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ABSTRACT

In the following pages, I present my personal perspective on the 1950s and 1960s in Australia's development, with particular emphasis on the Second World War, the Baby Boom, the Vietnam War, women's experiences with family life and gender formation, and immigration. In this life writing, I illustrate my personal knowledge of the stresses on middle class family life during the 1950s. I also examine the conflicting desires of many middle class women to experience fulfilment in the workplace, while at the same time conforming to the societal expectations of women in suburban family life. As well, I explore personal gender and sexual identity formation pressures that I experienced as I tried to meet patriarchal expectations for young women during this period. My personal experiences have greatly informed my analysis of the social expectations for women during this period.
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I was born in Strathalbyn, in South Australia shortly after the end of the Second
World War. This was a period when much of the Western world sustained
unprecedented economic growth, affluence and prosperity. My parents, Allan and Rita,
made in 1935 and were already established in their own modest suburban home, with a
seven-year old son, Rex, at the time of my birth. My father, although he had auto
mechanic training, was engaged in shop keeping at his own grocery business, as had his
father in earlier times. In my middle class family mother took daily care of the family
home and there was no economical need for her to have outside paid employment.

Along with economic growth and prosperity came a vast upsurge in the number of
post war births, between the years 1947 and 1963. This bulge in the birth rate was known
as the Baby Boom. I am one of the early baby boomers, a cohort that was positioned to
bring about radical changes in economics, politics, education and especially family life.
This cohort is often connected with media images of hippies and marijuana, free love and
flower power, as well as with women’s liberation. The decade of the 1960s was a period
of great social change, not only in Australia, but also throughout the Western world.
Even now, when many of the baby boomers, like myself, are becoming grandparents and
when many of us are retiring from paid employment, there is still a powerful interest in

the baby boomer generation because of the impact that we are still having on social change, especially now in the areas of retirement and health issues concerned with aging.

This interdisciplinary thesis will examine the period of the 1950s and 1960s from my personal perspective. This is not a history thesis. Rather, my interpretation of this period forms a backdrop to my story. From a feminist perspective I examine the various historical, social and political attitudes at work upon gender identity and how these influenced the views held by middle-class men and women in Australia during this period. Through my life writing, I illustrate my own knowledge of the stresses experienced in middle class family life during the 1950s. I will also look at the conflicting desires of many middle class women to experience fulfillment in the workplace, while at the same time conforming to the societal expectations of women in suburban family life. As well, I explore personal gender and sexual identity formation pressures that I experienced while my parents tried to mould me into meeting patriarchal expectations for young women during this period. This narrative constitutes my life writing and is “my story.” These personal experiences have greatly informed, enhanced and enabled my analysis of the social expectations for women during this period.

I will primarily address the concerns and attitudes of the middle class in Australia during this period, as this is the class with which I am most familiar. This class consisted of relatively affluent parents and their children who experienced the security of the economic post-war period of growth and prosperity in Australia. Although Australia’s aboriginal population has experienced intense alienation and disconnection from the mainstream white society since the arrival of the First Fleet from Britain in 1788, I do not propose to address issues concerning aboriginal experience within the framework of this
thesis. It is not my wish, nor place, to speak to aboriginal issues in Australia, and this thesis will be confined to discussions affecting white middle class Australians.

While this thesis is mainly concerned with the baby boom generation, it is certainly necessary to explore the various historical circumstances that created the baby boom in order to understand the influence and impact of the baby boomers upon Australian society. This generation did much to shape the history of this era.

Traditional expectations of behaviour and identity disintegrated after World War Two. There was dissatisfaction with traditional ideologies, and new ways of thinking were needed in order to integrate the various elements of society into a more coherent and functioning whole. Following the fading of the British role in Australian culture, and with the arrival of large numbers of immigrants, a new ideology was necessary to integrate the different cultures. Multiculturalism was incorporated as a policy. World War Two and the Baby Boom changed the role of men and women in family life. Feminist ideology has attempted to address this area. Historically women's voices and women's experiences were missing from the written record, and this problem is now being addressed with literature written by women and the availability of academic women's studies courses.

My family and personal stories are a micro version of the larger issues that were of concern to post-war Australian society. As a result of the conflict surrounding traditional gender roles in my family, my mother was able to embrace a more feminist role for herself as she searched for a more fulfilling personal life. Like her, I was raised to fill the traditional female role in family life, but have in later life followed my goals and ambitions for personal fulfillment. Due to interaction with immigrant cultures during the late 1960s, I became increasingly aware of the importance of the diverse cultures
inside of and outside of Australia. My emigration to Canada in 1970 was a way to integrate my Australian experience with the greater worldviews. Australian society has become much more integrated, both personally for its citizens, and within the larger global village as a result of the profound changes that took place in society during the 1950s and 1960s.
Figure 1

Brown Sheep, Brown Landscape
Langhorne Creek,
South Australia
March, 1998
Photographer: Danielle Sarandon
CHAPTER TWO

NARRATIVE OF IDENTITY

Until I was in my early twenties, I had never left Australia, but like so many of
my cohort, I was eager to save money to “go overseas.” Today it is inevitable that in
remote parts of the world you will find young Australians who have gone overseas to
know the wider experiences offered in the world. I noticed during my childhood in
Australia, that all the sheep were brown in colour, blending with and barely standing out
against the brown and dusty landscape. It was not until I travelled to New Zealand that I
discovered that the sheep were white in that country, and that they moved in huge flocks
across a green landscape. Clearly we all have different and particular lenses through
which we observe the world around us. Australians in my Australia of the 1950s and
1960s were a geographically isolated people, and alienated from much of the rest of the
world on their island continent. By travelling to other parts of the world, I overcame
isolation and experienced integration and connection with others. I found that there are
many different colours of sheep and many different coloured grasses.

When I was growing up, the books and magazines in my home were primarily of
British origin. While my mother baked an endless array of cakes on Saturday mornings, I
was often busily engaged in cutting out magazine and newspaper pictures of the British
Royal Family, especially pictures of Princess Anne and Prince Charles and pasting them
into a scrapbook. Because Prince Charles and I were born in the same year, I felt that we
had a special connection. The activities of the British Royal family were of great interest
to Australians, and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 and her subsequent visit to Australia in 1954, generated a great deal of public attention, especially in my own family.

It was difficult for Australian literature to be regarded as valid, particularly in early colonial times, as many Australians viewed the British canon as a touchstone of taste and value. British cultural hegemony rendered all colonial literature, including Australia's, marginal and subordinate. British standards were a defining influence on Australian clothing fashions and music tastes. Moreover, most Australians judged their literature against British standards, resulting often in a mismatch between language and landscape. Those who regarded Australian literature as a form of "Other," constructed as separate from the British canon, further contributed to disconnection that silenced some writers. It was impossible for Australian writers to describe the alien and harsh Australian physical landscape in the same terminology as authors used to describe Britain.

This gap between the words, the images and the reality is perhaps most apparent when one considers the type of Christmas cards that were available during the 1950s and 1960s in Australia. Having spent some thirty-five snowy Christmases in Canada, I now realize how distinctly different the Christmas experience in Australia was during my childhood. Scenes of roaring fires, and stocking covered mantels, with snow softly falling on laden evergreen trees appeared on almost every type of Christmas card, along with the ubiquitous reindeer. Neither this animal, nor the snow-covered scenes are reminiscent of the landscape of the Australian continent. There was a mismatch and a lack of authenticity between the language and the landscape. This became a form of silencing, or un-naming, as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in The
Empire Writes Back, describe it, occurring because of a “failure to control the means of communication.” The silence, however, became a “fruitful basis for an indigenising literature” as renaming gradually occurred (141). It was not until much more recently than the 1960s that Christmas cards became available that were truly representative of the Australian landscape. I now receive Christmas cards from Australia with koala bears in scarves and hats, along with kangaroos, and white cockatoos in gum trees.

Linguistic and artistic categorizations, such as Christmas cards, express more than just a perceptual framework. They express a particular cultural formation and are fundamental to the image of national identity that develops as a settler country seeks to create an alternative, differentiated identity. It is unlikely, however, that any settler society will be able to create an entirely separate identity. Because of the colonization experience, the Australian settler society will always retain portions of the linguistic and artistic material after the British model has been dismantled.

Rolph Harris was one of Australia’s more popular musicians during the 1960s. His mischievous grin as he played his “wocka” board accompaniment to Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport was as appealing as was his music to those of all generations. Many children, myself included, acquired strips of Masonite with which to make our own “wocka” boards. Harris, in a subversive manoeuvre, produced a song entitled Six White Boomers that told the Christmas tale of Santa Claus and his sleigh that was pulled around the world on Christmas Eve, according to Harris, by six white “boomers” (kangaroos). Many Australians prepare large Christmas dinners that would be suitable for a cold climate, but serve the food cold, under the shade of a tree near the beach. Hot plum pudding is often a Christmas dinner dessert, but instead of hot sauce or hot custard, a dollop of ice cream adorns the top of the pudding. It was many years before my mother,
sweating in a hot kitchen over Christmas dinner, finally conceded that it might make better sense to put ice cream on top of the pudding instead of a hot custard. Another counter discursive practice is illustrated as Australians subvert the colonial image of British masculinity in a celebration of the feats of the popular outlaw hero Ned Kelly. Kelly's outlaw image still persists in commercial and popular forms to enliven movies, create art and sell beer. The savagery of the outlaw hero is distorted into an idealization of the glorification of escape from authority. Subversive manoeuvres, and counter discursive practices then can become characteristic features of postcolonial texts.

One of the ways through which a particular culture can express its differentiated identity is through the dissemination of literature. Stories are at the heart of the historical and cultural exchange and this thesis is my attempt to show a construction of my life in Australia, based not only upon imagination, but also on journals, fictional vignettes and photographs that illustrate my own experience. I have included these sources in order to point out the influences that have shaped my story.

In The Call of Stories, Robert Coles describes how we all accumulate stories in our lives, and how “each of us [has] a history of such stories, that no one’s stories are quite like anyone else’s” and that ultimately we comprehend our own stories as we connect the various incidents together “in such a way that they do, in fact, become an old-fashioned story” (11). In hindsight, some of my stories definitely appear old-fashioned. It is interesting when one analyzes “which matters we choose to emphasize, which details we consider important” and the imagery we use, because what is omitted speaks as loudly as that which is included (Coles 19). In presenting these stories, I hope to create an exchange, or a dialogue, with readers.
In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said describes stories as a form of cultural theatre where various political and ideological causes are able to engage one another (xiii). Each author brings to their story a personalized view of their experiences of the world. Authors, while describing their own particular view, are also “in the history of their societies, shaping and shaped by that history and their social experience in different measure” (Said xxii). I allude to social and historical events that I recall which were formative influences. However I do not intend to write a social or cultural history; rather, this thesis reflects my life writing and interpretation of events as I remember them.

It is imperative that there be a narrative of identity, both for persons and for nations, because what has been forgotten or pushed back into the subconscious has as much of an effect on the shaping of the identity, as that which can consciously be remembered. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson compares the formation of a nation to that of a person, suggesting that it is impossible to remember the early years of childhood once the physiological and emotional experiences of puberty have been experienced. As well, he suggests that because it is impossible to remember childhood, it is imperative that the experience of this period be narrated (204). As a reminiscent narrator I am able to revisit the past with the wisdom and experience of hindsight, looking back into those events and times that had so profound an effect on my early life.

Personal narratives are one way to provide background and context to a particular era. Narratives of this nature, sometimes called life writing, demonstrate what is perhaps the biggest gap of all: the difference between an actual event that took place, and the author's perception of the event. In *Memory and Narrative*, James Olney describes the relationship of recollecting or remembering as it is linked with the act of narrating. He describes confessions, memoirs, life writing and the act of writing about or around the
self as having a “comfortably loose fit and generous adaptability” (xv). Because life
writing and memoirs are based upon memory, a question begs asking. How accurate and
how adequate could the mind’s knowledge of itself hope to be? It is possible to commit
certain facts to rote memory such as birth dates. Sometimes the senses of smell, or sight
trigger memories that can be quite accurate, however there is always the possibility, or
probability of errors in the content of the memory. Another kind of memory is the
principal or schema memory, which is “shaped according to a self already largely formed
from memorial acts earlier in time, and further back on the continuum” (Olney 61).
Memory is unreliable in that it tends to carry a fictitious component. Sue Kossew in her
interview with author Daphne Marlatt notes that Marlatt likes to rub “the edges of
document and memory/fiction against one another. [She] like[s] the friction that is
produced between the stark reporting of document . . . and the more emotional, even
poetic, language of memory” (Kossew). Life narratives and memoirs come from a
language of memory, and are as a consequence, inevitably flawed in accuracy but are
enriched by the “friction” produced in the poetic act of remembering.

Considered to be non-traditional literature, life narratives do, however, provide a
valuable and intensely personal window into the self. Narratives written from memory
become more than a summary of a person’s life. They become a “window into a life” as
William Zinsser describes it in *On Writing Well*, much as a photograph illustrates a
particular selected composition, illustrative of a particular moment in time (212). This
personal narrative may not be accurate, however, and memoirs may, as Zinsser notes,
become rather the “art of inventing the truth” (212). It is not so much a case of actually
inventing the truth, but each author brings their own peculiar perception of an event to
their writing, and this perception colours the truth of their writing, possibly inaccurately.
Life narratives are particularly important, because of the historical silencing of literature documenting women's experiences. Literature by women has often been deemed frivolous and unimportant, dealing as much of it does, with the personal and private experiences of matters important to women. Diaries and journals have been described by some as less objective literature, owing to their personal nature. There is a tendency, even in myself, to hold back from public knowledge memories of certain events, yet it is strange how these events are not forgotten over time but merely shelved temporarily in the back of the mind waiting for some external event to occur in order for them to be foregrounded. Margaret Atwood and Sylvia Plath are two authors who have been somewhat reserved about their personal lives in their writing, yet have allowed readers to share a glimpse of some of the events of their lives, even though those events may appear in the form of fiction.

The act of writing itself, including the writing down of the details of their lives, empowers many women authors who may have previously sacrificed their own interests in the name of service to their families and communities. Earl Ingersoll, in his introduction to Margaret Atwood Conversations, quotes Atwood as saying that she tends to be "very protective" of her right to be deeply involved with her writing. Atwood comments that during the late 1950s and 1960s it was painful for her to make the decision to become a writer, because all of her role models at that time had been women who were unmarried. She knew then that her writing would have to take precedence over any relationships with men (xii). D.K. Hollenberg notes that Carole Shields found that her family gave her writing perspective even though "family life consumes and fractures time" (Hollenberg). She found that family life and especially motherhood gave her a subject for her writing, and that she learned to "trust the stories of ordinary people"
including her own, about families, interconnections, growth, separation, birth and death (Hollenberg). Sylvia Plath also illustrates the value and importance of writing in her life in a letter dated November 7, 1962, to her mother. She writes about the power she achieves from her writing, stating: “I am, full of interest in my own life.... I amaze myself. It is my work that does it, my sense of myself as a writer . . . My hours of solitude in my study are my most precious, those, and the hours I spend with my darling babies” (Plath 565). In The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath, Karen Kunkil notes that Plath writes, on May 20, 1959 “Study, study. Go inward. There it is pure . . . . I MUST WRITE ABOUT THE THINGS OF THE WORLD WITH NO GLAZING. I know enough about love, hate, catastrophe to do so” (485). Love, hate and catastrophe are often the topics of women’s writing when they go inward and tell their own stories.

It is important for women to define themselves and their orientation to the world in relationship with others close to them. The effect of doing this may diminish not only the time available for self-development, but also the value of women’s personal work. Many women display this tendency to see themselves in relationship with others. In Australian Feminist Studies “Revolutions are not made by downtrodden Housewives,” Lesley Johnson explains this different framework, using Carol Gilligan’s term, as the “self-in-relationship” (245). To counter this tendency, Atwood, in an interview with Graeme Gibson, states that in order to be able to write many writers “have to go into a room and shut the door and say: ‘Go away everyone, because I’m going to write’ (Ingersoll 10). Some women writers have to seclude themselves physically from the demands of others in order to write. Atwood goes on to state that because Canada is a frontier country, the important work here consists of building houses and bridges and things of that nature, whereas writing is considered irrelevant or redundant (Ingersoll 10).
Not only is writing considered irrelevant, it is difficult for many women to find time to write, because the countless demands of others fracture their lives. This disconnected sense of time is often reflected in their writing, which tends to concentrate on life as it is, and not as the author would necessarily like it to be. Atwood concedes that virtually “everything is a conflict with your writing. If there were no conflict there would be no writing” (Ingersoll 226). The conflicting demands of women’s lives, however, are the material basis of narratives that can often be enriched by a variety of circumstances, including motherhood. In my life, motherhood and family demands kept personal narrative writing to a minimum, and during this period only important events were recorded. For many women it is the accumulation of the minute events of life that form the basis of material for narratives. Women writers adapt their writing styles to the conditions they find themselves living in, as they interact in relationship with others who are important in their lives.

Women have become their own worst enemies, in many cases, as they display a readiness to believe messages of disdain, especially regarding the importance of their narratives. Sometimes the message comes, not only from external sources, but also internal ones as they replay messages of disdain inside their own minds. In Writing a Woman’s Life, Caroline Heilbrun explains how many “women, writing of their own lives have found it no easier to detach themselves from the bonds of womanly attitudes” (22). She notes that for contemporary women and women writers there is the inevitable struggle between the concept of being unambiguously a woman, coupled with the intense desire to be something else (Heilbrun 21). Through the medium of writing, women can transcend traditional female boundaries and explore options for alternative identities. In Composing a Life, Mary Catherine Bateson describes storytelling as “fundamental to the
human search for meaning.” She describes how “the past empowers the present and the
groping footsteps leading to the present mark the pathways to the future” (Bateson 34).
As women seek to explain their past, and as they grope towards their futures, many are
hampered by a crippling dependency upon the need for continuity in their lives.

For most of us, we fear change, yet also desire improvement. Journal writing
became a form of personal therapy when I contemplated great changes in my life and
endured difficult times. The act of writing down my thoughts served as a panacea to the
unsettling experience of change. When there is a change, a discontinuity or a
disconnection, there is anxiety, and women in particular suffer and remain “adrift,
burdened by the broken assumptions of continuity” (Bateson 8). For many middle class
women in the 1950s and 1960s, the prospect of continuity in their suburban marriages
and lifestyles was the anchor upon which they based their lives. Bateson asks: “At what
point does desperate improvisation become significant achievement?” (Bateson 10). For
some women, writing was an outlet as well as a way to question and subvert patriarchal
silencing.

One of the obstacles that silence many women writers is the manner in which they
question the importance of what they have to say. Tillie Olsen in Silences quotes
Katherine Mansfield as saying that she “walk[s] about with a mind full of ghosts of
saucepans and primus stoves, and ‘will there be enough to go around’”(18). Many men
would consider this narration of ordinary, everyday women’s experiences as minor and
trivial, preferring to narrate the visions of extraordinary public figures. However
Mansfield’s concerns revolve around the minutia of the foundation on which most
people’s lives depend. Food must be procured, cooked, cleaned up; children must be
birthed, raised and cleaned up; these are the core concepts of life and are the issues
women writers "come to, cleave to, [in order to] find the form for one's own life comprehensions" (Olsen 256).

