

**COLLIERY WOMEN OF DENABY MAIN
AND MARY**

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis researches links between the lives of colliery women and the life of Mary of Nazareth. As participant observer I collected evidence about colliery women in Denaby Main. The lack of direct evidence about Mary required the use of the results of contemporary New Testament scholarship as witness to the lives of first century Palestinian peasant women, using the writings of Osiek and Balch, Sawicki and Ilan. From this data a picture of peasant women was set alongside data from the gospel narratives, to produce a plausible picture of the life of Mary as a peasant woman, using Gerd Theissen's criteria of plausibility. Contextual similarities indicate that both peasant women and colliery women, in carrying the domestic burden, were vital to the survival of family and community, managing extremes of poverty in an unforgiving environment. From the positive convergence outcomes, the thesis suggests that it is plausible to identify twelve characteristics Mary shared with colliery women. The thesis also suggests there are common features in their lives that have significance in God's purpose.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 Page 1

DENABY MAIN

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Disciplinary Context

1.2.1 Main Disciplinary Context

1.2.2 Social History: The Experience of Women

1.2.3 Ideas: Determinant in Directing Human Movement

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Data Source: The Witnesses

1.3.2 The Collection of Data

1.3.3 Interpretation of Data

1.3.4 Bias

1.4 Denaby Main

1.4.1 Defining the Nature of a Mining Community

1.4.2 The Historical Context

1.4.3 Formative Events in Denaby's Social History

1.5 Women and Denaby Main

Chapter 1 Endnotes

CHAPTER 2 Page 18

COLLIERY WOMEN OF DENABY MAIN

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Methodology: Participant Observer

2.2.1 The Role of Participant Observer

2.2.2 My Ministry and its Involvement with Families of Denaby Main

2.2.3 The Role of Colliery Women in the Parish Church

2.3 On Being a Colliery Wife

2.3.1 The Historical Legacy of Being a Colliery Woman

2.3.2 Managing Survival

2.3.3 Living with the Fear

2.4 Methodology: Listening to Colliery Women

2.4.1 Validity of Data

2.4.2 The Advantages and Problems of the Main Point of Entry into the Data

2.4.3 Method of Collecting Data

2.4.4 The Use of Data

2.5 The Evidence of Witnesses

2.5.1 Women's Expectation: Education, Work

2.5.2 Poverty

2.5.3 Childhood Experiences of living with Colliery Mothers

2.5.4 Prioritising Father

2.5.5 Managing Loss and its Consequences

2.5.6 Proud Colliery Women

2.6 The Derivation of a Workable Model

2.6.1 How Category Preferences Worked

2.6.2 Colliery Women as Servants in the Shadows

2.6.3 Colliery Women Unequal in a Man's World

2.6.4 Colliery Women as Strong Mothers

2.6.5 Colliery Women Managing Loss and its Consequences

2.6.6 Colliery Women as Achievers through Adversity

2.6.7 The Quintessential Humanity of Colliery Women

2.7 Conclusion

Chapter 2 Endnotes

CHAPTER 3 Page 69

MARY'S SOCIAL CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Focus

3.1.2 Method

3.1.3 Three Scholarly Works Selected as Witnesses

(a) The Criteria

(b) The Selection

3.2 Scholarly Witnesses on Women in First Century Palestine

3.2.1 Women in the Days of Herod

(a) Peasant Women in Israelite Society

(b) Herodian Urbanization

- (c) Political Impact on Peasant Communities
- 3.2.2 Women in Galilee
 - (a) Living Conditions
 - (b) Village Communities
 - (c) Survival Management
 - (d) Devoted to Housework
 - (e) Extra-Household Activities
- 3.2.3 Women's Place in the Natural Order
 - (a) Honour and Shame Culture
 - (b) Gender Roles
 - (c) Caste Categorisation
- 3.2.4 Women and Male Control
 - (a) The Father's Authority
 - (b) The Husband's Authority
 - (c) Social Restrictions

3.3 Significant Threads

- 3.3.1 Rationale
- 3.3.2 Peasant Women as Servants in the Shadows (2.6.2)
- 3.3.3 Peasant Women Unequal in a Man's World (2.6.3)
- 3.3.4 Peasant Women as Strong Mothers (2.6.4)
- 3.3.5 Peasant Women Managing Loss and its Consequences (2.6.5)
- 3.3.6 Peasant Women as Achievers through Adversity (2.6.6)
- 3.3.7 Most Significant Threads

3.4 Conclusion

Chapter 3 Endnotes

CHAPTER 4 Page 101

MARY AND HER ROLE

4.1 Introduction

4.2 The Magnificat: God and Mary

- 4.2.1 God Looks on Lowly Mary
- 4.2.2 Powerless Mary is Blessed
- 4.2.3 Faithful Mary and the Lifting Up of the Poor
- 4.2.4 Insignificant Mary is God's Choice

4.3 Mary and Crisis Management

- 4.3.1 Crisis 1. Managing Contiguous Expectations
- 4.3.2 Crisis 2. Managing the Shameless Title of 'Unmarried Pregnant Girl'
- 4.3.3 Crisis 2 Managing the Behaviour of Jesus
- 4.3.4 Crisis 3 Managing the Trial and Execution of Her Son
- 4.3.5 Crisis 4 Managing Post-Calvary
 - (a) Option 1 Mary Returns Home
 - (b) Option 2 Mary and Leadership

4.4. Mary's Role.

Chapter 4 Endnotes

CHAPTER 5 Page 124

MARY AND LOWLY WOMEN

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Comparing Peasant Women and Colliery Women: Significant Threads

- 5.2.1 Servants in the Shadows
 - (a) Overview
 - (b) Positive Convergence Outcomes
- 5.2.2 Unequal in a Man's World
 - (a) Overview
 - (b) Positive Convergence Outcomes
- 5.2.3 Strong Mothers
 - (a) Overview
 - (b) Positive Convergence Outcomes
- 5.2.4 Managing Loss and its Consequences
 - (a) Overview
 - (b) Positive Convergence Outcomes
- 5.2.5 Managing Adversity
 - (a) Overview
 - (b) Positive Convergence Outcomes
- 5.2.6 Quintessential Humanity of Peasant Women and Colliery Women
 - (a) Overview
 - (b) Positive Convergence Outcomes

5.3 Significant Threads: Comparing Mary and Colliery Women

5.3.1 Mary Compared in Colliery Women Categories

- (a) Servant in the Shadows
- (b) Unequal in a Man's World

- (c) Strong Mother
- (d) Managing Loss
- (e) Managing Adversity
- (f) Quintessential Humanity

5.3.2 Mary Revealed: Twelve Plausible Characteristics

5.4 Conclusion

- 5.4.1 God's Dealing with Mary
- 5.4.2 God's Dealing with Colliery Women
- 5.4.3 Final Thoughts

Chapter 5 Endnotes

APPENDIX 1

A Survivor's Story Page 145

APPENDIX 2

Significant Sayings Page 147

APPENDIX 3

Literature Surveyed Page 150

APPENDIX 4

**Negative Convergence
Outcomes Page 152**

BIBLIOGRAPHY Page 154

CHAPTER 1

DENABY MAIN

1.1 Introduction

The history and setting of the community in which the research is conducted is described in this chapter. In the beginning coal was found and a village was born to serve its extraction. The fight for survival characterised life in the village and led to disaster, hardship and militancy. Set at the eastern end of the coal rich Dearne Valley, my relationship with Denaby Main began in the late 1960s, at a time when mining was in decline, coal reserves more difficult to access and the community facing the challenges of change (see 2.2.2). The thesis discusses the role of colliery women from the early decades of the twentieth century to the 1950s.

The history of Denaby Main in South Yorkshire has been orientated to the colliery man's contribution. Literature on Denaby Main focuses on the miner and the male dominated mining industry.¹ For example, research for a pamphlet compiled for the Miners' Chapel opening in 1989, found women seldom featured in other than background and supporting roles.² One contribution this thesis will try to make is to re-orientate the social history of Denaby Main by looking at the contribution of colliery women, and through their testimonies, re-balance the socio-historic record. The second half of the thesis seeks to re-orientate perceptions of Mary, the mother of Jesus, by looking at the social context of peasant women in first century Palestine, and comparing these results with the lives of colliery women.

1.2 Disciplinary Context

1.2.1 Main Disciplinary Context: Social History

Although it is not possible for definitive lines to be drawn between the disciplines involved in this research, it is convenient to set the thesis in social history as the major discipline, because the core subject of the research, in shorthand terms, is the story of women in working class culture. Although millennia apart, the parallel lives under

scrutiny are those of colliery women in Denaby Main and Mary, mother of Jesus, in Roman occupied Palestine. The data sources for colliery women are their own testimony told either by themselves or their families. As indicated in New Testament studies, historical research cannot reproduce situations from the past, and, therefore, the evidence available for research is not 'fact' but testimony on the facts. The data sources for Mary are much less direct. The essential data, in a sense, are the gospel writers but their interest in Mary is brief. So it is to scholars such as Marianne Sawicki, Carolyn Osiek, Bruce Malina, and John Stambaugh and David Balch, that the research turns as it develops a picture of the social-cultural environment of Mary's life.³ Robert Shafer, puts it succinctly calling it a 'guess', but it is an informed and educated guess.⁴ It is based on evidence, and in its relation to Mary of Nazareth, it is suggestive. Inevitably there are overlaps with other disciplines such as theology and women's studies. However, social history offers the most appropriate way to study and compare two widely distanced (in time) experiences of lower class women dealing with their not totally dissimilar social cultures, as we shall argue.

1.2.2 Social History: The Experience of Women

The disciplinary framework for the thesis is social history. The necessity of history is deeply rooted in personal psychic need and in the human striving for community. Tracing personal roots grounds a person's identity in a collective group with a shared past, be it racial, ethnic, religious or national. It is the way to acquire stability and the basis for community. Those without a usable past, such as slaves and some members of racial or ethnic groups, have been denied their history. Women have long existed in this condition.

Groups deprived of their history suffer a distortion of self-perception and a sense of inferiority based on the denigration of the communal experience of the group to which they belong. To be out of history is to be out of power and this develops in oppressed groups a sense of solidarity among themselves as victims of oppression. Generally speaking, groups who are in the minority suffer in this way. In the case of women, however, they are not a minority, although they have often been treated as though they were. Women appear in each class and rank in society and they share, through connection

with males of their family groups, the fate, values and aspirations of their class, race or ethnic group. Women have participated in building civilized societies with men in a world dominated and defined by men. Women have functioned in a separate culture within the culture they share with men. No story of cultural history, therefore, is adequate which neglects or minimises women's power in the world. Traditionally, history has been considered only in male-centred terms. This thesis will focus on a woman-centred inquiry into the existence of the experience of women within the culture shared by men and women both in Denaby Main and in Galilee.⁵

Women made up half of the mining community, and their part in building social structures is essential for an adequate understanding of the social history of Denaby Main. The strength of colliery women might have been derived from their psychic need of community and from shared motives and values which made them determined to create an acceptable concept of human society in a context of life where survival had first priority. Women's strength may have had its source in their biological difference, the innate nature of being women, able intuitively to discern significant events and then to take subjectively meaningful action to adapt to their environment.⁶ Whether it was an historically conditioned response to counteract their disadvantaged position, or was the result of their biological nature as colliery women, they played a significant role in bringing into existence a village and creating the cultural history that did not exist before coal was extracted, a history that has been reinterpreted again and again long after they have left the scene.⁷

1.2.3 Ideas: Determinant in Directing Human Movement

The investigatory process of any historical research has to have a situation in which the events of the past, the actual happenings, took place.⁸ The reason why context is important, stems from the view that 'an historical reality has not been discovered that had an existence apart from men [sic] and that men themselves created history'.⁹ In other words, this research, like all historical inquiries, has to struggle with the interaction of the behaviour of humans whose various complexities include intellectual and spiritual forces, an example of which is 'historically created genderedness'. Human activity involves

large numbers of interlocking variables which make observation of human activity imprecise. Social human activity happens at the location where two or three are gathered together. It may be creative in building social structures to manage the environment.

This leads to the connection, between facts and ideas. The activity of individuals in society is determined not only by the physical conditions of existence but also by the ideas that individuals hold of their relationship with each other, of their hopes of life and family. Ideas in the life of individuals are facts, subjective facts maybe, but they are real in their effects on social history. Ideas are the engines that chiefly determine the direction of human movement.¹⁰ Ideas were the chief determinant in the direction of human movement in Denaby Main. The actual reality was the decision to sink shafts and mine coal. Different values and motives were operating at the time. It brought together two groups of people with different ideas in their mind, which for them as individuals within their groups, were facts. There was the group of determined investors with ideas (facts in their mind) of high profits at minimal outlay. The second group was made up of men and families who came from all round the country with the idea (facts in their mind) of survival, attracted by the hope of steady if not well paid work. The meeting of these two social forces would determine the direction of the human movement along the fault lines of profit and survival. The history of Denaby depended upon the action of both groups and their willingness to agree on ideas. Social interaction requires some kind of agreement on motives and values, in this instance, the merging of ideas such as profit and survival, to interpret future strategies in terms of a shared conception of human society. In this case there was no fusion of ideas but mutual dependency required the continuation of a fractured relationship between colliery owners, men and their families.

If history is the record of the actions of human beings, the history of Denaby may reveal a society welded together by hardship, poverty and deprivation. It may also uncover, in the testimony of colliery women, those whose shared motives and values sought to create an acceptable concept of human society by resourcefulness, innovation and determination in even larger measure. In its analysis of testimonies, the research will seek to develop a characteristic typology of working class women in Denaby Main. As in other historical

enquiries, so in this research it will not be possible to recreate the past to test hypotheses about behaviour. Therefore the evidence available for research is not ‘fact’ but testimony on the facts. The testimony is affected by the powers of observation, the mental state and veracity of the testifier.¹¹

1.3 Methodology

Methodology has to take into account the parameters which operate when researching social history. When the available evidence is not fact but testimony on the facts, it is essential that both the data source (witnesses) and the one who gathers and processes the data (the testifier) are trusted for the reliability of their evidence, its collection and interpretation. In this regard G.R. Ellis in his book, *The Practice of History*, has been helpful. He makes suggestions on ways to develop a methodology which elicits, as far as possible, a true meaning to the evidence available.¹²

1.3.1 Data Source: The Witnesses

First, Ellis suggests that historical facts are known only by the evidence they leave behind. I take this to mean that colliery women are the data source and the detail of their lives is evidence in the social history of the first fifty years of the twentieth century of the mining community of Denaby Main. The evidence is not always clear cut. The corroborating evidence recorded below about pit women in Durham, along with the testimony of Denaby colliery women, are major components in constructing an overall historical understanding of mining in that period of the twentieth century. Standing on its own, the evidence from Denaby women and their families in this thesis, establishes a female perspective in the knowledge required for a history of Denaby (let alone a history of women in mining communities) to exist and have credibility.¹³

1.3.2 The Collection of Data

Ellis then emphasises the need to extract, as far as possible, the true meaning from the facts of the past. By this I understand he is referring to the way data is gathered. This thesis is attempting to study the actions of human beings orientating or interrelating their actions (as families and community) to one another and communicating in symbolic

interaction (sharing a cultural identity verbally and experientially), in a complex set of circumstances.¹⁴ The method in this thesis has to embrace symbolic interaction in time zones centuries apart, made more problematic by the modes of data collection. The extraction of meaning and interrelation from the evidence will require an open and flexible systematic method of approach. One such method is discussed by Clive Seale. The data collected by feminist researchers through their preferred method of participant observation (which is my preferred method) is interpreted and analysed within the framework that understands the social world as symbolic communication between both genders (actors) in social interaction.

1.3.3 Interpretation of Data

Ellis wants a close examination of the data to ascertain exactly what evidence is there and exactly what it means. This requires of the observer knowledge of sources and to apply competent criticism to them.¹⁵ There are separate and distinctive data sources for two major groups of women (actors) in this research thesis. The first group, the colliery women of Denaby Main, has as its data source the testimony of colliery women in Denaby Main. A method of learning the culture of women under study, and a method of empathy with them has been exercised by the participant observer who has, for over forty years, lived amongst the ‘actors’ and in this way understands the culture and the meaning of their symbolic interrelationship (see also Chapter 2).

As participant observation does not apply to the second group, data will be collated from the New Testament and from scholars in New Testament studies and Palestinian social history with reference to peasant women in the era of Mary. It will be assumed that Mary would orientate her actions to other human beings, one to another and communicate in symbolic interaction, in a similar way to other peasant women of the time.

1.3.4 Bias

Barzun and Graff suggest the interest of the researcher will determine their discoveries, their selection and their exposition.¹⁶ This is unavoidable. Individuality plays its part in research and produces solutions or arrives at conclusions in certain ways. It is when

interest begins to spoil the product that it becomes bias. The researcher needs to be self-aware enough to acknowledge the assumptions connected with their interest. It is the job of the social history researcher to form as exact an idea of past events as is possible from surviving evidence. Their own mind, however, operates in the present. Their own way of thinking, their outlook, their opinions are products of the times in which they live.

Whatever the researcher discovers of the past is a compound of the past and present. Shafer distinguishes between the meaning of bias and subjectivity. Every person is subjective in the sense that they are aware of and seek to understand the meaning of experiences in terms of their own values. Many values are shared with others so that groups have common interests and responses to certain events, but each individual develops their own reality world. Subjectivity is inescapable. Every researcher has an opinion. The questions to be asked of it are: What are the bases for this opinion? What evidence was sought and what evidence was found for that opinion.¹⁷ As a researcher I have a subjective opinion of and an interest in this mining community. I include the following passage to indicate my understanding of mining and its immediate world. Miners have described this scene to me in different ways on a number of occasions.

Coal was dug by teams of eight to ten men traditionally by pick and shovel. Each man would hew five tons of coal in a shift. They would be paid 2s 3d per ton. The work was hot and sweaty in conditions so continually dripping water from the roof, the Parkgate seam was nicknamed 'stewpot'. Men took six pint Dudleys of water with them to drink on shift but often sent out for refills. (62) The team of miners split into six men cutting the coal and two 'packing the Gob', the space left behind when the coal was cut. The two best coal cutters worked on the extremes of the face, the next best two working in the middle and the slowest on the inside. This helped to maximise their pay. They would tram their tub to a central point. 'Muck Pickers' were young lads who were employed to pick out the stone and earth from the coal as it moved to be screened.¹⁸

My interest in that working scene is not so much the danger and the poor working conditions on long shifts. It's not so much the comradeship built up between members of the teams. It is not so much the young age of the 'muck pickers'. My interest is drawn to the tiny terraced cottage in the long streets of Denaby, outside toilet, back yard, smoke billowing from the Yorkshire stove inside. It was a man's world but mining is not all about the miners. There is a wife and mother in there working all hours to make sure the

team of six and muck pickers have a meal immediately they get home after they've bathed in the tin bath. If the miner gets home exhausted, the wife, who waits on him and the children, is up with him at 3am with Dudley and snap tin waiting for her husband and perhaps sons as well. The meaning behind the action in pit and home is survival and the actions are orientated or interrelated to one another (as families and community) and communicating in symbolic interaction (sharing a cultural identity verbally, experientially and in practical reality), in a complex set of circumstances. My bias is towards the colliery woman who is confined to home and, apart from her children, worked alone and worried more if her children are muck pickers. My opinion is that without the home there is no pit or community. To avoid the worst effects of bias, the strategy I use, is to apply a strictness not only to the recording of notes, but in the objective exercise of the skill acquired over forty years of ministry to understand the meaning that lies behind the facts expressed in the words of witnesses.

1.4 Denaby Main

1.4.1 Defining the Nature of a Mining Community

Bernard Knapp¹⁹ looks at the anthropology and archaeology of mining generally, not coal mining alone, and draws evidence from across the world. His ethnographical summary of mining to my mind encapsulates Denaby as it was in the past. He writes:

‘the mining community, be it camp or village, represents the domestic space of people who often were heterogeneous in character, of diverse origins and drawn together by the need to work. Mining populations often had higher fertility than do agricultural communities, not least because of higher infant and adult mortality or debility but also as a result of early marriage for women, low child-rearing costs and a minimum number of females in the labour force. Mining is a labour-intensive activity and requires a reliable, inexhaustible pool of labour. Coming as they did from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, mining households were often co-residential, with men either living in bunkhouses or boarding with families.’²⁰

It is to these households that this thesis looks for data and for evidence of the impact on the women of the households described by Knapp's observation. Evidence that the colliery women of Denaby Main come within Knapp's definition is found in Benson & Neville's *Studies in the Yorkshire Coal Industry*, in which the interview with Harriet Hallet produces important supporting data²¹ (2.7).

1.4.2 The Historical Context

The purpose for this chapter is to set the context for this thesis and for Chapter Two in particular. The method I intend to use is briefly to present Denaby's history from its emergence as a rural to an urban industrial environment with corroborating evidence from the Durham coalfield and contrasting details from the Wentworth collieries on the Fitzwilliam estate.

Denaby Main owes its existence to coal. A large slice of history would forever have remained un-experienced and unwritten had the Barnsley seam not been discovered below the land lying between two ancient settlements, Mexborough and Conisbrough. Yet, regardless of the passing of more than a generation since the closure of Cadeby colliery in 1986, the mining tradition remains vibrant in the memory of those now living in post-colliery Denaby. The paraphernalia of that proud mining tradition is on display in the Miners' Welfare, the artefacts of mining from Denaby and Cadeby are built into structure of the Miners' Chapel and schools write and perform the story of the great strike of 1903.²²

In the Yorkshire coalfield, the Barnsley seam was the richest and most famous. As the demand for coal increased in the mid-nineteenth century many pits were sunk in the well-proven areas along the length of the Dearne Valley. The Barnsley seam at that time ran as far as Wombwell, 5 miles west of Denaby, where the seam dipped at a hamlet called Denaby, and tests revealed the need for a deep mine. Six thousands jobs were eventually created and men brought their wives and families from Cheshire to Durham, Essex to Ireland, Scotland, even from Portugal, to find employment.²³ In 1868 the colliery company began the construction of an entire colliery village and Denaby Main came into existence. The hamlet became known as Old Denaby. Rows of tied terraced cottages were built to house an ever increasing workforce and their families.²⁴ Bailey portrays these homes as 'the construction of some of the worst slums in the North of England'. These same 'slums' were the workplace of colliery women and continued as homes long after I arrived in 1969.²⁵ Bailey describes the environment colliery women had to

confront as wives and mothers. Grids of terraced houses covered with a blanket of smog rising at 4.30am from a thousand waking homes. Living in Denaby put twenty years on women looking old and haggard long before their age warranted it. 'Mouths were many, crusts were few'. The oldest houses were built in the backyard of the colliery, rows of grim boxes. Damp walls, damp floors. 'Two up two down' housed families of up to ten children. There were few amenities and poor sanitation. Dust and stink until the middens were replaced by outside toilets in the 1930s.²⁶

Although her novel is fictitious, Sheelagh Kelly sets the family scene of her story in a Denaby pit cottage. Her description of Denaby is compelling and readily recognised by Harriet, Sally, Freda and Lily (2.1.2) and myself, for, in 1969, little had changed in Denaby over many generations.²⁷ In *Pit Women*, Griselda Carr describes the housing in north east pit villages and it reflects the conditions in Denaby Main.²⁸ The women of such villages had a different set of values. The families of pitmen are familiarised with the scenery of the pit landscape. To them the outwardly dismal settlements were friendly, all embracing and supportive. They were vibrant and proud communities.

1.4.3 Formative Events in Denaby's Social History

Bailey records how other miners from the Wentworth collieries and nearby family-owned pits viewed Denaby. They called Denaby a 'rough 'oyl' and a bad place. 'You hadn't much trouble at little pits. You see there was a stronger set of owners at Denaby, they could rule the roost'. This 'ruling the roost' led to two formative moments in Denaby's social history which are still remembered today.²⁹

(a) First was the Bag Muck Strike. Booth says the strike was caused by the intransigence of the colliery owners and had ramifications far wider than the streets and homes of Denaby Main.³⁰ Bailey suggests in the opening decades of the twentieth century, the South Yorkshire coalfield became one of the key battle grounds in a class war to redress the injustices inherent in British society.³¹ Bailey continues, 'on a bitterly cold morning in the winter of 1903, some of the first salvos were fired in a village eight miles from Wentworth House'. She claims that the Bag Muck Strike assumed centre stage in the

national conflict between capital and labour.³² In relating the story of the Bag Muck Strike, in what was a man's world, it is important to remember the colliery women managed their men and homes in often appalling conditions and with few if any resources, none at times of strife. The men on the coalface wanted pay for removing the muck, the dirt that came with the coal. They went on strike. Families were evicted.³³ Bewildered families, men, women and children, looked on. Carts supplied by local traders took their belongings away to barns, outbuildings, club rooms, schoolrooms. Families were forced to find shelter with friends, relations, local clergy did their best, but a large number lived in marquees and bell tents. Living conditions in bitterly cold winter conditions were harsh. The long winter strike claimed the lives of two children. The strike, one of the most notorious, was a disaster for men and union. The owners now were in a strong position even though their claim for damages against the union was finally rejected by the House of Lords. Within the workforce there were new non-union men alongside old workmen, disillusioned and heavily in debt. It was a wretched time for their women. The extreme hardship suffered by the women of Denaby and their families might have come to nothing as their men grudgingly returned to work, but their endurance of such cruel conditions forged a deep spirit of strength and interdependence for the generations to come. The women of Denaby, whose men lived hard and dangerous lives, were a strong thread in the spirit of a proud, militant community, which lasted to and beyond the last strike of all in 1984.