Illustrated on the physical bodies of women are the experiences that form personal narratives. In Women Native Other, Trinh T. Minh-ha suggests that women's bodies are like road maps, showing signs of having lived. As women age, their bodies show evidence of having lived: such as stretch marks, scars, and the inevitable sagging of the flesh. This female body needs to be heard, and the signs of the body read. This is what she means by "writing the body" and, as she describes it, women's writing is often a "headless and bottomless" form of storytelling that forms a new way of communicating (Trinh 43). Women writers have doubts about the validity of the topic of their narratives; they lack confidence and suffer frustration and despair, both of which are "the sentiments born with the habits of distraction, distortion, discontinuity and silence" (Trinh 7). Women are, in many cases, distracted from the act of writing by the demands of men and children, whose care and comfort is, in many cases, physically marked and carved on the physical bodies of women. It was not until I was alone and freed from the demands of growing children and a husband that I was able to focus my attention on my own needs for personal fulfillment through post-secondary education.

While it is necessary to re-place the lost voices of women's experiences into the literature, there are difficulties involved in the construction of a female literary tradition. Is it enough to just substitute a female canon for the male canon? It is difficult for many men to understand the experience of motherhood. It is different from fatherhood, in many ways, although it shares similarities. This subject material appears commonly in women's writing, especially in personal journals and narratives. If this information is not publicly available for men and other women to read, then the mystery surrounding the
acts of conception, childbearing and motherhood remains, contributing further to a lack of understanding between men and women. Further, men and women are different and view similar experiences differently, and this information can be conveyed through narrative. Keeping this material hidden further separates men from women and widens the gap between women’s and men’s writing. I believe that the only satisfactory solution is a melding or blending of the two, into the category of “literature.”

Including the voices of women in literature is an important change, but what has also changed is the language of that literature. The true function of art and a culture is to “interpret us to ourselves, and to relate us to the country and the society in which we live” according to John McLeod in Beginning Postcolonialism (122-123). As was the case with the art and text of traditional Christmas cards, the English language used by the first settlers in Australia was not capable of explaining the sights, sounds and experiences of the new country. The first settlers spoke in a Cockney dialect mingled with other dialects, but a distinctive shift occurred which affected the whole class of sounds of the new Australian dialect. Language evolved to become quintessentially Australian and an Australian set of values developed, separate and distinct from the British tradition. I am made acutely aware of how language continues to evolve and change, as my Australian friends occasionally now use new words that have no meaning for me.

There is currently a great desire to rediscover the lost work of women writers, and to put into print those long lost and dusty volumes of diaries and journals that may have spent time in a dusty box. My own personal journals have been physically transported from one location to another many times over the course of my life, and I have wondered about their value, apart from the personal catharsis of writing down my experiences at the time. Would they ever be of any profound use? In the context of this thesis, finally it
has become apparent to me that they are indeed the raw material of my life and have, as such, become a valuable resource for this work.

As a life writer I am able to be a reminiscent narrator, revisiting my past with the wisdom and experience of hindsight. Women writers have been silenced, "excluded from literary history" according to Mary Eagleton in Feminist Literary Theory. She notes that there is currently a desire to know what it is to be female, "to declare the experience and the perceptions that have been unheard" (Eagleton 1). It is, however, not possible to find a universal or eternal truth in the aesthetic value of a text. One of the implications of being a reminiscent narrator is that this text becomes a recollection of the past as I remember it now. I have been profoundly surprised, when re-reading entries from the 1960s, at my immature attitude and understanding of the issues of concern to me at the time. With more maturity and the experience of hindsight, I can see that my understanding of the events, about which I wrote, was limited. Throughout my childhood I was involved with the Methodist Church, albeit reluctantly. Regular church attendance was expected by my parents and not questioned by me. Interestingly, in many of my teenage journals I notice that I implored God for some request, usually concerning making some boy fall in love with me. One should be careful what one wishes for. Some of my early journal entries are integrated within this thesis at appropriate times, and serve to highlight my first experience of romantic love, and some of my attitudes and activities as a teenager. I wince at some of my expressions, and smile at my innocence and high spirits, and through the power of recollection give over my experiences to the reader to make of them what they will. Once written, the narrative ceases to be controlled by the writer, and meaning is given out to the reader. Readers of any text make meaning as they read, based upon their interests, perceptions and experiences with the subject material.
Why have I, and many other women who would write, not found my voice? The fear of being criticized is behind my self-imposed silence. In *In Our Own Words*, Mary Crawford describes her feelings of personal self-doubt when she was growing up during the 1950s. She remembers the "doubts, the lack of confidence, the uncertainty and confusion" that she experienced. She was afraid and shy, "chronically ambivalent, dreaming of being a writer... yet doubting whether [she] was smart enough to do much of anything" (Crawford, Unger 36). Personally it has been easier to succumb to, rather than resist, these self doubts, and easier to give in to my fearfulness to express myself, rather than voice my perceptions.

The greatest challenge has been to overcome a self-imposed reluctance to narrate the daily events of my life that I have considered to be mundane and irrelevant. I have used my personal journal as a sounding board to monitor and mark my journey through life's experiences. No one ever told me that this material was irrelevant, but without female role models who have successfully published similar material, it has been difficult to view my personal narratives as a worthy source of inspiration. By examining the historical background and gender issues surrounding women’s experiences in Australia during the 1950s, along with the social and political factors surrounding the revolutionary changes during the 1960s, within the context of my recollection of growing up in Australia, I have been able to define and articulate my position. Attending university as an adult and being expected to articulate my thoughts and display my critical thinking skills was another personal challenge for me. Confidence builds from the act of doing, and success builds upon success, both personally and academically. I have found that storytelling is now fundamental to my search for personal meaning, and as I retell the stories from my youth, I allow the past to empower the present for me. In the words of
of things. Tonight I said to Rob, 'I wonder what your brother would think if he knew about us?' Then I looked at Rob and said, 'Maybe she knew all about it, maybe she can see us now. I wonder what she thinks?' Robby said, 'She's probably as happy as I am now.' Oh God, thank you a million times over for sending me a love as wonderful and pure as Rob's and it must have been meant to be, for honestly I don't deserve a love as pure as his—I don't, but thank you, thank you.

Lunchtime was boring. Rob and I just walked around tonight. Rob and I sat together on North Terrace, and oh I was in heaven. I really was. We were in 'a world of our own.' I almost cried with happiness tonight, because he's so loving, and so sweet and gentle when he kisses me, but his passion too is when he clutches me to him, and holds me so tightly I nearly get crushed. But I do so love him, he's so wonderfully sincere about it!

Tonight we kissed and I knew the tip of my tongue over his bottom lip, I felt it and said, 'She's every word of it.' Oh Rob, learning is very, very sweet, he practically knows as much as I do about it all! But there's one thing we both really know, and that is that God's given us both the capacity and the ability to love each other, and to love all. It is wonderful, the heavenly taste of his sweet lips, precious

Figure 2 Learning Fast June 9, 1965
Bateson, my "grasping footsteps leading to the present, mark the pathways to the future" (34). By understanding how I reached the present moment, I am empowered to direct the course of my future.

By way of illustrating the aspects of separation and the discontinuities of Australian life in the 1950s and early 1960s, I will interweave a pastiche of personal stories, photographs and diary entries at various places in this thesis. This post-modern literary technique mirrors the uniquely fragmented nature of much of contemporary experience and consists of a medley of elements that celebrates my liberation from a fixed and limited traditional style. I offer an eclectic collection of personal experiences in which I illuminate the societal expectations of women and girls that I remember. The fictional interludes illustrate the fictionality inherent in social and personal revisioning and storytelling. As well, I look at the opportunities available to the baby boom generation during the 1960s as women and men challenged claustrophobic fixed systems of belief. As Peter Barry notes in Beginning Theory, this fragmented approach, while possibly jarring, is meant to be an exhilarating and liberating experience (84). My inclusion of story segments will not only provide my interpretation of the events from my experience, but will allow the reader to construct meaning as well, and facilitate a greater understanding of this pivotal era.
Figure 3
The Island Continent – Australia
Australian Government – Bureau of Meteorology
March 2, 2005.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE ISLAND CONTINENT

Culturally, Australia is an island very much disconnected from its background in Europe. Australia is the world's only island continent. The words "island continent" conjure up images of a body of land that is disconnected from and possibly located at a far distance from the mainland. Growing up and attending school in Australia during the post-war period, I was acutely aware of how isolated Australia was from the cultural centre of Europe. Nothing was taught in my schooling about the countries in close geographical proximity to Australia. It was as if the Asian countries were "Other" and no one was very interested in what went on there, but all eyes were on Britain and Europe and the events that occurred there were the sources of Australian identity. Great Britain, considered by many to be a world class marker of civilized values, viewed Australia in the eighteenth century, as the Antipodes; a place where things were the wrong way around. The seasons were "backward" with summer in winter, and winter in summer, according to the British standard. Even the water went the "wrong way around" as it left the bathtub! Writing in the 1960s, J.D. Pringle argues in The Australian Accent that culturally Australia is simultaneously, a "barbarous, uncivilized, land of cultural yahoos [and yet contains] . . . young but flourishing art and literature" (Pringle 134). While many working class Australians during the 1960s were involved with pubs and football, a more culturally appreciative group was growing in numbers, supporting art and literature and busily cultivating opera and theatrical productions. This sense of contradictoriness and disconnection that was particularly evident during the 1950s and 1960s, and the
integration that occurred with post war immigration, forms some of the subject material of this thesis.

The most obvious and blatant displacement arose from the colonial occupation of the continent by the British. With their concept of the Australian landscape as *terra nullis*, an unoccupied land, the British moved into what was then known as Van Diemen’s Land in the late 18th Century, using it primarily as a penal colony: a place to relocate the undesirable elements of British society and to relieve the overcrowded living conditions that were occurring in Great Britain. Paying no attention whatsoever to the fact that Australia was already very much peopled, the British displaced the aboriginal people and took possession of the land as part of the triumphant spread of British imperialism. This displacement and alienation of the aboriginal population in Australia could fill the pages of another thesis, but it is not the intention of this author to address aboriginal experience here, except to note that this white settlement by the British is a further pertinent example of alienation and displacement within the Australian context.

In the male dominated settler society of colonial Australia, men often possessed the economic power and political opportunities necessary to develop the colony in the image of Britain. Although early settler women were highly prized for their civilizing influence in the male dominated colony, most colonial women felt powerless to create change in the patriarchal society that developed in Australia. In a society that develops in a totally foreign environment from the familiar, and where women, in particular, feel powerless to make change, there most definitely exists an internalized sense of separation and alienation from not only place, but also from the machinations of power.

This sense of disconnection continues to be evident in many subtle ways in the modern Australian psyche; it is evident, as it was in myself, in the numbers of young
Australians who set off to "go overseas," particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, in a ritual seeking of a sense of personal and cultural placement within the parameters of the greater world. Before the Second World War this "greater world" was located in Britain, and many Australians during this period believed that Great Britain was the "lifeboat of empire in dangerous and shark-infested seas," according to Gregory Melleuish in *The Packaging of Australia* (21). As a young travelling Australian, I visited Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey and Trafalgar Square during my visits to Britain, and I distinctly remember feeling that I had somehow come "home" to a familiar place.

Australians used Britain as a kind of reference point, by which to judge themselves and their progress in development, but in the process may have created a monolithic cultural Britain of their own making. Perhaps the Britain of their imaginations was just that, an imaginary Britain that could not possibly live up to their expectations. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie describes the emotion that many emigrants or expatriates experience. He says they are "haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back" but this revisioning "almost inevitably means that [they] will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that [they] will, in short, create fictions . . . imaginary homelands"(10). Until the 1970s the dwellers of the island continent looked to Britain and British standards in order to position themselves ideologically. This positioning was but one of many ways to address the anxiety surrounding their geographical disconnection from European society.

The 25th day of April each year is ANZAC Day in Australia. Although Australia recognizes the importance of November 11th, ANZAC Day is by far the more important day, to the extent that it is a public holiday with parades and remembrance ceremonies taking place in all small towns and large cities across Australia. In school I was taught
the story of the brave ANZAC soldiers who died on Gallipoli Peninsula in an unsuccessful attempt to take control of the Dardanelles, believing that it was a moment of great glory for the brave Australian and New Zealand troops who died. Grainy black and white pictures of soldiers, wearing the familiar Aussie military hat that buttons up on one side, were displayed in newspaper articles, and I felt proud of them in a strange way, although it was more important to me to have a day off from school. My father served during World War Two, and his experiences were frequently discussed at our house, but it seemed to me that World War One was just too far removed to be of much significance.

In 1915 Australia and New Zealand were at war in support of the Allied Powers in the European battle against the Central Powers. The Turks were battering Russia in the Caucasus, when England decided to begin a campaign that was intended to distract Turkey in her attack against Russia. The ANZAC Corps (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) were brought in to lead the attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Instead of landing on a sandy beach, the ANZAC soldiers were pinned down on a beach facing steep cliffs and a constant barrage of enemy fire. While British politicians debated the merit of continuing the campaign, over 8,000 Australian soldiers died on the beaches of the Gallipoli peninsula, unable to make headway against the Turks. The legend of ANZAC is not a celebration of success or victory, but a celebration of courage, and ingenuity and was a deciding event whereby Australia became a nation in a sacrificial bloodbath. British and Australian interpretations of the event have been little more than a form of discursive dance to explain Australian militarism and British indifference.

On their journeys “overseas” to Britain and Europe for enculturation, many young traveling Australians are still drawn to the desolate beaches of Gallipoli. Remembrance ceremonies are still held on the lonely beaches in Turkey. Perhaps, during these
emotional moments, many young Australians fully empathize with that sense of emotional and physical disconnectedness that the Australian soldiers must have felt, as they valiantly fought on that foreign shore.

Another example of British disregard for Australian military concerns occurred before the fall of Singapore in World War Two. Following Japanese aggression in the Pacific, the Australian government urged Britain to send battleships to the "impregnable" strategic base at Singapore. Britain, however, was determined to keep its fleet in the Mediterranean, and although the British eventually sent two battleships to Singapore, they were too late. As Paul Langtry notes in "Australia's War," the Australian government had very little strategic input as to how the inexperienced Australian troops, who were sent to Singapore to defend the island against the rapidly approaching Japanese, were to be used (Langtry).

Moreover, it appeared that Sir Winston Churchill was happy to take all the soldiers, sailors and airmen that Australia could commit to the defence of Singapore but gave no consideration to Australia's fate as the Japanese menaced the Australian mainland in 1941-2 (Japanese Military Aggression). Churchill even resisted the return of Australian soldiers from the Middle East to defend their own country, preferring that they be deployed to defend India rather than Australia. In Australian Civilization, Richard Nile states, that every school child in Australia knows how Sir Winston Churchill abandoned Australian troops in the defence of Singapore (14). Singapore fell to the Japanese and many thousands of Australian soldiers were captured, became prisoners of war and rotted in Japanese run concentration camps or died of starvation and exhaustion working on the Thailand Burma Railroad (Langtry).
My brother Rex, who was born in 1941, was less than a year old when my father was conscripted into the Australian Army on January 6, 1942. My father believed that he would be exempt from military service, being thirty-two years old at the time and employed in the food industry. However, following the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, the Australian government decided to call up for service, men in the thirty to thirty five year old range. As he had automotive mechanical experience, he was stationed in the outback of Australia, repairing convoy trucks that regularly drove the dusty outback roads between Adelaide and Darwin, supplying the American military with food and supplies. Stationed in several places in the Northern Territory during this time, he was away from his home and family for a period of approximately four years before being discharged on November 16, 1945.

My father frequently complained, when I was a child, about the shoddiness of Japanese made products. He had nothing complimentary to say about anything that was made in Japan. Their cameras were cheaply made imitations and their cars were not worthy of consideration, in his opinion. This attitude was commonplace among many middle class Australian men who had served in the military.

Abandoned by the British, Australia began to forge an alliance with the United States of America. In his famous December 26th 1942 speech to the Australian people, Prime Minister John Curtin illustrated Australia’s changing alliance from Britain towards the United States of America, with the words “[w]ithout any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America [for defence], free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom” (Langtry). Fortunately for Australia, the United States military was well aware of the strategic importance of a free
Australia as an ally against the Japanese in the Pacific. Australia began a gradual drift away from core British values and loyalties following World War Two.

Australian soldiers have been present in many battles on foreign soils, but none within the island continent. Nile notes that the Australian military has a reputation for being “bloody good soldiers in other nations’ wars” and this reputation was upheld in both World War I, World War II and during the Vietnam War (13). All active military involvement has been disconnected from the Australian soil.

By the end of the Second World War with the British Empire gone, even in name, and with Australia’s allegiance tied to the United States of America, the spread of Communism in the Far East became another concern for the Australian people. My parents talked openly about the perceived threat from overcrowded countries like Japan and especially China, imagining the arrival of great numbers of Asians wanting to settle in under-populated Australia. Australia even had a “White Australia Policy” which was designed to make it impossible for people of Asian descent to become Australian citizens. In The Lucky Country, Donald Horne reiterates how Australians were no longer assured of British support against communism in Asia, and clearly felt disconnected from European civilization because of their location on the fringe of one of the more overcrowded and unstable regions of the world (114). Fearful of a possible attack, Australia willingly deployed troops and diplomatic resources to the Korean War, the Malaysian Confrontation and the Vietnam War (Australia’s Military History).

In order to counter anxiety during the Cold War period, Prime Minister Robert Menzies instituted various governmental policies designed to enhance a sense of self-contained domesticity within Australian society. Cultivating an orderly and essential domesticity, as well as encouraging increased economic consumption, quelled fears of
another war and economic instability. His approach was both economic as well as political and illustrates his belief that increased consumption and a vibrant economy would enhance domestic life, homeownership, and public security.

The growth in home ownership did not happen in a vacuum, however. It was the result of a conscious effort by Australian politicians to support and encourage the creation of strong nuclear family units. This politically approved growth in strength of the nuclear family, according to Louise Johnson in Placebound, was set against the backdrop of the Cold War, and was designed to ensure “political stability, male working-class loyalty to jobs, their family and nation” (101). In 1956 Melbourne hosted the Olympic games. According to Susan Sheridan in her article entitled “The ‘Australian Woman’ and her Migrant Others in the Post-War Australian Women’s Weekly,” in the Journal of Media & Cultural Studies, the Australian government requested the Chinese National Theatre cancel its performances in Melbourne that year, for fear of offending the visiting Olympic teams by appearing to recognize “Red” China (128). The Cold War fears of many Australians at this time led to reactionary measures.

Australian society changed due to the Second World War and the Cold War. Menzies' personal ideology, beliefs and strategies reflected his solid Protestant values of duty and self-reliance within a framework of independence and these aspirations “were crucially about duties and responsibilities rather than rights” (Murphy 15). My family was firmly Protestant and attended church on Sundays. Having personally experienced the difficulties of the Depression, my parents appreciated hard work and were very frugal. Mother saved small lengths of string, carefully rolling them around her fingers, and tying them with a bow before storing them. Elastic bands were also saved for re-use;
Figure 4
Home and Family
Strathalbyn 1983
Mother, 1968
FX Holden 1963
Photographer: Danielle Sarandon
paper bags and squares of brown wrapping paper were carefully smoothed out, folded and stored for re-use; clothing was carefully mended, and bed sheets were split down the middle and re-sewn together with the less worn outer edges in the centre. After the kitchen was cleaned up for the evening, Mother always had a basket of socks to darn. Hard work and conservative self-reliance were central attitudes in my family.