(b)The Cadeby Colliery Disaster was the second of the social formative events.³⁴ Its cause was to be found in the indifference of the owners to the safety of their miners. Lord Billy Fitzwilliam had worked underground and qualified as a mining engineer. For him safety was paramount. He owned some land under which coal at Cadeby Colliery was mined. He had tried to convince the manager they had too much dust (the biggest danger of the lot) and needed to have more ventilation. 'Watch Cadeby', he had said, 'there'll be a terrible blow up one day'.³⁵ There is a photograph in the Miners' Chapel in Denaby. In the picture women are wearing the long skirts, aprons, shawls and close fitting bonnets of the working class. They stand amongst men, some wearing boaters, old and young

waiting for news. They stood near the bridge leading to Cadeby pit. It was immediately after the Cadeby Colliery disaster.³⁶

Percy Murgatroyd, who survived, described his experiences to his daughter, Marjorie (See Appendix 1). In dramatic detail he describes his experience of the second underground explosion: total darkness, another explosion, silence. The disaster was so etched into the lives of Denaby families that Harriet, though a child at the time, remembers the sad and lasting effects it had on her mother. Perhaps the Springthorpe sisters, whose two brothers died in the explosions, are in themselves evidence of the lasting traumatic impact the disaster had on the social history of Denaby. Annually, on July 9th, they were still presenting flowers in church, seventy five years later, as mining at Cadeby was coming to an end.³⁷

In a photograph, mentioned above, of colliery women waiting at the pit gates for news of loved ones, the manner of the dress they wore has close parallels to the dress and work pattern of Durham miners' wives. Drawing on local evidence in Durham, Carr suggests that their dress was a symbol of their ceaseless work.³⁸ Carr explains the one source of pride which was the solidarity of mining communities. Solidarity was a natural reaction to the opposition of all-powerful management and the work and living environments. Women found solidarity within their own neighbourliness, their willingness to help each other especially in times of family stress, at childbirth, during illness and through bereavement. In a single-class community (as indeed was Denaby) women as well as men earned respect by building up a reputation at work, in the home and in dealings with neighbours. Dignity and respectability as people, apart from their limited roles as housewives, were important cultural elements within communities.³⁹

1.5 Women and Denaby Main

The value of the discipline of social history is that it extracts, as far as possible, the true meaning from the facts and events of the past. Women played a significant role in bringing into existence the village of Denaby Main and creating the cultural history that

did not exist before coal was extracted, a history that has been reinterpreted again and again long after they have left the scene. They derived strength as colliery women from the community they created interactively and, from shared motives and values, determined to create an acceptable concept of human society in a context of life where survival had first priority. Their strength also lay in their capacity to discern significant events and then to take subjectively meaningful action to adapt to their environment. The Murgatroyd account begs the question, where is the story of Mrs Murgatroyd? It gives credence to the suffering and loss faced by colliery women who would share a collective memory of strikes and disasters as well as the reality of both, as they struggled with living in the setting of Denaby Main, inheritors of the nature and spirit of their own parents and grandparents. They would have a common socio-cultural attitude to the injustices of life. They would know how to deal with Harriet's problem when her husband died leaving her a widow with children. Many other colliery widows had received eighteen shillings a week from the post office, ten shillings for herself, five shillings for her older daughter and three shillings for her son. It was a common experience to go on the Parish and be allowed rent for eight shillings and three pence. It was well known that if your son was poorly they took three shillings off you if he was in hospital. When her brother came to live with her, they took three shillings off Harriet with the warning that he must not pay her more than a pound a week. There would be nods of understanding (See Section 2.5.1 W48, W49). You made the most of what you had. For colliery women had helped to create a culturally vibrant and proud community set in Denaby Main.

The story told of Harriet Hallet is a particularly poignant one for me, ethnographically, as the participant observer. I have sat and talked with Harriet, as I have with her daughter Joan. Harriet's son Jim Macfarlane became leader of Doncaster Council and it is his thesis I quote in this research. I have sadly buried each of them. Her surviving son, Ken Homer, was an official in the NUM. Joan's daughter, Yvonne, is a great friend to me and my wife. Her daughter, Helen (Harriet's grand daughter), was recently in church with her son, Harriet's great grandson, and Helen is fascinated that her grandma is mentioned in a book on the social history of South Yorkshire pits. It is through Neil Benson's research

that Helen and her children will discover not only facts about Harriet, but also by tracing their personal roots, will ground their identity in a collective group with a shared past. It is the way they may acquire stability and the basis for their own lives, as they make history in a totally different era. In Chapter Two, the stories of my witnesses and Harriet Bright are to be set against this backcloth of a defiant, close and supportive community. Some of these characteristics are still evident today in a changing post-colliery community, now made up of a collection of six large council estates.

In the next chapter further consideration will be given to the person and role of participant observer in this research, as well as an insight into the collection, validity and use of data of witnesses to the essential nature of being a colliery woman in Denaby Main. There will be an introduction to the method of categorization of the research

Chapter 1 Endnotes

1. See A.J.Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries (Bridlington: Industrial Railway Society 1990); Catherine Bailey, Black Diamonds (London: London: Penguin Books 2007); J.E.MacFarlane, The Blood On Your Coal (MA Thesis: Sheffield 1975); For coal mining generally see also D. Anderson. Coal (Newton Abbot: David and Charles 1987). R.Page Arnot, The Miners 1889-1910. (London: George Allen and Unwin 1949). R. Page Arnot, The Miners: One Union One Industry 1939-1946 (London: George Allen and Unwin 1979). R. Page Arnot. The Miners in Crisis and War 1930 Onwards (London: George Allen and Unwin 1961).
2. Conisbrough and Denaby History Group, A History of Denaby Main, Research for Pamphlet published for the opening of Denaby and Cadeby Miners' Memorial Chapel, 1989.
3. John Stambaugh & David Balch. The New Testament in its Social Environment (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1986). Bruce Malina, The New Testament World (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 2001. Marianne Sawicki, Crossing Galilee (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity), 2000.
4. J.R. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method (Homewood IL: The Dorsey Press 1974), p. 4.
5. Gerda Lerna, History Matters, pp. 118-119. See also Michael Alvillian, Researching Local History (London: Longmans 1996).
6. Clive Seale, Researching Society and Culture (London: Sage Publications 1999), p .13.
7. Lerna, History Matters, pp. 210-211. Lerner distinguishes between biological differences between men and women, and historically conditioned differences. The former is described in terms of the gender based division of labour involving women in pregnancy, child birth, nursing babies and caring for small children, activities that are not markers of a woman's inferiority or subordination. Historically conditioned

differences are explained as women kept out of power, educationally disadvantaged and placed in the position of dependants in a patriarchal society.

8. J.R. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, p. 3. See also Margaret Hibbert. The Pit Boy and Denaby Main, 2001.

9. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, p.12. See also Derek Holland, Changing Landscapes in South Yorkshire. (Torbay: T. Holland 1980).

10. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, p.36.

11. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, p.4.

12. G.R. Ellis, The Practice of History (Sydney: University Press 1967), p. 81.

13. Ellis, The Practice of History, p.82.

14. Seale, Researching Society and Culture, p. 38.

15. Ellis, The Practice of History, p.83.

16. Jacque Barzun & Henry Graff. The Modern Researcher (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1977), pp. 152-157. For further explanation see Chapter Two.

17. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, pp.169, 170. For further explanation see chapter two.

18. A.J. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, p.64.

19. Bernard Knapp, Social Approaches to an Industrial Past (London: Routledge 1990), p.4. See also G.Tomlinson, Coal Miners, (London: Hutchinson and Co 1937). Bernard Taylor. Uphill all the Way; The Miners's Struggle (London: Sidgwick and Jackson 1972); Brian Jenner, The Coal Strike, Christian Reflections on the Miners' Struggle (Sheffield: UTU New City Paper Backs 1986).

20. Knapp, Social Approaches to an Industrial Past, p.11.

21. J. Benson & R. G Neville, Studies in the Yorkshire Coal Industry (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 1976. See also Neville Dennis, Coal is our Life (London: Eyre Spottiswood 1956).

22. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, p.3.

23. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, p.4.

24. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, pp.9-11. The brick built terraced cottages consisted of two bedrooms upstairs with a living room and a kitchen/dining room downstairs. In the kitchen there would be an earthenware sink, a combined oven and coal fire and a copper water boiler.

25. Catherine Bailey, Black Diamonds, p.73. Toilet facilities were in earth closets in the 'backs' of the terraces known as middens. Water flushed down the length of the middens, taking excrement to an end collection pit to be periodically emptied by contractors called 'night soil men.' There is a picture in the Miners' Chapel window of a midden. Such unsanitary conditions led to many health problems and was a contributory factor in a high infant mortality rate. These miners' cottages were only replaced in the 1980s. See also Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, pp. 69-70. The family of Edith Booth (interviewed in 2008) remembered the middens running down the centre of George Street in Denaby. Her sons recalled air raid shelters being built on the site of the middens. They were filled in, in the late 1930s.

26. Bailey, Black Diamonds, p.70-95.

27. Also see Sheelagh Kelly, A Different Kind of Loving (London: Harper Collins 2003), p. 32. She described Denaby 'as a collection of slag heaps and winding gear, a network of railway lines, the smoke that belched from countless chimneys, a powder works, a glass factory and rows of grimy cottages marked this as a place of monotonous industry. Denaby Main would grace no artist's canvas. The lifeblood of the village was transfused by the Denaby and Cadeby Colliery, whose black pulleys, towers and gantries dominated the valley, as its owners dominated its inhabitants. Almost everything and everyone in the village belonged to the Company'.
28. Griselda Carr, Pit Women: Coal Communities in Northern England (London: Merlin Press 2001), p.34. In Durham, houses were variously described as 'bleak and terrible', 'most-woeful looking', and as 'the miserable back yard to the collieries'. The worst description of the Durham pit villages was, 'a tribe of Englishmen living in isolated, work-centred, hate ridden communities, dwellings row upon row, vile smoke belching from stacks place without regard for eye or lung'.
29. Bailey, Black Diamonds, p. 65.
30. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, p.41.
31. Bailey, Black Diamonds, p.68. In 1900 Britain's status as the richest and most powerful nation in the world depended on coal. It was her biggest export. It powered railways, fuelled steamships with her trade round the world and the Imperial Fleet that protected them. Bailey goes on to say that at the time 88% of the population owned nothing and 1% owned two thirds of the nation's wealth.
32. Bailey, Black Diamonds, p.72. See also p.82. It was a bitter strike lasting through the cold winter months. Families were evicted. Over two hundred policemen, some mounted, moved into Denaby to supervise and conduct the evictions. Streets were cordoned off, houses entered, contents left out on the streets and the doors locked. Rioting took place and Lord Asquith, MP for Morley and Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire, came personally to read the riot act. (It is also referred to in research carried out by the Conisbrough and Denaby History Group for the Miners' Memorial Chapel Brochure).
33. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, pp. 41-42. Discontent had simmered for months before the start of the strike in July 1902 lasting through a miserable winter and ending in March 1903. One elderly lady visiting the Miners' Chapel recalled that she had just been married at the time of the evictions, and she described her grandmother refusing to move from her rocking chair and being lifted in her chair by two burley policemen into the street. The two policemen, she remembered, were apologetic and with tears in their eyes.
34. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, p. 56. See also Catherine Bailey, Black Diamonds, p.146. Bailey's book is about the Fitzwilliam family and Wentworth House and the collieries sunk on their large estates.
35. Bailey, Black Diamonds, p.147.
36. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, p.56. See also Catherine Bailey, Black Diamonds, p.134. 88 miners, including rescuers, died in two explosions. The sequence of events leading to the first explosion 2 am, July 9th 1912 is recorded in the report by HM Chief Inspector of Mines, January 13th 1913. There was a second explosion about 12 noon, 9th July 1912. Percy Murgatroyd, one of only three survivors, describes the effects of the second explosion and his personal experiences in the chaos and darkness to his daughter who wrote them down 'in his own word'. Her letter is in the Miners' Chapel archives. In a postscript, Marjorie records that the three survivors enlisted in the 1914-1918 war. Farmery and Birch lost their lives in the war leaving her father as the sole survivor of the explosion. He saw service in the RAMC in France, Egypt and Palestine. In the battle of the Somme he was blown up, shell shocked, but physically uninjured. He worked at Cadeby for 50 years, many as a deputy. He died of pneumoconiosis in 1964. See R.A.Redmayne, Explosions at the Cadeby Main Colliery. Chief Inspector of Mines Home Office Report 1913.

37. James McFarlane, The Blood on your Coal, (MA Thesis: Sheffield 1975), pp.2 and 15. He makes the point that, whilst colliery disasters by their very nature make a big impact on the public mind, the appalling day to day fatalities which killed most miners are diminished in their significance. The majority of fatal accidents in the life time of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries were through falls of roof or coal or side.

38. Carr, Pit Women, p.34. She presents their functional fashion with the example of a Throckley grandma, in the inter-war years, who always wore a black skirt an apron down to her ankles covered by an apron or a pinny. She wore a starched white apron on Saturdays and Sundays. The dress had the air of a mission statement, when Carr adds to its symbolism by including a 'family' testimony- that grandma's dress was a sign of her acceptance of toil. Work was the motive for her whole life and the source of her self-respect [here it takes on a Biblical quality] the quality above all others that her husband most valued.

39. Carr, Pit Women, p.26.

CHAPTER 2

COLLIERY WOMEN OF DENABY MAIN

2.1 Introduction

Social history was described in 1.2.1 as the main discipline for the thesis. This chapter presents the role of participant observer as the most appropriate ethnographical approach for studying the lives of colliery women in Denaby Main.¹ To support its use I will draw on Clive Seale's description of Weber's 'action theory' and empathy as the first of two steps in the approach. Weber's suggestion was that the social world consists of the subjectively meaningful actions of individuals² and the 'action theory' of society is developed from the fact that people have a purposive character because they give meaning to their actions. Action becomes social, and society is produced when individual actors orientate their actions to one another. They acknowledge shared beliefs, values and interests. Action cannot be understood by external observation. The researcher does not try to identify with the actor (that is try to become the actor which produces an emotional understanding), but must achieve a degree of empathy with the actor by grasping the actor's meaning. This is crucial for the method of understanding. It provides a rational understanding opposed to an emotional one.³

The second step is the communicative interaction needed to gain access to meanings of action. Seale turns to Mead in his study of human behaviour. Behaviour is based upon a problem-solving adaptation to the environment. The social world is a world of inter-communicative symbolic interaction. As in the action theory, human action can only be understood by gaining access to the meanings which guide it. It involves learning the culture of the people under study. It is a field of study best suited to participant observation and ethnographic analysis to describe what happens in social settings, how people involved see their own actions and the context in which action takes place.⁴

Weber's action theory and Mead's perspective of symbolic interaction assists the legitimacy of the testimony of colliery women as an historic record of the actions of human beings orientating their actions to one another and communicating in symbolic interaction. The researcher needs a degree of empathy to grasp the meaning of the action (Weber) and to gain access to the meanings which guide human action, it is necessary for of the researcher to learn the culture of people under study (Mead). Seale concludes that participant observation best suits these requirements.

It is the intention of this investigation to observe, with empathy, the behaviour of the colliery women of Denaby from within their culture in their practical problem-solving adaptation to their mining environment.

2.2 Methodology: Participant Observer

2.2.1 The Role of Participant Observer

As the Vicar of Denaby Main for forty years, I am in the position of a participant observer. In explaining this role reference is made to Tim May; Cohen, Manion and Morrison; and Alan Bryman.⁵ They raise issues important to my role as participant observer:

1. First, in contrast to other methods, May states that participant observation is said to make no firm assumption about what is important. Ideas may be developed from observations, inductive observations.⁶ Over the years of my ministry in this place I have learned especially from visiting bereaved families and listening to their stories, the things that are important to them. This has informed my manner of approach.

2. Secondly, the method of participant observation encourages researchers to immerse themselves in the day-to-day activities of the people they are attempting to understand.⁷ My own immersion in Denaby is both long standing and wide ranging. We share the same clinic, supermarket, walk the same streets and Craggs and meet in homes and sometimes in clubs. We share moments of sadness and joy. Their children are known to me through my connection with schools and Sure Start programmes. We share the same community history together over nearly two generations.

3. Thirdly, social life is not fixed but dynamic and changing. It is incremental and progressive. If people's lives are constantly changing then the observer must become part of their lives in order to understand how it changes.⁸ This is intriguing and has made me study my method again.⁹ It is arguable that statements from colliery women and witnesses, because they are made in this post- colliery era, have a clearer definition and greater depth of perception and focus. I have observed their lives whilst this social dynamic of change has taken place. It brings into sharper contrast how things were.¹⁰

4. Cohen, Manion and Morrison support the value of the participant observer but warn participants to be aware of 'going native' by adopting the values, norms and behaviours of the group as their own and therefore becoming a member of the group.¹¹ This, as I understand it, is about losing objectivity. As I have been in this community for a long time this could be a problem; but, however close you are as a priest to a community, it is very difficult to become part of the group. The laity seem to draw a line between themselves and clergy. Nevertheless, objectivity will be important in my analysis of the data so the warning is timely and to achieve it, it will be necessary to stand back, subject the material to critical analysis and, where possible, compare data with other places.

5. Alan Bryman describes participant observation as unstructured. It does not entail the use of an observation schedule. Instead, the aim is to record as much detail of behaviour to develop a narrative account of that behaviour.¹² This brings me back to the point made earlier that I have learned from witnesses the things that are important, especially to bereaved families. Observation takes place in their home, often with other members of the family. I do not force the direction of the conversation but there is a general development of personal feeling and experience and a pattern has emerged.¹³

A summary of how I see my role as a participant observer:

1. To observe as a long time member of the community
2. To record data from my observations

3. My unstructured observations require objectivity in collecting the data and in its analysis.
4. The perception of witnesses who view their lives historically is the dynamic of my observations and my task is to bring to them clarity of definition.

In terms of my role, it is necessary for me to begin by explaining briefly my ministry and its pastoral involvement with the families of Denaby that forms the basis of my observations, and the role that colliery women have played in the parish Church.

2.2.2 My Ministry and its Involvement with Families of Denaby Main

My ministry as Vicar of All Saints Denaby Main began in 1969 when I was inducted and collated into the benefice. By the time my ministry started the traditions of this colliery community were deeply entrenched. The role and status of colliery women was well understood. My arrival coincided with the impact on families of the closure of Denaby Colliery in 1968. I discovered it to be an isolated, proud and defiant community.¹⁴

Looking back, the closure of the pit was the beginning of the post-mining era in which the present community finds itself. My ministry amongst families was caught up in strikes, soup kitchens, braziers and marches which were features of the 1970s and 80s. Miners were still a low paid workforce and poverty existed in many families. My admiration for working class women springs from my own family roots on Merseyside. My mother had the same strength and selflessness which marks out those whose life is spent doing remarkable things, balancing priorities with few financial resources. There have been many points of contact with colliery women during my ministry of nearly forty years, recorded through baptisms, weddings, funerals and pastoral visits. Many conversations have been written down for Chapel lectures and some contacts are unforgettable memories.¹⁵

2.2.3 The Role of Colliery Women in the Parish Church

Churchgoing even in the 1930s was not a priority with most men. In my pastoral experience women have always predominated. The part they could play in church

positions was still limited by their traditional status as colliery women. They were there to clean and make tea, though they could sit as members of the Church Council.¹⁶

When I started my pastoral ministry, circumstances demanded change and at the forefront to manage the challenges facing Denaby Church, were colliery women. They were freed to become leaders and they became a power for managing change. Liz Green, Beattie Croft, Winnie Robinson, Maisie Eyre, Florence Gregory, Shirley Panther, Elaine Ross to name but a few, all colliery women, were the heart and soul of my early parish ministry in Denaby. The creativity of colliery women carried through the pastoral decision to build a new parish Church which was consecrated in 1975. It was their courage that over came the destruction of much of the fabric by arsonists in 1977 and the rebuilding that followed. They were involved in planning children's weeks. They visited Scargill House, an opportunity they had never had before, to meet Christians from other backgrounds. They spoke at meetings with a simplicity and sincerity that was impressive.¹⁷ Through out the decade which led to 1984 and its consequences, colliery women helped originate trips for children and were involved in pastoral care during the strikes of that period and worked alongside families affected by them. In 1989 the Miners' Chapel opened as part of the Church at Denaby. On the committee were colliery women including Louis Dryden, Irene Duffty and Beattie Croft. They shared a vision of a quiet place of worship to remember the importance, selflessness, strength and dignity of generations of miners, their wives and families, including themselves and their own. The Chapel was to be in recognition of their divine relevance to the past, and a symbol of hope for future generations of families in Denaby. It was to be a reminder that they, too, had a role in the divine economy for community and national life.¹⁸

Dolly, Nellie, May, Lily, Freda and Sally, Joyce, all colliery women, with those like Claire and Angela who have joined us from backgrounds outside the colliery tradition, are now a major part of God's family going forward. The character of colliery women as a group in Denaby was moulded from the late nineteenth century, through the general strike of 1926, and the years of deprivation stretching across the thirties and forties and the uncertainties of two world wars.¹⁹ By its very nature, mining attracted men from the

toughest and sometimes the roughest working class backgrounds across the country. These were the men colliery women served. The central question the data might answer is whether or not colliery women were down trodden in a man's world: whether they were the source and inspiration of family survival or merely slaves to a tradition.

2.3 On Being a Colliery Wife

Before we listen to the voices of colliery women, it is helpful, in general terms, to describe the environment in which the character of miners' wives was shaped. There are three key factors that I will examine in turn:

- a. The historical legacy of being a colliery woman.
- b. Managing survival.
- c. Living with fear.

2.3.1 The Historical Legacy of Being a Colliery Woman

The people of Denaby Main are very attached to the history of their community. Running through the psyche of those who were an intimate part of creating the history of this colliery village, is the rigour and severity of their stories alongside the nostalgic pleasure of good times together. It is a strange mixture of emotions but understandable in those whose lives created a history where none had existed before.²⁰ The early years of that history were to mark indelibly the inheritance passed to succeeding generations. Two events in particular, the Bag Muck Strike and the Cadeby Disaster, are now part of folklore. Both incidents are described in 1.4.3.

Into a mere one hundred and twenty year span of existence, generations of ordinary working class people have extracted two precious 'commodities'. First, they have helped produce the means of the nation's industrial legacy and its ability to secure victory in two wars. Second, colliery women have dug into the depths of their humanity to draw out of tough, uncompromising poverty and deprivation the means to build out of small, two-up, two-down pit cottages, an environment which, still, today, is remembered by their children's children for its simplicity, sacrifice and security. (See 2.5: W28 W32 W55).

What had begun as a quiet, rural area centred on agriculture and set between the ancient towns of Mexborough and Conisbrough, was on its way to becoming one of grime, smoke and soot. Industrialisation had brought new jobs, skills and opportunities. Workers flooded in from all over the British Isles. The mind and attitude of colliery women, in my experience, have responded to the context of their environment. They possessed seams of hard work, intuitively thinking ahead, working on hunches and managing on very little. They demonstrated self sacrifice and a determination to provide a better future for their children and pride in who they were, as a collective. The support network in Denaby was immediate and supportive within an integrated and interdependent community.

Bill Williamson makes it clear that maintaining the links of neighbourliness and friendship was a central theme in a colliery woman's working life in Durham pit villages.²¹ Williamson writes that the relationship between neighbours was direct and was very close. The data supports the testimonies of Denaby colliery women. Self help amongst neighbours gave a feeling of security. It was taken for granted they would help each other at the birth of their children, laying out the dead, at weddings, at christenings and at funerals. It was part of the business of being a pitman's wife. Without it life for a colliery woman would have been impoverished and insecure. Williamson's insights into Durham mining communities, from an auto-biographical point of view, confirms much of the testimony of colliery women in Denaby Main and sometimes, indirectly lends support to Lerner's historically created genderedness.²² Williamson's argues that, without women, mining communities would not exist. They would be labour camps. Pit work is only possible because of the qualities of women who worked in the home. Housework was as central to the winning of coal as the graft of the miner underground. Through housework the miner was prepared day in, day out, to return to his work. The home supplied the main rationale for the miner working.