There was an uneasy swirl of anxieties and tensions at this time and Australian society, with Menzies’ political encouragement, invested heavily in domesticity and family life believing that a commitment to a strong family based society would help to establish a more secure world. Upon his return from the Second World War, my father took advantage of programs available to veterans, began his own poultry and egg business and contributed to the development of family life and domesticity with the eventual arrival of myself, some seven years after my brother’s birth. This age difference or lack of continuity in births, because of my father’s absence from home for military service, caused long lasting discord between my brother and me. We were not able to integrate closely as family members, and it was not until both of us had children of our own that we were able to experience a common bond. Despite the political commitment to family life, many Australian families, like my own, were fragmented by wartime separations.

By 1964, as the Vietnam War escalated, Australia made a decision to introduce conscription for twenty-year-old males. Conscripts were selected for two years of military service through a process known as the “birthday lotteries” (Murphy 25). Young men, born between prescribed dates, were required to present themselves for military service. Recruits were sent anywhere that the military ordered, and by March 1966, the first battalion of conscripts were deployed to Vietnam. For young twenty-year-old men
the prospect of military conscription clearly represented a frightening state of displacement from their normal family lives, careers and studies. In *The Meagre Harvest*, Gisela Kaplan describes the emotion of disconnection within families with sons who were conscripted as they faced the possibility of being “called up and torn away from their homes and lives to engage in a war that seemed scarcely relevant at best and hardly defensible at worst” (26). Men, women and especially the middle class women whose twenty-year-old sons were liable for conscription, joined the movement against Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War.

The draft resistance movement widened into a much larger ideological objection to the war, and moratoriums against Vietnam and anti-war demonstrations turned violent. Australia’s commitment of soldiers increased in numbers until 1969 when there were 7,670 Australian soldiers serving in Vietnam (Thorogood). By 1969, the anti war campaign had become a national movement, with the largest moratoriums occurring in 1970 and 1972.

Clearly, the majority of Australian people did not support the involvement of either Australia or the United States in the Vietnam War. As is evidenced by the widespread moratoriums and protests, there was alienation between the wishes of many Australian people and their conservative politicians. Counter to pressure in the face of such discontent, politicians continued to increase the number of recruits serving in Vietnam. For young twenty-year-old men, the experience of disconnection from their daily lives due to conscription created a profound sense of helplessness. Some fathers who had themselves served in the military, felt it was an honour to be called to serve, and were dismayed by the lack of patriotism and loyalty of those young men who resisted conscription. Many of those men of the older generation had a different attitude toward
fighting for one’s country. World War Two was seen as a “just” war; it was a war in which most Australians had compelling patriotic reasons for supporting Britain in its struggle against Nazi Germany. The war in Vietnam, however, for many Australians was not a valid conflict that required the involvement and conscription of young Australian men. The young conscripts found themselves in an ironic position: they could neither buy a beer in the bar, nor vote. They were powerless to change the political system that sent them to fight in a foreign war.

It was during the post-war period that the age of first marriage dropped and more people married than ever before. In Imagining the Fifties, John Murphy’s research indicates that by the end of the 1950s only one in eight women aged twenty to twenty nine had not married (21). Within the group of women born between 1920 and 1950, many of who became the mothers of the “baby boomers,” only four to six percent never married (Murphy 21). This shift towards early marriage, domesticity and large families expressed not only the influence of Australian governmental policies, but also historical shifts in society. Young people invested heavily, both emotionally and materially, in an effort to create personally meaningful and important social bonds within society.

A post-war housing shortage occurred that led to many middle class households sharing their dwellings with extended family members. My parents were already established in a home of their own, but for many newly wedded couples, verandas were closed in and sheds converted for sleeping quarters. Increasing prosperity eventually led to the emergence of a new suburban lifestyle based on privacy and intimacy within the nuclear family. According to Murphy, “this [nuclear] family . . . was no longer a place of economic activity and was a private sphere separate from . . . the wider public world, with a clear division of labour between male breadwinners and female homemakers”
In many ways, however, the development of the nuclear-based suburban middle class family led to a further experience of disconnection and displacement within Australian society.

The lack of intellectual stimulation caused by routine work at home, caused many women to experience acute frustration. As the economy improved there was less and less need for women to work at producing food and clothing within the home. It became a status symbol, especially for working class men, to have a wife who did no paid work outside of the home, as this permitted them to emulate the middle classes. My father was adamant that my mother not seek employment outside of our home. She was always busy in her garden growing vegetables, but mainly enjoyed cultivating her favourite roses. To my father it was an insult to his masculinity and his ability to support his family for my mother to want to work for paid wages. Rising technological developments in the way of labour saving devices within the home were supposed to make daily housework easier and less time consuming, and for many women, like my mother, there was little stimulation in their daily routines. By the end of the 1950s the discontent with, and limitations of, suburban life became a factor in the rise in popularity of the second wave women’s movement in Australia.

Although women’s rights in Australia were well established by this time, they were largely unused. Meshed as they were in the ideology of domesticity and suburban life, middle class women failed in many cases to exercise their rights. This second wave women’s movement was, as Kaplan observes, “less a fight for civic rights than a fight against social custom and widespread social practice” (24). For many Australian women the subject of politics was an unknown topic, and largely because of this ignorance many middle class women failed to assert their rights. Kaplan notes that in 1960 an attempt
was made to inform women of their political rights using the forum of night school classes (27). Many women gained crucial political knowledge from these classes, but it took the experience of the anti-Vietnam war movement to provide a political forum of a general nature in order to assist women to emerge from the “Cinderella syndrome” of political ignorance (Kaplan 27). In much of the Western world, the 1960s represented a birthing period for social democracy and the Vietnam War urged forward this force for change. The women’s movement, along with Aborigines and other groups for whom discrimination was unbearable, greatly benefited from this awareness.

The 1960s were years of intense separation for many middle class Australian families. Throughout the 1950s middle class family values had revolved around individual families working together to be independent and self-sufficient within the domestic sphere. Both churches as well as family structures reinforced the value of social harmony within the independent family. During the revolutionary era of the 1960s, teenage baby boomers came into conflict with parents as they struggled to establish different family values during this period of great social upheaval. The expression “Make Love Not War” may very well epitomize the emotions at the heart of the 1960s youth culture. Melleuish recognizes a growing sense of individualism that developed during the 1960s which had the effect of emancipating many middle class people from the social constraints of the past, but also had the effect of creating a “re-orientation of the relationships between individuals and the social groups of which they are members” (40). When relationships between individuals within a family group are in the process of re-orientation there often is conflict and a sense of alienation, as the two generations express their wishes for differing values.
Teenagers felt disconnected from their family members as they discarded self-discipline and a sense of personal responsibility in favour of functionalism and self-expression. Australian teenagers during the 1960s often rejected the musical choices of their parents’ generation. From the middle of the 1950s music moved from jazz to skiffle to rock ‘n’ roll. Bing Crosby was a favourite of my parents, who listened to songs like *I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas, Just a Walkin’ in the Rain, and Swanee River.*

When I was a child, I would sometimes unfurl my Mother’s seldom-used umbrella and put a brittle 78-rpm record of Johnnie Ray singing *Just a Walkin’ in the Rain* on the radiogram in the sitting room. With the volume turned up, I would dance along the back of the settee, balancing with my umbrella, and loudly singing. During the 1960s, though, my taste in music changed drastically. I would never have been caught listening to my parents’ music.

Another form of teenage self-expression was evident in the styles of clothing and hair. Parents despaired as their fourteen-year-old daughters wore bras and nylon stockings, used lipstick, had home perms and wanted to date. In my family it was not even remotely possible for me to have a bra and nylon stockings or high-heeled shoes until I was at least fifteen years old. Styles by leading British designers, such as Mary Quant, were popular with their mini skirts and unisex fashions. London led the way. During the 1960s, skirts became shorter and hairstyles became longer. Many baby boomers declared that everyone over the age of thirty was “square” and definitely not to be trusted. Parents and teenagers became disconnected because of the influence of
Saturday Afternoon at The Pictures

I write his name intertwined with hearts. Mrs. Robin Lehmann, Mrs. D. Lehmann, Mrs. Lehmann, Mrs. Mrs. Mrs. I form rows and rows of signatures, using his last name... I tell myself that I’m just doodling, but I glow with warmth and I smile.

I told my father I was going to the ice skating rink with a girlfriend. I hate lying to him. I’m not his little Danny girl anymore. I’m grown up. He says I’m too young to go out with boys. I don’t want to go out with just any boy, but I want to spend the rest of my life with Robin. R O B I N... I love just saying his name. Robin, with his horned rimmed glasses and smooth dark hair, looks just like Hank Marvin of the Shadows. I love him, I do, and I know it. I’m only just seventeen, but I know how much I love him and we are always going to be together.

Robin’s arm around my shoulders mimics the embrace of the soft red velvet seat for two in the back row of the balcony. The theatre fills with the lilting sounds of “Lara’s Theme” and Dr. Zhivago’s jet black eyes smile across the screen, filled with longing for the passion that is his Lara. Our linked hands rest hotly on Robin’s leg and I can feel his heat penetrate the palm of my hand.

He leans closer and his arm tightens around my shoulders as his fingers stretch across my blouse. My breath is rapid, shallow; my gut tenses in the most engulfing way; my chest swells to his touch. Like a fire his hand slides burningly across my breast, then lies still, pausing. I stop breathing momentarily, at the pause, and then slowly inhale as his fingers probe under my blouse. The smell of melting ice cream and sugary drinks surround me but I am oblivious to all but the burning that fills me with his touch. My body awes me as his fingers reach my nipple. I need to breathe! He turns in his seat. My eyes are closed as I feel him cup my chin with his hand, drawing me close and parting my lips. His tongue caresses mine, and I am oblivious.

Loudly, a black, steam-driven locomotive pierces the snow-filled screen, and two red flags snap wildly in the wind from the front of the train as it sears across the white landscape but the scene fades into a white noise that blocks out the real world and I become the moment; the moment is NOW.

His arm relaxes its touch. I breathe again, and glance back to the flickering screen. In the dancing blue light, his other hand moves up my stocking-covered leg. His hand reaches the suspender on my garter belt, and hesitates at the line of my bare thigh. I push his hand back down to my knee, and try to focus on the screen.
— world, I'm going to live my life my way—I've got a good job and a steady woman, and I'm not giving that up for anyone—all I want is a home—something to call my own—out at Bond I'm always using THEIR things, always using THEIRreddy feet—All I want is a room to call my own—just something I don't care how seedy or tough it is—I like when I wasn't Margaret—she used to—mum—just anything—my God I'm damned well going to get it even if it takes me till bloody hell. Right for the rest of my life—damned bladdy world—I'm not going to stop until I do get from—

there I want. I'm going to adventure—get something. My God I'll bloody well show THEM I can stand on my own two blasted feet. I'll bloody well show them all—All the bloody greetings and their phlegging, bloody, stuff, including my brother and my galls (holy mother (who, incidentally, knows I've bloody right!))

You bloody well show THEM...

Well I've rationalized them, be cause the last time I went out and bought and I walked on the street that was considered that was considered. I did it.

Figure 6

Seeking Independence
December 14, 1965
an exceedingly affluent society and a massive increase in consumerism. As well, changes in the sexual attitudes and behaviours of young people further affected large segments of the population and contributed to a sense of disconnection between the generations.

Attitudes towards sexuality and sexual behaviour changed rapidly with the availability of the birth control pill that arrived on the Australian market in 1961. In Populate and Perish, Stefania Siedlecky and Diana Wyndham note that the first oral contraceptive pill on sale in Australia was Anovlar, and by 1966 there were 26 brands of the pill. Annual pill sales amounted to the equivalent of nearly 6 million cycles, making for a rate of oral contraceptive use “higher than in any of the countries of Europe and nearly twice as high as in the USA” (Siedlecky, Wyndham 44). Women who used the pill appreciated that sexual activity would not necessarily lead to pregnancy. Women could enjoy a sexual life without the risk of an unwanted pregnancy, and this change in attitude caused conflict and stress between generations as parents clung to 1950s values in the sexually liberated 1960s.

In addition to changes in attitudes towards sexuality, other cultural changes were taking place due to the arrival of unprecedented numbers of immigrants to Australia, following the devastation of war in Europe. After the war, Australia clearly was seriously under-populated, and an effort was made to attract large numbers of immigrants. Reassurances were made that the majority of immigrants would be of British origin and that “aliens ... [would] be admitted only in such numbers and in such classes that they can be readily assimilated” (Arthur Calwell in Murphy 153). According to Sheridan, Prime Minister Caldwell promised that he would bring in nine British immigrants for every ‘foreigner’ or ‘alien’ immigrant. This would prove to be an
impossible goal, and Australia's doors opened to many ethnically diverse groups from Europe (Sheridan 123). Through the 1950s, immigrants arrived from Italy, Greece and other countries of Eastern Europe bringing with them their cultures, *haute cuisine*, coffee bars and bistros. Between 1947 and 1961 almost 408,000 immigrants came from Britain; 334,000 came from Southern Europe; 248,000 from Eastern Europe, and 226,000 from Northern Europe (Murphy 157). This cultural diversity accelerated the sense of disconnection from British values and familiar habits and lifestyles for some time but eventually served as a means of integration as cultures mingled.

With the arrival of immigrant "New Australians" in greater numbers, daily contact with foreign cultures became common experiences, particularly within the urban cultural settlement. Sheridan's article indicates that the expression "New Australians" eventually replaced the colloquial "D.P's" (displaced persons) or "reffos" (refugees) (123). Australians confronted the exuberant sounds of European languages and foreign and unfamiliar foods in the market place. Different personal habits shocked Australians, as women with unshaved armpits appeared on the streets in sleeveless summer dresses. My father, who by this time had again acquired his own grocery business, was strongly ethnocentric. A young female employee at my father's store was let go, even though she was scrupulously clean and efficient, because of her heavy Dutch accent. The grocery items that my father stocked at his shop reflected traditional British food items. People from ethnic cultures who wanted to preserve themselves from contamination from outside influences developed separately and frowned upon inter-cultural dating and marriage. When I began dating a Catholic Dutch immigrant, my parents were strongly disapproving, admonishing me that if "something happened" was I aware that the children would have to be raised Catholic? This ethnocentrism led to an experience of
displacement for me, and undoubtedly for other Australians, as I tried to make sense of the changes in the cultural makeup of society.

The popular and widely read magazine, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, included regular articles within its pages which provided migrant readers with symbols and ways of acting that were deemed, at the time, to be 'Australian.' Many migrant women became loyal readers of this magazine, and in the pre-television days before 1956, this magazine was a particularly useful tool for assimilating women of immigrant cultures to the Australian way of life (Sheridan 122).

Many Australians experienced cultural diversity as exciting and liberating. Some immigrants retained their cultures intact, as they opened coffee houses and stores that sold ethnic produce. The aroma of espresso coffee on Australian streets dispensed a "romantic whiff of continental life" and brought relief from the appalling coffee substitute made of chicory essence and boiled milk that many Australians, including my parents, considered to be coffee (Murphy 166). Many other immigrants rapidly assumed Australian customs and habits and willingly abandoned their immigrant lifestyles and assimilated.

The reaction to the vast numbers of immigrants in Australia challenged popular assumptions about British homogeneity during the 1950s. Some welcomed the arrival of immigrants from differing cultures, believing that Australia would become enriched, more varied and diverse because of the immigrant experience, while others retreated and viewed immigrants with suspicion and distrust. For these latter Australians, cultural diversity was a source of anxiety and displacement. Some middle class Australians viewed immigration as a matter of public policy concerned with population growth and national development (Murphy 159). Members of the Australian-born working class
were the most likely to experience anxiety over large-scale immigration, as they worked side by side on building sites or in factories with immigrants born in Greece or Italy. Some feared immigrants as unwelcome competitors for jobs. Gradually, however, most Australians became either accepting or indifferent to the immigrant presence, and this indifference "was one face of the inward-turning impulse of private sentiments and domestic commitments of the period" (Murphy 162).

The cultural exchanges that took place between immigrants and Australians at this time contributed to a sense of integration once acceptance and understanding took place. Diana Kirkby's article "Beer Glorious Beer," in The Journal of Popular Culture, describes the changes in Australian drinking habits due to immigration, and she notes that gradually wine was preferred with meals and that couples began drinking together in clubs in greater numbers than before. No longer was it acceptable for wives to wait in the car while their husbands went in to the pub for a drink with their mates. In short, "the old culture was coming unstuck" (Kirkby 249).

After the initial difficulties with immigrant assimilation and Australian-born acceptance of immigrant cultures, it became apparent that these difficulties were merely transitional experiences. Murphy notes that the "vast social and cultural transformation resulting from migration began to work its way towards more diverse imaginings of national identity" (166). By the 1990s Australia had dramatically changed and many Australians today want the luxury of expensive hotels when they travel, appreciate opera in large numbers, and are culturally and environmentally conscious people. It is quite possible that acceptance and support for multiculturalism may be one factor that has integrated the Australian people on the island continent.
A woman operating a turning machine in a munitions factory

Figure 7  Courtesy Australian War Memorial
 "War and Peace – Rationing and Rebuilding"
CHAPTER THREE

GENDER INEQUALITY

A gender-based disconnection and separation existed between men and women during the 1950s and early 1960s and had its roots in the colonial ideology that existed from the first settlement in Australia. This ideology was based on the male as head of the middle class household, and provider of the family income. The colonial ideology firmly placed upon females the roles of guardians of family morality and the bearing and nurturance of the next generation. When Britain declared war against Nazi Germany in 1939 and Australia supported Britain’s war effort by contributing troops and supplies to the Allied effort, this role changed; many women contributed to the work force and for those whose partners had gone to war, often became the head of the family.

When Prime Minister John Curtin introduced conscription of Australian males for overseas military service in 1943, an opportunity arose for many middle class Australian women to step into positions formerly occupied by men who had left for military service. It was essential, Curtin understood, for Australia to take advantage of its remaining vital resource – women – and in 1943 Curtin “man-powered” women to fill the men’s working roles in war related industries. Prior to this time, women had primarily been valued for their reproductive abilities to provide sorely needed new citizens for the severely under-populated country. Once Australian men were sent to the European front, the government encouraged women to assist the war effort by taking vital war related positions in munitions factories, driving taxis, acting as bus conductors, delivering milk and bread, and driving ambulances and heavy vehicles (War and Peace). They were paid close to the same wage that men had formerly received in the same position. In work that
was not war related, however, women were only paid between 55 - 75% of men's wages (War and Peace). Australian women's organizations severely criticized the government for not paying women 100% of men's wage rates. There was a clear distinction within patriarchal society between the value of a man's work and the value of a woman's work.

While large numbers of Australian women readily filled formerly male occupied positions, a majority of women assisted in the war efforts with contributions at home. Propaganda, in the form of posters and newspaper advertisements, explicitly encouraged all women to support the efforts of Australian soldiers overseas by knitting socks and jumpers, making camouflage nets, making up Red Cross parcels for a comforting touch of home for overseas soldiers and assisting the war effort with recycling newspapers and rubber products that were in short supply and needed for the war effort (War and Peace).

Many women working in war related industries or civilian roles experienced a profound sense of liberation and independence because of this move to paid work. With husbands away serving in Australia's and Britain's military efforts in Europe, many women became financial heads of households, permitting many, for the first time, a measure of financial control over their lives. With my father in the Military, for example, my mother shared wartime household activities with a female friend, Dot and her son Anthony, who moved into our home for companionship and as a source of additional rental income. Mother and Dot produced knitted socks and food packages for delivery to the soldiers defending Australia against the Japanese. Women worked in factories, operating machinery and learning trades formerly occupied by males, and some experienced difficult conditions in work places such as munitions factories where they worked with dangerous chemicals. Women also filled vital clerical positions and many became wireless and teleprinter operators (War and Peace). Through the experience of
overcoming challenges, learning new skills and receiving a wage, these women experienced an increasing sense of liberation.