What the miner's wife was able to achieve in her own life, were all limited by her own expectations born of her education, the predictable routines of the pit and the attitudes and expectations of the men. Lacking the independence of the men, unable to share their

fatalistic attitude to the pit and its dangers and risks and living without the supportive structure of workmates and pit talk and unable to find employment in their own right, women were left to bear the psychological risks of the pits and the precariousness of their own and their children's security. Williamson maintains that women's work was physically hard, relentless, monotonous and 'unacknowledged as requiring any special aptitude'.²³ Women had little freedom of choice in the use of their time. Within the small space of a pit house women had few social contacts. Planning the family budget was made difficult because of the unpredictability of the weekly or fortnightly wage packet and the woman's share of it.

The real task as women saw it was to create comfortable conditions for their husbands because they thought that this was where their duty lay. Their education had led them to expect nothing more and their upbringing in a mining area taught them what they needed to know. There was an acceptance but not an uncritical view of their social position. Many women were acutely aware of the limitations of their lives.²⁴ Colliery women, as Williamson notes about his grandmother and mother, were not passive victims of circumstances. They had a unique style of commitment to their work which gave them deep satisfaction and through the strict control of their work, the ordered routines they were able to create space for themselves and find a freedom and personal autonomy even in their restricted lives.²⁵

2.3.2 Managing Survival

For much of daily existence people have to deal with the material and physical phenomena that surrounds them. In most circumstances spiritual experience has a connection with such phenomena. To be a colliery wife was 'a particular experience of being female'.²⁶ By all accounts life was hard. It required the tough love of colliery women to generate a determination to survive with as much dignity, integrity and dedication as possible. They and their families inherited this set of historical circumstances and dealt with it as best they could as most witnesses will recall. One is quoted as saying: 'Times were hard but it was hidden from us', and as another witness put it, looking back on poverty, 'we as children never went short'.²⁷ It was the colliery

woman who, when the wages were in her hands, worked out what was available for what was essential. For most colliery women it was never on themselves. In telling of village life you have to search for the women's role of dutiful wife, mother and manager. It was a man's world and women were in the home holding a family- centred society together. The circumstances of the Cadeby Disaster and the volatile nature of the work force and obduracy of the company profoundly shaped their lives. It was never ending and frustrating and exhausting. It was particularly demanding on women when their young sons started work at the colliery along with the rest of their family.²⁸

Carr describes colliery women as always tired. Their working day was from the small hours of the morning until midnight. With her husband and working sons on different shifts, a wife would be expected to prepare the tin bath with water on their return at all hours of the day. She would be there to wash their backs. Carr gives a timetable of a colliery woman's daily toil. In many details it reflects the testimony of colliery wives in Denaby Main. It might start at three in the morning see off her son, continue throughout the day seeing other of her men off or coming home from shift, until after midnight before the last had used the tin bath and gone off to bed. It started again for her at 3am. This was apart from the weekly timetable of domestic tasks. There was hardly a break in the continuous round of tasks. There was baking, cleaning, polishing, there were children to bath. There was shopping, and clothes to find, the best to be laid out for Sunday for each of the family. There was the special dinner to be cooked with a joint or a fowl. The wife still accepted the traditional division of labour, spent nothing on herself without her husband's approval and did not resent her exclusion from most of his social activity.²⁹

2.3.3 Living with Fear

To contextualise the historic and inherited experience of being a colliery wife in Denaby includes, amongst many hardships, the danger of bearing children, and then, more likely than not, getting over the death of children in a high mortality rate community.³⁰

For miners such as Chambers, Bury, Springthorpe, Murgatroyd, Famery, Birch and all those caught up in the Cadeby Disaster, the context would be, that, from their waking

moments, by their habitual experience of preparing for work, they would see the coming shift as part of their accepted role as men in the survival of their family.³¹

For their wives, the context was in the phenomenon of rising early with their husbands, the wave and goodbye as their men leave for their shift and then the wait, hope mixed with fear, for his homecoming. For the wives of those who died in disasters or fatal accidents, it had the confused shock of being long anticipated but not expected.³²

Under the circumstances of the many fatal accidents in the history of Denaby pits the fear is actualised. The experience of being a woman then, is to wake up in the morning with a husband and bread winner and to end the day alone as manager and provider in an unhelpful environment of deprivation and poverty. Her part in the family economy and consequent daily routine was totally disrupted. At such a time as this, the inherited experience of being a colliery woman fulfilling the traditional role of managing the family, which restricted women to the home, left her with few skills to deal with the new and harsh reality that was upon her.

2.4 Methodology: Listening to Colliery Women

The rationale of the rest of the chapter is to build up a model of the lives of colliery women through collection of evidence from episodes of their life in the community of Denaby Main (2.5). This data will be categorized and significant threads discerned (2.6). The method is to present the stories of colliery women as much as possible in their own words. Those telling their story are called 'witnesses' because they testify to the people and events that are at the centre of our enquiry. There are thirty five witnesses. Their evidence comes from three sources, my pastoral bereavement files, a recorded case history of Harriet Bright and notes of conversations and files in the Miners' Chapel. In addition a literary source is used to support the evidence when considered necessary.

2.4.1 Validity of Data

This research starts with the premise that the narratives of the lives of colliery women have validity. This is because the witnesses tell their own story in their own way. Tim May finds this pattern at the centre of feminist attitudes to social research.³³ The basis for the feminist viewpoint, he argues, is women's exclusion from the public realm. The woman operates from a dual position, as an oppressed female and as the researcher and observer. May goes on to say that a woman's biography and experience are an excellent point to start unbiased accounts of the social world so long as they proceed in a democratic and participatory way. I am not a feminist, nor female. However, I am a long-term participant observer (see 2.4.3; 2.4.4) and, though I might not have the empathy from a woman's point of view that a feminist researcher might have for oppressed women, our method of observation, which begins with women's exclusion from the public realm, would be comparable. I do not speak for colliery women any more than would a woman ethnographer. I allow their story to be told, including their own words that have been elicited in a participatory way. The biography and experience of colliery women are central to accounts of Denaby as a social world. The narratives of the lives of colliery women's have validity in their own right, independent of the researcher. Feminist ethnographers cannot be assumed to be the only ones who are able to conduct ethnographic research among women.

Indeed, some feminist claims have been criticized for being over-stated. For example, Seale³⁴ discusses Anne Oakley and her feminist commitment to qualitative interviewing. He quotes her as saying that personal involvement is more than just dangerous bias, it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives. Critics of Oakley maintain that her implied opinion, that only women researchers should interview women to gain authentic accounts, is no guarantee for this to happen. Social class and ethnic differences between interviewers and interviewees can put up barriers as high as gender differences. Opponents also claim that Oakley underestimates the extent to which the awareness of trust influences gender during interviews.³⁵

Bryman discusses Skeggs's claim of a non-exploitative relationship when women conduct ethnographic research with other women. Stacey, however, disagrees with Skeggs and argues that the situations she faced as a feminist ethnographer lead her to believe that fieldwork represents an intrusion and intervention into a system of relationships that the researcher is far freer to leave. Stacey also argues that when the research is written up, it is the feminist ethnographer's interpretations and judgements that come through and that have the authority.³⁶

It is evident from these examples that there is difference of opinion over the validity of the claim that women interviewing women give resulting data greater authenticity. I doubt the differences can be resolved, but I take encouragement from the positive indicators for my approach. The emphasis on personal involvement as a way of interaction in the ethnography process, an awareness of the influence of trust in the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, and the importance of long term commitment by the participant observer (male or female) to overcome intrusion and intervention are all positive indicators about the validity of my role as observer of Denaby colliery women.

As an insider over a long ministry I have heard stories of the past, not included in this data, from men as well as women. I can relate to the interviews of both miner and colliery women conducted in Denaby by Benson and Neville³⁷ and other literary evidence about the lives of colliery women. Funeral interviews, a major source of my research data, are approached openly. Some families may eulogise their wife and mother but not always. My socio-cultural knowledge gives my research a reasonable understanding to discern distortion and assess veracity. In terms of the testimony of colliery women the passing of time eases tensions of the past. The burdens are now gone but the memories are still real.

There is a thread woven through the following data on colliery women which reflects the complications, decisions and contradictions involved in the social life of Denaby Main. The thread represents the reaction of colliery women to the environment which is producing their lives and defining their nature and their being.³⁸

2.4.2 The Advantages and Problems of the Main Point of Entry into the Data

By their very nature, data collected by clergy for funerals needs to be detailed and accurate. In the interview with the family I often stress the necessity of creditable background information, even if I cannot always use it at the time of the service. Families do not want their parents described in unrecognizable ways. Each interview takes up to an hour and a half. It is possible I have had contact with the family over many years through various agencies including schools, as well as church-based activities including weddings, baptisms and other funerals. The information provided is supported in many cases by their neighbours and friends who have known the departed perhaps since school days, as well as by eulogies from family members. My data overlaps the detailed and familiar information of intimate eulogies. This is information that has been given to me, as a parish priest, in an open, non-confidential way in full knowledge that it will be used to describe loved ones in the public arena.

In the course of a funeral interview the bereaved family voluntarily discloses information for use at a funeral and there is a culture of permission, an understanding that the family themselves distinguish between information for public disclosure and something not for public use. This is in contrast to the work of priest in a professional role as counsellor or in a confessional situation. Information in such cases is never disclosed. In the case history interview Harriet Bright and her daughter were told that their evidence would be used in this research. Where there is any doubt I will refer to people anonymously. Therefore, apart from one or two sensitive subjects, I have been able to name the witnesses and, in this way, affirm them, their history and their role in an ethically responsible manner. Since I began this research the requirements for ethical review have been applied by the University, but they pre-date this work.³⁹

It may be suggested the disadvantage of this method of entry is the propensity for the bereaved to present a slightly unrealistic image of their loved one. This may happen, but the data suggests it is not necessarily over stated. As an example from the data, whilst Rose Wright's family speak well of their mother, they are honest about her cooking,

which they assess as ‘not very good’ (2.5: W44). In W1, the daughter was equally forthright in her response in her mother’s presence. In an unused data source, Maxine and her sister, Valerie as children, were cared for by their mother’s sister, their aunt, Liz Green (see W56). Both sisters and their brother were brought up by ‘Green’ and owe much to her. At their mother’s funeral, the data I used was candid and in no way unrealistic, but despite their bond with Green, the bond they had with their mother was still mentioned as strong and loving. With Lorna and her mother Harriet (W61) there is no way you can exaggerate Harriet and their relationship. As my ministry in Denaby is in its forty first year, there is an informed capability to recognize embellishment in a community well able to speak robustly of family members. Indeed, this is sometimes regarded as a Yorkshire working class trait.

Barzun and Graff, in discussing memory recognition, apply certain features of bias (1.3.4) to the researcher that may, in terms of memory recognition, also apply to the testimony of witnesses. Individuality and interest play their part in the responses of those interviewed as it does in the mind of the researcher in producing solutions and arriving at conclusions. Equally, as it is when the interest of the researcher is in danger of spoiling the product that it becomes bias, so it is important to be aware of the effects of nostalgia. Nostalgia is not by nature, bad. It is also a motivational force in memory recall. However, as Barzun and Graff indicate, individuality and the interest of the researcher is unavoidable and so, I would suggest, nostalgia is also unavoidable in recalling past events.⁴⁰

Shafer⁴¹ refers to subjectivity as an inescapable human quality by which individual values give meaning to experiences (1.3.4). When those experiences and values are shared with other individuals in the group then individual own-world realities coalesce into a cultural memory. It would seem that nostalgia and subjectivity are two sides of the same coin. The safeguards against the over influence of both in this thesis are in checking witness statements and in my knowledge of the historic-cultural data. I will try to check on witness statements from independent written interviews sources. My own long ministry amongst colliery women gives me such knowledge of historic-cultural data that I can,

with some authority, judge overstatement. Nevertheless, I doubt if this will prove completely successful in correcting memory recognition.

2.4.3 Method of Collecting Data

The method I have used for gathering data has been by informal and unstructured interviews. The main framework of reference has been family bereavement when family members (surviving spouse, their children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters) answer questions within their own frame of reference. They simply talk about the issues and concerns in some depth. At that moment in their lives, individuals reflect on ideas and meanings of their relationships. It is, in effect, an oral life history interview.⁴² Interviews take place in the family home and are recorded by hand and are kept on file. The evidence of Harriet Bright is used as a case history. In explanation of my decision to make her life a case history, Harriet was born in the year of the Cadeby Disaster, 1912. She has lived through every vicissitude of life as girl, colliery woman, wife and mother in Denaby Main. My interview with her was in October 2006 and recorded with her daughter, Lorna, present.

A secondary framework is an ad hoc series of conversations with both members of Denaby Church and members of the community in pastoral visits, in social events, in community work, in passing conversations, in personal contact with visitors to Chapel lectures. Some are on record in the Chapel archives.

The method of presentation is by a W notation, W meaning 'witness'. Data from bereavement files are dated, the year and file number (e.g. year, 03/ file 7: 03/07). Secondary material may not be dated because most is in rough note form.

2.4.4 The Use of Data

The data has been selected from a larger body of evidence to give a broad view of the social history of colliery women. The unstructured nature of the material and the freedom witnesses have to tell their story requires editing of the material. Although, as narrator, I want the story of witnesses in their own words, editing takes place to give clarity of

definition to the context of the data. Repetition is helpful if the impact of situations and events are to be seen as widespread experiences in the community of colliery women and add reliability to the data. Also, in an attempt later to categorize the data there is the likelihood incidents have reference to more than one section of the narrative.

The problem I have faced is that it is sometimes difficult to unravel the essential data from the more peripheral observations of the witness. An example of this is in section W5 below. In this case, the essential data is the work done by Amy. I have not removed the peripheral material. In it the witness paints a wider canvas of the social life in Denaby in which her life was shaped. The limited opportunities are part of the tradition which controlled the lives of colliery women.

I am aware data produced in my research might be similar to other working class communities around the country during the same period. However, my thesis is narrowly focused on colliery women in Denaby Main. The research has limitations. The research is not claiming colliery women in Denaby are different to other working class women. The thesis is interested in the character of colliery women in relation to perceptions of Mary. Maybe there is a possible correlation between Mary and other working class women, but this is not the subject of the research.

The research is trying to find evidence of the way of life of colliery women and their practical adaptation to their mining environment in Denaby in their generation, in comparison to that of Mary as a peasant woman in her day. Evidence of colliery women from elsewhere (Durham) provides background material and assists my perception of Denaby Main women.

I now present my research findings from the evidence of witnesses to the lives of colliery women in Denaby Main under six headings. To repeat the method of presentation, it is by a W notation, W meaning 'witness'. Data from bereavement files are dated, the year and file number (e.g. year, 03/ file 7: 03/07). Secondary material may not be dated because most is in rough note form.

2.5 The Evidence of Witnesses

It is not possible to present my research findings to a pre-ordained structure, because of the unstructured nature of the material and the freedom witnesses have to tell their story. Rather I have tried to let the data create the headlines or elements which make up the structure, to give order and definition to the evidence of witnesses. Witness material has been gathered under six headings as directed by the material. Harriet's contribution as an expert witness is used throughout the chapter to give first hand evidence in its own right in addition to that of other contributors. Evelyn Haythorne's books are used as a literary source in support of the data, not as a witness. Her books are a series of stories based on her life growing up in Denaby pre-war and into the 1950s.

2.5.1 Women's Expectation: Education, Work

W1 Anonymous When I was in conversation with a miner's widow, shortly after the death of her husband, with her daughter alongside her, the daughter, a woman then in her forties, spoke bluntly of her bitterness towards her parents. In the 1960s, she was prevented from taking her place in the sixth form of what was then the local grammar school in Mexborough, despite the pleas of her teachers.⁴³ She was forced to leave school because 'she was a girl'. Her parents maintained that education was of little use to her. The memory of lost opportunity was still strong. The depth of her feelings spilled out as she said, 'I will never forgive my mother and father for that.' (93/21)

W2 Harriet Education was not seen as important for Harriet's daughter, Lorna. She recalls her father 'refusing to let me go into further education. In the end mother negotiated a one year course instead of the three years my head teacher was suggesting'. Lorna told me that Tom, her father, was a traditionalist. 'He was a clever man. As an eleven year old he had won a scholarship to Mexborough Grammar School but family poverty didn't allow him to take it'. 'This always rankled with him'.⁴⁴ So, when Lorna passed an exam and interview and was told she had done exceptionally well and was offered a three year course, it was Harriet who wanted it for her but Tom's response was what counted. 'That's out. Two years! You get a job.'

W3 Evelyn Haythorne From her own experience she supports the evidence above. What was expected of colliery women was shaped at an early age. It was difficult to learn anything as a girl. As Haythorne says, 'to learn anything I had to be sneaky. I lived in a world of whispering and of superstition and fear. All this caused me much annoyance and left me in a narrow, small world.'⁴⁵

W4 Gladys and Lizzie Shreeves At the age of fifteen, Gladys went into domestic service in Harrogate, 'not a good place', Elizabeth to Bradford, where Gladys joined her. Later together they went to Mulrose in Scotland and stayed there serving a family until the surviving member died in 1936. Lizzie went into service in Sheffield and Gladys returned home to look after their mother. Lizzie came home and was a cleaner at Denaby School.⁴⁶
(03/7)

W5 Amy Bulcroft, She was 15, when she went into service in London. She continued in service with the Royds family who were mill owners in Halifax. She came home to marry Joe. Together they ran a soup kitchen in the General Strike in 1926 with a horse and cart.⁴⁷ (04/24)

W6 Sarah Hatton Young colliery women travelled from Denaby to the mills in Shipley, Bradford or Morley in Leeds. Rene Adcock was in Shipley. (89/17) Sarah Hatton worked as a girl in the mills at Halifax. (02/39)

W7 Clarice Cornthwaite worked at Kilner's 'glass works'. Other colliery women worked at the box factory in Mexborough and Peglar's factory and the umbrella factory. Maureen Jackson worked in potato fields and the scissor factory. Flo Earp worked in the pit canteen, KP Nuts and Peglars factory. (97/20)

W8 Harriet also worked at Kilners Glass when she was a young girl up to when she was married. She said, 'It was then expected [after marriage] that a colliery woman would manage the home and have meals prepared for her husband'.

2.5.2 Poverty

W9 Evelyn Hawthorne writes that Friday was always the day for a clean piney. They would wash and change and if their husbands were on afternoons they would go to the pit and wait as the men collected their wages. A minority of husbands would slip money first into his pocket as pocket money. The women stood together on the pit bridge thinking of their money for which most had been biting their finger nails since Wednesday. Then they'd be off to the pit canteen for a real cheap dinner. This in itself was a treat because canteen food was the nearest they ever got to a restaurant or café meal.⁴⁸

W10 Lily Wright Poverty was a hard taskmaster. This is best described by Lily Wright in conversation in 1989. 'I got home from my wedding. I told me mam I'd no money. She asked me what I'd got on me finger. It was my wedding ring. She told me to pawn it.'⁴⁹

W11 Sarah Hatton Colliery women made the most of what they had and did what they had to do. When Sarah Hatton married Bernard before the war broke out, they walked to Church. She had to be at there for 10 am. The legacy Sarah Hatton created was in a two up two down pit house with outside toilet for her seven children. She worked with gas lights on the wall, no electricity. Her greatest delight was when the whole family met on Boxing Day. (05/14)

W12 Ivy Ball comments more on the way she and her family handled poverty than on poverty itself; 'We were a typical Denaby family, friendly, we knew everyone of our neighbours. None of us had a lot but there was little stress. We enjoyed life.' She continued about her husband, Tom, 'He took the lads (their four sons) fishing, they'd watch cricket. They'd sit with him listening to boxing on the radio. He was always singing.'^(06/14)

W13 Rene Bulcroft Paula Cooper also has memories of hard times and the way mam, Rene Bulcroft, and dad reacted to it. 'There was hardly any money, no new togs. We'd make up stories like the magic stick story, wack, wack! We'd sit together on Denaby pit

bridge and vibrate the wooden structure and guess which way the train would come'.⁵⁰
(06/7)

W14 Harriet She describes life with her husband as 'difficult, tough'. When Tom (her husband) first went down the pit he didn't smoke, drink or bet on horses. Lorna, her daughter, added, 'He was a bad 'un'. With the rest of his family, he gambled his money away. There were many times Harriet was left with her children without money and survived only because of financial help she received from relatives, and by going without things herself. Lorna remembered receiving one Christmas present, a black doll. She did receive a watch for her sixteenth birthday. Her father never brought her anything.⁵¹ (See W61)

W15 Harriet never saw Tom's wage packet. It was a man's world. Harriet got what was left from his wages. He never brought his wages home. Whenever Harriet asked for his wages his reply was, 'You want that you put boots on.' At other times he would expect her to be grateful, 'Well, you've got half of it.' (See W63).

W16 Lilian Bellfield Her four children remember there were always 'lodgers living with them. We never had a lot. It helped money wise'. 'She was always baking. The door was always open for everybody, all neighbours. You could walk and make yourself a cup of tea. Mam even worked at glass works'. (96/56)

W17 Emily Taylor Ellen described her mother, Emily Taylor, as 'devoted to her five children'. Along with other Denaby women she worked all hours in the powder works on munitions, in factories and in the fields to support her family. 'As children we loved the stories they told about their lives'. (96/57)

W18 Evelyn Haythorne In times of poverty neighbours are there ready to help. When Haythorne's father died they had little or no money. Their neighbours offered to lay him out. When mother said she wanted to do it herself one of the women said that wouldn't be decent. To which mother replied: 'Don't talk to me about decency. I've done everything

for that man during the last few weeks and I'm laying him out now. Evelyn, you go to bed love. I'll look in on you soon'.⁵²

W19 Elizabeth Green There was an intimate network of social support in Denaby. Families were together in poverty. (see W57) A knock on the dividing wall would bring immediate help from a neighbour. Elizabeth Green was a woman people looked to for help. She was the doctor's receptionist. When someone died she would be called on to prepare and lay out the body. (99/30)

2.5.3 Childhood Experiences of Living with Colliery Mothers

W20 Gertie Pickersgill Neighbours were in and out because the door was never locked. They remember 'the Street as one big family'. They also remembered 'life without electricity, blacking the fire place, playing in the back yard, home made pies and pastry and that mum never saw his wage packet'. Mum would do, 'the washing in a tub with a dolly and then send for the children and wash them by pouring the water over them'. They had hand-down clothes. (98/61)

W21 Alice Wigley Her five children told me she was well organised. 'Monday shop, Tuesday family visits, Wednesday home, Thursday family visits, Friday shopping for others, Saturday fish and peas'. In addition she had all her other chores. 'She was never still. She was well organised.' She used the tub and dolly for washing. The tin bath was for Sundays. The same water was used for everybody. There were 4 boys in one bedroom. Mavis slept with mum and dad. (04/18)

W22 Beattie Parnham created a good home life. She is described by her family as the 'perfect mother given what she'd got'. She created a good home life 'At home it was a lovely life, baking, sitting round the fire with toasting bread on a fork'. 'She would laugh and play with the children' After that 'the rest was work'. (07/1)

W23 Kathleen Taylor's The family recalled that they never locked the doors, 'there was nothing to pinch. No one stole. Everyone knew each other.' 'It was a brilliant growing up

environment. We had nothing and enjoyed it! It was a simple life'. When Kathleen cooked Sunday dinner everyone was together. 'It was a gentle time. They didn't need to be strict. We didn't get out of place. Dad's word was law'. There were no real holidays. (00/15)

W24 Edith Shepherd's The family remembers a time when everyone was a miner. 'No locked doors, friendly and generous'. 'We never went hungry. She grafted. She was so house-proud that not only would she scrub the step she also washed the pavement'. (00/44)

W25 Alice Walton As a proud colliery woman, she is remembered for 'being there at home, baking bread, knitting and sewing and as a good teacher. 'Ironing was her obsession. She was known for her washing and ironing!' 'Everything was nice and starched. We children were turned out clean and fresh'.⁵³ (96/59)

W26. Jean Haigh She said of her mother, Irene, 'We were very close. She wanted her family round her so she could look after them all the time. We were poor. We were happy. I never remember not having all we wanted. It was a way of life. We children didn't think we were poor. Mum never left us'. (05/57)

W27 Gladys Boot Her family saw 'mam' as the great stabilising factor in community life. 'There was no 'where's me mam?' she was always there.' 'Ten children, a lodger, a friend in a three bedroom terraced house. Life was hard but we children never noticed it.' 'Only mother went short.' (07/1)

W28 Iris Jones 'Home life for me was lovely'. Her mum, Beattie, provided a secure, stable home. She 'never left them, never drank or smoked. She baked bread and cooked in a black- leaded oven and on the fire too, 'potatoes in a pan on the fire'. (07/5)

W29 Lilian Hinton Her children remembered, that at home, 'the table was always full'. Though money was short, Lilian Hinton, out of little, produced meals from her coal oven.

‘As fast as she baked it, they ate it’, according to her five children. She was ‘always up with dad to make the fire and breakfast’. (97/1)

W30 May Forweather She ‘never went out to work. She was always in. She was always there.’ Her daughter, Hazel said, ‘You could tell her things. She would say, ‘never mind, cock, you’ve done well’. ‘You just knew she loved you’. We played in the backs. Mum loved to take us to Denaby market and the stalls at Doncaster race course. ‘There was no TV. We’d sit round the fire with a little wireless. Dad used the poker to get the fire burning.’ ‘We’d stay in bed to keep warm. It was lovely as kids’. (05/7)

2.5.4 Prioritising Father

W31 May Forweather always put father first. Hazel told me. ‘There wasn’t a lot of money but we never went short. Mum fed us well. When dad came home from the pit there was always hash ready for his dinner’. ‘Mum and dad were very close. It was a good marriage. They were happy together. He was quiet. He would never swear or shout. (05/7)

W32 Frances Rowe She was a dutiful wife. Her family said of mum. ‘She was always up at 4am to get dad out to the pit. She would be baking at 5am’. The family remembered mum not letting dad do anything. ‘She would black lead the fireplace, wouldn’t let us touch it’. ‘Nine pounds of flour for bread and there were cakes and flat jacks all baked at a constant heat in a coal fired oven. Now that’s skill!’ (97/26)

W33 Frances Stead Her husband, a miner, ‘would never have got to work without her’, her family told me. Home in the evening, ‘his meal was always ready for him. He would sit Mary on his knee and share his food with her. Mum was up at 4am every morning to shout him up. He would never have made it to work without her getting up’.⁵⁴ When he worked overtime she’d meet him at the bridge with extra food. ‘She spoilt him’. (98/62)

W34 Eleanor Street Her family remembered her this way; ‘She had no hobby but looking after Joe (her husband) and family. She gave him freedom to do what he wanted. She

cleaned at the cinema and the chemist. She was very simple, straightforward and uncomplicated. She was always the same and always there. She would not fall out with you and very seldom showed anger. She remembered everyone's birthday, was very independent and never owed a penny. She loved snooker and having her photograph taken and was happy with her lot. She never asked for anything. The quality of her life was lovely'. (93/34)

W35 Gladys Spooner Her five children and eleven grandchildren said, 'Mum was always the easy one. Dad was stern. Mum never pushed [him] too far. She loved everyone. You'd go to her and she's make everything better. She could melt dad. She controlled him'. (93/62)

W36 Evelyn Haythorne She confirms that the long tin bath was at the centre of a colliery woman's life. Their role was to understand and serve the needs of the collier and then his family. After their shift miners would trudge home, begrimed in coal dust and exhausted after an eight hour shift. At this time there were no pit baths nor were there bathrooms at home. Each wife or mother would bring out the long tin bath normally kept hanging in the back yard. It was placed in front of the fire and filled with hot water from the copper.⁵⁵ Some miners were so tired, they had neither the energy to bath themselves, nor have the inclination to eat their meal. They would fall asleep in front of the fire or at the table. Evelyn Haythorne remembers the warmth of the home colliers' wives created out of two up, two down cottages.⁵⁶

W37 Harriet She had a tin bath ready for her husband and he was always first to use it. Lorna, Harriet's daughter, recalled her experience of being brought up without a bathroom and inside toilet. 'I was determined that our first home would have both a bath and an inside toilet'. She was married in 1966. (Interview 10/06)

W38 Irene Duffy Before pit baths were introduced dad always had the tin bath to himself first. There were five Duffy children in a two up, two down miner's cottage. They remember mum, Irene, getting the tin bath ready and especially Saturday nights as bath

night. On Wednesday, which was wash day, they all were washed in the tub. Water was never wasted. It was then used to clean the outside toilet and back yard. (06/46 04/45)

W39 Harriet She always put Tom first. She remembers ‘spoiling’ Tom. ‘I waited on him hand and foot. He never lifted a hand in the house’.⁵⁷ He did, however, lay the law down in the house. Harriet spoke of Tom’s insistence on eating alone when neighbours visited. She recalled when a neighbour came in their house ‘kalling’ (gossiping) with Harriet on the stairs. He told Harriet, ‘I’m not working down there eight hours and coming and sitting watching her. You don’t tell her, I will’.

W40 Harriet On Friday afternoon when Tom was on afters, she crossed the pit bridge to be with other colliery wives meeting their husbands as they came out with their wages. It was for many miners straight from work and into the Drum. It was the man’s place. Women were not allowed in any of the clubs unless their husband’s took them with them.

W41 Anonymous One family had no good memories of dad, describing him as ‘hard, never involved, he never showed affection, never made people feel welcome’. Mum on the other hand was ‘the light and centre of family, loved by all. She never stood up to him’. He would budget the money. He did nothing and wanted beer money. ‘Mum substituted for him and made up for it all. Mum did it all. She kept a lot back from him’. ‘We never went on holidays. We went on day trips and had picnics by ourselves. She even taught us to swim’.⁵⁸ (04/4)

2.5.5 Managing Loss and its Consequences

W42 Beattie Parnham Her daughter remembers the poverty brought about, in part, by their father John’s illness. Before his death from tuberculosis, Beattie would walk to Wathwood sanatorium to see him every day. It was a walk of several miles and it saved the fare. At the same time her daughter, Iris, one of seven children, contacted the same illness and was sent to Ilkley. Beattie had to go on the parish and they allowed her train fare only, once a month.⁵⁹ (07/1)

W43 Ada Sand Her daughter explained the ‘sheer determination’ of her mother after her husband died at Denaby pit 45 years ago. She worked hard. ‘She’d walk and not wait for a bus. She’d push two bags of coal in a barrow during the 1972 strike. She picked peas and potatoes right up to the age of 75’. (05/56)

W44 Rose Wright Her family, whilst remembering their mother’s ‘cooking wasn’t very good’, praised her ‘for her tenacity’. Dad, Joe died in 1958 after 25 years of ‘a good marriage’. Rose had been a seamstress and after she was widowed went cleaning offices. ‘She was under 50 when he died so she received just a 10/- pension. ‘She was always the boss’. ‘Manners have got to be right’, she would say. (04/5)

W45 Meredith and Haywood These families knew the dangers working underground. Wives always lived with the dread of the pit siren. Financially families often needed their sons to work at 14. They left school Friday and started work Monday. They added to a mother’s fear and to her work load. Lads worked with their dads and brothers and uncles on the same shifts.⁶⁰ (09/45)

W46 Harriet feared the wail of the siren; ‘I can remember the lasting effect it had on my mother after Cadeby disaster the year I was born [1912]’. Lorna, Harriet’s daughter, still has memories of when they were knocked up in the middle of the night in 1964 when Tom was badly injured by a roof fall and fortunate to survive.⁶¹ Harriet said, ‘It changed him. ‘He was a man proud of his skills as a collier and now he was given a pit top job in the lamp room. ‘The men he had worked with handed him their lamps. He had to sweep up with a young lad. He felt humiliated and depressed. ‘Amongst the men handing in their lamps were two young men he had been training at the coal face. ‘They were always fighting and when Tom had had enough he got them together in an empty stall in the coalface where they sorted out their differences and after the fight they shook hands and started work again’.⁶²

W47 Evelyn Haythorne She provides supporting evidence when she gives a graphic account of her own experience when, in the early 1940s, her father was taken ill down the

pit. He was brought home in the pit ambulance.⁶³ It changed him and put mother under intense stress at a time when there was no money and the help available was discriminatory.⁶⁴

W48 Harriet MacFarlane She had been married twelve years when her husband collapsed and died and was left a widow with two children in the nineteen thirties. She received eighteen shillings a week from the post office, ten shillings for herself, five shillings for her older daughter and three shillings for her son. 'I had to go t' parish and they allowed me rent, eight and three-pence it was'. When you, [Jim, her son Jim was interviewing her] got diphtheria about a month after your dad died, you were very poorly and nearly lost your life and they knocked three shillings off me because you were in hospital'. My brother came to live with me and I reported it to t' doings, the parish, and they knocked three shillings of the rent allowance and they said he hadn't to pay me more than a pound a week.⁶⁵

W49 Harriet MacFarlane She told her son, Jim MacFarlane, 'The man [from the parish] came to see me and said I'd been reported and I asked, 'What for?' He said, 'You've been seen in the Comrades [working men's club] '. 'I said, 'Yes, I have and my brother gave me three shillings to be with friends.' 'It were the old lady in the end house who reported me, he told me it were. She used to go up [to the parish relief] and she said if there weren't so many young 'uns on this, old 'uns would get more.'⁶⁶

W50 Harriet [Bright] The death of a miner left a colliery wife destitute. As Harriet said, 'there were no posh funerals in those days. Just family went to the funeral. They walked with ordinary horse and carriage. Often there were no flowers on the carriage. If there were they were grown on their own allotment. There were no florists as there are today'.⁶⁷

W51 Harriet Women were skilled in managing the money, or loss of it. Harriet details the time she had to go to the parish. The Parish was there to help in destitution but it was a humiliating experience. Harriet went on the parish during a strike, 'I was awarded four

shillings and three pence a week for me and children and nothing for Tom. They were strict in setting the bottom line for awarding help. 'You really had to be destitute. They questioned everything you owned, everything'.

W52 Evelyn Haythorne She confirms her mother going through that same demeaning experience as Harriet. After the death of her father, she writes, 'there came a point when money became a problem again and nearly everything they owned, a watch, two cherished cut glass vases and mother's fox fur, was pawned. It was her firm belief that this was better than crying poverty and asking help from any one.'⁶⁸ Haythorne supports the view women had of the Parish Board. During her father's illness mother, against all her principles, in the end had little option but to go before the Parish Board. Back home in her kitchen, again, mother wept. 'Five bob! How and I going to keep five of us on five bob? I wonder who gets the Co-op divi on that?' Having got this out of her system she put the kettle on and made some tea, her remedy for everything that happened and then went into the living room to see dad.⁶⁹

W53 Harriet She also made use of the pawn broker (especially at the time of Tom's illness) along with many other families. You paid a shilling a week. If ever she needed new furniture and something extra for the children she had to save for it and her husband would not let her buy anything else until that debt had been cleared. Harriet remembered a ditty from years before; 'Borrow on Monday, pay back Friday. If you don't pay this week, you'll definitely no pay next week'. She paid it back at a shilling a week.

W54 Harriet She said that another way of surviving loss was to shop 'on tick' It helped in all circumstances of poverty. As, 'men like Tom, didn't shop', it was for the woman to manage. Near their house in Annerley Street was the Co op. Harriet said 'I couldn't afford to go there. I used the corner shops', which were dotted about the streets of Denaby. At a corner shop Harriet could buy 'on tick' and pay back on Friday, pay day. 'People got into trouble if they didn't pay it back by the second week. 'Tom was very definite about it. He wouldn't let me [Harriet] get into debt'. 'One reason', said Lorna, 'why she never had anything, because he said, "if you can't pay for it you do without"'.

2.5.6 Proud Colliery Women

W55 Elizabeth Green She had a quiet authority, and was the ‘focal point of the family’. She never failed to be there when they needed her. All the family met every Friday at Green’s. ‘Her life revolved round Wilf’ [her husband]. Not once in their 60 years together did he have to wait for his dinner’. Yet, ‘she was “the matriarch” we looked to, to solve problems’. Her own abilities were spent in her devotion to Wilf and the family’. She had ‘a presence’.⁷⁰ (99/30)

W56 Elizabeth Green Her own children exemplify the legacy left by colliery women in their devotion to creating a close family home. ‘We were taught loyalty. Never hear a bad word against the family’. (99/30) Elizabeth Green throughout her life struggled to gain over adversity and was a proud colliery woman. Her legacy had its roots in the colliery cottage at 1, Firbeck Street, Denaby Main, where family life began.⁷¹

W57 Evelyn Haythorne In her mother she saw raw courage in maintaining her dignity and determination to survive against the odds. ‘Mother was now well into a battle for survival. Proud, with head held high she would walk down the road and go straight through the front entrance of the pawn brokers’. (see endnote 52) For the Pickersgill family that same intuitive response achieved survival on a daily basis and it was one they had in common with their neighbours. (See W20)

W58 Harriet When her husband, Tom, had an accident down the pit, he was given a job in the lamp room. He had been a proud, skilful coal face worker. He was so depressed he cried about it. He told Harriet ‘I nearly died when the men came in’. Harriet’s reply was uncompromisingly realistic. ‘Well, you can’t do any thing about it. It’s keeping you in a job’. (See W46)

W59 Elsie Jenkinson Her ingenuity is remembered by her children. Life was hard, with little money but they all had new clothes for Easter, Whit and Christmas. Harry, her husband retired though ill health but Elsie still managed to cook good meals always with

second helpings. Rabbit was popular and Sunday dinners. 'Harry never showed affection. Elsie made up for him'. (04/31)

W60 Joan Jackson She shared her love of learning with her children and grandchildren too. She sought to win for her children what she herself was denied. She had a great intellect.⁷² She was a good conversationalist. She read widely and as her daughter Yvonne said, would read six books at a time and three when in hospital. A strong character, she was happy with her own company.⁷³ 93/51

W61 Harriet Bright Harriet is 97. She is indefatigable and humorous. The stresses of confronting adversity in her life have toughened her attitude but not changed the essential nature of who Harriet is.⁷⁴ Harriet worked as a machinist during the war years. Along with other colliery women she gained a new confidence and independence.⁷⁵ Lorna paid three tributes to her mother's intuitive wisdom, physical and spiritual strength and generosity of her love. First, when her father refused to let her go to college, 'it was my mother who intervened to make it possible'. Second, it was in the 1984 strike when Lorna and her husband had used up their savings and friends and relatives were rallying to their aid, that she 'realised how much her mother had sacrificed for her and the family'. Third, when Tom, her father, showed little interest and no affection, 'it was mother who made up for him'. She was his equal. Despite the hard years with Tom, Harriet never stopped loving him. (See W14)

W62 Harriet She speaks of her pride in her domestic role as a colliery wife. The source of that pride seems to be the subverting of male power by perceiving realities and managing the experiences of those realities and intuitively naming the parts that were significant.⁷⁶ Harriet had a pride in her domestic role dynamically understanding the significance of the core value of family life.

W63 Harriet For Harriet the male status was based on a misconception that colliery women depended on their men. In fact it was a shared dependency which colliery women always understood. The ultimate expressions of that shared humanity was first, Harriet's

twice repeated words, 'I loved him, I really did'. Her resolute face backed up that statement.⁷⁷ The second expression was Lorna's description of her father's last moments before he died. 'He told me, 'I love her, you know'. In all his life he'd never told Harriet. Lorna urged him, 'Tell her, dad, tell her'. He died before he could. Harriet said 'I knew he loved me'.⁷⁸

2.6 The Derivation of a Workable Model

The purpose of this chapter is to build a model of the lives of colliery women based on witnesses from Denaby Main. In its construction significant threads from the witnesses will need knitting together to derive, from the data, categories to describe the characteristics of colliery women. The reason for the choice of categories lies in the nature of the data. Sifting it into convenient categories requires adequate representation of the realms in which colliery women made a distinctive contribution to the lives of their families and communities.

The method in categorising the material includes reference back to the witness statements, their phrases and sayings, and reiteration of a number of significant elements from the data which support the grouping I propose. As a participant observer it is my interpretation of what is significant in the data that decides the grouping of material.⁷⁹ This move to a derivative model from significant threads is intended to make it possible to view the data in specific category blocks to link shared elements in an overview of the experience of colliery women. Harriet's testimony is strong and occurs in twenty references. Evelyn Haythorne is a secondary literary source of material used nine times to support witness statements.

2.6.1 How Category Preferences Worked

The data presented in 2.5 covers most aspects of the life of a colliery woman from teenage into adult life. I have sifted this data according to those significant experiences derived from the evidence of colliery women themselves. Inevitably there will be overlaps in details. Evidence in each category is sorted from the total data available. Its elements are so interwoven that category definitions are soft and flexible and dependant

on previous material. This interlocking may in the end prove the value and strength of the data used in the model.

My approach to sifting witness statements is through narrative analysis that is ‘sensitive to the sense of the temporal sequence that people, as tellers of stories about their lives or events around them, detect in their lives and surrounding episodes and inject them into their accounts’. Narrative analysis ‘relates not just to the life span but also to the accounts relating to episodes and to the interconnection between them’.⁸⁰ It is from the ‘temporal sequence’ and the ‘interconnection’ in the episodes that data will be elicited to reveal what is significant about colliery women. In this way life histories may dovetail into one life story model.⁸¹

Alan Bryman makes the point that it is the interviewee’s perspective that is important and the interviewer should be concerned that they are part of the process of constructing their story.⁸² I am here putting forward my hypothesis from the data. In summary, the accounts relating to episodes in the temporal sequence of colliery women in Denaby Main and their interconnection are refined to six categories. Each category proposed is explicated in a six-fold format as follows:

- a. Selection from Witnesses (2.5.1 to 2.5.6)
- b. Rationale for Category
- c. Significant Threads.
- d. Significant Sayings.
- e. Most Significant Thread.
- f. Most Significant Saying.

2.6.2 Colliery Women Servants in the Shadows

a. Selection from Witnesses

Women’s Expectation: Education, Work 2.5.1

b. Rationale for Category

The data reveals the low expectation others held for colliery women. It was a societal agenda set within a male dominated community. Future prospects for colliery women

were within traditionally defined limits which were entrenched by educational outcomes and resulting work patterns. The male operated in the public sphere, women in the shadows of the home. Men worked out down the pit. Colliery women were expected to keep whole the fabric of family life, like servants in the shadows. The manner in which Eleanor Hatton served her family (see endnote 77) at first sight presents a contrary picture. Even here, however, her management was within the societal agenda of the home. There is evidence that some colliery women felt trapped within these confines and were increasingly aware of wider horizons. Within this block I include both education and paid work, one led to the other and reinforced domesticity.

c. Significant Threads

1. Education was not necessary for girls. Harriet's husband had no objection to his son taking his place at the Grammar School. W1, W2
2. The colliery woman's management of her husband was a decisive factor in a daughter's future prospects. One mother was submissive, but Harriet managed her husband. W1, W2
3. There was a secret world of information hidden from young women who only knew that their lives would be devoted to serving their husbands and families. W2, W3, W8
4. They were expected to take full time menial, low paid work. W4-W7

d. Significant Sayings (Appendix 2)

e. Most Significant Thread

The colliery woman's management of her husband was a decisive factor in a daughter's future prospects. W2

f. Most Significant Saying

'It left me in a narrow, small world'. W3

2.6.3 Colliery Women Unequal in a Man's World

a. Selection from Witnesses

Poverty 2.5.2

Prioritising Father 2.5.4

(Link with 2.5.3)

b. Rationale for Category

The data provides evidence of gender inequality. The data also suggests that in many families, husbands by their attitude had a part, at least, in intensifying the poverty suffered by colliery women. The financial dependency of colliery women on their husbands, led to a clash of priorities between them. Colliery women gave precedence outside themselves, to serve the needs of their husbands and families before their own. On the other hand, many miners had a male-centred attitude, which included their power over their wages packets. In many cases it was this inequality in the gender relationship that created a lonely struggle for colliery women to manage poverty which could have been ameliorated. The data also reveals how colliery women reacted to poverty (W12, W13, W14). Poverty followed them even at the moments that most mattered to them as Lily Wright indicated, and her mother's words indicate her mother was as poor as Lily (W10, W11).

Significant Threads

1. The unceasing service of a colliery wife to her husband's every need. W31, W33, W34, W39
2. It was a man's world. Colliery wives got what was left from his wages. W9, W15
3. Women, hard pressed and with families, had to manage with the uncertainty of money being made available to them. Many a miner staggered home drunk and empty handed. W14, W41
4. Colliery women managed by their weekly procession to the pawn shop on a Monday when their men, worse the drink, missed their shift or they had no wage earner. Many survived on tick.⁸³ W49, W51, W54, (see endnote 48)
5. Meal times were dictated by the husband and when he came home. W31, W55
6. A colliery wife was up early every morning to get her husband to work. W32 When he was on overtime wives would meet them on the pit bridge with extra food. W33

7. Despite managing their poverty, colliery women still made sure their husbands were free to do what they wanted. W34, W41

d. Significant Sayings (Appendix 2)

e. Most Significant Thread

It was a man's world. Colliery wives got what was left from his wages. W9 W15

f. Most Significant Saying

'She gave him freedom to do what he wanted'. W34

2.6.4 Colliery Women as Strong Mothers

a. Selection from Witnesses

Childhood Experiences of Living with Colliery Mothers 2.5.3

Links with 2.5.2 and 2.5.5

b. Rationale for Category

The inevitability of domesticity for women in a coal mining community required a strength of mind and body to face daily, as colliery women did, impoverished homes and basic human survival. There was no inside toilet or bathroom, with gas lights on the walls, peggy (dolly) and tub for washing and endless baking on a coal fire with an oven alongside. (W20, W21, W29) It also held the prospect of carrying the burden of responsibility, whether knowingly or otherwise, for succeeding generations of families and the viable existence of Denaby Main. Inevitable or not, their acceptance of this challenge and the way they met it is the foundation on which future hopes for families rested. The data has a realistically proud tone to it. The links with Poverty (2.5.3) and Loss (2.5.5) are important overlapping issues involving the home.

c. Significant Threads

1. Colliery women were devoted mothers, always at home never still. W16, W17, W26

2. Colliery women hid hard times from their children. Mother was the one who went short when things were tight. W27
3. They had to manage homes that were small and lacking amenities. W11, W20.
4. Colliery women created their world of family with great pride despite the difficulties. Most men, busy at the pit, did nothing in the home. W32, W23, W24 W39
5. There is a laid-back feel in the data to the shared experience of enjoying family life. Simple pleasures created a secure home background. W12, W13, W22,
6. Little money, hand down clothes did not stop children enjoying life. The data indicates family life as warm, secure and fun. W17, W23, W30
7. Colliery women were the great stabilizing factor. W35, W27, W30

d. Significant Sayings (Appendix 2)

e. Most Significant Thread

There is a laid-back feel in the data to the shared experience of enjoying family life. Simple pleasures, created a secure home background. W12, W13, W22, W30

f. Most Significant Saying

‘She was always the same and she was always there.’ W34

2.6.5 Colliery Women Managing Loss and its Consequences

a. Selection from Witnesses

Managing Loss 2.5.5

Links with Poverty 2.5.2 Childhood Experiences 2.5.3

b. Rationale for Category

In 2.3 there is a reflection on the contextualisation of the experience of being female in Denaby. A colliery woman was totally dependent on her husband, whose income was from the colliery. Her home belonged to the colliery owners and was rented only to mining families for as long as the man worked at the colliery. For all her diligence, her children faced increased health problems. If she suffered loss in any of these departments

of her life the impact was immediate and severe, emotional and economic. (W40) There is a close correlation between poverty outlined in section 2.5.3 and the poverty from loss of income and support. The overlap is that those suffering from loss, generally are already managing poverty (W51 and W52 fit well in both scenarios). The main fear was death by accident in the pit. Hardship came through other dangers such as heart and respiratory problems (pneumoconiosis), as well as the physical ailments of working underground. Families working together down the pit were common place and increased the worry of women at home. In conversations at a Miners' Chapel lecture in 1995, two brothers told me that 'mam' had a system for the older sons of the family working down the pit. First up got the braces, the trousers, the boots and went to work. The last couldn't go anywhere! The same system worked at home. First back from the pit, best dressed to go out! The last one stayed at home.