Although they worked under difficult conditions, women were instrumental in improving work place conditions during the war and in 1941 they achieved the goal of an increase in the annual vacation pay to one week and an increase in sick pay to two and a half day’s pay with a medical certificate (War and Peace). As a consequence of being valued for their ability to work and contribute to the organizational structure of their country during wartime, women developed an increased sense of self-esteem and independence. For a very short period, and only under exceptional circumstances, women and men became more closely connected in pursuit of a common purpose.

Within a few months of the end of the war, women were required to give up their jobs to returning servicemen who were given first preference for jobs that they had held before the war. As well, disabled servicemen were required to be employed before any one else (War and Peace). For many women this situation was particularly distressful as it meant giving up their hard earned independence and a new sense of identity as valued employees. Although some considered a return to the home sphere a welcome change from the rigours of war-related work, many women were distressed to find that returning servicemen were given priority for their positions, or that their jobs no longer existed. Reluctant to give up this experience of independence and control over their lives, many women wanted to continue their paid work in civilian society.

When I was a young child my father often talked about his wartime experiences, describing his time spent in the Military as “the best years of his life.” He proudly showed black and white photographs of himself, in full summer uniform of baggy khaki shorts, gaiters and boots, short-sleeved shirt and his Aussie “digger” army hat. In one
picture he was astride a BSA motorcycle, looking much like a young Errol Flynn.

Always a smartly dressed man, he looked slim, tanned and attractive in his military uniform. He told stories about going out into the outback at night in some of the trucks that he serviced shooting kangaroos, with his military .303 rifle. Other stories were about the enormous numbers of flies in the outback, and the heat, and the ever-present "bulldust" that rose in clouds behind the military trucks as the convoys drove into camp for servicing. So these were the best years of his life. It was many years later, after he had died, that my mother bitterly told me that my father had had an affair with a wireless operator during the war, whilst stationed in Alice Springs.

The patriarchal society of the late 1940s looked to women to help create a stable and conservative social environment by expecting them to return to the domestic realm. Menzies spoke to the people of Australia in his 1942 "Forgotten People" speech outlining his views of a conservative, stable society. Louise Johnson describes the conservative nature of the speech in which Menzies states that "one of the best instincts in us is that which induces us to have a little piece of earth with a house and garden which is ours, to which we can withdraw, in which we can be amongst our friends, into which no stranger can come against our will" (100). Menzies believed that the promotion of a strong domestic and patriarchal ideology would serve Australia well as a model for a stable society.

In order to encourage the development of this stable society, Menzies implemented policies that supported the creation of a family-based society by increasing the supply of new houses and lowering the costs of home ownership through such mechanisms as War Service Loans and lump sum cash payments for ex-service personnel (Louise Johnson 100). Menzies himself had a nostalgic penchant for the past and his
conservative messages appealed to the values and hopes of young, married, suburban homeowners, who reflected his Protestant virtues of self-reliance and hard work (Louise Johnson 30). Cleverly appealing to middle class Australian families, Menzies' political policies were founded on an ideology of domesticity based on the British model.

Despite the frustrations of a shortage of housing coupled with difficulties surrounding adjustment from the hardship of wartime, young people rushed into early marriages and produced large families. Murphy describes the resultant baby boom, as the "combined effect of younger age at marriage and the increasing proportions of people living within marriage (19). The Australian baby boom first peaked in 1947 when 182,400 babies were born to couples resuming family life after the disruption of war (Australian Bureau of Statistics). After a brief decline, the number of births steadily rose during the 1950s and peaked for a second time in 1961, when 240,000 births were recorded (Australian Bureau of Statistics). With young couples marrying at an early age, it was inevitable that there would be a rapid increase in the birth rate during this time.

With a majority of middle class women firmly established in suburban domestic life and with an astounding increase in the numbers of births, there was a proliferation of women's magazines in the early 1950s with stories and advertisements that promoted the desire for and commitment to, domestic life. Both men and women made substantial emotional and material investments in their families and homes. Marriage and motherhood were the foundations for representations of domesticity in magazines like Women's Day and The Australian Women's Weekly. Review of several articles in The Australian Women's Weekly from this era suggests that Australian women were vitally concerned with the importance of marriage and domestic life. There was a great interest in my own family in the domestic events involving the raising of the young prince and
princess in the British Royal family. Knowing that Australian women were interested in and connected with ideals of British life, the magazine featured an article in January 25, 1961, entitled “Margaret – the happy housewife” with an illustration that shows Princess Margaret and her husband, Antony Armstrong-Jones, in a happy domestic scene. Two other articles featured are entitled “Do Women Really Benefit from a University Degree? Education – a Burden to Women” (February 8, 1961, 29) and “How to Get a Man” (March 21, 1956, 12). The last article features a photograph of a smiling woman wearing a coat and hat and holding a rope that is drawn from her hand over the page to lasso the photograph of a man, who looks cautious. However, as Jessica Weiss discovers in To Have and to Hold, the ideals promoted by this “fabled world of fifties magazines” were not so easily achieved (120).

These images indicate that many middle class people believed that the only requirement of young women at this time was to marry and settle into a happy domestic life. Menzies supported this view of domestic arrangements, believing that it was the basis of an Australian commitment towards a safer and more secure world. His ideology encouraged the formation of young suburban, home-owning nuclear families. Home ownership increased through political policies designed to promote the nuclear family as “part of a conservative Cold War agenda to ensure political stability, male working-class loyalty to their jobs, their family and nation, female fecundity and domesticity” (Louise Johnson 101). Melleuish concurs with this view, and adds that the churches worked with Menzies in supporting the moral authority of the State, preaching morality in order to secure a stable social order (58).

Menzies believed that order was to be achieved when women focussed their work and attention solely on the creation of happy households that would best support their
husbands and children. Women, before World War Two, had accepted this role, but because the war had opened up satisfying employment opportunities for many of them, this prescriptive housebound role was no longer acceptable to many women. Technological inventions assisted housewives with new gadgets and tools with which to manage their homes. Lesley Johnson's article describes the dissatisfaction experienced by many housewives. Because less time was often needed to clean and manage the household, many women suffered from boredom and depression and resorted to medication in response to the constraints of this role (Lesley Johnson 239). Johnson notes that Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* called for women to develop life plans as a solution to this crisis of identity. Life plans were for developing their whole life as women, and not just one part of it (Lesley Johnson 240).

It is possible to view *The Australian Women's Weekly* and other magazines of a similar nature, as conduct books. These magazines offered guidance to women about how they could construct a "coherent sense of self and a life plan," gave advice about self-therapy, and articulated ways in which women could become self-forming (Friedan 243). Johnson believes that books such as Friedan's, and similar books by Simone de Beauvoir and Germaine Greer, were all guides to living that attempted to resolve the tensions that many middle class women experienced when they found their desires for public achievement in conflict with their prescribed domestic role (244).

While both Church and State promoted the domestic arrangement, many middleclass women found that this focus on suburban, domestic happiness left them with a sense of dissatisfaction with family life. This isolation was exacerbated because of the proliferation of suburban housing areas. From 1945 – 1955 over 700,000 new homes were built in Australia, many of them in large public housing suburbs (Louise Johnson...
Women's lives were spatially defined by the relationships between home, local school and shops (Louise Johnson 103). Recent historical analysis indicates that many middle class women enjoyed the housebound domestic experience, however, a large number of middle class women felt disconnected from the world of paid work that they had readily given up in the pursuit of domestic bliss, and from meaningful social interaction beyond the domestic scene. This isolation was particularly pronounced where stores and working places were segregated from suburban dwellings.

My father's grocery business was located in another town twenty-two miles away from our home. He would take the only car our family owned to work in the morning, and would not return until 6.45 p.m. for his evening meal. Our home was located on the edge of a medium sized town, about three miles from the centre of the commercial district. Although my father brought home canned goods and many grocery items, he did not sell meat, vegetables, fruit or dairy products other than cheese. For these items my mother would take off her apron, put on a clean dress, pin a hat securely against the ever present hot wind, place her hand-bag into the wicker basket of her bicycle, and ride the three miles to the shops. Shopping for perishable items was a daily event, and she would load the bike rack with bread and meat and ride three miles home again. There was no public transportation and she had no car. Kaplan describes the typical suburban location as one "bereft of public transport, facilities, telephone booths, meeting places and even a sense of community"(7). Young families settled in suburban environments where there were often no day care or pre-school facilities and many women found themselves frustrated with their inability to find relief from unmitigated child care chores.

Although housed in comfortable new homes the rhythm of life in the suburbs reflected the dominant gender order of male patriarchy. In suburban life during the 1950s
and 1960s in Australia, men often took the only family car to their employment. Many men were employed in large industrial plants, leaving wives stranded in the suburbs with young children. Public transportation was sometimes entirely absent from many of the new suburbs, adding to the sense of isolation. Speaking of American communities in Dark Age Ahead, Jane Jacobs considers the automobile to be the chief destroyer of a sense of community (38). Similarly, in Australian suburban communities, women who had no automobile were often trapped in isolating cul-de-sac suburban homes, unable to reach the heart of their communities on foot in order to connect with others.

Further adding to the sense of entrapment that many middle class women felt in their suburban environments, was their total dependence upon male breadwinners for income. My parent’s marriage had not been satisfying for either of them, especially since the disruption of his wartime absence. Divorce was not considered an option in the 1950’s for my parents due in large part to social expectations and their Methodist upbringing that preached that people married for life. My mother chafed at the financial control that my father held over her. She did not consider the income that my father brought home to be “their” income, but made do with an allowance that my father gave her. It was a sign of his masculinity that my father was the family breadwinner.

Many young women readily left school during the 1940s and 1950s without adequate preparation for an independent income and rushed into marriage. Their dependence upon male breadwinners was reinforced in two ways, as Louise Johnson clearly articulates: “(i) through women’s place in the labour market and (ii) the attitude of lending institutions” (104). The only way for females to have access to homeownership was through the institution of marriage. Single women, at this time, were resigned to living with their parents until they married, as they were unable to access financing for
home ownership, even if they had dependents. Eligibility for housing loans under the Housing Assistance Act was for families only, or couples aged below thirty years without children, effectively ensuring that only heterosexual couples could access home ownership and the suburban lifestyle (Louise Johnson 104). Single or separated women encountered chauvinistic and patronizing attitudes from lending institutions. The Federal government “favoured the preferential granting of home loans to families with children” which left most women at the mercy of their husbands when it came to matters of financial control (Louise Johnson 101). Not only did many women have no independent source of identity beyond their roles as wives and mothers, but they also had no financial resources with which to make changes in their lives in order to fulfil their potential as human beings.
Saturday mornings were spent baking cakes: sweet layer cakes filled with cream, or cakes full of the sultanas and almonds that came from the vines and trees in the far reaches of the backyard. Rows of soft centred biscuits lined the black trays that were whisked from the wood-fired oven. Leaning over the open oven door to check just the right shade of brownness or crispness of the biscuits, sweat would trickle down her forehead between her eyes and run silently to the end of her nose where the drops would dive and sputter in the hot recesses of the oven. Cream puffs were her specialty, their crisp golden orbs filled with sweet cream, whipped to thick perfection. The tops were cut in halves, and carefully stuck into the cream like angel wings, before being dredged with white clouds of icing sugar.

Sundays were spent at the old stone Methodist church on Commercial Street. It was important to Mother that everyone in the family dress and act properly: shoes were polished, white socks put on and kept clean, Sunday dresses for the girls, ironed and beribboned, and sometimes even gloves. The girls were admonished about sitting up like young ladies with their legs together, and Allan had to be reminded not to sing his favourite hymn, “How Great Thou Art,” so loudly in case he was off key. Reverend Wiltshire would sometimes visit for afternoon tea after the service. He suffered from the tremors, and it was hard not to notice how his hands shook when he grasped a teacup. She had warned the children not to giggle when the Reverend’s hand shook so wildly that the tea would slop onto the white embroidered tea cloth. Children and manners – it was a constant battle.

Washdays were hectic Mondays, beginning with the lighting of a fire to heat water in a copper tub. Once the water was hot, it was bucketed into that wonderful little Hoover washing machine that was Mother’s joy. With its lid closed, the machine whirred and shook as it circulated the clothes around and around in the soapy water. Mother then ladled the clothes into a galvanized tub of cool water to rinse, and then lifted them up, one by one, turning the wringer handle around as the rubber rollers squeezed the water out. The heavy wicker laundry basket groaned as she hoisted it out into the yard. Piece by piece the garments were shaken and pegged to the Hills Hoist, sheets on the outside, and all the underwear on the inside, for modesty’s sake, of course. The hot breeze would whip the frenzied sheets around and around, filling the yard with flapping whiteness. Allan wouldn’t wear a deodorant saying it was not manly. Instead he changed his white shirts twice a day. There was a lot of washing and ironing.
Allan was away at the business all day. It was just as well. They had little in common, especially since he’d had that affair. She’d waited, with their baby son, for his eventual return from the War. keeping herself to herself as she put it, and not flirting with the American men stationed in town. There’d been lots of opportunities, mind you, but she had resisted. Not Allan. The woman he’d had an affair with was a wireless operator in Alice Springs. Allan had been a handsome devil in those days, tanned and muscular, with a moustache like Errol Flynn. Some women just couldn’t resist a man in uniform.

The old green and rust coloured bike was her lifeline to the world of the High Street shops. The wicker basket in front of the handlebars hung at an angle, secured by brown leather straps. Behind her seat was a rusted metal luggage rack that often held a canvas bag for carrying groceries. She never used the shiny metal bell bolted to the handlebar. White sweat ringed her dresses under the arms after pedaling up the long road to her house in the heat of the day. She remembered gingerly the evening she had filled the wicker basket with her sewing supplies for a class at the local high school, and had caught the tyre of the bike in the railroad tracks that crossed the road at a rakish angle. Some kind stranger had helped pick up the reels of thread and patches of cloth, and driven her home, her knees raw and bruised from the fall. Father drove the car, and Mother rode her bike; that was just the way it was. Besides, she thought, she could never learn to drive, even though Allan had offered to teach her.

Moira rode off on her bike, her fat bottom sagging over the sides of the narrow seat, as she disappeared in the heat that shimmered off the driveway. Dreading the lighting of the wood fired stove to make a meal, Mother sighed, and lay down for a while on the faded green settee in the front room, closed her tired eyes and gently arranged a cool wet flannel on her forehead.
1950s marriages were characterized by unequal relationships, based on economic contribution. Women's routine domestic work clearly maintained husbands and children. However, because most breadwinning husbands did not observe the daily work that their wives performed, there was a tendency for husbands to consider that their wives' work had no value. In Natural Women Cultured Men, R.A. Sydie states that during the 1950s in Canada, the expectation that women would take the major responsibility for the care and socializing of the young as part of the domestic duty was seen as legitimate and desirable because women were the weaker sex, and that this was their "natural" and unalterable role (113). My family certainly held this view and, while many women were reassured and found a sense of security in the "stable" social order that emanated from these patriarchal attitudes, large numbers of women suffered frustration within the domestic realm.

Success in the domestic environment was difficult, with its separate and dualistic requirements for family time. Both husbands and wives devoted themselves to interacting with their ever-increasing numbers of children, while attempting to find quality time to interact as a couple. Weiss describes the concept of togetherness, so idealistically promoted by magazines in the 1950s, as a "leaky vessel on which to navigate the family cycle" and concurs that factors like the isolation of the nuclear family unit from its extended family, as well as the gendered division of labour within marriage, both "created more tensions than [they] resolved" (Weiss 116). None of my extended family lived in the same town as my parents, and our closest relatives were three aunts and uncles and two remaining grandparents who all lived in the city of Adelaide. Once a month my family loaded the car with blankets and a basket containing a Thermos of hot
CROCHETED SQUARES

Brown and dusty sheep lay panting in the slits of shade from the tilted fence posts, while pink-chested galahs drooped in the heat that shimmered off the bone white gum trees that lined the road to the city. Blackened stumps of trees dotted the slopes of the Adelaide Hills, giving testament to the bushfire that ravaged the area last summer. Sitting next to my father in the front seat of the car, I wriggled over to the window and let my hand and arm hang out from the car, my hand rising and falling in the stream of overheated air that whizzed past the car.

We were going to visit my grandmother again, as we did about once a month. My Mother and brother sat quietly in the backseat, my brother sullenly staring out of the open window on his side, behind my father. Our family often rode this way, with Father driving and my Mother in the backseat. Whenever my brother and I were within striking distance of one another, we would fight. He was a lot older than I, and his knuckles would punch me in the arm as we passed. I would retaliate with a kick. Confined in the overheated car for a two hour drive to the city was more than either of us could bear, so we sat, separated by the seats, under the watchful eyes of our mother.

Grandma was my father's mother and she lived in "Resthaven," a Methodist old people's home. This was a long pale brick building with rows and rows of bedrooms, each with a window that overlooked a communal lawn and rose garden. She shared her room with her sister, another ancient wrinkled old woman, and the two were usually bedridden, so there was nothing for me to do, but sit and wait for the adults to finish talking.

Going to visit grandma involved washing my hands, scrubbing my knees free of ground-in dirt, combing my tangled hair, and wearing one of those Sunday School dresses that were handed down from my older girl cousins. How I detested those dresses. It was not that the dresses were so awful; it was just that I always had to be careful not to rip them, or get the lacy bits caught in a fence, or torn on a bush.

Resthaven was quiet, with a smell of antiseptic that oozed from the linoleum. Voices were lowered to a whisper when one entered the wide cool hallway; footsteps were muffled, and the nurses' white shoes squeak, squeak, squeaked as they efficiently delivered pills in paper cups. Grandma was pale and soft, and the wrinkly skin of her old cheek slid softly against my own tanned cheeks, as I leaned over to kiss her. Pink, green and brown crocheted squares swirled together on her bedspread. It annoyed me that my grandma would confuse me with my female cousins, and she often called me by the wrong name. Her pale, rimless glasses slid to the end of her nose, when she inspected me, but rarely did she get my name right. She resorted to calling me "Why, Why, Why." I got that name because after I would listen intently to her explanation of something I would then screw up my face with curiosity and ask "But why, Grandma?"
I was warned against fidgeting and jiggling and touching grandma’s things. She had silver framed pictures of my father and uncles on a crocheted yellowing doily on her table. Bored with the conversations, I would quietly circle the room, inspecting things, touching china ornaments, always touching, until my mother would again remind me to sit down and stop fidgeting.

The time would tick away, slowly, like the tick of the polished wooden mantle clock in grandma’s room. The sunshine beckoned me outside with the whirling wind and the nodding roses, drawing me away from the stillness inside. On rare occasions I would be allowed to go outside, with strict instructions to play on the lawn but to remain within sight of grandma’s window. If I were to go out of sight I would never hear the end of the yelling about my disobedience. Before leaving the room I was taken aside and warned, yet again, not to even think about picking any of the roses. The lawn beckoned, soft and green, unlike the harsh, prickly, drab brown lawn at my own house. This lawn was manicured and regularly refreshed with city water that came through underground pipes. Our lawn received no water for months, as our country house depended for water on the two corrugated rainwater tanks that sat in the backyard, and caught the runoff water from our roof. Father would regularly tap, tap, and tap on the tanks as the water level got lower and lower as summer progressed.