The fundamental reason for this category is the graphic images of colliery women left to cope on their own through the death or injury of their husbands. Two responses are highlighted. First, colliery women could not afford to indulge in a long emotional response to tragedy. Second, they had to control circumstances quickly as best they could through tenacity, determination and hard work. This they did, generally, with dignity, even in humiliating circumstances.

c. Significant Threads

1. Death brought an immediate and harsh reality of loss into a colliery woman's life. W42-W44
2. Colliery women worked and waited at home. As mothers they had double reason to fear the pit siren and the pit ambulance. W46, W47
3. The support network in Denaby was immediate and generous. W18, W19
4. Family survival depended on the character of colliery women. There was no room for sentimentality. W43, W58
5. Colliery women just had to survive loss in whatever way it came. They did not have the luxury of financial help. W52, W53

6. Pawnbrokers, 'tick', debt and going to the Parish awaited them. They were humiliating episodes. Dignity was hard to maintain, but most held on. W42, W48, W51, W52
7. Colliery women had to be the realistic ones. W27, W44, W58
8. It brought them high levels of stress. They kept the children as free from worry as was possible. W23, W26, W27, W30, W41

d. Significant Sayings (Appendix 2)

e. The Most Significant Thread

Colliery women just had to survive loss in whatever way it came. They did not have the luxury of sentimentality or the help of finance. W43, W47, W54

f. The Most Significant Saying

'Well, you can't do anything about it. It's keeping you in a job'. W58

2.6.6 Colliery Women as Achievers through Adversity

a. Selection from Witnesses

Proud Colliery Women 2.5.6

Link with Poverty 2.5.2 and Childhood Memories 2.5.3

b. Reason for Category

Having accepted domesticity as a natural consequence of their gender role in a coal mining community, it is not surprising to find in the data evidence of colliery women's achievements being mainly in the home. What is surprising is how much they achieved for their husband and family from so little, by understanding significant priorities. Colliery women themselves received great love and respect from their families as their children reflected on the start in life their mothers gave them in the homes they created. It was regarded as a remarkable thing.

c. Significant Threads

1. With so few amenities they achieved remarkable standards. W11, W22, W55
2. They made them warm, welcoming, well managed, secure homes. W12, W21, W28
3. They had an unending work routine and meals were ready at all times. W16, W17, 24
4. Colliery women were always there for their children. They were proud of their homes and had pride in the appearance of their husband and children. W24, W25, W62
5. In pit homes they taught family values and loyalty W56, W61
6. They inherited a legacy from a long line of colliery families. W11, W17, W56
7. Most were uncompromisingly realistic and determined to survive. W10, W13, W57
8. Many had a presence and a capacity patiently to confront poverty. W41, W42, W16 W55
9. Many were keen to pass on their love of learning. W60

d. Significant Sayings (Appendix 2)

e. Most Significant Thread

Most were uncompromisingly realistic and determined to survive. W10, W13, W57

f. Most Significant Saying

‘She was the Matriarch we looked to, to solve our problems’. W55

2.6.7 The Quintessential Humanity of Colliery Women

a. Selection from Witnesses

Proud Colliery Women **2.5.6**

W59 to W61 Links with all other sections

b. Rationale for Category

Here I use ‘humanity’ to describe the essence of the nature of colliery women which accepted the responsibility for the welfare of husband and family as their own, regardless of inherent injustices in such a division of labour. The data provides evidence of the humanity (or spiritual and moral imperatives) which motivated colliery women. It is seen

in their perception of realities and their instinctive recognition of the core values of family life. They also discerned the significance of, and pride in, both their domestic role and status as colliery women.

c. Significant Threads

1. She was indefatigable and humorous. W61, W41, W11, W22
2. They understood the core value of family life W62
3. They were proud to be colliery women. W62
4. They were proud of their domestic role. W62
5. They perceived realities men failed to see W14, W26, W29, W41
6. They understood the misconception that colliery women alone were dependant on their men. W35, W61, W27
7. They understood their partnership to be a two-way shared dependency W58, W61, W63
8. They understood what love was all about. For many women it was unspoken commitment, hard work, sticking together (or going it alone) and in the end maybe winning. W24, W44, W53, W54, W59, W63
9. They made up for the short comings of their husbands W41, W59

Significant Sayings (Appendix 2)

e. Most Significant Thread

They understood what love was all about. For many women it was unspoken commitment, hard work, sticking together (or going it alone) and in the end maybe winning. W44, W53

f. Most Significant Saying

‘I loved him, I really did’. W63

2.7 Conclusion

The 'action theory' of society is based on the fact that people have a purposive character because they give meaning to their actions. Society is produced when action becomes social and individuals orientate their actions to one another. They acknowledge shared beliefs, values and interests. Action cannot be completely understood by external observation. Therefore, in this research, the researcher must achieve a degree of empathy with colliery women by grasping the meaning they give to their actions. This is crucial for the method of understanding. It provides a rational understanding opposed to an emotional one. For example, the action of colliery women is that they hid hard times from their children (W27). They, as mothers, were the ones who went short when things were tight. The meaning behind the action is that colliery women carried the responsibility to feed and clothe their children. The real task, as women saw it, was to create comfortable conditions for their families because they thought that this was where their duty lay.

The meaning for so much of the activity of colliery women is reflected in the relationship between neighbours, which was direct and very close. It was taken for granted they would act to help each other at the birth of their children, at laying out the dead, at weddings, at christenings and at funerals. It was part of the business of being a pitman's wife. The meaning to the activity of self help amongst neighbours was to give a feeling of security. Without it life for a colliery woman would have been impoverished and insecure. There are many other examples of colliery women acting unceasingly. Carr describes colliery women as always tired. Their working day was from the small hours of the morning until midnight. With her husband and working sons on different shifts, a wife would be expected to prepare the tin bath with water on their return at all hours of the day. She would be there to wash their backs. It might start at three in the morning see off her son, continue throughout the day seeing other of her men off or coming home from shift, until after midnight before the last had used the tin bath and gone off to bed. It started again for her at 3am. There was hardly a break in the continuous round of tasks. There was baking, cleaning, polishing, there were children to bath. The wife operated within the traditional division of labour, spent nothing on herself without her husband's

approval and did not resent her exclusion from most of his social activity (W20, 29, 32, 33). The meaning for all their activity was that they perceived realities men failed to see (W14, W26, W29). They understood the misconception that colliery women alone were dependant on their men (W35, W61, W29). They understood what love was all about. For many women it was unspoken commitment, hard work, sticking together (or going it alone) and in the end maybe winning (W24, W44, W53, W54, W59, W63). They were proud to be colliery women and they were proud of their domestic role (W62).

The research indicates gender inequality was embedded in the accepted tradition of Denaby Main as a mining community.⁸⁴ Inequality is seen in the data as the attitude that limited colliery women's educational and employment opportunities because they 'were only girls'. Inequality was in the societal expectation that colliery women would always confront poverty on behalf of their children and perform unrelenting tasks of survival, often without the help of their husbands, as in Harriet's [Bright] case history and referred to in Evelyn Hawthorne's description of life of the women she knew. Colliery women were unequal in dependence on husbands and the priority men had in their lives. In this they could be seen to be inferior to men. Yet the data never mentions colliery women themselves feeling inferior to men. The data does, however, interpret this externally perceived inferiority in terms of gain over adversity. Colliery women drew out of adversity an unsung authority as they turned hovels into warm homes, empty tables into boards always with sufficient to eat and with deft skill hid from children their poverty and against a background of deprivation produced 'fun' 'happiness' 'and 'a lovely life', statements that appear constantly in the data. I have already mentioned this problem of incongruity. In W41, the mother is described as 'the light and centre of family, loved by all'. Such phrases seem totally inappropriate if taken out of the context of the unglamorous but powerful place of colliery women in their homes.⁸⁵ Apparently, gender status was not as important to them as the ultimate expression of a shared dependency, love.⁸⁶ (W62/63)

In the next chapter I will seek to observe as clear a picture as possible of life for Mary of Nazareth in New Testament times. This requires a different approach. Literature on Mary

is often on spirituality or Roman Catholic dogma or feminist use of Mary to in relation to gender inequalities. However, in Chapter Three, we will concentrate on the historical, socio-cultural aspect of New Testament times to understand the life of peasant women in first century Palestine that was Mary's lot.

Chapter 2 Endnotes

1. Alan Bryman, Social Research Methods (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). See also Jacque Barzmin & Henry Graff, The Modern Researcher (New York: Harcourt Brone Jovanovich 1977), p. 152; Martha Howell & Walter Prevenor. An Introduction to Historical Methods (New York: Cornell University Press 2001).
2. Clive Seale, Researching Society and Culture (London: Sage Publications 1999), p. 27.
3. Seale, Researching Society and Culture, p. 27. See also Nigel Gilbert, Researching Social Life (London: Sage Publications 1999).
4. Seale, Researching Society and Culture, pp. 29-30. (See also endnote 38). In animals it is instinctive behaviour. In human beings it is a matter of mind. Human beings have an ability to understand gestures and responses. They share symbols in a common language which is a system of symbols and enables them to interact and form social relationships through communication. The theories of Weber and Mead are articulated by Shafer when he said that people create history. It is the record of the actions of human beings orientating their actions to one another and communicating in symbolic interaction.
5. Tim May, Social Research (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2nd Edition 1999); Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison, Research Methods in Education (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000); Alan Bryman, Social Research Methods.
6. May, Social Research, p. 133.
7. May, Social Research, p. 133.
8. May, Social Research, p. 134.
9. If I was researching women from the last two generations in Denaby which have been, for the greater part, post colliery years, the change recorded would have been dramatic. My field of research, however, is colliery women from the earlier mining generations. I am observing change in those times by witnesses and by colliery women themselves who have survived and review their lives from this post colliery period of traumatic change. This historical viewpoint expresses itself in statements such as 'colliery women were intelligent but didn't have the opportunities women have today'. In her case history, Harriet Bright is clear in her comparison of her poverty as a colliery wife and the comparative prosperity she enjoys today. 'Then I didn't have it, now I can afford to be generous.'

10. Participant observation is defined by May on p. 134 as ‘the process whereby an investigator establishes a many-sided and relatively long-term relationship with a human association in its natural setting, for the purposes of a scientific understanding of that association’. The ethnographer then has an empathic understanding of the social scene. It leads to theory being generated from data. See also Dick Hobbs & Tim May, Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1993).

11. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, Research Methods in Education, pp. 187-188.

12. Bryman, Social Research Methods, There is a fuller description of participant observation on page 298.

13. These are some of the important points of contact that witnesses relate and hold important:

- The names of all family and close relatives
- The names of important friends and carers
- Where mother and her husband were born
- How they met
- When and where they were married
- The work she may have done outside the home
- The hobbies she enjoyed
- Her first home after marriage
- The family home where the children were brought up
- The kind of life the family had as children
- The relation between mother and father
- The central part mother played in family life bringing up of children
- Mother as manager and the influence of her character on their lives
- The things the family did together
- The memories of her as a person and her idiosyncrasies

14. Everything was a shared experience in Denaby. Friday was a big day for colliery women because it was pay day. The house was cleaned and they put on a clean pinney and they gathered on the pit bridge to wait for their husbands’ wages. They shared poverty. They shared the ‘backs’ to meet and gossip as well as to support one another. They shared open doors to their homes never locked never burgled. They shared fears for the safety of their husbands and fears for their future if one of their husbands were to die. They shared days out to Cleethorpes, all of Denaby crowding trains with excited children and women having prepared everything days before. They shared grief and they shared hard times when strikes were called. They survived together.

15. John Vincent, Endogenous Theology (forthcoming). He explains this theology to be from within the experiences and testimonies of a person or group. In it the narrative is communicating the context and how it had an impact on and shapes that which wells up within you. John Vincent defines ‘remarkable things’ as a whole series of small distinct, special happenings that take place to a small selection of residents in a street. Each separate story is told as a special meaning filled narrative, a remarkable thing. It becomes remarkable by speaking of it as remarkable. An example of this is amongst my earliest experiences. It was of Mrs Clark who was a large lady and sitting on the window ledge of the upstairs front bedroom. Her legs were inside and the rest of her dangled precariously outside as she reached to clean the window. Her life had not been easy, but she had an enormous capacity for caring. She was doing one of the many ordinary but remarkable things in the life of a colliery woman. Maureen Scott also has a lasting place in my memory. Her father, a miner, was dying and would be my first funeral. In their ordinary lives they performed remarkable things. She and Edna, her mother, were to become friends until Maureen’s untimely death as she reached her early fifties. Time does not allow other special, meaning filled narratives.

16. Circa 1979/80, the then Bishop of Sheffield, at his visitation in St. George’s Church in Doncaster, was critical of one parish for having a PCC dominated by women. Where he was critical, I was thankful.

17. Scargill House is a Christian Conference Centre near Kettlewell in the Yorkshire Dales.
18. This fact was brought home to us all when a colliery wife, Amy Watkin, who was on the committee, died just before the opening ceremony. See also endnote 12 on coal and its vital part in national life.
19. Evelyn Haythorne, On Earth To Make the Numbers Up (Yorkshire Art Circus 1986), p.11. Even in the 1950s it was not easy for girls growing up. Haythorne describes how difficult it was to learn anything as a girl. 'I was never allowed access to a newspaper, and if I ever gave a second glance at my mother's weekly book, the Red Letter, I was given a back hander and the book put out of reach. Everyone around me seemed to have something to say that I was not to hear'. See 2.5:W3.
20. Compared with the antiquity of its neighbouring towns of Mexborough and Conisbrough, the story of Denaby Main is still history in progress.
21. Bill Williamson, Class Culture and Community (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1982), p.130.
22. Williamson, Class Culture and Community, p. 125.
23. Williamson, Class Culture and Community, p. 118.
24. Williamson, Class Culture and Community, p. 119.
25. Williamson, Class Culture and Community, p. 131.
26. Ann Loades, Searching for Lost Coins, p. 18. I was attracted to the phrase 'the particular experience of being female'. It seemed to fit the circumstances of colliery women. Loades writes, 'gender interacts with race, class, education and other social factors to shape the particular experience of being female'. See also Gillian. This Female Man of God. (London: Routledge 1995).
27. This was from conversations with people attending Chapel lectures 1989-2004, also see 2.5: W26 W27.
28. Deirdre Beddoes, Discovering Women's History (London: Pander Press 1983), p.61, points out that as late as 1963 the Newsom Report said, 'We try to educate girls into becoming imitation men and as a result we are wasting their qualities of womanhood at a great expense to the community. In addition to their needs as individuals our girls should be educated in terms of their main social function which is to make for themselves, their children and their husbands a secure and suitable home and to be mothers.' See also Vicky Seddon, The Cutting Edge, p. 254, who claimed that the attitude of the miners' in the 1984 strike was as traditionally entrenched as ever.
29. Griselda Carr, Pit Women: Coal Communities in Northern England (London: Merlin Press 2001), pp. 35, 39, 44.
30. Bailey, Black Diamonds, pp.74-75, discusses the grim conditions of life in Denaby and the epidemics of typhoid, diphtheria which at the turn of the century gave infant mortality rate of 250 in every 1000. Denaby Parish Burial Registers (Doncaster Archives) reveal deaths of children in Denaby were at times as many as twenty a week. A high mortality rate continued throughout the pre-war years.
31. MacFarlane, The Blood On Your Coal pp.2-4. 'In the one hundred years of coal production at Denaby Main Colliery there were 203 fatal accidents. The death toll was the normal cost of coal production.' At Cadeby Colliery there were 218 fatal accidents of men and boys. In his Thesis he contrasts the rate of fatalities under private ownership with the much lower rate after nationalisation. There was a desire, expressed in the Miners' Chapel, to recognise the worthy part the coal miner and his wife had in the divine economy, as the first step to moving on.
32. It is twenty two years ago since my last funeral service for a miner killed in a pit accident. Rob Genders died underground at Maltby Colliery. His widow, Janet, died early in 2007 still grieving his loss.

33. May, Social Research, pp. 22-23.
34. Seale, Researching Society and Culture, p. 208.
35. Seale, Researching Society and Culture, p. 209.
36. Bryman, Social Research Methods, p. 308.
37. J. Benson & R.G. Neville. Studies in the Yorkshire Coal Industry, (Manchester: University Press 1976). See W48 W49 below.
38. May, Social Research, p. 10.
39. This research was undertaken before the requirements of Ethical Review. However, this description indicates the ethical approach of the researcher. All information was gathered voluntarily and any data that might be prejudicial has either been omitted or referred to anonymously.
40. Barzun & Graff, The Modern Researcher, p. 152.
41. Shafer, A Guide to Historical Method, pp. 169-70.
42. May, Social Research, p112.
43. W1 data is from conversations in 1993 prior to the funeral of the daughter's father. The family will remain anonymous. See also Deirdre Beddoe, Discovering Women's History (Pander Press 1983), p. 50. This attitude to women was widespread. Beddoe quotes the 1923 Hadlow Report, 'We do not think it desirable to attempt to divorce a girl's education from her home duties and her home opportunities'. Beddoe also refers to the Norwood Report in 1943 which 'thought in terms of education for boys as that for future supporters of families and that of girls as future wives and mothers'.
44. Lorna's father had no objection to his son taking a scholarship and then into further education. Women had their place and education was not necessary for his daughters. 'They would work and marry and look after the home'.
45. Evelyn Haythorne, On Earth To Make the Numbers Up, p. 11.
46. Elizabeth and Gladys Shreeves were born in Denaby in 1911 and 1914 part of a family of eight children. Their mother and father struggled through the early twentieth century strikes (W4). Young colliery women returned home to marry. Many, like Gladys Shreeves, looked after their mother and the rest of the family (W5). There were small industries around Denaby. A miner wrote a poem (engraved in glass around a ton slab of coal in the Holy Table in the Miners' Chapel) about the girls from the scythe works. Girls of 14 travelled to mills around Bradford each day to work and help the family income. Harriet, like many colliery women, give up paid employment to look after husband, family and home. The Kilner's glass works were owned by the family of Jeremy Clarkson of Top Gear fame. The firm closed in late 30s through poor family management (W8).
47. The Reresby Arms, a public house in Denaby, has always been known as The Pig. At the back of the pub was a pig slaughter house. Hence it's name. Joe and his brother Herbert used it as did others miners, Wilf Green amongst them.
48. Haythorne, In Our Backs, p.47. Miner's pay was calculated by the wages clerk who would put the stall's money into individual tins marked with the stall number. The money was divided out often in the Drum pub. Certain amounts had already been deducted, for rent for their tied housing, the Welfare fund, the pit doctor for any needed medical attention, union dues, and the payment of any provision bought at the colliery store. What was left was for beer, for the family, for food and clothing often in that order and in

some cases even before they had left the Drum. Miners could be very demanding, sometimes dismissive of their wives.

49. This evidence came from Lily in one of our many conversations. Her life, rather like Harriet's, was extremely hard. Her mother's reply indicated the way she [her mother] coped with poverty and it certainly was the way Lily struggled to maintain her family. Families had to be fought for and protected. The life of colliery wives was at home and was demanding. Lily's heritage built out of extreme poverty is to be found in her proud family. Survival was all the more difficult during strikes. The men in Denaby lived up in Ladies' Valley (an old quarry at the top of the Craggs) so the women could claim money from the 'parish'. Men would 'kidnap' sheep and the farmer would give them 2/6 for saving them from the river. (96/57)

50. Dad, Alf Bulcroft, was blinded at age of 17 by a stone in the eye. The family remembers him on one occasion 'borrowing' a motorbike from the backyard, driving through Denaby woods and returning it. Later, in The Pig, a policeman arrested him. Alf protested, 'how can I pinch a motorbike? I'm blind!' The policeman bought him a pint.

51. Haythorne, In Our Backs, p. 47. Evelyn understood Harriet's dilemma. Bailey, Black Diamonds, p. 76 'When trade was bad the Colliery Company closed the mines or put men on short- time, meaning the colliers earned little or nothing. The main market for Denaby's coal was Eastern Europe and Russia. If the Baltic Sea froze, the pits would stop. No wages were paid until the sea thawed'. One funeral family told me, 'If dad got a full week in it was a clean pinnie and a bun' (06/26).

52. Haythorne, On Earth to Make the Numbers Up, p. 72 In 2.2.3 above I briefly reflected on the contextualisation of the experience of being female in Denaby. The shadow of loss brooded over every part of a colliery woman's life. She was totally dependent on her husband. Not only was her income from the colliery, her home belonged to the colliery owners and was rented for as long as the man worked at the colliery. For all her diligence, her children faced increased health problems in the village. If a colliery woman, such as Evelyn's mother or Harriet, suffered loss in any of these departments of her life the impact was immediate, severe, emotional and economic.

53. Alice Walton always went on holiday without dad. He stayed at home with the pigeons. (W25). The smell of home cooking was part of home life. Mary Walker made 'special dumplings. 'Her family recall that 'she baked lovely bread and sweets. The house smelt lovely. 'We had homemade pop. 'She could make a meal out of nothing'. (97/14).

Ann Mangham's family recall a 'happy childhood'. 'The slipper was used for punishment. Every Saturday we had bacon and tomatoes, at other times hash and good plain food such as homemade custards and Sunday Yorkshire pudding and beef'. 'Mum's epitaph was, 'Grandma needed a medal for living with Jack'. (05/59)

54. Haythorne, In Our Backs, p.10 'Arthur was the Denaby knocker up. Constant mornings after three years in the pit meant that he couldn't sleep after half past three and so he earned himself half a crown a week at each house 'knocking up.' Hawthorne confirms the evidence of witnesses that colliery wives would be up with the early pit buzzer, black the fireplace, scrub floors, clean windows, swill the poky back yards.

55. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, p. 70. Not all wives were willing to help their husband bathe. There was still a traditional modesty that shied away even from hanging a woman's underwear on the washing line in the backs. The tin bath was used by all members of the family most likely in the same water. The water would be thrown out in the backs and used to wash the yard. (W38) The lives of colliery wives seemed to have revolved round the Yorkshire Range and the tin bath. For Alice Wigley (W21) who had five children, the tin bath was for Sundays. The same water was used for everybody. There were 4 boys in one bedroom. Mavis, the daughter, slept with mum and dad. (04/18) Harriet Bright's sister, Connie, offered them their newer tin bath because she was moving up into a home with a bathroom for the first time. 'Tom refused to carry it through the village streets in daylight and waited till after dark to bring it home'. Lorna remembers it well. It was that tin bath she used on the eve of her wedding day in 1966. 'Everything was done on the Yorkshire Range, from washing clothes and cooking to bathing'. 'On the morning of my wedding', Lorna said, 'I washed in a bowl with hot water boiled on the stove'. (W37)

56. Haythorne, In Our Backs, p. 38. Evelyn Hawthorne memories of the warmth in her home, the big open miners' fire and the table set for tea. I remember a few decades ago sitting often with Bernard Madin, an elderly miner, whose wife had recently died. We would sit in front of his fire and talk and sometimes sit in silence watching the flames leaping from the coal, making patterns across the room and our faces. It was cosily warm.

57. Haythorne, In Our Backs, p. 46 Women in Denaby Main were, generally speaking, fastidious in their home life. (33) Many families have spoken of memories of well kept, well-cared for homes, steps scrubbed, window sills washed daily, carpets beaten, the yard swilled and clean despite the environment. Mothers kept their eyes on their children, their eating habits, their hygiene, even their courting. Regarding helping in the home and wage packets, here many miners drew the line. One family remembers their father, a miner all his life, enjoyed a good marriage over 51 years. His wife did everything for him including his snap. She did everything for all of them. He never told mother how much he earned. Men were paid in stall, how many tubs they'd filled. 'He'd bring money home after mum had gone to bed. He left more in the locker at the pit. There was money hidden under the carpet, behind mirror even under the soap'. (97/32) The Mangham family's epitaph for their mother has already been noted (85) 'She needed a medal for living with Jack'. (05/59)

58. The word, 'hard', is the nearest my research comes to violence in the home. The one exception was when I interviewed a woman about domestic violence in her family though not to her personally. It happened to her sister-in-law who was badly beaten by her husband. As a consequence he, too, was badly beaten as punishment. This data comes from conversations with a couple I had known for many years. They remain anonymous (8/7/85) There is anecdotal evidence of violence in the home and a family, mentioned in other data, confirmed their mother was subject to violence. Sheelagh Kelly, A Different Kind of Love, p. 40 suggests in her novel through the main character, a colliery wife, that it was noticeable 'that one or two of the women [in Denaby] she spoke to appeared a lot happier of late, and guessed that it was not due simply to the glorious sunshine but because their husbands were away at the front, for it took the war for them to escape domestic violence'. There is no other evidence of domestic violence in my research data.

59. Haythorne, In Our Backs, p. 25 Evelyn Haythorne confirms poverty and a tough life left colliery women little time for sentimentality. She tells the story of Arthur, a miner, who was staggering home drunk, not for the first time, when he fell near his gate and his wife's reaction. She showed little grief at his passing. When the neighbours called her she showed little grief at his passing. Her reply didn't surprise them. 'Don't bother me with that, leave the old buggar there, he'll get up when he's ready'. Ma looked down on her now dead husband and wringing her hands in her apron, said, 'Aye Arthur, yer silly old chuff, you've supped yersen to death.' She then had a swig of gin, bent over Arthur and started going through his pocket. 'What was his is mine now, after all he can't take it wi' him, cos if he's got a ten bob note it'll be in his arse pocket.' 'There, I knew he'd have a ten bob note. I telled yer didn't I?' She waved the ten shilling note in the air and put her husband's last few coppers in her apron pocket.

60. Horace Meredith's stories about pit ponies were fascinating. He managed the pit ponies. One of the first jobs he was given underground was to go to a gob fire and help out. (W36) Horace's mother had a family of miners to feed, clothe and worry over. He was 13 going on 14 years old when he started down the pit with his father and older brothers. At 18 he had a heart attack but continued to work down the pit 40 years. He managed the pit ponies.

61. Bailey, Back Diamonds, p. 22 has a photograph of face workers hewing coal. This photograph is also in the Miners' Chapel. Mary Haywood also knew the dangers underground for her son and husband. Her son David worked with his father on the coal face. David, worked with a pit pony called Major. He coupled him up to dad's coal to take back to the pit bottom. He sneaked on to the coal face to talk to his dad. According to David, even in 1956 coal on the Barnsley seam was 'hand got' as in the photograph mentioned above. 07/21

62. Lorna described her father as a brilliant miner everyone gave him a good name, despite his attitude to his family. (W45) Harriet said fighting was the way they sorted out their problems. If they had a grievance with another man in the pub they'd strip to the waist John Wayne style up on the Craggs, a big circle of people with the antagonists in the centre and after beating each other up it ended with a hand shake. Lorna remembers women fighting too. One colliery wife in particular, Mabel, tucked her long skirt between her legs fastened up her back, then laid into another woman. (W46)

63. Haythorne, In Our Backs, p. 46 It was 'a very old black van with dark windows and two doors at the back held closed by an iron bar. The very sight of this vehicle rumbling down the street struck fear into women's hearts and it was a common sight to see a woman try to run after it and then break off and cry with relief when it passed her street.' Women would stand around who had been brought home. If the man was dead they would offer to help lay him out. 'Most women had a complete laying-out set of clothes ready and waiting in a drawer or trunk, the cloth kept sweet smelling with little bags of lavender'

64. Haythorne, On Earth to Make the Numbers Up, p. 46 Evelyn writes about her mother under stress. (W47) Evelyn continues that her Dad rallied from his illness though it was short-lived. He had changed and things easily annoyed him. Mother couldn't do any thing right. It was dinner time and dad was getting annoyed with Evelyn and brother arguing. Mother served the children and came in with her husband's dinner just as he suddenly bent down lifted the chairs from beneath the children, and they fell onto the floor with their dinner all over them. Mother burst into tears, 'I'm sorry but I've got to the end of my tether, I just can't take any more! 'Mother didn't bat an eyelid but lifted his plate up and hit him squarely on the top of his head. He looked so funny sitting there with bits of potato and meat stuck in his hair and gravy running down his face'.

65. Benson & Neville, Studies in the Yorkshire Coal Industry, p. 132.

66. Benson & Neville, Studies in the Yorkshire Coal Industry, p. 132.

67. There were no posh funerals in Denaby (W50). So small were the homes with steep, narrow staircases, Joe Burdett the undertaker, told me the difficulties of removing loved ones. Smaller bodies were carried upright down the stairs, struggling not to let them fall. Bedroom windows would have to be removed, so that larger remains could be lowered into the street. I still visit Joe's widow, Joyce. Mary Croft was a colliery wife married to Fred. The started a small house-shop in the streets behind the Drum. Fred continued as a face worker whilst Mary served in the shop. They had two sons. Each son died of appendices at seven years old. Her husband, Fred, died soon after my arrival in Denaby. I took the funeral. I knew Mary very well.

68. Haythorne, On Earth to Make the Numbers Up, p. 48 It seems that it was always the woman who went before a panel of worthy people to ask help when they had no other resources. (W48) Witnesses have told me that folk desperate for funds would find a broken watch, shake it and whilst it was ticking take it into the shop. Wives would 'hoc' their husband's best suit and shoes on Monday and reclaim them on Friday. In conversation one elderly widow remembered pawning her husband's shoes and didn't realise his socks were in them and he missed a shift because he had no other socks! (W51) Eleanor Hatton would take things to Haigh's pawnshop because the others were too shy to go in. (96/58).

69. Haythorne, On Earth to Make the Numbers Up, p.64 There was the further humiliation of the silence that accompanied the members of the Board looking through papers whilst ma and daughter stood there waiting for the verdict. They were to be given a five bob voucher to spend on food at the Co-op.

70. Elizabeth Green had a strong and attractive soprano voice. She had a stage name, Irene Walsh, when she sang around local clubs. Wilf, who was a good man and a friend, never did anything round the house. He always 'laked' (missed his shift) on Mondays after a weekend at the Northcliffe club. 'Nana' Green had, as many colliery wives had, this enormous capacity patiently to carry on, to listen and never pass judgement. It is, however, a recurring theme. Mother was the provider and manager. Dad was always her priority. Ken Harrison was a blacksmith/welder at Cadeby pit for forty seven years. He expected his wife to

have dinner on the table when he came home. According to the family, 'Sunday dinner came straight from the garden'. (96/6)

71. Parents asking a relative to bring up their child was not unknown in Denaby for a variety of reasons. Florence Gregory brought up two of her sister's daughters for economic reasons. They didn't lose touch with home and parents. It was a family support system. Maxine now works as an assistant in a residential home and mothers her family as Green mothered hers. Maxine remembers, as a young girl, every Friday carrying in her arms a wooden box heavy with a load of wet fish from the station up to the miners' hospital. 'It nearly killed me and I went to school smelling of fish. I got 6 old pennies'. Conversations with Maxine 11/7/07

72. Joan Jackson's granddad was a member of the Bolshevik Club which met opposite the Drum in Denaby. Neil Fitzgerald, brother to the singer Tony Christie and deputy chair Balby St Governors, remembers the 'Bolts' club.

73. Joan came from a line of miner's union leaders and her brother Jim MacFarlane was leader of Doncaster Council. She channelled her abilities into home, husband and children. Colliery women like Joan 'sometimes made pit work look the easy option'.

74. Interview with Harriet and Lorna in 2006.

75. As in World War 1, colliery women were required to fill the places of men away in the Second World War. Harriet worked at the newly opened baths at Denaby pit which were taken over by Edgar Allen, a Sheffield firm to produce aircraft parts. Harriet worked there as a machinist. Nellie Atkinson was interviewed on Workers Playtime and worked as a mechanic. (05/48) Ann Mangham was in service during the war and then made ammunition, 303n bullets. 5/59 Sarah Hatton worked making ammunition. Two Denaby sisters, Connie and Hettie, worked in a Sheffield factory building aircraft. Hettie ('nut and bolts' as she said) put them together. Connie cleaned them out before delivery. There was also the local gun powder works. Older women like Liz Rainer, remember the powder works as young girls, returning home covered in yellow powder. Liz lived to the age of 96. (28) Evelyn Ball made detonators and bomb doors. (04/53) Irene Burke was at British Nylon Spinners (later ICI) making parachutes in WW2. (05/5) Evelyn Haythorne, On Earth to Make the Numbers Up, pp.92-112 Nearly every available woman was on munitions. Women and girls who had never been seen inside a factory helped make badly needed ammunition. They wrote messages to Hitler on torpedoes. Hawthorn describes the war as a time of an increasing awareness that there was a world outside Denaby Main.

76. Harriet's words (W62) are symbolic of the place colliery women accepted in the family structure and economy. Their intuitive ability to prioritise realities significantly enhanced the survival of families. At the same time their lives were geared to give freedom to the man. Vincent, Endogenous Theology (endnote 11).

77. Haythorne, In Our Backs, p. 48. Evelyn, as evidence of a shared partnership, tells the story of Jenny and Eddy. Their son Bobby was accused by another neighbour, Mrs Johnson, of smashing milk bottles in her yard. Jenny went into a deep depression after a fight with her neighbour who called her a 'black cow', words reserved for women who carried on. She became obsessed with the thought of herself as a 'black cow' and would repeat again and again that she was 'not mucky'. She suffered a nervous breakdown. Eddy went on sick for three weeks. The doctor diagnosed the problem. After that, 'It was Eddy's gentle ways and loving care that brought her through'.

78. Colliery women accepted that 'being a woman' entailed restrictions, life in the shadows of their men. Eleanor Hatton's family, however, did not concur with any view that men were their mother's superior. Eleanor Hatton was very well organised, thrifty and boss of the house. If dad forgot shopping he was sent straight back. He gave his wages to his wife'. (96/56) It was not always straightforward for colliery women to give freedom to their husbands. It was a self-denying exercise. The point is made in several parts of the data but especially in (W15).

79. Bryman, Social Research Methods, p. 448 agrees with the suggestion that the participant observer should instinctively trust his observation finding. The ethnographer's greater proximity to the people studied frequently inspire greater confidence in such data. May, Social Research, p.152 underlines the centrality of the ethnographer in the interpretive process. Cohen, Mannion & Morrison, Research Methods in Education, p. 188 consider the value of participant observation lies in the extended period of time in which observers can develop intimate and informal relations with those they are observing.

80. Bryman, Social Research Methods, p. 401 he describes narrative analysis. Also on p.316 there is a discussion of life and oral history interviews.

81. I interpret the term 'temporal sequence' as a succession or a series of experiences, say, a life-sequence moving from limited education into employment away from home and then to marry into domesticity. Life-sequence is more complex when the sequence of living in a tradition which is gradually challenged by a shift of unforeseen events (such as the death of a miner or the demands of war that takes women outside the boundary of home) is taken into account. 'Interconnection between episodes' I interpret as the experiences that are common to other families in the community as well, such as a miner as the head of the family, mother always there, waiting on a Friday with clean pinnie at the pit gates for his wages, going to the pawn brokers to survive poverty. Both are part of each other.

82. Bryman, Social Research Methods, p. 401

83. Booth, A Railway History of Denaby and Cadeby Collieries, p. 12 see also p.70

84. May, Social Research, pp. 147-149. I have drawn on parts of his chapter on Methods of Social Research for presenting my analysis.

85. Another example is in (W22) where Beattie Parham is called 'a perfect mother' which might seem slightly overstated without the additional words 'given what she'd got'. (See also W41). There is another phrase that caught my imagination in (W34). It sums up the male/female dichotomy. Eleanor Street 'gave her husband freedom to do what he wanted'. Along with 'a perfect mother', both phrases are significant. There is evidence that colliery women in general had a deep and unrelenting sense of responsibility in fulfilling their role regardless of its perceived inequality or its secondary nature implied by tradition.

86. This thought exposes the complexity of human emotions that are woven into the temporal sequence shared by human beings. In the case of Harriet and Tom it was the unspoken bond that bound together two personalities and was the determinant factor in the fight to survive

CHAPTER 3

MARY'S SOCIAL CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Focus

There is little direct data on Mary. Indirect data has to be extracted from material set in other contexts and for other purposes. Therefore, there is an inherent uncertainty to the results of this chapter, relying as it does on perceptions of women in Mary's social context. Tan Ilan gives a timely reminder of the problems of collecting data about women in Palestine in New Testament times: 'it is focusing on a group [women] which produced no written sources of its own and must be investigated by examining sources written by others but mentioning them, more often than not, incidentally'.¹ What might be notable about women were the secondary roles they were expected to accept and the anonymity of their contribution within social structures.

The intention is not to establish a history of women in first century Palestine. Nor is it to be an interpretation of women in New Testament tradition. The intention is to view how scholars have received their history. This chapter attempts to establish a portrait of the life of Mary of Nazareth using the results of contemporary New Testament scholarship. Of course, such scholarship does not come with unified voice, so it has been necessary, within the space constraints of this thesis, to select a small sample from the varied contributions on offer (see Appendix 3) The purpose of this chapter is (in parallel with the second chapter) to establish as clear a picture as possible, of life for Mary. This requires a different approach from that of participant observation. The witnesses will be the writings of contemporary scholars. Further more, we will need to deal with assessments and conclusions with varying degrees of probability.

3.1.2 Method

Nevertheless, the method will echo the strategy used in Chapter Two. Statements from witnesses will be presented. However, the witnesses will be three contemporary scholars.

In the first part of the chapter their statements will be investigated and their opinions will be noted on material relating to the Jewish background and the environment and nature of the community that shaped Mary's life (3.2).

Though this chapter is distinct in its research approach, it will then investigate historical episodes similar to those in the lives of colliery women. For this to happen in a structured way, the method will be to use the model of colliery women derived in 2.6, as a template to summarize the results of our scholarly witnesses through allocation to significant threads (see 3.3). As there is no direct data of Mary and her daily life, the research will attempt to place Mary into the category structure from the statements of the witness scholars, expert in the socio-political environment of women in the Gospel era.

3.1.3 Three Scholarly Works Selected as Witnesses

As a prelude to the selection of the scholarly witnesses, samples of the vast literature were surveyed to establish an overview (see Appendix 3).

(a) The Criteria

From the literature surveyed it was decided to limit the field by selecting three scholarly works meeting the following criteria:

- Published in the last fifteen years
- Female scholars preferred
- Interested in social context and the life of ordinary women
- Written other works in the same field
- At least one Jewish witness
- Respected by the scholarly community

From an academic point of view most of the writers reviewed had merit and insight and many met most of the criteria. In practice, the writers selected were those who became important to me at the formative stage of the thesis and have been in the background of my thinking as the research developed. In the three works I have chosen, there is both a comprehensive and complementary style and content that resonates with me. The

witnesses fit the criteria: all are women except one; all have published recently in the field and are clearly concerned with social context; all are recognised scholars; and one of them is Jewish.

(b) The Selection

The books, selected as good examples of scholarly writing in this field during the last fifteen years, demonstrate an understanding of and sensitivity towards first century Palestinian women in the socio-political era in which they lived:

Carolyn Osiek and David Balch³ (Families in the New Testament World), evaluate first century Christian household relationships within both a Greco-Roman and Jewish-Palestinian environment. Of particular interest is their evidence of families and gender roles in the gospels. They say ‘The early Christian family was the Greco-Roman family with a twist.’⁶ This may be said of Jewish family life in Greco-Roman times. Mary is mentioned rarely and only in a secondary and general way, but it is possible to extrapolate from their descriptions of Christian households elements of the Jewish social traditions, Mary may have herself experienced both as a child and as a mother. They write at length on housing in the ancient Mediterranean world, but add a rider to archaeological findings that no houses from that era are known for certain to have been occupied by Christians [Jews or Mary]. In describing social and family life they trace broad general lines. They discuss, with some caution, the common patterns of life in Mediterranean culture of honour and shame in the construction of sexuality and gender issues, and the importance of kinship in social organizational structures. They give a comprehensive review of family and gender in the gospels which has a general application to women.

Marianne Sawicki’s writing (Crossing Galilee)⁴ is orientated around thoughts of the land and the flow of water across it. Sawicki, in her description of people and their homes, points out that the basic material needs of people are the same where or when they live. She maintains the houses and water cisterns of Galilee are analogous to houses and water mains in our own era. They provide for physical needs. However the social and

cultural patterns which stabilize the lives of residents occupying these homes might be quite different. Sawicki, with some reservations, demonstrates this by evidence from excavated remains of houses and the use of space within them, as well as by data on caste and kinship. Sawicki suggests the statement, 'the work of her hands,' marks the economic reality of women who by their fertility and labour, sustain life and, in Mediterranean thought patterns, belong under male control. Marriage based on legitimate lineage was important for the flow of entitlements to inheritance and obligations to one's kin. Sawicki goes on to discuss Galilee as an occupied land, the indigenous hostility and the dangers for women that flowed from occupation. Sawicki has an originality and breadth to her study of Palestine. In her book, which uses evidence from archaeology and architectural design of first century Palestinian houses and space as a basis for her view of family life, only a small section directly mentions Mary, but the range of her topics offers an impression of the social and political landscape in which people survived.

Tal Ilan⁵ (Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine), is chosen for her detailed evidence of women's domestic world within their gender group, which Ilan then extends to the public space where women join men in sharing the burden of meeting the needs of their children and family. Mary is not the topic of her writing. There is, however, material that allows reasoned speculation of the pattern of life that may have been among women of her generation. Tal Ilan gives an in-depth description of family life and the maternal role of Jewish women. She claims that men's dominant social status leads the aristocracy and upper middle class, not only to express their opinions regarding women, but also try directly to shape women's social status according to their own evaluation of women's character, abilities and limitations. It is their opinions that have survived not the actual history of women. The first chapter starts with the birth of a daughter and with rabbinic quotations which demonstrate male attitudes: 'The birth of a daughter is a loss': 'anyone who does not have a son is as if dead'. She proceeds through the life cycle of women: the daughter's love for her father expressed in her total obedience to his authority especially in who she should marry: the importance of preserving a woman's chastity and her confinement in the home to prevent her social interaction with men other than her husband and the covering of her head to indicate she is under his [male] control. Ilan,

however, suggests that the laws expressed in the Mishnah are somewhat idealized. Women struggling in deprivation must, of necessity, work for their husbands outside the home, socialize with men and women in the market place or welcome people when they run hotels in their homes. In the end it is survival that is the priority. This correction of balance in priorities might apply to other areas of gender regulation. The ideal view of women always under male authority might appeal to regulators but within the home, women managing the family might have the upper hand and husbands might defer to their authority in the home.

In the final analysis, the selection of these particular scholars was somewhat subjective. Inevitably, my own bias and prejudices will have played their part in the selection process. However, these works, above all others, have found a resonance in my understanding of the research and its intentions and its limitations. Looking back, it interests me why I have chosen these. Given my experience of Denaby and its colliery women, the resonance is indicative.

In the next section we will present our findings from the witnesses under a number of headings. The headings have been established by the collation of the emerging research data. The following key will be used in relation to the three witnesses:

Key

MS + page number = Marianne Sawicki

OB + page number = Carolyn Osiek & David Balch

TI + page number = Tal Ilan

3.2 Scholarly Witnesses on Women in First Century Palestine

3.2.1 Women in the Days of Herod

(a) Peasant Women in Israelite Society

To first century Palestinians everything on the land had its own proper process, place and natural course in the survival of life. (MS 192, 193, 194) Land was the only permanent

possession. Wealth was linked to land and ownership of land. Israel, as an agrarian society, depended on arable and pastoral farming. Crops and herds can recover from drought or war. To be dispossessed of one's family land or to be driven out of your country was an unmitigated disaster.⁷ Peasant women had no share in the ownership of this most important and precious national asset. Women were counted alongside minors and bond workers, outside the normal accepted circle of those central and essential as human beings. As a social system it served as a means of economic oppression and gender disparagement. (MS 38)

Wright agrees emphatically with Sawicki. A peasant woman had no part in the land traditions which 'earthed' the relationship between God and Israel in the socio-economic facts of life. And yet the focal point of this 'earthing' process was the family, its role and tenure of the land and its social and religious importance in the community.⁸ It might be that only within the realm of the family, women would fit into the thought processes of patriarchal power, but this was a crucial realm. The land, for an Israelite, belonged to God. In a derived sense it belongs to tribes, clans and families. In the realm of the family, peasant women were the strategists in the daily economic, social and cultural operation of survival. Within their realm, peasant women gave life, fed and directed the vital early years of their children, to provide the land that belonged to God, with another generation to inherit it and to work it. Property ownership was not the thing that most mattered. They might not inherit the land, but women were at the centre of what most mattered to Israel- the 'earthing' process. Without women there would be no relationship with God.

Peasant women are not seen as history makers. Men make history. (TI 2) Land is where history is made. Men like Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah and the prophets walked the land creating the history between God and his people. Armies of men from Assyria, Babylon and now Rome brought the unmitigated disaster of the loss and occupation of the land. The man Herod the Great, backed by the man Augustus, had a grand urban project to change the flow of social, cultural, and economic life, and so make history himself.⁹ There were notable women in biblical tradition like Deborah, Esther, Judith who stand out as makers of history. But they were exceptions.¹⁰

(b) Herodian Urbanization

The Herodian project was to build new cities on a Hellenistic style. Herod built Sebaste and Caesarea, named after members of the imperial family, with temples named after them. The urban drift was from countryside (agriculture) to town and city orientated economics. It changed patterns of the circulation of people, their work and their goods. In the case of the Sea of Galilee, Hellenistic-Judean interests organized and expanded the fish-packing facilities on the western shore.¹¹

Herod Antipas, one of his sons, continued this Hellenization and urbanization in Galilee. He built two Greek cities, one near Nazareth, Sepphoris, and later Tiberius, on the Sea of Galilee. Sepphoris was the administrative centre which covered Nazareth and surrounding local villages. Wealthy Jewish landowners lived there and supported the Romans during the Jewish wars and the Galilean villagers detested them.

Trade routes passed through connecting cities in lower Galilee and the coastal plain. All these cities were Greek speaking and cosmopolitan and connected by these busy trade routes. Cultural and economic changes took place as Herodian urbanization redesigned the patterns of life refocusing them on a suburban lifestyle provided for by the rural output of peasant families.¹²

(c) Political Impact on Peasant Communities

Mutual distrust and hostility had already led to a tense and worsening political situation between the opposing factions of Herodians and Galileans in the early part of the first century CE.⁸ Herod the Great never endeared himself to the Jews even though he rebuilt the Jerusalem Temple. He distrusted the Hasmonean family and they resented Herod, an Edomite not of Jewish descent. So one by one he wiped them out, eventually murdering Mariamme (Mary), the Hasmonean princess he married in his desire for power in Judea.

If Jewish parents gave their daughter the name 'Mary' shortly after 29BCE, when Herod murdered the last Hasmonean princess (when the name 'Mary' was unambiguously

political), then it indicated that those parents supported the resistance to Herod's takeover and his alliance with the Romans.¹⁴

Herod treated the Jews with contempt, tortured faithful Pharisees who resisted his Hellenization, and murdered three of his own sons. This would have been the time of Mary's parents. Civil unrest broke out at the death of Herod the Great in 4BCE but was suppressed with the help of Roman legions. It ended in Jerusalem with the crucifixion of two thousand Jewish prisoners, and so added to the danger, resentment and resistance that flowed across the land about the time Mary was pregnant.¹⁵

Danger awaited women in Herod's occupied Galilee. First, there was the danger for many young women in and around Sepphoris of sexual assault by Roman soldiers when the city was besieged and burned in 4BCE. After the siege of Sepphoris Roman soldiers combed through neighbourhoods in Nazareth and raped anyone they could catch. The suggestion has been made that Mary was one of the victims of this violence and that Jesus was born after she and others was sexually assaulted.¹⁶

The second danger was that women were subjected to caste subordination. Every girl in a besieged city lost her high caste marriageability, regardless of whether a soldier had laid a hand on her or not. If a woman conceived after being raped or was untouched and merely hiding in Sepphoris or nearby Nazareth, then her life as a prospective bride was irreparably damaged. It also had ramifications on the future of her offspring.

The third danger was to a woman's offspring. If these were the circumstances of a woman's pregnancy, by Judean religious law, the loss of his caste and flawed kinship would make her new-born child a defective 'man' and 'Jew', alongside slaves, freedmen, proselytes and gentiles. In Galilean and Judean cultural thought patterns a child conceived in such circumstances, did not achieve full manhood and would be ineligible to marry. The gospels try to counter any defect by establishing pure Israelite descent in the case of Mary's child.¹⁷

Osiek and Balch suggest the out-cast child was born to Mary in her father's house. Her trust that God would find a way to provide a future for her and for her son, to survive rather than take her own life, facing the loss of legitimate Israelite lineage, was a courageous decision (Luke 1.26-38). Mary's father went ahead with the wedding but Osiek is doubtful that Joseph was her intended husband even though Luke and Matthew indicate this was the case. Her family would hope for a better match than Joseph the craftsman, as in Joanna's and Elizabeth's cases. (Luke 1:5) If Joseph were the second choice from her family's point of view, Joseph gave his own courageous assent to be the solution to Mary's pregnancy and married Mary, with child. (OB 37)

3.2.2 Women in Galilee

(a) Living Conditions

Peasant houses (in which women were confined) were small, dark, poorly ventilated, crowded buildings, in which privacy was unavailable, sanitation impossible and the spread of disease inevitable. Medical knowledge and practice was extremely limited. Most residents of an ancient Mediterranean city or town lived lives full of hardship, poor health and crowding with high rates of infant mortality and low life expectancy.¹⁸

A house in Nazareth probably was a single story building with a flat roof that gave some privacy and cooler temperatures. Rooms below were small with inadequate ventilation and tiny windows. Floors were uneven and made up of ill-fitting basalt blocks, between which it would have been easy for a woman to lose a coin. (Luke 15:8).

Basic homes were not heated and had no chimneys. Ovens and fires for cooking were in the unroofed areas and may not have been used everyday because fuel was scarce. As well as cooking, spinning, weaving and pot manufacture took place in the open courtyard. Ovens were essential. A mother would probably bake weekly for the whole family.

Courtyards were paved. This, and the runoff from the roof, helped to collect rainwater and channel it down into limestone cisterns. If the house was not built on bedrock, water had to be drawn from a well or carried from a nearby spring or stream.¹⁹ A house or

blocks of homes are ideally sited on a hillside on limestone bedrock which provides natural caverns. These can be enlarged and modified to contain the torrential winter rains and to shield the water to supply the dry summer months.