The green springy grass beckoned, and drew me in to take off my shoes and run in socked feet through the green delight. I sprang into a cartwheel, flying dizzyingly round and back up again. Three in a row, feet in the air, arms outstretched, pink lace flying around and around. A handstand, yes, I could do them really well, yes, yes a handstand, feet up, balance now, balance, teeter, keep balancing, great!

"Get in here this very minute. How many times have I told you to behave like a young lady? What on earth do you think you are doing? You can’t do handstands or cartwheels when you are wearing a dress. Will you get in here this very minute!"
sweet tea, sandwiches and cakes, and drove to the city to visit my father's mother. Grandma lived in "Resthaven," a senior's home run by the Methodist church, that was surrounded by beautiful rose gardens and located in the city of Adelaide some thirty five miles from our home. This drive to the city was undertaken over roads that were very narrow, and that wound through the Adelaide Hills. The road was often in poor condition, the area was prone to savage bush fires in summer, and it took close to two hours to get from our home to the city. No extended family members regularly visited our home except at Christmas time, when an attempt was made for everyone to join together. On a daily basis then, my mother had no sisters or brothers or other extended family members with whom she could consult.

A closer examination of the entrapment and sense of disconnection that many middle class women experienced reveals that the male took the dominant position in the household as well as in society. In *Gender and Power*, R.W. Connell describes this structure in his sex-role theory. Women accept the traditional dependent feminine sex-role through socialization. Simultaneously, men hold this stereotypical customary expectation, while women internalize it. Families, schools, churches and the mass media continually promote the expectation (Connell 34). In patriarchal society, white males have a vested interest in maintaining this stereotypical view. In *Ideology and the State*, Louis Althusser examines the manner in which society replicates the rules of good social behaviour. He suggests that all children are taught the social rules of good behaviour, which inculcate that these rules "should be observed by every agent in the division of labour according to the job he is 'destined' for; rules of morality, civic and professional conscience which . . . ultimately [means] the rules of the order established by class [and
BLUE VELVET BUNNY

“I’ve told you a hundred times Rita, I don’t want you getting a job!”
“Well I don’t care Allan, I just don’t care what you think any more!”
“I don’t know why. Why on earth would you want to get a job anyway?”

Their loud voices echoed off my dark bedroom walls. Moments earlier Dad had said goodnight sitting beside my bed. His large heavy hands stroked my hair until my eyes drooped. “I love you Danny girl,” his soft voice crooned. That same voice was now raised angrily, piercing sharply through the air and penetrating deep into the sanctuary of my room. Earlier Mum had patiently listened while I said my prayers. Every evening I recited the prayers, parrot fashion, with my eyes closed and hands clasped tightly together. “... God Bless Grandma and Grandpa, and bless Mum and Dad and bless my cat Snowball. Oh yeah, and my brother.”

Mum insisted I say my evening prayers every bedtime and nagged constantly about being a young lady. “Sit with your legs together; don’t fling your arms and legs about or you’ll knock something down; don’t be so careless; how DO you get your socks so dirty, and what do you mean you’ve LOST it?” Her insistent voice now rose in desperate tones to a screech that cut knife-like through the door. Why do they fight and yell every night?

I turned in the bed, puffing the feather filled pillow into a shape that padded my ears against the voices, but in the hot night air the fluffy pillow wrapped around my head soon brought beads of sweat to my face. Once again, I tossed my legs aside in the sheets, and wriggled around on the lumpy mattress. Between the yelling voices, I could hear the springs on my bed squeaking as I jigged and jigged, far too agitated to fall asleep.

I pulled my bunny rabbit closer. His soft and faded blue velvet face came close to mine. Almost cross-eyed I stared into his scratched brown glass eye, and he stared back. I squeezed him close; the voices increased in volume again.

“I just can’t live like this Allan. I’m leaving.”
“Where do you think YOU’RE going?”
A door slammed.
gender] domination” (Althusser 132). Using this analysis, it is in the interests of patriarchal society to socialize women towards positions of dependency in order that they will contribute to the reproduction of the next generation of workers. Middle class values limited women’s opportunities by dictating that a successful male should keep his wife at home and out of the work force.

Matters of concern to women at home are evidenced in the pages of The Australian Women’s Weekly magazine. Articles in this magazine concerning the domestic scene, as well as the topic and tone of the advertisements, indicate an intense interest in matters surrounding the home, and in particular with cleaning. The March 14, 1956 issue shows, on page 27, an advertisement stating “All this work from one bottle of Trix!” and shows a woman wearing a black leotard and a small frilly apron bending forward and pointing to a rack of freshly washed dishes. Another advertisement in the same magazine on June 27, 1951 shows a woman wearing a starched apron, holding a posy of flowers, and curtseying to two thrones on which are situated a vacuum cleaner and a washing machine, both of which are wearing crowns. The image of the domestic appliance being enthroned connects the ideal of domesticity with a fascination with the Royal Family and the monarchy. Women could aspire to be Queen of their own homes when they focussed on family reproduction, cleaning and cooking.

Relying upon their charm, modesty and poise to catch a man helped many women attain their goal of marriage during the constrained and prescriptive 1950s. However, once they were married, many found that the security tended to induce a sense of dullness and they found themselves trapped in quiet, desperate, suburban loneliness. Simone de Beauvoir warned women in The Second Sex, of the need to acquire education and paid work in order to achieve what she called “an authentic existence.” She stated that there is
an urge within each individual to affirm their personal existence, but there is also a
temptation for many women to forgo liberty and to become a "thing." The person who
gives up their authentic existence becomes the "creature of another's will, frustrated in
[his/her] transcendence and deprived of every value" (de Beauvoir xlv). I think that
many Australian middle class women took the "easy" way by depending on their
husbands for financial support and, by doing so, avoided the strains associated with
developing their "authentic existence." This lack of an individual accomplishment
beyond the family contributed to the undercurrents of discontent within the domestic
realm that were being heard in the early 1950s and which became louder as the decade progressed.

Even in my own life I have found it easy to lose myself in the minutia of
housekeeping. Friedan links the traditional view of femininity with a state of female
immaturity and states that she believes that the women of the 1950s who rushed into
early marriage and early childbearing were "playing house at nineteen [thereby evading]
the responsibility of growing up alone" (281). She suggests the possibility that these
young women were interested in early marriage as a defence against their need to develop
their own intellectual talents (Friedan 281). In this way they refused to face the question
of their own identity (Friedan 76). In the mid 1960s my view was that early marriage and
dependency upon a husband was considered a normal facet of feminine adjustment.

Many single women in Australia during the 1950s believed that taking a paid job
was something they did only until marriage. As Murphy points out, it was during this
decade that great prosperity in Australia was achieved through full employment and the
ability of a breadwinner to earn a "family wage" that would support a whole family. The
"foundation of solid citizenship" rested firmly upon this situation, and yet despite steady
economic growth, relatively low inflation and low unemployment, it became apparent that there was discontent within the private realm of the family (Murphy199). I personally left high school just before turning sixteen and, armed only with the skills of shorthand, typing, bookkeeping and a good command of written English, found employment as a secretary - work that I fully intended only to last until I married. If I had planned to work at a career after marriage, I most certainly would have given greater consideration to the kind of employment I was suited for, before leaving high school.

Some recent historical perspectives challenge and contest the 1950s as a period of female oppression and the 1960s as liberatory. Lesley Johnson writes of a debate that was initiated by Catherine Hakim, a British sociologist, who wrote an article in the British Journal of Sociology entitled “Five Feminist Myths about Women’s Employment.” Hakim asked whether or not all women rejected the full-time homemaker role and wanted to “flood into wage work on a full-time basis if at all possible” (Lesley Johnson 237). Would the majority of housewives want to go out to work if all the barriers to their employment were removed? Johnson pointedly comments that Hakim herself had to admit that her own research had proven her wrong and that Hakim had had to recognize that not all women wanted to work full-time and that many did want to stay at home as housewives. Johnson indicates that several Australian feminist scholars have had to suffer antagonism from other feminists for arguing that many women would prefer to stay at home with their children and be full time homemakers (Lesley Johnson 238).
STENO-POOL GIRL

The Gestetner makes a rhythmic clank, clank, clank, as it turns out endless sheets of acrid smelling paper. Wet ink copies flutter down into a lopsided pile in the tray. Suddenly, black lines appear where there should be none and the ink fades to grey hieroglyphics. I carefully grasp the bottle of correcting fluid and slash pinkly across the gaps in the waxy film. Filling the ink reservoir I manage to keep the ink from splashing on my pink dress, but swear at the black marks that spread across my fingers. Damn! That cute boy Robin from the Mail Room asked me to meet him for lunch, and now my hands look like I've been working on a car engine! The correcting fluid holds. I again crank the handle, and the words appear blackly without the lines. F. H. Fauldings and Company, Proprietary Limited. F.H. Fauldings and Company, Proprietary Limited. F.H. Fauldings and Company, Proprietary Limited. This is my first job, and I'm a steno-pool girl.

Outside the Gestetner Room there are rows and rows and rows of identical dark wooden desks, each one holding a black Remington manual typewriter, biros and pencils in jars, and piles of paper. At the desks sit rows and rows of girls with high bouffant hair, and whirring hands ... tap...tap...tapping the keys in buzzing monotony. I join the rows of bobbing heads, lay up a set of letterhead, carbon paper, paper, carbon paper, paper, and slide it into the Remington, twirling the platen swiftly. Black filmy carbon paper leaves black smudges on fingers as the bobbing heads erase their typing errors sheet by sheet.

"Oh shit, another typing error!"

Mr. Roberts, the boss, is short, balding and often has sweaty stains that circle out from the underarm areas of his white starched shirts. "OFFICE MANAGER" is spelled out in black letters on the etched privacy glass of his office, which is, like all the others, open to the high ceilings in the building. Above the desks high up in the ceiling hang rows and rows of fluorescent lights each held captive within a sterile white metal holder which dangles on very long cords. Flies lazily drone in monotonous circles above and around the humming lights. The odd flickering faulty fluorescent tube sends shafts of maddening light onto the girls.

Outside Mr. Roberts' office sits Miss Betty Saunders, his secretary and my boss. Her desk, immaculate with piles of papers neatly arranged in big wire baskets, is located on a raised platform. Looking over her black horn rimmed glasses she glares down the rows of labouring girls as if daring anyone to raise their heads unnecessarily. I never know exactly when Miss Saunders is looking at me, although a kind of dread grips me nervously, now and then. At morning-tea the girls giggle and speculate on the relationship between Mr. Roberts and Miss Saunders. She is single, but at least thirty. She wears her dark hair permed tightly into waves, and often wears a red dress, full
with many petticoats, that swish around her legs as she walks, but skims demurely below her knees when she sits down at her desk. The high stiletto heels of her black shoes click clack click clack when she strides firmly throughout the room, glancing side to side at the labouring steno pool girls. Miss Saunders never has a ladder in her stockings.

“Oh shit, another typing error! Damn!”

I rub at the error again trying not to smudge the ink nor make a hole in the paper. The penciled squiggles on the shorthand pad squirm around the page, opening yawning gaps that won’t stay still long enough for me to decipher. What does all this mean?

It’s easy to blame my father. What had he said to me when I was starting my first year of high school, right after I had declared that I wanted to be a commercial artist? He had loudly explained that artists starve in attics and that I was going to study shorthand and typing and be a secretary like my Mother was before he married her. “If it’s good enough for your Mum, then it’s good enough for you. Maybe if you stick at it for awhile you’ll marry the boss!”

Robin, the mailroom boy appears pushing a trolley, with wire baskets full of envelopes and parcels, down between the rows of girls. My eye catches a glimpse of his black leather Beatle boots, his grey suit pants and white shirt with narrow black tie. His dark hair curls over his collar. Miss Saunders has warned him to get it cut. He’s coming to Miss Saunders’ desk now to leave Mr. Roberts’ mail. After gazing once more at the rows of girls over her black-rimmed glasses, Miss Saunders turns her steely gaze to the mail and reaches for her cold steel letter opener. Robin looks sideways down the rows of desks – I move imperceptibly and our eyes meet.

“Oh shit, another mistake!”
Central to Hakim’s argument is the concern about women’s need to become “superwomen” and about the difficulties with making adequate child care arrangements. In Social Inequality in Australian Society, John Western advises that in the Australian Royal Commission on Human Relationships (1977:35), from 1954 until 1974, the number of married women in the workforce increased from thirteen percent of all married women to over forty percent (168). I am aware that some structural deterrents were undoubtedly lifted in the early 1970s that would have influenced these figures. Moreover, I believe that the availability of the birth control pill had a major impact on these figures. Although there is much feminist debate inherent in this topic, I believe that the astounding rise in the numbers of married women who obtained post secondary education and paid employment during the 1960s in Australia, confirms the extent to which women were dissatisfied with the limitations of the domestic focus during the 1950s.

With entry into the workforce, married middle class women recognized the need to access more education. Melleuish provides statistics on the rise in post secondary education for the general population. In 1969, 2.7 percent of the population had a university degree while 20.2 percent had some post-secondary training. By 1992 some 9.4 percent of the population had acquired a university degree and 41.8 percent had post-secondary training (Melleuish 41). This occurred, interestingly, during a period of high economic growth and full employment of breadwinning husbands who earned a “family wage” sufficient for the entire family to live on. Why would women whose material needs were adequately met, go out to find paid employment in such numbers? Clearly they were seeking a reorientation of the relationships in their lives and a sense of
reconnection and wholeness within themselves as they sought an “authentic” personal identity.

Another arena of disconnection and separation was evident in Australian society at this time, with the establishment of sex segregated drinking spaces. As Kirkby points out, women had been involved throughout the twentieth century with beer drinking as managers or owners of their own pubs and many women worked behind the bar. Despite this kind of involvement, in the 1960s hotel bars in suburban and rural areas were definitely not mixed drinking venues, but were strictly male preserves (Kirkby 245). Men's only public bars were often small, with few tables, and linoleum covered floors that were simple to clean. Many bars had buxom barmaids who served beer. Rowdy, singing, brawling male customers frequented these bars and fought over football scores and told jokes (Kirkby 246). These kinds of behaviours permitted men to indulge in the “mate-ship ritual” that is a recurring motif in Australian history (Kirkby 246). It was not uncommon for wives to wait outside in the car while their husbands went inside for drinks with their mates. Even the New South Wales Royal Commissioner in 1954, Justice Maxwell was appalled by this habit, which he described as a “most unedifying spectacle” (Kirkby 249). These sex-segregated drinking spaces associated masculinity with beer drinking in pubs and reinforced the separation between men and women in Australian society.

Until the 1960s, advertising promoted beer drinking for men in public saloon bars. Advertisements also showed women drinking beer and providing it for family members within the home environment (Kirkby 247). In the 1960s beer was sold in cans and small bottles called “stubbies,” rather than the large bottles available prior to this time. Advertisers began to connect beer drinking with the male mobility associated with cars.
Small bottles of beer could be easily taken to the beach in an “Esky” cooler and women were portrayed in advertisements as sexual consorts, rather than drinking equals (Kirkby 247). Advertising continued to reflect separate locations for behaviours that were considered appropriate for men and women. While men drank in male only public bars, women who needed refreshment after shopping were permitted to drink in hotels if there was a “Ladies Lounge.” No men were permitted to drink in these places (Kirkby 247). In this way women were further socially segregated from men as each developed their own separate drinking cultures.

In 1966 Australian drinking laws gradually changed to allow for a more liberated beer-drinking environment, but the masculinist concept of national culture continued, with many middle class women separated from their authentic selves. Their discontent showed itself in stifling and dishonest sexual mores. Kaplan explains that when problems occurred in marriage there was a “tendency to explain them away as purely ‘women’s problems’ and by implication, as women’s fault” and also notes that in the pre-war era and well into the 1950s, Australian women were not considered to have an independent sexuality (9).

I am quite sure that my father considered my mother to be a rather cold woman. From my earliest memories, I cannot remember my parents sharing a bedroom, let alone a bed. Apparently my father had confessed to his having committed adultery while he was away during wartime, and this information undoubtedly had a negative impact on my mother’s attitude towards sexuality and my father. Eventually, separation from my father was the only way that my mother could establish an environment suitable for her spiritual growth. Australian feminist Germaine Greer, in The Female Eunuch, declared “woman must have room and scope to devise a morality which does not disqualify her from
excellence and a psychology which does not condemn her to the status of a spiritual cripple” (115). Sexual silences were stifling and it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that many middle-class women reclaimed their bodies and declared an independent sexuality.

Having no economic means, many women had little opportunity for independence. This lack of autonomy manifested itself in some women’s frustration with the masculine prestige that de Beauvoir notes “rests solidly upon economic and social foundations” (42). Men, more than women, were connected with the world of politics and economics and, through these connections, maintained their power and prestige. In Gender Shock, Hester Eisenstein declares that women are “at the mercy of the power of men unless they can obtain sufficient education, control over their reproductive lives, income and support to gain some independence and autonomy in the direction of their own lives” (92). By focussing exclusively on family, my mother could access few outside resources when conflict arose in family life.

Few women were directly involved in any form of political activity, and this omission further cemented their subordinate position. As Kaplan points out, this was a two-fold problem where “the opportunities were circumscribed and the impetus to act was limited by [women’s] lack of experience.” She notes that in the mid 1960s night school classes were implemented with the goal of educating Australian women in the “mechanics of politics” (27). Although some women acquired political knowledge through these classes, most found the experience of being exposed to a political world beyond the domestic domain a startling new experience (Kaplan 27). Political ignorance caused women to suffer a disconnection not only from the world of politics but also from opportunities to bring about creative change in the social conditions that affected women’s lived experiences.
The predominant social condition that affected women was the centrality of the family. As Elaine Martin states in “Social Work, the Family and Women’s Equality in Post-war Australia,” women were often deeply concerned with the production and care of young families. Social pressures, the media and various political programs and schemes were all designed to support the family (Martin 446). Connected with the centrality of the family was the identification of “deviant” groups in society. Concerned with the problem of rising divorce rates and the increasing numbers of deserted wives who suffered social stigma, social workers focussed on identifying these deviant groups. Working mothers were considered with widespread suspicion, and were frequently blamed for the breakdown in marriages, and the maladjustment of their “juvenile delinquent” children (Martin 446).

The labels “broken home” or “broken family” were used, in many cases, to lay blame squarely on the shoulders of the working mother. Martin’s article indicates that the social work profession in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s was very conservative by nature and that the majority of the members of this group believed that family responsibilities were primarily the sole duty of women (Martin 449). By way of an explanation of why the social work profession was so conservative in its nature, Martin explains that social work developed as an occupation that was considered suitable for women, because it was seen as an extension of their domestic role as natural caregivers (Martin 457).

Although women were considered to be family oriented and natural caregivers, loneliness was one of the deeply felt problems at the heart of intimacy within marriage. As a result, divorce became necessary for many couples that found themselves mired in unhappy marriages. By 1960 my brother had already left home and I was entering high
school. Obviously unhappy, my mother chose to go and take care of her elderly father who, at that time, still resided in his own home in Adelaide. This charitable act was acceptable to my mother as a way out of her marriage, as she was deeply concerned about the social stigma she would experience having left her husband and daughter. I doubt that my parents really considered divorce until my mother had been “taking care of Daddy” for over a year. My father and I were to spend my high school years living in the family home together and visiting my mother, with ever decreasing regularity, in the city where she shared her father’s home. I still recall the absolute shock experienced by my father, and undoubtedly myself, when we realized that my mother was not coming home again. She had found a socially acceptable way to remove herself from the constraints of her marriage.

One of the grounds for divorce in Australia was adultery, although it was necessary to hire a private detective to take incriminating photographs as evidence of a partner’s infidelity. The Woman’s Day magazine ran articles warning married couples of the dangers of having casual affairs. Despite these admonitions and the socially unacceptable status of divorce, separating couples found that it was legally necessary to prove the shortcomings of the guilty party. Aside from adultery, other grounds for divorce were: hopeless insanity, alcoholism, desertion, cruelty, bigamy and incestuous adultery. Each state interpreted the divorce laws differently, and women had to prove that their husbands were guilty, which involved a great deal of expense. Many women who were unhappy in their marriages and wanted a divorce found that they were discriminated against due to their financial dependence upon their husband’s income for support. Often this situation precluded them from the opportunity to divorce.
Australian society was concerned with the increasing rate of divorcing couples, and founded Marriage Guidance Councils in an attempt to halt this drift. Australian Bureau of Statistics data indicates a divorce rate of 0.8 per 1,000 between 1961 and 1970 (Australian Bureau of Statistics). Churches, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, fought against liberalization of the divorce laws, which they believed would undermine the marriage state (Murphy 211). Australia was not ready to consider undermining the marriage bond, despite a great deal of debate between cautious conservatism and progressive liberal rationality. Deeply ingrained ideals about the importance of married domestic life during the 1950s impeded the progress towards individual self-expression and continued the ingrained imbalance of power in domestic life. Uniform divorce legislation was not achieved until 1958.

Menzies himself recognized that it was necessary to address the task of making divorce law more equitable and accessible, especially for women who were dependent upon their husbands. After public debate on the subject, opinion polls indicated that the majority of Australians recognized the need for, and favoured, the principle of national uniform divorce laws (Murphy 213). Sir Garfield Barwick, whose responsibility it was to formulate the new divorce act, believed that divorce laws did not encourage marital break-down, but would provide a remedy for married misery and would encourage the possibility of remarriage (Murphy 213). Debate raged among the churches, with the Anglican Church taking the view that marriage should not be concerned with individual and personal happiness, but should be formed for a purpose beyond personal happiness, and not used as a convenient way out of irksome marriages (Murphy 214). Despite scepticism about the limits allowed in the name of secular individualism, Barwick’s Matrimonial Causes Act was voted into law in 1959, and took effect in 1961 making
divorce easier and more accessible for women (Murphy 215). There were fourteen grounds for the granting of a divorce, including adultery, cruelty, desertion, habitual drunkenness, imprisonment and insanity. To succeed on these grounds, a spouse had to prove marital fault. There was only one “no-fault” provision for a divorce: separation for more than five years (Parliamentary Library).

Having separated from my father in 1960, my mother filed for divorce in 1965, her application based upon the only “no-fault” provision of separation for a period of five years. Following the dissolution of their marriage, my father, completely unable to accept this turn of events that was so out of touch with his expectations about marriage and masculinity, suffered from increasing mental illness and was subsequently unable to take care of himself. Within five years he was dead. My mother, on the other hand, decided to take a refresher course in secretarial training at a facility near her father’s home. From that institution she was hired as an executive assistant in a large firm, and stayed with the company until her retirement at age sixty-five years. With newly styled hair, tinted to her original brown colour, and wearing up to date business clothing, she remade herself into a professional assistant and found new interests and self-esteem by working as a valued employee.

Interestingly, this new opportunity for women to claim a sense of independence from unhappy marriages was not taken up in great numbers, as many had feared. Although it became somewhat easier for a genuinely injured spouse to end the marriage, there were restrictions protecting the institution of marriage by not permitting bored or disillusioned spouses to divorce at will. Couples were not permitted to consent to a divorce, or join in collusion to acquire a divorce. As well, parties had to have been married for at least three years before being eligible to bring proceedings for divorce.
Australia’s divorce rate continued to climb steadily until the introduction of the *Family Law Act 1975* which came into effect on January 5, 1976. This legislation allowed only one ground for divorce: irretrievable breakdown of the marriage, as measured by the separation of the spouses for at least one year (Australian Bureau of Statistics). Once the need to prove a spouse guilty was removed, there was a massive increase in the divorce rate in 1976-9 as the backlog in applications was cleared (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Changes in divorce law were instrumental in addressing the disconnection between married women and men. A new and secular sense of individualism resulted which heralded a “reorientation of the relationship between individuals and the social groups of which they are members” (Melleuish 40). The post war economic boom lasted until approximately 1973. During this period, prosperous industrial societies such as Australia profited from high growth and high employment. Along with this economic growth, there was a rise in individualism that promoted people to seek autonomous identities, as well as a sense of personal emancipation from the constraints of tradition (Melleuish 12). Individualism was a factor in the changing social attitudes that led to a resurgence of interest in feminism. Significantly, this appreciation for feminism and access to increased education and individual self growth were primary factors of reintegration between men and women, as their areas of interest often now overlapped.

Work became the new centre of individual existence and took over from the role of family and religion as Australia moved away from religious and traditional values to a more secular and self-fulfilling attitude (Melleuish 43). Women were now able to access opportunities to view themselves as individuals instead of solely as members of families under the domination of husband and children.
Advances in science helped alleviate one of the concerns women experienced in relation to their sexuality: their fear of pregnancy. With the arrival of the birth control pill on the Australian market in 1961, the attitude that sex inevitably leads to pregnancy changed, and the pill enabled users to plan their reproductive lives in a more effective manner than had formerly been possible with other less reliable forms of contraception.

Although the pill was available for use by married women in 1961, medical professionals strongly advocated against prescribing it for unmarried women. As Siedlecky and Wyndham found, unmarried Australian women were dependent upon finding a medical practitioner who would prescribe the pill for them. Some doctors would not prescribe the pill for birth control, but would prescribe it for other indicated medical conditions, which Siedlecky and Wyndham found ironic, as “it was acceptable to treat VD or pregnancy in an unmarried woman, even an minor, [yet] advice to prevent pregnancy was considered immoral” (125). Many single women simply said that they were married when they were not.

I remember acutely the atmosphere when I casually informed both my parents that I was taking the birth control pill. On occasion my mother would invite my father and myself to dinner. Assisting in the preparation of the meal, I was casually stirring the gravy for the roast lamb, when I mentioned the fact. An absolute silence fell over the kitchen as they absorbed my news. Although I was already eighteen at the time, this news obviously shook their notions of acceptable behaviour for young women. In order to get the pill I had used a married woman’s prescription, as it was difficult to obtain for unmarried women in 1966. Prior to this time, the only advice I had been given about sex before marriage was from my father who had suggested that I be very particular who I went out with, because “you never know, you might have to marry the boy.”
Throughout the late 1960s debate raged about whether to extend birth control services to unmarried women and minors. The Family Planning Association of Australia stated in 1966 that it was not their policy to meddle in matters of morality, and it was not until 1971 that the FPAA would sanction the provision of birth control services for both married and unmarried women and minors (Siedlecky, Wyndham 126). Many medical professionals during the 1960s took the moral high road. Eventually they realized that while there may not have been universal consensus in Australia regarding premarital intercourse, doctors had no right to impose their moral values on the lives of their patients. With the availability of the birth control pill, contraception became a less mysterious process. The pill permitted women to choose their sexual responsiveness, without having to discuss it with their partners.

The pill created a divide between Protestant and Catholic churches. The Catholic Church continued its resistance and opposition to any form of birth control long after the Protestant faiths accepted the changing personal behaviours and standards in Australian society. Protestant acceptance led to a changed attitude in greater society about sexuality both within and outside of marriage. The parents of the Catholic Dutch man that I was seriously dating were mortified that their son’s girlfriend was taking the pill. Their response to this unacceptable situation was to encourage their son to attend confession, and to push for marriage. These older religious divisions eventually became broken down and eroded, as Melleuish describes, “by occupational mobility, demographic change and a much more anonymous society,” although the kind of behaviours that people indulged in within the privacy of their own homes were often quite different from what they professed to indulge in outside the domestic realm (48). Once all women in
Australia had access to the pill, they had the ability to control their reproduction and this led to a changed attitude about sexuality both within and outside of marriage.

Having control over their reproductive processes allowed women the opportunity to invest in lengthy and expensive career training in order to address their needs for paid employment and development of an independent career. Moreover, the availability of the pill unleashed a major social change by increasing the age at first marriage. Young women in the late 1960s had opportunities to undertake long-term educational investments. In the article “Career and Marriage in the Age of the Pill,” Claudia Goldin and Lawrence F. Katz describe how women now had “almost complete certainty and safety regarding the pregnancy consequences of sexual activity” (464). While the data collected by Goldin and Katz is derived from United States statistics, the same correlations can be made for the situation in Australia during the same time frame.

Goldin and Katz note a direct connection between the lowering of the age of majority, and the ability of young women to access the pill for contraceptive use. It took until 1974 for all states, with the exception of Victoria, to reduce the age of majority to eighteen years. Although the age of legal maturity had been reduced to eighteen in most states, there was still considerable debate and concern over the availability of the pill for young women under eighteen, and in particular for young women over the age of consent (sixteen or seventeen years in different States) (Siedlecky, Wyndham 129). By having control over their reproduction, and increased opportunities for post secondary education and career training, Australian women were spurred on by writers like Germaine Greer, who advised “women [to] learn how to question the most basic assumptions about feminine normality in order to re-open the possibilities for development which have been successively locked off by conditioning” (14). Whether women had to lie either about
their marital status or their age, unmarried women did what they had to do to obtain the pill, and, by doing so, gained control over their reproductive processes.
CHAPTER FOUR

‘I CAN’T GIT NO SATISFACTION’

As mentioned previously, feelings of separation, misunderstanding and disconnection were evident between teenagers and their parents’ generation, particularly during the 1950s and the 1960s. Weiss describes how the young parents in the 1950s were the ones who first set in motion the radical changes that took place in the 1960s. Weiss suggests that it was the parents of the baby boomers who “began to chip away at traditional gender roles” (11). My parents were somewhat older than most of the parents of the baby boom children. They were both thirty-eight years old when I was born and this age factor undoubtedly added to the generation gap that we experienced. Not being young parents, they were even more out of touch with the changing social attitudes and roles of young women in the 1960s than younger parents. Teenagers displayed the most open challenges to conformity, buoyed as they were by rising affluence and their sheer numbers. Contrary to their parents’ beliefs, many of the teenage baby boomers rejected youthful marriage and child rearing, preferring instead sexual freedom and mobility.

The term “teenager” was coined in the United States in the post-war period and spread from there to Britain and Australia. In Understanding Rock ‘n’ Roll, Dick Bradley describes the label of “teenager” as being synonymous with the “discourses of affluence, classlessness, juvenile delinquency, promiscuity [and] the ‘generation gap’” (84). Rapidly rising affluence for the middle classes during this period enabled a greater number of parents and teenagers to afford the clothing, haircuts, and musical equipment that served to define the teenage experience. The rising numbers of middle class families made it appear to many teenagers that Australia was a classless society. Moreover, prior
to this period, class had been defined more by the type of work that one performed, rather
than by the amount of leisure time available or by funds available for the purchase of
consumer goods (Bradley 85). Teenagers especially defined themselves by their leisure
experiences, rather than their work, and often rigidly demarcated their leisure time from
work or school time (Bradley 84). This leisure style was primarily defined by the
consumption of goods, and because of the rapid increase in population during the baby
boom, this generation became a target for certain commodities, especially music and
related music products and experiences afforded by records, record players, transistor
radios and music concerts.

"Teenager" came to signify everything that was different about this group, and the
term primarily focussed on the special quality of youthfulness. Many parents viewed
their teenagers as largely incomprehensible beings. My parents, for instance, were
frequently rendered speechless by some of my statements and actions. Criticism and
nagging only widened the generation gap, and so they resorted to silence as a form of
protest against my ideas and habits. This inability to understand or appreciate the young
is what is referred to as the "generation gap." Margaret Mead is credited with coining the
phrase "generation gap" and the term refers to the rapid acceleration in social and cultural
change that occurred after the Second World War (Bradley 86). Post-war teenagers were
unique in that they were physically almost adults, yet they were, by their age, excluded
from adult roles and responsibilities. Previous generations of teenagers had had to
perform hard physical work. Without the "anchor" that work and responsibilities
provide, many middle class teens in this privileged new generation "experienced
limitations, frustrations and oppressiveness" (Bradley 96). Bradley describes youthful
cultural resistance as filled with tension, friction, refusal and defiance, linked with the
changing circumstances in which young teenagers found themselves (96). The baby
boomers were the first generation to be healthy and well fed, to have considerable cash at
their disposal and to be familiar from childhood with the products of consumerism.

I clearly remember my father reminding me, as a teenager, that I never had to
collect bottles for spending money, as he obviously had to do. If I wanted money to
purchase an item, it was required that I do a small chore, such as bringing firewood into
the porch for the fire that occasionally was needed to heat the house. The part that I
particularly remember though, was not that I could not get money for spending, but that I
always had to ask my father for it. There was never any regular money handed over that
was mine to manage; it was always doled out by my father, and in later years I recognize
that his need to control the family finances extended also to my mother.

Boredom with the domesticity of the older generation and the predictable cultural
fare of television, which arrived in Australia in 1956, led to teenage experimentation with
resistant and rebellious cultural practices that defined them as separate from the older
generation. As school careers lengthened in the 1950s and 1960s, teenagers associated
with larger and larger peer groups. Moreover, the increasing influence of television, film
and radio played a large role in the socialization of the young (Bradley 96). Many
teenagers in middle class Australian homes were bored, especially those who did not
have paid work. Clothing and hairstyles were indicators of a distinct youth culture, but it
was music and music making that particularly defined the teenager. My first “major”
purchase after leaving home was a small, portable record player that looked like a
suitcase, which could be easily transported from place to place. This item and the paper
envelopes of forty-five rpm and EP albums that accompanied it were my most prized
possessions at this time. Youthful exuberance displayed itself in loud music, loud
behaviour and an abandonment of formality and manners.

This teenage resistance to formality peaked at a time when the world was
threatened by nuclear war, and Australia felt particularly vulnerable because of its
commonly perceived geographical isolation in Asia. Menzies' emphasis on strong family
unity in this uncertain time period generated a middle-class retreat into a domesticated,
small-scale family life with emphasis on family entertainment in the home.

Most of the adult Australian community at this time found reassurance in laws
that restricted alcohol consumption, gambling, abortion and homosexuality. In Make
Love, Not War, David Allyn describes the 1940s and 1950s as periods of great sexual
repression with laws against contraceptive use, censorship of literature, and social
ostracism for those who admitted to premarital sex or an attraction for someone of a
different race, or of the same sex (6). Although he refers to American society, many of
the same kinds of sexual repression were experienced in Australia. Sexual content was
regularly and strictly censored in literature and film. In 1958 the list of banned books
was finally published whereas, previous to this time, even the list was banned
(Thorogood). Australian society experienced further separation due to laws restricting
certain activities on Sundays, namely sports and store opening hours. Melleuish notes
that few adults found these laws restrictive or burdensome and noted that both the
Christian churches and the State pursued the same course and goals for the Australian
society (58). It was against this sexual repression that many teenagers and sexual
revolutionaries of the 1960s rallied, refusing to act normally, or dress appropriately or to
“go with the crowd” (Melleuish 57). Flaunting sexuality and defying socially constructed
sexual mores were ways youth accentuated the disconnection between generations.
Separation also occurred in the kinds of educational experiences received by young women and young men within the public school system. Sex-role stereotyping was evident in Australian school textbooks during the 1950s and 1960s. As well, Western points out that the suggested areas of interest for young women centred predominantly within the home environment, whereas young men sought activities in the wider community (142). Western examined textbooks for both primary and secondary school, and found that these texts almost universally characterized females as being “gentle, timid, conforming, domestic, physically weak, docile and fearful in times of stress or danger situations” (142). Accordingly, society encouraged young women to seek training and employment in traditionally female roles like housewife, mother, nurse, air hostess, teacher, secretary, sales girl, model or librarian. As a result of this sex role stereotyping, many middle class young women failed to develop their full potential, missed out on opportunities to increase their self-esteem and became dependent upon the approval of males. Young, single women filled temporary occupations such as those listed above until they married and reached ultimate female fulfilment as wives and mothers. Many companies and organizations required single women to give up their employment upon marriage. Schooling therefore played an active role in the “appropriate” sex roles that many young women and men acquired during the 1950s.

My own experience supports this point. From 1960 to 1963 I attended Mount Barker High School. Because of the hot climate, many of our school activities took place outdoors. We always ate lunch outside, and during this activity, teachers separated the schoolyard into a girl’s side and a boy’s side. They busily patrolled the invisible dividing line between the two sides watching for errant teenagers who may have “crossed the line.” Several classes were single sex, especially those classes where the subject material
THE FIRST DANCE

Dad pulled the old black Holden to the curb. I couldn’t wait to get out of the car. Here it comes, I thought: the rules. “I’ll pick you up at eleven o’clock. Be outside, standing right here!” I was again reminded to remember the rules about acting like a “young lady.” What were they again? Oh yes, always sit with my legs together, keep the boys away because they only want one thing, and always keep myself to myself. Whatever that meant!

Dad had barely begun to move the car away, and all thoughts of rules drained from my head. I had begged for days to be allowed to attend my first high school dance! Excitement made my heart beat faster as I skipped across the dusty footpath, grasped the heavy black iron door handle and pulled open the dark wood door of the Town Hall building. The cream limestone brick structure with its tall dusty windows was the largest building in the High Street, and dominated the rows of veranda-covered storefronts, and a church. I entered the building and inhaled quickly.

The foyer smelled of oil and wood, mingled with dust and a faint smell of antiseptic that wafted out from the ladies lavatory. Polished wooden floorboards led through the foyer into the dance area where the lilting melody of a saxophone, guitars and a piano filtered out into the foyer. To the rhythmic drumbeat, dozens of regulation oxfords and party shoes skimmed the powdery dance floor.

The ladies lavatory door slammed shut after I entered. Under my pink and blue polka dot dress, petticoats with rows of ruffled rope sewn into the hem plumped the skirt that swirled around my legs. My long sunshine-freckled arms hung awkwardly by my sides, and I looked down as I smoothed the dress behind my bony knees. My legs sported a disarming fuzz of hair. Kirsten Jorgensen, the Danish girl in my class, wore stockings and a garter belt. I had tried them on while we were swapping pinup pictures of our idol Crash Craddock in the small frilly rooms above her mother’s hairdressing shop. Kirsten also had large breasts. If only my Dad would let me wear stockings and a garter belt! No, he said I was way too young for stockings. I had to wear white cotton socks folded down at the ankles. At least my black patent leather shoes were acceptable, even if they were a size too big. “Room for you to grow into” Mum had said when I tried them on at Mr. Wade’s leather scented shoe store. Every pair of shoes I ever had was too big for me when I got them. I wanted my breasts to grow, and my feet to stop growing!
In the mirror I puckered my lips into a kissing shape, and making kissing sounds in the air, pretending. I wanted lipstick, but that item was as impossible as stockings or a bra in my house. My best friend Claire had lipstick, but then her parents smoked cigarettes and drank beer, unlike my parents, who totally disapproved and who thought the Devil lurked in every bottle. I leaned forward, and could see the freckles on my chest as the dress gaped in the front. If only I could convince my Mum to buy me a bra! I stuffed the hated socks into the front of my dress, turning sideways to admire my new silhouette. I pinched my cheeks in the mirror, admiring the flush of colour that appeared. I ran my hands slowly over my chest and hunched my shoulders forward to hide my lanky height. With a sigh I walked slowly into the main room, sidling along the row of chairs and joined my girlfriends.