Blocks of houses were surrounded by streets or alleys. Family apartments faced onto a common courtyard. Families living in such small spaces would never be alone. Some families lived in one room but most had more than one. By family is meant a patriarchal structure which included wives, children and children of married sons. Extended families would sleep in one room, the householder and family in their own. The bed was the most important item.²⁰

The house remained essentially the same throughout its existence. The stone floor plan could not change. Family members were born, grew up, married out or married in, and died. The use of the space served various needs at various times as the kin group expanded or shrank. (MS 20)

(b) Village Communities

Women's lives were at the hub of family life within a village setting. Life continued, despite the insecure socio-political atmosphere that radiated distrust and hostility to the Roman occupation that backed the unpopular Herodian ruling class. Galileans still farmed their ancestral plots of land; herded sheep and goats; produced wine and oil for local consumption; fished the Sea of Galilee; lived in villages; practised trades in weaving, pottery or masonry; traded goods with other villages and kept their Israelite identity by following the Mosaic law through festivals, marriage, inheritance and the distribution of produce to kin, the poor and the local priests. (MS 134)

Peasants spent their lives in small villages where kinship and loyalty were essential values.²¹ Peasants made up the vast majority of the rural population. They worked the land or provided support for them through small crafts and trade. The silent majority, who worked the land and supported small peasant villages, ultimately bore the crushing economic burden of taxation to support the luxuries, military campaigns and religious

pomp of the urban wealthy. Peasant women spoke a dialect of Aramaic, lived in a community managed by a group of elders. Every member of a village thought themselves kin to every other member through lines of relationship and kin based procedures. The difference between the richest and the poorest in the village would never be very great.²²

(b) Survival Management

Peasant women managed economic survival from income brought in by men mostly working in small scale occupations to meet local needs. Potters, fullers and weavers made items for everyday use. Leather workers sewed shoes, blacksmiths made farm implements and tools for artisans, carpenters furniture and wagons. Many operated from small workshops, such as basic craftsmen like Joseph (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3). Most tradesmen did much of the work themselves helped by wife and children.²³

Women, fighting for survival, were confronted by economic deprivation caused by too many families to feed and uncertainty of harvests and food resources, the concentration of possessions within an elite group, and competing tax systems. Repeated warfare meant each new conqueror confiscated land. Overpopulation meant that all the land was cultivated. Taxes demanded by Romans and priests caused economic pressure in towns like Nazareth in Galilee, which was a rural area with many small communities.²⁴

Peasant women and their families in Galilean society were dependent on food and earning your daily bread. There are references in the gospels to planting seed, harvesting fruit, grinding grain, eating bread, at times surpluses in the barns, at other times a matter of bare subsistence. Wives struggled with the harsh realities of subsistence economics. When the disciples do not catch fish, they expected to go hungry (Luke 5:1-11; John 21:3-5). There were small farms with an owner helped by his family. The farm would grow vegetables and cereals with a few flocks or herds to supply wool, meat, milk and skins.²⁵

Married peasant women performed survival management in homes which were, from any point of view, primitive. They belonged to the household of their husbands and were

expected to play an active role by the work of her hands (see earlier note) in the economic and social survival of the kinship group. The home she created would be a reflection of her character. Always the goods that she produced and the home she created would be under subordination to male control.²⁶

Women worked in divided domestic space. The back of the house was for women and family work. Front areas are for male social activities (including business, patronage and political life). The male head dominates the public space. His wife and her domestic activities are subject to his own authority. Men spent little time in the woman's space where they felt ill at ease. (OB 42-44)

Jewish mothers raised all their children. In the Roman Empire, mothers, at the birth of their child, were not consulted if the child was not perfect. It was a medical decision to cut short the umbilical cord and the baby bled to death. It was not the mother's decision, but the father's, whether to raise the child. Pagan writers were surprised that Jews raised all their children. Galilean mothers followed village customs and refused to restrict their baby's movement. When they cried they rocked them and nursed to soothe them. It is thought that a third of babies born died before they reached ten years of age. A couple would need to have five children for two of them to reach the age of twenty.²⁷

According to village custom and to earn extra family income, some women accompanied people to their graves as professional mourners. The mourner always appears in feminine form. 'They sing lamentations. They clap their hands. They wail. One begins by herself and all respond after her,' are all expressed in feminine terms. Women return to complete the preparation after the Sabbath. It was very common for women to work. They helped support their households and worked in professions in which they had special knowledge and training even if it was informal.²⁸

(d) Devoted to Housework

Peasant women devoted themselves to work confined to the house. The husband had the full responsibility to support the family, which was done outside the house in agricultural

work [in his own field] or a trade in his own shop or as someone else's labourer.

Women's work was defined by Rabbis as tasks which a wife must perform for her husband. These included grinding flour and making bread, washing clothes and cooking food, making ready his bed and working in wool. In managing households, bread making would be an important part of women's lives. (Matt 13:33: 24:41). Life in New Testament times was vulnerable to drought or other natural disaster and desperate shortages of grain brought a real possibility of famine.²⁹

A woman's daily work is, importantly, the rearing of her children. Many laws assume her responsibility implicitly. She is therefore allowed to pull her child along in the public on the Sabbath. A woman is routinely the one who feeds her children so she is, therefore, permitted to wash her hands on the most holy day of the year when all work is forbidden, in order to feed her children. The mother took care of the male child whilst he was young, while the father taught him Torah and a trade and married him off when he reached a mature age.³⁰

(e) Extra-Household Activities

With peasant women managing survival, the division of labour between home and field in agricultural societies was unrealistic especially at harvest and fruit picking seasons. Even the wife of a hired labourer was expected to work in the fields with him. Peasant families would help one another at busy times.(TI 186)

Peasant women would also prepare dough in her house for sale in the market to increase income. Women made wool and linen garments to sell in the market. The reality was that a woman had to come into contact with her customers. Women's skill as weavers was officially recognized. One group was mentioned as the weavers of the curtain which hung in the Temple. They are recorded as having taken their wage from the Temple treasury. A peasant woman was put in an entirely new position as a shopkeeper who serves customers in a family store. A husband is ashamed to sell olives at the door of his house and so gives them to his wife to sell. The rabbinic ethical code held this to be an unsuitable occupation. It is reasonable to assume that women generally worked to support

the economic well being of her family. (TI 187, 188) A range of other economic activities for women can be identified. Inn keeping was a well known occupation for women especially as their husbands worked outside.³¹ Women worked as hairdressers, maidservants and midwives. (TI 189)

3.2.3 Women's Place in the Natural Order

(a) Honour and Shame Culture

A common Mediterranean culture may have existed where societies revolved round honour and shame as a way of structuring social relationships through sex and gender roles. (OB 37, 38) According to Osiek and Balch, this concept is not accepted by all anthropologists and they explain the cautions they have in accepting this point of view.³²

Within this structure, one aspect of male honour was to defend women who were thought to be the weak members of the family and less able to control their sex drive than men, and more likely to shame their family by sexual activity with males, other than their legal husband. Women have the power that provides legitimate offspring and they must be protected from outsider males and therefore controlled.

Males suffer dishonour when their women are seduced or raped. It demonstrated that males lacked the power to protect their weakest members. Also a raped woman was damaged goods and would not be able to command a good marriage. Therefore, virginity before marriage was a girl's highest duty and greatest value. One of the functions of kinship practices in Galilee was to discourage the birth of children outside the traditional cultural structures, since defects in lineage carried heavy economic sanctions and could not be repaired.³³ In this structuring of social and gender roles, honour is for men. Shame is for women. Shame is the positive characteristic of a woman's sensitivity to male honour. It also meets the male ideal of feminine modesty. It is an acknowledgement of women's subordinate position. Shame for women in the public male world, is in preserving the family's honour by guarding their own sexual purity. Shame also displays positive womanly values of honesty, confidence, friendship and industriousness. In

peasant society women are less enclosed and the value of their contribution to the economic well being of the family, brings to a woman and her family public honour.³⁴

(b) Gender Roles

Gender inequality is possible only by control, enclosing and guarding women against the power they have to bring shame on the family. The traditional separation of the worlds of men and women in daily life is one way of guarding women and is an important part of gender identity. For peasant women the major means of meeting these expectations are marriage and child-raising. Family and social traditions dictate what men and women are to be in each stage of their life cycle: child, young adult, husband, wife, widow, and widower. A peasant woman would never be contemplated by a man as his equal. Only a man of similar education and social status could be his equal. Equality of the sexes is not an issue in such societies. The cultural construction of personality is to meet the expectations of society rather than to develop as an individual. Each gender is assigned a role with regard to the other and to the ordering of tasks that are essential to sustain the life of the group. A peasant woman would not see herself as exploited, a chattel, a possession nor (in modern terms) a repository of 'rights'. She would regard herself as active in the network of her husband's house and by the fruits of her labour securing the lineage of her children and the honour of her husband.³⁵

When women either are allowed, or need to be, in public spaces, they are to behave with feminine modesty and cover their heads with a veil to mark the gender distinction and they are under proper male control. Space was used as a major way of regulating gender divisions. Male space is the open public spaces of markets, temples, civic buildings and law courts. Public civic life is a male activity.³⁶ Male honour is in maintaining the status, power and reputation of the male members of a kinship group against threats against them from outsiders.³⁷

Men spend little time in the woman's space where they feel ill at ease. A wife's domestic activities are subject to male authority. Women, as part of her husband's family, were clients, and their role was to show deference to the patron to honour him. An important

element of the male honour system was patronage. Every family and household was in some way affected by the patronage system and was an integral part of it. Entire households depended on the fortunes of their heads, fortunes dependant on securing the right patronage. Male society held all the political power and because it was structured on patronage lines, influence lay in the major, elite families.³⁸

(c) Social Group Categorisation

Peasant women were placed into categories and men assigned authority to moderate and control women's femininity and sexuality. Gender was an integral part of the kinship system in Israel. The pathway to legitimate marriage and offspring was important. Within social group categorization a bride, with the proper pedigree, marrying into a man's family, was an essential part of a man's social status. Proper marriage was the only way to maintain the social grouping over time within a household and the flow of entitlements to inheritance as well as to a long list of obligations to one's kin. Within this socio-cultural web, a household is linked by the exchange of brides to other households. Brides are seen as mobile. Men are static, grounded in their father's house and social group.³⁹

A peasant woman, by living in the house of her husband's family, secured for her children and herself a stable lineage and access to all she produced by her work. She and her children had the right to consume rations and enjoy other social privileges. A peasant wife regarded herself as playing an active part in the socio-cultural and economic well being of the kinship group. The goods women produce and the wages belong to the household. A woman belongs to the house as someone whose productivity and children are essential to the household's economic and social wellbeing, and contribute to its enrichment and enhance its reputation. From this socio-cultural structure it is hardly surprising that peasant women's expectations are contingent on male control.⁴⁰

3.2.4 Women and Male Control

(a) The Father's Authority

A father had control over his daughter's betrothal. He is awarded rights and benefits regarding his daughter. He had the right to anything found by her and to the work of her

hands. These rights have economic profit. Her handiwork and the things she finds could be valuable.⁴¹

A bride's future productivity is part of the negotiation of the marriage contract. After marriage a woman's labour benefits her husband's household just as her children will belong to his caste and not that of her father. The peasant woman's productivity belongs to the household that defines her caste. (MS 43) A woman has no choice but honour her father by accepting his authority. Marriage was viewed as good for the male and, therefore, was preferable. Traditional attitudes are argued from a decidedly male point of view, that a man needs a wife regardless of the problems this dependency causes. Marriage brings a certain desired stability to a man's life and to society.⁴²

A peasant girl who had passed twelve and a half was considered ready for marriage. The rabbi's recommendation to marry a daughter at a very early age was to counter the problem of preserving a daughter's chastity and modesty.⁴³ Whatever affection a daughter received from her father it would be by her acceptance of his authority which honoured him. (TI 49) The intelligence of a daughter is interpreted by some as the daughter accepting any husband her father chooses for her. This interpretation views her intelligence as nothing more than obedience to her father.⁴⁴ Marriage was a matter to be settled by parents on the basis of social connection and status. Children had absolutely no right to choose their partner. Rabbis saw in the marriage of a well matched couple a kind of guarantee of a peaceful married life, full of love. (TI 79)

(b) The Husband's Authority

There was a belief that love was the natural product of marriage between well matched couples. The transfer of a peasant woman from the authority of her father to that of her husband was viewed as the transfer of property by purchase. One difference between the acquisition of a wife and the purchase of other property is that other property has a market price which varies according to quality, whereas a bride's value is non negotiable.⁴⁵ A woman's virginity was a commodity with a price. Loss of virginity had an

economic significance. The father had been the main beneficiary receiving a bride-price. Protecting the virginity of his daughter until she married was an urgent concern.⁴⁶

In summary, a good wife had the essential qualities to make a man happy. The restrictions were there to encourage a male-centred relationship. Amongst her qualities an intelligent wife had a relationship with her husband that was better than that of a good and trusted friend. (TI 59) A silent and modest wife had restraint and charm which fulfilled her part in the 'natural order of the world', by which a woman was subordinate to a man, qualities highly regarded by her husband. The ideal wife, therefore, is one who is obedient and beautiful and increases a man's self-esteem. Her husband will stop her going into the market place to avoid her becoming the subject of public talk.⁴⁷ Social traditions dictate what and where women and men are to be as husband and wife. For peasant women the major means of meeting social expectations are marriage, home and child bearing.⁴⁸ However, peasant women, in reality often went into the market place as part of managing family life and poverty. Ilan notes a poor husband and wife who shared a garment she had made. He used it to cover himself when he went out to pray, she used it to go to the market. Some women were set up as shopkeepers by their husbands and therefore had to be seen in public.⁴⁹

(c) Social Restrictions

A plethora of socio-cultural traditions evolved to restrict the movement and ambitions of women in order to protect them. Women as wives might meet another man who will talk to her, with the threat of seduction, leading to the sin of adultery. This possibility prompts safeguards against coming too close.⁵⁰ Women spoken to by a man might be misinterpreted by the public. Therefore 'a man should not speak with a woman in the market even if she is his wife, much less another woman.' Even a father should not speak too much with his sexually mature daughter. (TI 126)

If there is reason to speak to a woman, a man should avoid extended conversations. Make it brief. It was concluded by some Rabbis that God does not converse with women.

‘We have not found that the Almighty talked to a woman, except Sarah’. Ben Sira forbids looking at any woman other than one’s wife. (TI 127)

Head covering was to avoid men admiring a beautiful woman. When a woman goes out in public her head should be covered. Truly modest women cover their heads indoors. Ilan quotes a mother who when asked how it was that seven of her son’s served in the high priesthood, replied, ‘The beams of my house never saw the hair on my head’. Unbound hair was seen as a compromise of modesty. (TI 130) The woman sinner who washes Jesus feet in oil and tears and dries them with her hair is apparently without a hair covering. The public’s reaction was contempt for her (Luke 7.38; John 12.3).

3.3 Significant Threads

3.3.1 Rationale

The methodology for this thesis set out to accommodate two characteristically different data sources. In Chapter Two we dealt with direct personal testimonies. In this chapter we have no personal narratives to work from. Although the witnesses have scholarly integrity, direct evidence (as in personal narrative) about Mary eludes us. We do have, however, a wealth of indirect data about the lives of peasant women from which reasoned assumptions may be drawn about Mary. The strength of the evidence in this chapter rests on the solid scholarship of the witnesses. The data source for Chapter Two has priority because it is based on direct testimonies. The categories were established on the direct narratives of colliery women and their families. Therefore we will apply these categories as a means of marshalling the data on peasant women. Chapter Four will investigate evidence about Mary from the biblical text to provide us with significant threads of in her life. In Chapter Five there will be a comprehensive and comparative study of significant threads. In this way, hopefully, we can present a plausible picture of Mary as a first century Palestinian woman, by merging the evidence from Chapter Three with Chapter Four. We will then evaluate the merged evidence, alongside those significant experiences and events of colliery women, to assess in what ways links may be made between Mary and colliery women. So, significant threads about peasant women are presented according to the format devised from the evidence of colliery women in 2.6.

Key

MS + page number = Marianne Sawicki

OB + page number = Carolyn Osiek and David Balch

TI + page number = Tal Ilan

3.3.2 Peasant Women as Servants in the Shadows (2.6.2)

1. Women were at the centre of the 'earthing' process MS 38 ⁵¹
2. Women economically oppressed and gender-disparaged by social structure MS 38
3. Women do not make history: men make history. TI 1, 43
4. Women meet expectation of social structure only by marriage and child-raising OB 40
5. Women secure lineage of children, honour husband by her work-presence in house MS 35, 39
6. Women's femininity and sexuality moderated and controlled by caste system OB 35
7. Women were placed by caste system under authority of men OB 35
8. A daughter honours her father by accepting a husband her father chooses for her TI 49
9. A daughter's obedience to her father is counted as intelligence, the father controls her betrothal TI 59
10. A daughter's future productivity is profitable and negotiated in the marriage contract MS 43
11. A wife: intelligent wife makes a man happy by honouring his authority TI 59
12. A wife who is silent and modest is a gift from the Lord: her restraint is beyond worth TI 59
13. A wife's honour measured by fulfilling her part in natural order, subordinate to a man TI 59
14. A women was restricted by social conventions which confined her in the house for her family TI 128

3.3.3 Peasant Women Unequal in a Man's World (2.6.3)

1. Women were weak and unable to control their sex drive. OB 38
2. Women more likely than men to bring shame on their family. OB 39

3. Women must be controlled against power they have to bring shame on family. OB 40
4. Women raped dishonour males, indicating their failure to protect them. OB 39
5. Girl's duty to preserve her greatest value, virginity before marriage. OB 39
6. Women are damaged goods if raped or pregnant outside the cultural structures. OB 39
7. Women are to be sensitive to male honour and ideals of feminine modesty. OB 40
8. Womanly values honesty, friendship hard work are accepting subordinate role OB 40
9. Women never made an issue of equality. OB 41
10. Daughters have no right to choose their partner but settled by parents. TI 79
11. A woman is subdued by her husband her ambitions restricted to protect her. TI 128
12. Wives should not talk to other men for fear of adultery. TI 128
13. Wives should not speak to their own husbands for fear of misinterpretation. TI 125
14. Daughter, if sexually mature, should not speak in public with her own father TI 126
15. Men avoid conversations even if there is reason to speak with a woman TI 126
16. Women going out in public must cover her head to avoid men admiring her TI 127
17. Women's children, work, earnings belong to household controlled by men MS 41

3.3.4 Peasant Women as Strong Mothers (2.6.4)

1. A mother managed impact of urbanization on their family MS 3-4
2. A mother may prepare 'packed lunch' for young males finding work in town MS 3
3. Women essential to household's economic, social wellbeing and reputation MS 42
4. Women worked in unheated homes, no chimneys, ovens outside for cooking MS 15-16
5. Women's cooking spinning, weaving, pot making took place in open courtyard
6. Women drew water from limestone cisterns or wells, spring or stream MS 15-16
7. Women worked for extended families, wives, children, married sons' children. MS 16
8. Women probably baked weekly for the whole family, ovens were essential MS 16
9. Women's lifespan, her family and children shortened by poverty conditions MS 16
10. Women at hub of family life in Galilean villages trading goods MS 138
11. Galilean women kept Jewish identity amongst Greek speaking Gentiles MS 139
12. Women peasants worked land to support villages and bore burden of taxation OB37

3.3.5 Peasant Women Managing Loss and its Consequences (2.6.5)

1. Women lose independence by seclusion in houses. TI 128
2. Women who were raped suffered loss of caste eligibility MS 9
3. Women faced child mortality rates of one third of children dying before age ten. OB 66
4. Women faced by death, support each other communally. OB 66

3.3.6 Peasant Women as Achievers through Adversity (2.6.6)

1. Women managed survival confined in primitive homes lacking sanitation OB 44
2. Women respected in kinship group for accepting subordination to male control OB 44
3. Women by labour of their hands achieved homes that reflected their character OB 44
4. Women managed domestic survival out of sight at the back of the house OB 44
5. Women achieved this though domestic affairs were always under male scrutiny. OB 44
6. Women raised all their children different to normal Roman practice OB 67
7. Women needed to bear five children to achieve two to reach the age of twenty. OB 67
8. Women to survive needed children working as soon as they were strong enough OB 67
9. Women had to plan earning their daily bread as family dependent on food. MS 35, 39
10. Women struggled with economic realities, without food you go hungry OB 42
11. Women managing survival aware of vulnerability to drought and famine OB 42
12. Women dependent on income of husbands working in small scale occupations OB 70
13. Women and children to survival helped father in small workshops OB 71
14. Women earned income on small farms, seed time, harvest, and fruit picking TI 186
15. Women knew they had to work, not to stay in the home to achieve survival TI 186
16. Women at home daily reared and educated her children and achieved respect TI 185
17. Women ground flour made bread, washed clothes, cooked, worked wool, prepared bed TI 186
18. Women made dough for sale in market to achieve extra income TI 187
19. Women learned skills in weaving TI 187
20. Women learned skills with customers as a shopkeeper to help family income TI 1 87
21. Women made their homes welcoming as hotels, learned skills in hairdressing TI 187
22. Women as midwives achieved more expertise on childbirth than a Rabbi TI 189

23. Women midwives and as mothers familiar with herbs achieved skills treating illnesses TI 189

3.3.7 Most Significant Threads

From the listing of threads we now identify the most significant. What we are looking for are headline events or experiences which, for example, explain better than others what it meant to be a peasant woman in Palestine. This is inevitably subjective, and others would no doubt make different choices.

▪ Peasant Women Servants in the Shadows

- 4. Women meet expectation of social structure only by marriage and child-raising
- 13. Wife's honour measured by fulfilling her part in natural order, subordinate to a man

▪ Peasant Women Unequal in a Man's World

- 7. Women are to be sensitive to male honour and male ideals of feminine modesty
- 9. Women never considered equality an issue
- 11. A woman is subdued by her husband her ambitions restricted to protect her

▪ Peasant Women as Strong Mothers

- 6. Women essential to a household's economic, social wellbeing and reputation
- 10. Women lived in unheated homes, no chimneys, ovens outside for cooking
- 17. Women's lifespan, that of her children, shortened by poverty conditions

▪ Peasant Women Managing Loss and its Consequences

- 1. Women lose ambition: subdued by the husband going to market place
- 2. Women who conceived after being raped suffered loss of caste eligibility
- 3. Women experienced child mortality rates of one third of children dying before age ten.

▪ Peasant Women as Achievers through Adversity

- 2. By accepting subordination women received respect in their kinship group.
- 1. Women managed survival despite primitive homes lacking sanitation

6. Women raised all their children different to normal Roman practice
7. Women needed to bear five children to achieve two to reach the age of twenty.
10. Women struggled with economic realities, without food you go hungry
11. Women managed survival aware of vulnerability to drought and famine
16. Women at home daily reared and educated her children and achieved respect
17. Women made flour for bread, washed clothes, cooked, worked wool, prepared beds
18. Women made dough for sale in market to earn extra income

3.4 Conclusion

Through the lens of scholarly witnesses this research has viewed the realities facing peasant women, in first century Palestine. Their lives revolved round male priority. One clear example in the data is in the definition of the good wife. The good and virtuous wife is discussed as a male possession and benefit. Gender and sexuality distinctions were maintained as much by community approval or approbation as by the letter of the law. Male priority was wired and deeply set in social consciousness. This as a major factor both in the acceptance by peasant women of the gender demarcation set by male authority as the status most appropriate for their sexuality; and the major factor in the male thought process on the sexuality of women which led to the necessity of controlling women.

The data suggests the justification of male priority was the long term continuity of the community. This included the prevention of peasant women's potential to bring shame and dishonour to their father or their husbands and their families. The concept of honour and shame seeks both to contextualize the relationship between first century women and to interpret the behaviour, especially of men, towards them. The culture, which gave rise to the concept, created social structures which, almost as a by-product, marginalised peasant women and confined them to the woman's space.⁵² Male honour stood for manliness, courage, a willingness to defend his reputation and a refusal to submit to humiliation. Men turned their attention outward away from the home, concerned with their authority and precedence. Their world was organised and their gender relationships structured round this most important concept of honour. In contrast, social pressures turn

women inward toward their space in the house or the village. Women look inward to the home and to such as the grinding wheel and the well. This is their shame. For peasant women, shame was their sensitivity to male honour and the defence of male honour.

The data suggests that male supremacy was inculcated in peasant women's minds and had a far reaching impact on the way women saw themselves, the purpose for their being and the role that was theirs dictated by tradition. A woman would never think in terms of being equal with men. A woman's thinking was geared not to develop as an individual but to forego individuality to prepare to fit into the expectations society had for the male ideal of feminine modesty. A peasant woman could meet society's expectations only by marriage and child-raising. Most areas of her life were covered by the tension between the feminine modesty and male priority. It flowed through every facet of their existence. The data indicates the fruits of a peasant woman's labour were owned and controlled by her father and later her husband. For peasant women marriage was not so much a developing relationship with a [young] man, as a display of her intelligence defined by her obedience to her father. His affection for her was based on her accepting his authority particularly in terms of accepting the husband he chose for her. In marital negotiations not only was her ability and skill to work value added. Her virginity, her caste, her inbred complicity with the view that her charm, intelligence and understanding are measured by her fulfilling her part in the natural order of the world, by which a woman is subordinate to a man, were also commodities to be purchased (IT 58). For a daughter to be with child by rape or seduction outside marriage was a loss of value, a shaming of her father (loss of honour) and a loss of kinship and caste. Peasant women lived in dangerous times. Data reveal life under foreign power and the possibility that women shared nationalist sentiments with their husbands. Peasant women may have shared with their children their hostility in the political struggle.