Giggling and laughing loudly, we ignored the boys sitting and standing along the other side of the hall. Periodically a teacher's voice would crackle over the microphone, announcing “Take your partners please for a Progressive Waltz.” A swarm of teachers would prod and drag reluctant boys and pair them up with equally reluctant girls. A male teacher appeared, unceremoniously placing a boy in front of me. Glancing furtively to the side, the boy’s high voice fearfully requested, “May I have this dance?” As I caught his eye I realized that he was standing, and I was sitting, and that our eyes were just about level. Towering a foot above him when I stood up, we joined other equally awkward boys and girls in a circle on the floor. We waited until the very last moment to touch each other in the required dance embrace as the music began. Grim faced, I tried hard to remember the rules of dancing that we had endured in dance instruction lessons. Together we managed the prescribed routine like robots, and I was duly twirled on to the next partner at the appropriate time. Miss Voaden, the spinster headmistress, with her grey streaked hair pulled tightly back and wearing a soft mauve print dress, smiled contentedly from among the gaggle of teachers who complacently observed their charges. The boys dutifully returned their partners to their seats after the dance, displaying good etiquette as they had been instructed.

The girls dissolved into giggling pink clouds of dresses, laughing uproariously and eagerly confiding details about whose hands were sweaty, whose hands were ice cold, which boys were silent and who had dared speak. Chatter echoed up and down the girls’ side of the hall, intermingled with fits of giggles, while the boys, awkward in their long pants, ties and shirts, shifted their dusty shoes on the waxy floor.

Promptly at five minutes to eleven, the band broke into a mournfully strained rendition of “God Save the Queen.” The drums were silent; the piano was closed with a bang; two guitars and the shiny curves of the saxophone disappeared into their furry cases. The dance was over, and Dad was waiting.
might lead to employment such as shop trades, typing and domestic skills. The rooms for woodwork and metal work were on the boy's side of the yard, whereas the typing room was on the girl's side. As well there was a well-equipped domestic science room, where girls learned not only cooking skills, but also laundry and ironing, stain removal and sick room management. The school did not permit girls to attend woodworking class, or boys to attend domestic science and learn typing or domestic skills.

By the early 1960s Australian women began to take control of their reproduction, there was full employment, women attended universities in increasing numbers and the Australian government supported the American involvement in the Vietnam War. In November 1964 Prime Minister Menzies announced that a proportion of twenty-year-old Australian males, chosen by lottery, would serve a compulsory period of two years in the military. In *Australian Society*, Keith Hancock notes that by 1966, these national servicemen were required to serve in Vietnam (105). According to the results of a public opinion Gallup Poll taken in July and again in November 1966, asking whether or not these men should have been kept in Australia, Hancock advises that a bare majority of fifty-two percent believed that they should indeed have been kept at home. He notes that this opinion was strongest among middle-aged women who were, of course, the group who were most likely to have had sons in the twenty-year-old range (105). Hancock further notes that within two or three years following the above-mentioned poll, Australian opinion became strongly opposed to the Vietnam War. In this way, public opinion, although it at first lagged behind, eventually followed the growing opposition to what many perceived to be a United States war (106). The Vietnam War was a catalyst for a broad-ranging critique of the state and of society in general, according to Kaplan, as ideological opposition to the war grew (25). The Australian government's decision to
HEADED FOR 'NAM

The irrepressible beat of a march crackled over the loudspeakers as the heat danced and shimmered off the asphalt parade ground. The grandstand, filled to capacity with proud families, groaned under its dusty load. A shrill whistle blast captured our attention and, moving as one, the graduating soldiers began their “passing out” parade. Left. Right. Left. Right. The undulating rows of arms and legs moved like a military centipede around and around the parade ground. Like mirages, the men’s faces swam into view then faded beyond view, as if one moment they were there, real and flesh, and the next, they had passed into another reality, indistinguishable in the flow of khaki. Proud parents craned their necks from their seats, hoping to spot a glimpse of “their boy” for that was what they were - boys! This was Puckapunyal Army Camp; first military stop for these young conscripts, and this was December 7, 1969.

Vietnam! We were shocked, stunned to see our friends’ names on a roster. Eighteen to twenty year old boys, whose birthdays fell on odd days of the previous year, found themselves headed for “boot camp” in the Australian Army. My friend’s brother John, invisible in the robotic flow of men, marched with the other conscripts across the parade ground. Co-opted into the military machine through the process of birthday lotteries, John still struggled to make sense of this change in plans. John’s blonde hair flowed long and yellow across his brown shoulders during his “uni” days. Wearing ragged bell bottomed jeans and sandals and a colourful leather headband, John’s university days had been filled with nothing more threatening than a mid term exam.

Toes tapped on the dusty boards, motivated by the hypnotic marching beat. It was impossible not to be mesmerized by the music - buoyed even - almost inspired. But no, this was a military march, not a protest song. Another shrill whistle blast echoed and the columns halted as one. Polished black boots churned the dust as the men turned about and faced the grandstand. Rows of identical khaki clad boy-men, shorn of any sign of individuality stood at attention, their identities swallowed into the military machine. There were no long and unruly curls, no beaded headbands, no bell-bottomed jeans and bare feet or sandals here. Regulation clipped hair was invisible beneath the familiar Aussie hat, with the brim sewn up on one side. The only indication of individuality was the size of the white un-tanned area around the backs of the necks and ears. John’s family had invited me to witness this “passing out” parade of boys who were leaving behind childhood to face the grim reality of Vietnam.
The dusty heat mellowed into a calm and gum scented evening, and around the parking area of Pukapunyal Army Camp campfires sizzled as meaty lamb chops and fragrant sausages browned on grills. Young soldiers relaxed, still in uniform, looking oddly incongruous as they mingled with the summer bare clothing of their family members. Lying on blankets on the dried grass, parents and friends sipped hot sweet tea from thermoses or dived into the icy water of their Esky for a cool Fosters lager. The sun slipped beyond the white gum trees and the darkening horizon. Mosquitoes began their invisible whining, joining the ever-present flies in persistent clouds. A guitar appeared, then another, and the soft refrain of “Kumbaya” echoed softly around the dark silhouettes that contrasted with the firelight.

A smiling John leaned against his sister, his arm draped lazily around her shoulders. Frosty beer trickled down his hand as he wiped his mouth. The army hat, still covering his shorn hair now jutted at a rakish angle, and his chinstrap hung loosely. There was no sign of the soft, thin, scraggly blonde hairs on his bottom lip and chin that he had so proudly cultivated. It was not really a beard, just a few pre-manly hairs, but he had been proud of them. The beard was gone - as was the boyish charm - replaced by the hard-edged look of his shaven face. His jaw grew more grimly set as he faced the unknown. Someone strummed the opening chords of “Blowing in the Wind.” Voices rose into the warm night air, softly, then more loudly as others joined in; the words echoed off the white ghost gums.

How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?
Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannon balls fly
Before they're forever banned?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

Figure 14

Pukapunyal Army Camp
Victoria, Australia
December 7, 1969
Photographer: Danielle Sarandon
introduce conscription in 1965 in support of the American effort in Vietnam added substantially to general feelings of separation and disconnection.

Many young Australian men who faced the "birthday lotteries" responded with a sense of fatalism as they faced the most disruptive and disconnecting experience of military conscription. Moral questions were raised by a majority of Australians about the Vietnam War, and protests and moratoriums were held in greater numbers as opposition to the war grew. Many Australian youth in the 1960s expressed a sense of fatalism and helplessness at the political system, especially because they could not yet vote, and responded with a "live for the moment" attitude. For many youths, this often involved drug use. Major themes in the words of 1960s music were not about sex but about drugs and the politics involving the Vietnam War. Great numbers of Australians did not believe in violent behaviour and protested against Australian involvement in the war. Music was one arena in which the voice of youth was evident, as escapist popular music gradually gave way to folk music, which led the charge in representing the youth of the early 1960s. Protest songs grew in popularity, urging people to rise up against their governments and insist that their rights be heard. Conscription, however, continued with the hugely unpopular "birthday lotteries" until the Whitlam government abolished conscription in 1972.

With the rise in post-war social affluence and an increase in educational opportunities and full employment for youth, rapidly increasing consumerism had an impact upon the whole of Australian society. The government viewed this increase in affluence and consumerism as proof of the economic security that came from the Australian focus on home and family during the 1950s. The Australian baby boomer teenagers were the first of their generation to be surprisingly well off. This increase in
the numbers of teenagers as consumers during the 1960s provided an enormous market for leisure and fashion items, musical instruments and records.

I recall, for instance, that my brother, when he was a teenager, had his own rock 'n' roll band in the mid 1950s called “Astro Jenkins and The Asteroids.” They regularly appeared at Saturday night dances at various venues including the school and the town hall. His group thought that their name was a clever imitation of the group named Bill Haley and the Comets. Created from a tea chest and a broom handle with a string attached, their bass instrument had a hand coloured image of an asteroid painted across it. My brother played guitar and sang lead vocals. After they were regularly hired to perform at local dances, it became important for the group to be identified by their clothing. Flamboyant sports jackets in wild colours were worn, with black pants, white shirts and black bow ties. The group evolved over time, with the addition of various saxophone players, keyboard players and a bass guitarist. They became “The Vampires,” and then “The Dead Beats” and went on to star on the television show “Stairway to the Stars.” For this performance they wore gold lame jackets.

My father encouraged both of us to sing, and I vividly remember being called in to assist my brother in his rendition of *A White Sportcoat, and a Pink Carnation*. For some odd reason, this song was a particular favourite of my father’s. After buying my first record player, the next important item I wanted to purchase was a guitar. By the early 1960s folk music was extremely popular, and with my straight long dark hair, I was regularly likened in appearance (if not in sound) to Judith Durham of the very popular Australian folk group, The Seekers. I eagerly learned the words of *A World of our Own*, and *Morningtown Ride*, both of which, by 1966 had outsold many other big name artists on the charts. At private house parties someone would inevitably bring along a
Figure 15
My brother’s rock ‘n’ roll bands
Top photograph - 1963
Bottom photograph – 1968
Permission obtained to print these images
guitar, and people would sing the songs of Peter, Paul and Mary, Bob Dylan and Joan Baez.

As families increased in size during the 1950s and with increased post war social affluence, ownership of a family car often became a necessity. Car manufacturers rose to meet the public demand for affordable vehicles. In 1948 General Motors Holden built Australia’s first car, the Holden FX. Holden developed the “family six” which gained unprecedented market dominance. The Holden FX was affordably priced at 733 pounds (Thorogood). By the 1960s these early cars were priced within reach of the young teenagers, and the FX and cars like the Morris Minor, that had been manufactured since 1948, gave teenagers the mobility they craved for in their search for a separate existence outside the restricted and oppressive Australian family structure. My family had a black Holden FX. This was a solidly built car, with wide fenders and a hood that comfortably provided elevated seating for watching the car racing that my family enjoyed. The car was so well built that our family would spread a blanket over the hood or roof, and all of us would sit and get a clear view of the stock car racing that my father, in particular, enjoyed watching. When my brother reached the age that he could learn to drive, he was allowed to use the Holden. After a disturbing occasion on which he was found to be speeding, I was firmly told that there was no possibility that I would be permitted to learn to drive the family car. It seemed entirely unfair to me at the time, but in retrospect I believe it was more a matter of my parents believing that a girl had no real need to drive a car. My mother did not drive, although my father offered to teach her. I found myself dating only boys who would allow me to drive their cars. This is how I gained driving experience. I spent many a “date” just driving around the city. Usually the date would eventually involve attending a drive-in movie theatre. By the mid 1950s drive in movie
Monday 23rd April

Driving the car
February 28, 1966

Figure 16

Driving the car
February 28, 1966
theatres had sprung up in all towns and cities, and with accessibility by automobiles, young people had privacy and opportunity to explore youthful activities away from the watchful eyes of parents.

In an effort to separate from the adult lifestyle, teenagers sought ways to express their individuality as a group, choosing from a variety of commodities that seemed capable of holding lasting meaning for them and musical choice became a method of representing themselves as a separate youth culture. Rock 'n' roll music had a polarizing impact upon post-war Australian society by clearly dividing and separating teenage musical consumers from adults. The youthful audiences, who danced and screamed at rock concerts and sang along with folk performers, such as the very popular Australian group, The Seekers, and the folk icons, Peter Paul and Mary, were both consumers and active shapers of popular culture in Australia at that time. I remember attending a concert by Peter, Paul and Mary at the Adelaide Show Grounds hall. There, I learned to love the songs they sang and I eagerly added them to my repertoire.

The term “teenager” became an identification label. In order to identify as a separate group, teenagers sought self-expression in clothing, hairstyles, and musical preferences that they often chose because of their connection with a youthful leisure style. It is hard to pinpoint exactly when or where rock 'n' roll music began, but the influence of this style of music became most apparent after the movie debut in 1956 of “Blackboard Jungle,” which featuring the song Rock Around The Clock. The movie featured the music of Bill Haley and the Comets who toured Australia in 1957. Musicians who played this startling new style of music, with its loud, energetic and highly rhythmic beat, rejected the principal pop music of the immediate past; instead, this music rapidly became one of the central characteristics of youth culture. In Myths of Oz,
John Fiske, Bob Hodge and Graeme Turner describe the function of rock ‘n’ roll music as a “ritualised demonstration and celebration of the difference between the group and those outside it” (19). Teenagers embraced the new music as a form of youth group identity that was in opposition to adults.

In contrast, the older style music that was aimed at adults was often sickly sentimental, with big band instruments and complex reed and brass playing. The new music was simpler to play, and involved small identifiable groups, singers and musicians. In The Sixties, Arthur Marwick describes the transition most eloquently: “the subtleties and sonorous sentimentalities of the saxophone gave way to the intoxicating strumming of the electric guitar” (68). For many parents, the new connection between rock ‘n’ roll and teenagers “fixed another association, in the eyes of the parent culture – namely, that between rock ‘n’ roll and ‘juvenile delinquency’” (Bradley 56). Dance halls and cafes where jukeboxes played the new music attracted street gangs and vandals, leading parents to connect youthful delinquency with the music style (Bradley 57). Many middle class parents were unable to understand the appeal of the new music and were fearful of the music reinforcing the disconnection between adults and teenagers.

Black blues music and rock ‘n’ roll originally had an association with the Teddy boy image and was particularly appealing to many working class British teens. This youthful image, complete with flick knife and chain, coupled with the music, appealed to all teenagers because, as Marwick notes, “all teens are in essence ‘outsiders’” (67). British newspapers, in particular, delighted in exaggerating the violence that surrounded the showing of movies such as “Blackboard Jungle” that featured the song Rock around the Clock (Marwick 67). The new style music spread rapidly around the western world and became a vital part of teen culture in Australia. Members of Australian youth
cultural groups challenged the adult values and priorities presented by parents, schools, the media and police in an effort to establish their separateness from adult society. Teens sought a position outside of and disconnected from adult family structures.

Another group that strongly influenced Australian teenagers at this time was Buddy Holley and the Crickets. This American group was connected with the musical style known as “skiffle.” Developed in working class neighbourhoods, skiffle groups used homemade instruments made from broom handles and washing-boards. Holly developed the image of the rock group, with guitars, drums and a singer, and teenagers connected with the concept of playing as a group (Bradley 61). Holly’s big hits were *Peggy Sue* and *That’ll be the Day*, with their vitality and spontaneity evident with imaginative chording and original words.

Elvis Presley entered the music scene with his 1957 hit *All Shook Up*. He soon became the “property of teenagers” with his liberated singing style, complete with gasps, grunts, swoops, and slides, which he used to express excitement, strong emotion, vitality and sexiness (Bradley 67). To many parents Presley’s style was little more than a spectacle, a scandal. To teens, however, he expressed a youthful extroverted masculine style, and they identified closely with Presley, delighting in his “crudeness and sullen, rebellious look, speech and song” (Bradley 67). Identification with Presley became, for many teenagers, a way in which they could reject the values of adults and reinforce their sense of separation from adult society.

British musical groups hugely influenced Australian teenagers. One of those groups who moved from jazz to skiffle to rock ‘n’ roll was The Shadows, with their lead guitarist, Hank Marvin. Marvin was the absolute idol of my first boyfriend, Robin who
Figure 17

First Love
June 5, 1965
Photographer: Danielle Sarandon

Below, Rob was a bit scared because his shoes (walk-oat) were pretty slippery. Well then we got to the sea! I went crazy off with the shoes + wore into the surf. Rob was scared but came out with me (attached) + we stood on a rock, kissed each other again + again, while the surf broke on the rocks + splashed us.

But the it was a wonderful feeling. It was romantic really. Rob didn't want to kiss each other. "I took a couple of snaps of me + then I took a couple of him."

Eventually we climbed down another pathway. I came to the beach after a fairly stiff walk to the island.
bore an uncanny resemblance to Marvin. Robin idolized the British singer’s performance on his famous red Fender Stratocaster guitar, with his customary echoed picking and generous tremolo use. I spent many Saturday afternoons during 1965 listening to The Shadows on a portable record player in Robin’s bedroom. I watched enthralled, as Robin would imitate Hank Marvin playing the popular Shadows’ hit *Apache*, on an imaginary red Fender Stratocaster.

The all-pervasive popularity of The Shadows and Hank Marvin inspired Sydney rock ‘n’ roll groups like The Atlantics and The Denvermen, along with Melbourne’s The Thunderbirds. Marvin inspired more budding guitar pickers than any other figure in music according to the Milesago Historical Overview of Australasian Popular Music of the 60s and 70s. Cliff Richards teamed up with the Shadows and provided a “kind of cheeky, music-hall presentation to skiffle and then rock” (Marwick 68). Other British groups formed such as Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Hollies, The Searchers and, of course, The Beatles. By the end of the 1950s, there were at least three hundred groups playing regularly in Liverpool pubs, clubs and dancehalls (Marwick 69). Although much of the Australian music of this era went unheard of by world audiences, several local acts began to make an impression overseas. Australian singer Frank Ifield became one of the first Australian singers to gain widespread international fame with his hit *I Remember You* (Kimball).

The entire Australian music scene changed virtually overnight when the Beatles made their historic tour in June 1964. The Beatles’ plane arrived at Adelaide airport on June 12th during the afternoon when I was at work. Their open car drove slowly down King William Street, through the centre of the city, and the Beatles sat on the back of the convertible in full view, waving and smiling at the enormous crowds of almost three
hundred thousand screaming fans. The street was packed with people from side to side. I had never seen such a huge crowd and I could not move because of the crush of hysterical girls screaming to catch a glimpse of their idols. Like most of the girls in the crowd, I screamed and screamed for the Beatles, whose popularity was palpable.

By 1963 a full transformation of music had occurred in Britain with the Beatles and their music style, which Marwick describes as “the stuff that screams are made of” (70). The effect of “The Fab Four” on the Australian music scene was profound and it, combined with the influence of other new British groups such as the Rolling Stones, The Kinks, and The Yardbirds, created the formation of a huge new wave of “beat” and rhythm and blues groups. The words of the Rolling Stones 1965 hit *I Can’t Get No Satisfaction* were apparently written about a man who was looking for authenticity, but could not find it. The words are also suggestive of sexual dissatisfaction, and were more often sung with the latter interpretation when I was a teenager. Australian artists, perhaps inspired by the new British groups, proved that they could write and perform as well as their overseas rivals and Billy Thorpe’s single *Poison Ivy* topped the top ten charts around Australia during the middle of the Beatles’ Australian tour (Kimball). Australian radio stations picked up on the new music trend and, in 1963, Sydney radio station 2SM introduced twenty-four hour pop music. In 1964, perhaps in response to the Beatles’ tour, Sydney station 2UW abruptly dropped all radio serials that they had been carrying and devoted themselves to becoming NEW2UW with twenty four hour pop music and the new logo “more music, more often” (Thorogood).

The development and availability of the transistor radio during the late 1950s changed the listening habits of families and contributed to a further separation between youth and adults in Australian society. Prior to the 1960s, families listened to the radio
together or, after 1956 when television arrived, watched television together as a family group. The portability of transistor radios accelerated changing developments in the music industry. As Marwick notes, rock 'n' roll was the music of choice for youth, and transistor radios permitted teenagers to listen to their music in the privacy of their rooms or cars, while the adults watched television (48). A trip to the beach to lie in the sun and “sun-bake” was not complete without a small “tranny” for musical entertainment. The small, cheap transistor radios were extremely important agents in the entertainment gap between parents and teens, as they enabled teenagers to indulge their personalized musical listening choices separate from the family.

The origins and styles of music that teenagers listened to in the 1960s varied in their sources. British beat groups, American “heavy” music and the folk genre all found a niche in the ears of Australian youth. Throughout the 1960s, and especially following the Beatles’ tour of Australia in 1964, all Australian music performers’ eyes were on London and many groups, such as The Seekers, The Easybeats, and others, tried their luck in London in the hope of making a successful British career. London was as much the centre of the pop world as it was for most other aspects of Australian culture. With the escalation of the Vietnam War during the mid 1960’s, however, tens of thousands of U.S. servicemen arrived in Australia for rest and recreation leave. Australian groups performed for these American servicemen in areas of Sydney, particularly around King’s Cross, and found that they had to cater to a whole new clientele with often radically different musical tastes from Australian audiences at local dances. This new clientele wanted to hear the new “heavy” sounds of Jimi Hendrix, The Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin.
As protests against the Vietnam War grew, so did the popularity of a new genre of music: folk music. Bob Dylan’s song *The Times They are A-Changin’* became almost a generational anthem that warned parents that the old ways were changing, and that parents should strive to understand the new ways and beliefs of their children. Dylan’s words clearly drew a generational line between youth and adult with words like “Your sons and daughters are beyond your command/your old road is/Rapidly Aging/Please get out of the new one/If you can’t lend a hand.” Dylan’s music reflected the view that the beliefs and values of the system were desperately in need of changing, especially in view of the escalation of the Vietnam War. Dylan, Hendrix and Joplin, among others, became figureheads for the generational divide between adults and youth in Australia.

As it became increasingly obvious that young adults could not change the system in which they found themselves trapped, many turned from being outwardly political to an inward shift towards drugs and alcohol. Patrick Mignon in his essay “Drugs and Popular Music: The democratization of bohemia” in Steve Redhead’s *Rave Off*, states that from 1965 onward music was connected with drug use in a “movement of reciprocity and mutual enrichment” and suggests that a series of drug songs from The Byrds’ *Mr. Tambourine Man*, Bob Dylan *Everybody Must Get Stoned*, as well as The Beatles’ *Strawberry Fields, Yellow Submarine* and *Lucy in the Sky* offered everyone “courtesy of a joint and a thirty three rpm album – eternity in an hour”(186). Teen involvement in the drug culture in Australia offered a secret world that was open only to those who used psychedelic drugs such as marijuana, hashish and LSD. The focus moved from the frustrations experienced by the young with attempts to create social and political change, to a concern with the desire to “turn on, tune in and drop out.” The Beatles responded to this shift in focus with their song *Revolution*. In this song they acknowledge the
Figure 18
Party Time 1
26 November, 1966

know him a bit better. Well the night settled on, George's wife came early - they were not exactly the party kind. Even got all the things in and walked out - our home - then Veronica and Peter came because she wasn't feeling too well - it was so hot and stuffy inside there. We had in all 32 people in our living room & by the time we counted our record player was on that end and yet we could hardly hear it.

About 12 we stood up
supper, which were pretty quiet
cast then John's a few shots,
regalia a few songs, and the
quarry came out. I was just
happy by then. Jeff Bolton came
along too and together we sang
a lot of songs. "Wayward Wind"
we did and everyone joined
in on numbers like "Yellow
Submarine", "Michael".

"He Boat Ashore" and "Real�\A
beer". It was very good. Then we
went dancing around about 120
a few times, and John was
by then getting somewhat pickled.
We then danced together for
the first time that evening. We
went staggering around the
floor. Then Mary John
Robinson were packing up on a
car and John Robinson of his friend
Peter Hanna also came along. They
were better just as anything.
Then we really nice time
and to talk to and again.
Big party up all around - I
was kissed by everyone of the
male species. I think including
only the Asian fellow.

At 2.30 pm I was getting
mighty pickled at the beer
had my shirt under - and I was on
Bournemouth. Ken had gone to
keep on the lounge.
John got up on the coffee.
Figure 19
Party Time 2
26 November 1966

The room was madly gyrating and smoked his shirt and pants in the process of madly spinning it off when the coffee table collapsed from under him. Three legs broke off. He looked so funny. As we ducked into Mario's bedroom.

Once Peter and I went into John's bedroom — I was getting away. We were pushing up in the dark, with the door shut when John burst in. Painted back into the living room and yelled 'Out!' I was he was jealous! I thought it was rather funny really!

By 3:00 everyone except John roared home. Larry was asleep. John, Robert, and Peter Hanna were still going — banging on the radio like a drum. Mary was still going — even I caught Mary in bed. John was glassy-eyed and turned, in the dark — I walked in — see, I was jealous! Also he was dancing with Val a lot too! Real cool! Fig!

Then John went to bed, undressed — fell asleep. Peter went to bed but missed hitting the wardrobe door — hit to hurt. The others were still going. I ended up rolling around the floor, still drinking, fell as a goon. John got furious, as I hardly had a thing on. He said 'Come back here, you — shut those doors — called me every name under the sun! Ended up he got up dressed — walked out Mary began vacuuming.

I heard the bottles up. SO gray. I hear bottles — plus lemonade:

Goo! Dance on until 3 a.m.

Danced on until I could stand outside and watched the sun come up. I went to sleep lying in the twine out on the lawn.

With my back — today was still pushing up — he must have thought he was real sexy!!
John Robinson was really swinging and having a good time. I ended up in my room to sleep on the floor at 3:00 a.m. I was asleep on Mary's bed - John Robinson was flashed out on the floor hugging the leg of an unsatisfied chair. I tried Anna, but she was never around. Joan's - what a mess.

So I went to sleep, passed out. The next thing I was woken by John Robinson getting into bed with me. He was very drunk. I told him to get back after a while he said, "Great, you're good on Sunday morning? I heard John was a little rough. By the time I woke up it was 8:30. Mary was sitting in the bathroom. She was very rough. She had her hands on me and I was very much so. I didn't want to do anything. It was a very rough morning."

I said, "OK, let's go up to the church."

She said, "Sleep."

I said, "I'm a pastor somewhere - I need to sleep, I need a walk, a church."

Mary said, "Oh, let me know if you need to talk."

I said, "No, I need to sleep.""
frustration in the words “You say you want a revolution/well you know we all want to
to change the world/ when you talk about destruction, don’t you know you can count me out/
it’s gonna be alright.” The message that youth absorbed from the Beatles’ song was that
instead of fighting for an upheaval and change in the government, it was better to use
drugs to free their minds. A division was set up between those who knew a better way,
the young, and those who did not. In an age when no one over the age of thirty could be
trusted, youth made every effort to separate themselves completely into a group quite
apart from the adult world. Rock ‘n’ roll music and drug use were ways to indicate a
divide between the generations, but clothing styles also were important signifiers of the
division between youth and adults.

Hemlines and hairstyles underwent major transformations during the 1960s. Post-
war clothing styles, especially for middle class women, were conservative and modest in
coverage of the body. Women’s undergarments were stiff and contoured and lifted body
parts into an unnatural shape. My mother always wore a girdle or corset, even in the heat
of the day, and her body was confined and restricted in this type of garment. Even when
I began working at sixteen, it was customary to wear a form of girdle. There was to be
no allowable movement of the buttocks, no bouncing of the breasts; otherwise, one was
thought to be drawing attention to oneself. I was admonished about garish or scanty
clothing, bright makeup, and loudness of voice and of course I was not permitted to
smoke, drink alcohol or swear. A girl wearing an orange shirt with a black and white
striped band around the bottom and collar, and a pair of torn off pedal-pusher pants was
labelled, in the late 1950s, a “widgie.” The male equivalent was a “bodgie,” with slicked
back hair, black jeans and a T-shirt, and likely with a cigarette pack in the sleeve. The
Australian names of bodgie and widgie were forerunners of the "rocker" label. At parties it was customary for the boys to swear, but never in front of young women. Nothing in appearance was left to chance, and every body part was neatly tucked in the right places. Hemlines were below the knee, women wore hats to church and to the city, and stockings covered the legs even in the Australian heat.

With the arrival of the 1960s a much more liberated attitude developed towards the body, perhaps spurred by the introduction into Australia of the birth control pill in 1961. Skirt lengths drastically shortened and more skin became visible. British designs in fashion directly affected what Australian women could buy in the stores, and one of the most influential British designers of the early 1960s was Mary Quant. Her "wacky and "kooky" fashions defied the conventions of established fashion. Quant herself declared "London led the way in the changing focus of fashion from the Establishment to the young" (Marwick 67). British art colleges and design schools were critical agencies in the evolution of a separate youth culture and young clothing designers were soon producing distinctive and exportable designs that spread from England throughout the world in the mid 1960s (Marwick 57). In 1965 Mary Quant introduced the mini skirt that supermodels such as Lesley Hornby (Twiggy) and Jean Shrimpton modelled.

By 1967 an even shorter “micro mini” was popular in Australia. Pantyhose were invented because the ultra short skirts could no longer cover the tops of stockings and suspenders. It was extremely difficult to wear the ultra short mini skirts, especially in an office employment situation. Bending down to a low filing cabinet was absolutely impossible without showing undergarments and it was necessary to squat down, keeping the hemline level at all times. Low chunky heeled shoes and boots were popular accessories for the ultra short skirt, as well as white leather “go-go boots” for girls and
“Beatle boots” with chisel shaped toes for boys. Wearing white go-go boots and short, brightly coloured mini dresses to parties, my girlfriends and I would pump our arms up and down in the 1960s go-go dance style. Hemlines in the 1960s may have been interpreted as a kind of barometer of contemporary attitudes: when consumerism was at its height, skirts were shortest (Hoeymakers).

Conservative parents attempted to influence the kind of clothing worn by teenagers. Determined to make themselves quite separate from the adult world, young people developed a unique clothing style. Until the late 1960s, many people believed it inappropriate for young women to wear pants. It was not until I arrived in Canada in 1970 that I was permitted to wear pants to an office job. I remember the debate about the kinds of acceptable pant styles in my first office job in this country, and I felt very liberated to be allowed to wear the comfortable and more useful garment than the restrictive and limiting dresses that had been customary in Australian offices in the 1960s. By the late 1960s pants became acceptable fashion garments for women, and hipster pants, bell-bottom pants and unisex styled clothing were very popular. Bell-bottom pants were originally made of denim and more suited to the working life of a sailor, but for many people they became the hippie culture’s counter statement against the conservative adult styles of their parents’ generation. The rise in popularity of unisex clothing indicated a natural progression in clothing following changes in men and women’s roles in society at this time (Hoeymakers).

Young men also had their fashion styles that depended upon their class and musical tastes. The group known as the “rockers” favoured the “Duck’s Ass” hairstyle. They combed back the hair on both sides of the head and held it in place with a liberal application of Brylcream hair grease. The young men who favoured this style during the
1950s were also called “greasers” and many of them wore black leather jackets, black jeans and rode motorcycles. Especially in Britain, adults connected this group with what was often ritualistic rioting behaviour, directed at the “mod” youth sub-culture (Marwick 77). In contrast with the rockers, young male mods wore smartly styled suits with narrow lapels or collarless Cardin suit jackets and Beatle boots, and styled themselves after the Beatles’ look. In the 1960s, the Beatles wore Nehru jackets, with no lapels and no collar. As the popularity of the Beatles rose, and as their hair became longer, young men copied the “mop top” look and hairstyles became a hugely popular way for youth to distinguish themselves from the adults in society. As women’s skirts became shorter and shorter, youthful hairstyles dictated that hair be grown longer and longer, for both men and women. In the late 1950s the bouffant hairstyle became popular with young women, and involved a great deal of preparation, special combs, and a lot of hairspray to keep the mounds of teased hair in place. I had a “teasing comb” specifically designed to tangle the hair at the base into a mat. I would tease sections of my hair at the roots, smooth the top layer and liberally apply hairspray to ensure that the rounded appearance of my hair would stay put, even in a windstorm. Brushing out the tangles the next day was quite an ordeal.

When I arrived in Canada in 1970 I attended the musical “Hair” in Toronto. This extremely popular tribal love-rock musical drew enormous audiences, and was popular for its simulated sexual intercourse and nudity on stage. Many conservatives considered it a lewd and lascivious show and, on occasion, the shows were shut down. With the name of the show, “Hair,” and with the emphasis on male and female cast members’ extremely long hairstyles, this show epitomized, and became a further form of resistance against, adult expectations for youth.
By the late 1960s unisex clothing and hairstyles developed to the degree that many adults complained that they could no longer distinguish the girls from boys. The Beatles’ hairstyles grew from the relatively conservative “mop top” style to long and flowing hair, and beards, as the 1960s gave way to the 1970s. Both sexes of the hippie group wore long hair, headbands and worn out jeans. Continuing this trend, the Beatles changed their look as they entered their psychedelic phase, and wore flower-patterned shirts, epaulette jackets and flared hipster pants. Western youth mirrored the Beatles’ lead, and continued to develop distinctive styles separate from the adult world.

Rock 'n' roll music became one powerful medium through which youth culture established their separateness from the adult world. The 1960s brought about a sexual revolution, a music revolution and a fashion revolution, all of which expressed the youthful desire for separateness from the adult world.

While it is often a part of typical youthful behaviour to establish a separate identity from that of adults, I believe the revolutions that took place in Australia during the 1960s were in direct response to the rigid and repressed social expectations the Menzies’ government encouraged during the post war period. On a personal level, I know my parent’s expectations for my behaviour were completely out of touch with the changing times. Their dismay when I informed them that I was taking the birth control pill was palpable; they believed I was “living in sin” and their silence indicated their disapproval. When parents accept a wider range of youthful behaviour without rigid guidelines and expectations, teenagers are then permitted an opportunity to experiment with their identity formation without reinforcing a ‘generation gap.’

Metaphorically speaking, Australia experienced many of the same “growing pains” that teenagers experience during the 1950s. Separated and disconnected from the
parent-like Britain, Australia experimented with identity formation as it resisted the rigid and repressed social expectations of the early colonial experience. As is the case with teenagers, Australia valued and desired peer support, and became politically more closely affiliated with the United States of America than with the "parent" Britain. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin describe the experience of the free settler as "show[ing] clear signs of alienation even within the first generation of settlement, and manifest[ing] a tendency to seek an alternative, differentiated identity" (9). Like the teenager who feels compelled to seek an alternative and differentiated personal identity from that of a parent, Australia evolved during the 1950s and 1960s into its present form out of the experience of colonization. I would suggest that these were the teenage years for Australian nationalism. During these formative decades, Australians lost many of their connections with British values. Through the influences of multiculturalism, the acute realization of its geographical place in Asia, and its affiliation with the United States of America, Australians have, I believe, become more integrated.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Although Australia experienced unprecedented economic growth and prosperity during the post-war period, there was a pervasive sense of separation and disconnection in society. Even within my own family, great rifts were apparent between my parents, my brother and me. This social fracturing came about as a result of the post-war shift away from traditional British ideological roots, as well as from the influx of great numbers of foreign immigrants who arrived from Europe to start new lives in Australia. Due to the policies of Prime Minister Robert Menzies in support of a strong family based society, and increased consumerism, many middle class women, like my mother, experienced frustration and disconnection. They spent their days performing routine household chores and were separated from other community members in isolated suburban housing developments. Further adding to the sense of social separation was the revolution led by the massive cohort of teenagers, born during the Baby Boom, against the restrictive social mores and standards of post-war middle class society. This state of disconnection became a catalyst for change that resulted in policies and movements such as multiculturalism and feminism. These social and political movements, as well as the proliferation of women’s literature and women’s studies courses in educational institutions, have done much to bridge the gaps between social groups and address the problems of separation and disconnection that were apparent to me growing up in post-war Australian society.

In writing this thesis from the perspective of a life narrator, and with the advantage of hindsight, I can clearly see how the areas of disconnection within my family
mirrored the disconnection within the larger society. My parents experienced a profound disruption in their married life because of the conscription of my father into the Australian military. The stresses of this experience caused profound changes in the relationship between my parents, as well as between my brother and me. Having experienced the seclusion of domestic work and consequent separation from the world of paid work, I can more fully understand how my mother felt as she laboured within her suburban environment. What appeared, at the time, to be her exceedingly selfish solution has, with hindsight, become more understandable to me when I consider the changing role of women in society. I have personally experienced the same seclusion, dissatisfaction and ultimate liberation in my search to become more integrated with my "authentic self," to use de Beauvoir's expression. With the wisdom of maturity, I believe that feminist approaches to relationships between men and women, and within families, have done much to address the same problems that were apparent in my family.

In my interactions with the opposite sex I was drawn, as a teenager, to people from other cultures. I attended a Greek wedding in 1966 with my Greek boyfriend. My delight in, and appreciation of, the richness of this multicultural experience may have been a factor in my deciding, not only to undertake overseas travel, but also to emigrate to Canada in 1970. From my teenage years on I have always had a fascination with, and interest in, cultures different from my own. Until I left Australia, I had seen nothing but brown sheep in a brown Australian landscape, and it took exposure to New Zealand to integrate my own experience of sheep within the colourful paradigm of the greater world.

With such a culturally diverse population base in Australia, and also in Canada, it is essential that cultural exchange and the implementation of multiculturalism as a policy provide an opportunity to integrate people whose beliefs and habits differ. Immigrants
and minority groups now have a voice and many cultural barriers have, through time and experience, been erased, allowing all nationalities to celebrate their unique qualities while integrating harmoniously within the whole Australian society. As a result of the acute realization of its geographical place in Asia, Australia, with its high standard of living, political stability, vast open spaces and attractive lifestyle, has reconnected itself within the global village, content now with a modest rate of immigration and slow population growth.

My academic studies here in Canada, in later life, have exposed me to many of the complicated issues surrounding female identity and voice. This awareness has culminated in the production of this thesis and its accompanying research. Feminist support for women’s development through post-secondary education and career opportunities continues to seek to address many of the problems of separation, disconnection and inequality that have traditionally existed between men and women. This approach has blended the boundaries of those once rigidly masculine or feminine behavioural patterns. Both men and women now have the possibility of integrating into a more central position, a more “human” position on the continuum, neither particularly masculine nor feminine, where they can more easily develop their full potential.

As well, the proliferation and support for women’s studies courses in Australian and Canadian universities have done much to further public knowledge of issues of importance to women, but also to society as a whole. Women’s voices are now being heard and women are more easily able to take their rightful place as fully functioning individuals in society. As a life writer and reminiscent narrator, I have revisited my past experiences, placed them within the larger framework of Australian history as I
remember it and I share these memories with readers in the hope that they will make their own interpretations and, perhaps, be inspired to write their own stories.