It is not fanciful romanticism to see nobility in a peasant woman's acceptance of things as they are and their commitment to get on with the job. Nor is it fanciful speculation to believe that the job they did, struggling with survival economics in an uncertain environment, was a great achievement. Living in the most primitive of housing, with

uncertain income from husband and children, peasant women were not only confined to essential domestic activities, such as baking and drawing water at local wells, they themselves would work in market place and welcome people into their homes to share the burden of lack of income. It is not idle conjecture to believe women brought up their children, in straightened circumstances, to be independent, stable and hard working members of the kinship group. It might be reasonably assumed that their child-rearing skills were highly successful. The Syrophenician woman (Mark 7.26) and the widow at Nain (Luke 7.11) may be examples of peasant women displaying exceptional (and successful) survival/love skills.

The research data could not produce conclusive evidence. It has been pointed out that there is a lack of women's history and what is known is drawn from the history of men. Two of the data sources are written on topics unconnected with women. Evidence of women is again incidental. However, the research proposal recognised this and accepted that significant threads might be drawn from the data to give an overall general view of the lives of women in first century Palestine. This indicates what life might have been like for Mary. In the final chapter we will consider how this picture might connect with the experience of colliery women.

Chapter 3 Endnotes

1. Tal Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1995), p.1.
2. The preferences were established by sifting the aspects of the life of a colliery woman from teenage into adult life, according to those significant experiences derived from the evidence of colliery women themselves. See J.P. Folkkelman, Reading Biblical Narrative (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press 1999).
3. Carolyn Osiek teaches in areas of social life, social science and interpretation of women in early Christianity. Her publications include studies in feminism and the Church and the social setting of the New Testament. Osiek and Balch were both involved in the archaeology of early Christian households. Carolyn Osiek & Margaret MacDonald, A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). This is her latest book. See c.osiek@tcu.edu. David Balch is co-author with Osiek in their latest work, Early Christian Families in Context, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2003). According to his website, dbalch@plts.edu, his most recent work has been researching the interaction of early Christians with current Judaism and Greco-Roman Culture and Society. In many books and articles, he deals with family and social history in biblical times.

4. Marianne Sawicki, (Crossing Galilee, 2000) Her writings range over number of disciplines all with a social interest, with projects on archaeology, phenomenology, biblical studies and ethics. Her recent works study kinship and social practices in first century Palestine, the mission and James, Peter and Paul and women in pre-canonical Christianity. Her interest and work in archaeology and anthropology is evident in 'Crossing Galilee', in her approach to kinship practices gender and caste. Her latest article is, "Who Wouldn't Marry Jesus?" in A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Sean Freyne. Edited by Zuleika Rodgers with Margaret Daly-Denton and Anne Fitzpatrick McKinley, (Leiden: Brill, 2009). Sawicki website is westarinstitute.org/Fellows/sawicki.

5. Tal Ilan (Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine 1995) Tal Ilan was born in Israel and studied in Jerusalem's Hebrew University. She is presently Professor of Jewish Studies at the Free University in Berlin. Her special interest is in Jewish women in antiquity. She currently teaches and researches into Bible related literature, the history of the Jewish people, Jewish thought and philosophy and Rabbinic literature. Her recent publications include works on learned Jewish women in antiquity and Jewish women in the Jesus movement. Tal's latest work, "Its Magic: Jewish Women in the Jesus Movement," in J. Pastor and M. Mor (eds.), The Beginnings of Christianity: A Collection of Articles (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press 2005). Her website is eurojewishstudies.org/scholar.

6. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.3 Willen Van Henden. Families and Family Relations in Early Judaism and Early Christianity (Leiderdorp: Deo 2000).

7. Christopher Wright, God's People in God's Land (Exeter: Eerdmans 1990), pp. 3-4.

8. Wright, God's People in God's Land, p.23.

9. Emile Schurer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (Revised and Edited by Geza Vermes, Fergus Miller and Matthew Black. Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd 1979), pp.1-13.

10. Cheryl Exum, Potted, Shot and Painted. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1996), pp. 92-95. Cheryl Exum points to the story of the mother of Moses. It would not have been possible for Israelites to survive as a people were it not for the ingenuity and courage of 'inferior' women. Nevertheless, women, as mothers, were acting not to authenticate their own autonomy but on behalf of male power. They were supporting the patriarchal power and were still subordinate in their domestic role. The public arena still belonged to men. To paraphrase Exum, 'women did not make history for themselves they made it for men'. They were unseen, hidden in male history (Ex 1.5-2.10).

11. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, p.3. In the time when Mary's eldest son was a young man Herod Antipas built himself a new capital called Tiberius. This had an impact on the fishing industry. Changes took place in the flow of culture, economic kinship and inheritance streams, as the Herods redesigned the patterns of life on the land of Palestine. MS 4 See also John Stambaugh, and David Balch, The New Testament in its Social Environment (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1986). pp 92-93 Underwater ruins of ancient docks are all around the shore line of Lake Galilee indicating well organized fishing and transport activities. There may have been industrial activity: ship building and repair, sail-making, net-making, fish markets, fish-processing and packing, the import of timber, salt and vinegar and shipping from distant cities. (MS 27) There were safe and passable roads for transporting these materials to the dry docks and packing plants at the ancient harbour at Magdala. (MS 28) See also Mark Harding, Early Christian Life and Thought in Social Context (London: T&T Clark 2003). Richard Horsley, Galilee:History, Politics, People, (Valley Forge PA: Trinity Press International 1985).

12. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, p.3. There was a sharp contrast in life-style and attitude between the peasants of the Galilean countryside and the wealthy landowners of the cities. Galilee also had a different cultural background to Judea. In the case of Antipas, he re-landscaped Galilee. Tiberius had an impact on the fishing industry. The Babylonian tourist traffic was diverted across the lake and into Galilee. It was as Antipas internationalized the Sea of Galilee that peasant families grew into manhood. It had an impact on families. It is possible the young males from Galilean families found employment in a lakeside construction

project at Herodian Tiberias or in the shipyards at the former facilities at nearby Magdala. Richard Horsley, Archaeology, History and Society in Galilee: the Social Context of Jesus (Valley Forge PA: Trinity Press International 1996).

13. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, pp.136-137. See also Emile Schurer, The History of the Jewish People, pp .219f for a wider historical study.

14. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, pp.172, 140-144. In the Torah it was the name of Moses' sister, Miriam. Mary's grandparents might also have at the least agreed with the stand against Herod.

15. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, pp.136-138.

16. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, p. 192 See also Jane Schaberg, The Illegitimacy Of Jesus (San Francisco. Harpers and Row 1987), Chapter 4. See also Marianne Bickerstaff. Whilst the Bridegroom is with Them: Marriage, Family, Gender and Violence in the Gospel of Matthew (London: T&T Clark 2005).

17. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, pp.186-187 See also Beverley Roberts Gaventa, Mary, Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus, p. 44. Gaventa senses a threat to Mary as early as v16 of the genealogy. We are still in stage one when Mary's pregnancy takes on the serious dynamic of threat. It is a threat to the very well being of Mary herself. It would be hard to expect people to say instantly that her pregnancy is of the Holy Spirit (1.18). Matthew's readers now know Mary's pregnancy isn't scandalous. But Joseph did not, and 'being a just man and not willing to make her a public example....' (1.19)

18. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.45. See also Stambaugh and Balch, The New Testament in its Social Environment, pp.83-84. In first century Palestine the majority of Jews lived in Galilee, Trans-Jordan and Judea not in large cities such as Jerusalem. See Eric Myers. Galilee Through the Centuries: Confluence of Cultures (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 1999).

19. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, pp.15-16. According to Sawicki the house had doors but probably not windows. Doorjambs need care and precision and required a skilled carpenter to hang the doors right. It is possible this sort of work was done by Joseph in Nazareth. See pp.17-18. See Halvor Moxnes. Putting Jesus in his place: a Radical Vision of the Household and the Kingdom (London: Westminster John Knox Press 2003).

20. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.134. The separation of men and women was only possible if houses of the period were built according to certain specifications. 'See there is no lattice in her room, no spot that overlooks the approaches to the house'.(p.132) In some houses there were separate quarters for women kept in doors and even to seclusion in their chambers. Poorer families would have all lived in one room. See also Sawicki who describes houses discovered in Capernaum. The walls of a house enclosed several clusters of two or three rooms each around one or more courtyards. The domestic arrangements indicate that people slept near their domestic animals. Working, sleeping and eating all took place within the same enclosure. (pp. 18-21). Osiek describes the houses excavated in Capernaum just south of the synagogue as clusters of simple houses with small one and two-roomed buildings built into an enclosure wall, surrounding a central courtyard. It is possible that extended family groupings lived within the same enclosure. (pp. 13-14, 31). James Newsome, Greeks, Romans, Jews: Currents of Culture and Belief in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Trinity Press 1992).

21. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.37. See Stambaugh & Balch, The New Testament in its Social Environment, pp.91-94. There is no evidence that Mary worked the land but she would carry the burden of taxation and might have shared local hostile feelings. In Herod's time policy favoured large holdings by the rich, land that was worked by tenant farmers. The policy led to hostility between landlord and tenant (see Matt 21:33-41). Small landowners and tenants were forced to ask for

loans which again led to antagonism between large wealthy owners and tenants or debtors. See also John Pilch & Bruce Malina. Biblical Social Values and their Meaning (Peabody, MA: Hendricksen Publishers, 1993).

22. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, p.139. See also Stambaugh & Balch. Peasants were taxed but also carried heavy overheads. They paid a tribute to Rome. They had to support Herod's lavish building projects in Judea and in various Greek cities as far away as Antioch. Peasants, paid taxes, rent and interest on loans if they were fortunate enough to have land on which to scratch a living.

23. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, pp.70-71 The economy of ordinary life was too close to subsistence level to demand luxury goods which were only for upper classes in large cities.

24. Stambaugh & Balch, The New Testament in its Social Environment, p.102. Economic factors were responsible for social rootlessness of wandering charismatics. Peter (Mark 10:28) and others are examples of this group. Other groups who responded to economic deprivation in a similar way, are the resistance fighters, prophets like Theudas (Acts 5:36), emigrants and robbers (Luke 10:30).

25. Stambaugh & Balch, The New Testament in its Social Environment, pp. 68 69 Wealthy landowners might divide their land into small plots to let out to tenant farmers on a lease agreement (Matt 21:33-41: Mark 12:1-9) (68). Other large enterprises had large tracts of land farmed by slaves under trusted and loyal stewards who were skilled in producing large cash crops, olives, grapes with large flocks of sheep, goats and pigs. (68) At busy times peasants would help each other or hire extra workers for the day from those who would stand around the marketplace waiting to be hired (Matt 20:1-16). The surplus from small farms would be brought by cart and mule and donkey for sale in market squares in towns and cities. (68)

26. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.54. Family residences were usually the centres of production and often of business activities. The home was not a place to escape from work but the place where much of the work was done largely by women.

27. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.66. Osiek indicates attitudes to children in the Roman Empire, the raising of female children for domestic work, beating of children, abortions and infanticide and exposure of children and the low birthrate. Jews kept all their children to the surprise of pagan writers. Christians took over the value and considered infanticide as murder and killing an infant was made a capital crime'. (p. 65). Karl Marx's reaction was, 'we can forgive Christians much, for they taught us to love children'. (p. 66). Birthdays were celebrated only by Gentiles, not Jews. First born sons were redeemed (Ex 34:20) which meant giving a fee or dues to the priest. This could be given to the local priest or at the Temple in Jerusalem. Some women and their husbands chose to go to Jerusalem (Luke 2:22). See. Stambaugh and Balch, The New Testament in its Social Environment, p. 84.

28. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, pp.189-190. In the Gospels women were the ones who prepared bodies for burial (Mark 16.1 Luke 23.5 24.1. In John 19.40 it is the men who do it in some haste. See Alan Bouquet, Everyday Life in New Testament Times (London: Batsford 1953). Families hired mourners and pipers accompanied those assembled. (Matt 9:23). Whether Mary, with the apparent deaths of her husband and maybe her parents, followed local custom is uncertain.

29. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.186. See also Stambaugh and Balch. The New Testament in its Social Environment p. 69. See also Bouquet who describes Jewish food, cookery, meals and olive culture (p. 72).

30. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, pp. 184-185. *Yon Kippur*, Day of Atonement on tenth day of seventh month (Tishri) September/ October is a most solemn holy day and all work forbidden. The mother is explicitly exempt from what are maintained as the father's obligation. See also Bouquet p. 156

31. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.188. A woman innkeeper was allowed to give evidence that a man had died in order to free his widow to remarry. Nevertheless inn keeping was not a respectable job for women.

32. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, pp. 75-80. See also Jerome Neyrey The Social World of Luke-Acts (MA: Hendrickson Publishers 1991) p.25. He favours the Honour/Shame option. 'To understand the ways such people organise their world and how they structure their social relations we must attend to this paramount value, honour'. p.26. 'Honour is an abstract concept that becomes concrete only when the understanding of a particular society of power, gender and precedence is examined.' See also Bruce Malina, The New Testament World, p.52 who validates the use of the contemporary model of honour and shame in ancient Mediterranean societies.

33. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.39. Kinship and gender relations were the structures people used for managing and at least the material chances and changes of their own lives. (35) See George Brook. Women in the Biblical Tradition (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press 1992). Also, David De Silva. Honour, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking Old Testament Culture (Leicester: Intervarsity Press 1997)

34. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, pp. 40, 41 Osiek suggests that in a society where tradition maintains the hierarchy of male dominance as the cultural norm, the perception of women has been devalued and role of women have been to some degree subordinated. Women, however, make up as near to half of all groups and classes and their interaction with males is essential for the continuation of that group or class. Women bear the burden of child care and within the family they cannot be seen by males as totally 'other'. See John Pilch, Introducing the Cultural Context of the Old Testament. (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1991).

35. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, p.35, 39. As an economic reality, women's labour (the work of her hands) produced food (grain, bread, fruits, vegetables, olives, oil, wine, milk, cheese meat) textiles (wool, flax, thread, raw cloth, dyed cloth, clothing, military cloaks, embroidery) equipment (pottery, jewelry, tools, baskets, bags) and services (fuel gathering, laundry., hygiene, maintaining public buildings like the baths, cleaning in private homes, hairdressing, wet nursing, property management, negotiating betrothals). The fruit of her labour constantly flowed back into the house where she belonged. Its value is vital and if lost through injury or death has severe economic and social consequences. It is always under the control of her husband. (41) See R.E. Clements, The World of Ancient Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989).

36. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p. 44. Sexual separation at certain levels of society applied to dining, too. For formal dining men and women dined apart. For informal family dining, they dined together. This was unlikely to be practiced in peasant homes.

37. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p. 38 A claim to status and power, however, must be matched by the perception of others. To claim greater honour than is recognized by others is seen as the shame of a male who does not know his place in society.

38. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.53-54. Patronage was part of the male role of the powerful to support the less powerful. In first century Palestine the social structure of early Christianity depended on this extended kinship which supplied the finances to support Jesus and later missionary work by Church leaders, amongst them, Paul. (54) There is a danger in this book in assuming all customs in the Greco Roman world applied in Palestine and in Jewish families. It is a reflection of what might have happened. In terms of Christian family life, according to Osiek, hardly any of the legacy of the past has been preserved. (167)

39. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, p.41. See Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p. 38.

40. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, pp. 42, 35, 39. See also Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.91.

41. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, p. 49 A father was generally required to provide for his daughter's maintenance. It is generally accepted that sons inherit and the daughters receive maintenance only after the father's death. However, it was also accepted that a man must maintain sons and daughters whilst they are minors. (50) Daughters were treated as less valuable than sons. Under conditions of economic deterioration, it was suggested that, when it became harder to feed hungry mouths, fathers were not liable for a daughter's maintenance. See Bonnie Thurston, Women in the New Testament (New York: Crossroad 1998).

42. Sawicki, Crossing Galilee, p.57. See also Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.91.

43. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.65. The age of marriage depended on the interpretation of Lev.19.29 referring to the father who delays marrying off a daughter who has passed through puberty. (65) The other side of the discussion was that from experience, rabbis had learned coupling young girls to older men was not usually successful.

44. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.59. Such a view understates the social role of a daughter, a wife and a mother. Marriage, for instance, was a matter to be settled by parents, which presumably included the mother of the bride and the mother of the groom.

45. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p. 88. The marriage contract (a term not used in the Bible) is a monetary arrangement between bride and groom to ensure the bride's maintenance in the event of divorce or the husband's death. It is possible that to begin with the original value of the contract was given to the father as a bride-price and in the event of a divorce the woman returned to the father's house. The money had to be paid before the wedding. Well matched lineages are a vital part of the marriage dictated by Jewish society. Whilst the control of a father was traditional and widespread in its rigorous form it was practiced more in wealthy homes to take care of complicated economic and political factors.

46. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, pp. 89-98. The acquisition of a wife is discussed in similar terms to the acquisition of a Hebrew or Canaanite slave, secured or unsecured property or large cattle. Virginity was to become much more than merely an element in a woman's physical anatomy, turning rather into a symbol of purity and innocence.

47. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, pp.58-60, 128. A woman should be subdued by her husband to stop her going out into the market place and falling into sin. Traditional attitudes to rape are therefore 'if she had not gone out into the city [market place] he [the rapist] would not have happened upon her'.⁴²

48. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.40. In interpreting the command 'to be fruitful and multiply' the command that follows 'subdue' is used to enforce the view that, whilst a man and a woman are equally obligated to be fruitful and multiply only the man is to subdue. See Luise Schotroff, Let the Oppressed Go Free: Feminist Perspectives on the New Testament. Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press 1993

49. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.129. She gives evidence of a woman, in the depths of poverty and the suffering of her husband, was forced to wander the market place to earn bread for them both and also to sell her hair to support her husband.

50. Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine, p.126. Rabbinic opinion was 'Do not talk a lot with women kind-they say this of a man's own wife, how much more of his fellow's wife'. In the Talmud, 'it is taught do not speak excessively with a woman lest this ultimately lead you to adultery'. Women lived in a society of worried husbands.

51. Wright, God's People in God's Land, pp.3-4

52. Neyrey, The Social World of Luke and Acts, pp 25-27, 36, 41, 61. Neyrey suggests that to understand the ways such people organise their world and how they structure their social relations we must understand honour. 'Honour is an abstract concept that becomes concrete only when the understanding of a particular society of power, gender and precedence is examined.' Female sexuality symbolises exclusiveness, discretion, shyness, restraint and timidity. Because of the nature of the honour of their sexuality, women represent the domestic sphere. The social order in Mary's day was Roman controlled. The temple was dominated by the aristocratic Sadducees. These powerful influences set the culture-lines for towns and villages across the nation and the resulting social gender structures gives perspective to the difficulties women faced in following Jesus. It puts into context the problem Mary faced in her attempts to keep in touch with her son, now seen as a deviant. Additionally she would face the opprobrium of her community for his actions which reflect on her as shameless.

CHAPTER 4

MARY AND HER ROLE

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter my strategy is to attempt to read the narrative of Mary in the gospels, particularly the Magnificat, in the light of first century Jewish peasant women as described in Chapter Three. I am not attempting an exegesis of the biblical text or a theological reflection on the significance of Mary or a comparison of how various biblical commentators view Mary. Rather this is a continuation of the method in the previous chapter of seeking to derive from the work of scholarly commentators the clearest picture possible of the biblical Mary as a peasant woman of her time.

In this chapter I will briefly investigate the most celebrated words associated with Mary (the Magnificat). I will then make certain reasoned assumptions about Mary in relation to how the task given her by God was undertaken in her daily struggle to manage survival. I will attempt this by considering Mary in the light of the crises in life that she faced as indicated by the gospel narrative. As this research is studying the parallel circumstances and events of colliery women and Mary of Nazareth, it is necessary to complete the cycle of experiences of Mary as an old peasant woman.¹ To this end I will try to construct a hypothesis of Mary's life post Calvary. Although there is no biblical evidence for this period of her life, such an hypothesis may help in the discernment of practical, as well as theological links between Mary and colliery women, which is the purpose of Chapter Five.

4.2 The Magnificat: God and Mary

Mary's status within her social context probably was that of a peasant woman: wife, mother, manager of family survival, in the shadows, in adversity, struggling in poor housing, in poverty. In the gospel story, God elevated all that was to happen to her to an importance far outweighing the lowly expectations of her gender.²

In this way God elevates the ordinary daily struggles of a peasant woman, into the activity of his eternal love to bring about his desired outcome. Mary's response to the divine initiative is expressed in the Magnificat (Luke 1. 46-55) and indicates the kind of link that existed between the Holy One and this ordinary peasant woman.³ Key words and phrases in the early verses apply especially to the circumstances of Mary. They are like threads woven throughout the song, presenting a picture of the way the God-relationship worked towards her;

4.2.1 God Looks on Lowly Mary

In verse 48 there appears to be a sense of excitement of faith. The reaction of a young peasant girl seems to be that it is unreal and yet wonderful. Mary regards herself as lowly yet she is honoured (and intrigued) by the angel's attention and the very fact that this is happening to her is, in itself, God blessing her. She describes her state as 'of the humble', in 'humiliation or humility and lowliness' and this is to be understood metaphorically, as in Greek usage, in social and economic sense. The word expresses her distance from God and her place amongst the socially poor of Israel.⁴

Furthermore, God has *looked upon* Mary's condition. According to Marshall,⁵ this can often carry the meaning of loving care (Luke 9. 38). God looks upon Mary and her lowly state as a peasant woman. Lowliness is not simply a mental attitude, but an objective condition. Mary lives in conditions of poverty and powerlessness in her society. Her rich blessing by God comes to her whilst in, and continuing to be in that objective condition of poverty and powerlessness.⁶ God looks upon Mary and her lowly state as a peasant woman. God's loving-kindness and Mary's condition come together to form the start of God's eschatological exaltation of the lowly.⁷

4.2.2 Powerless Mary is Blessed

Regardless of who or what she is, God has looked upon Mary and has done great things for her. Although her societal status and condition remain powerless, the Mighty One is doing a great thing for or in 'me' (v 49a).⁸ The hymn conjures up the Old Testament metaphor of God as the divine warrior (Isa 10.20-27; Zeph 3.17).⁹ God's might is now exerted on the

side of Mary and generations to come in the cause of righteousness and mercy. For this reason Mary will ‘triumph’ (achieve) in his calling of her.¹⁰ The song portrays the character of God who is most powerfully shaping the whole series of events. God is mighty but uses that might in mercy towards the weak. God is not the placid ruler who maintains social order but the over-ruler of human power and plans.¹¹ Generations will call her ‘blessed’ not as the mother of the Son of God but because the Almighty One has done ‘great things for *me*’. What God has done rather than what she is, is the key aspect of the matter.¹²

4.2.3 Faithful Mary and the Uplifting of the Poor

Mercy, in v.50 and v.54, conveys the ideas of compassion and mercy to those who are unfortunate. It includes the sense of God’s gracious faithfulness in his attitude to those who, like Mary, need reassurance in their struggle to survive. To use the term, ‘self-effacing’, about a peasant woman does not imply lack of character or determination. It is more an attitude of quietly getting on with the struggle without fuss. It includes the sense of God’s gracious faithfulness in his attitude to those who, like Mary, are getting on with, and are in need of reassurance of, the outcome of their struggle to survive. Mary’s response to Gabriel in which she displays a lowly, self-effacing attitude, is in contrast to those who are arrogant and conceited in their thought and intention.¹³ Bovon suggests these words presuppose a relationship between God, Mary and his people. God delivers his people in faithfulness to his name. God’s actions correspond to his essence. Those who fear him are his faithful people. The Magnificat speaks of social and economic conditions. When God inaugurates his throne he shakes the mighty from their thrones and demands money from the rich. ‘If he did not do so he would be neither just nor good’. The child’s birth signifies the end of many privileges and oppressions.¹⁴ It is by means of looking with favour on the lowliness of a peasant woman, that God has chosen to do a great thing for Israel. To fulfil his covenantal promise.¹⁵

4.2.4 Insignificant Mary is God's Choice

Green suggests the song's celebration of God's mighty acts, radiates from the insignificance of Mary. It first centres on her as peasant woman and then is expanded to embrace God's mighty acts on behalf of the lowly and the hungry, and to Israel.¹⁶ Mary's elevation is within her social position. Against the background of attitudes to women in New Testament times the most surprising thing is that God chooses a woman so he may be seen to act decisively in history. The hungry are to be satisfied with the blessings God provides. Marshall reckons this means more than physical hunger, but is about want in general (v. 53).¹⁷ Green considers Luke's characterization of Mary in the Magnificat, from the aspect of the stature of important persons in Luke and Acts and the importance of pedigree, kin and clan. There is a stark contrast between the handmaid, who is the singer, and Luke 3.23-38. Here Joseph is a son of David, but Mary has not yet joined his household and thus has no claim on his inherited status. Mary's family is not mentioned. Indeed she is not introduced in any way that would recommend her as particularly noteworthy or deserving of divine favour.¹⁸

Elaine Storkey describes Mary as a 'no-body':

Mary reminds us that it sometimes seems that God's way of choosing people is less discriminating than our own. God doesn't even seem to short-list the most suitable candidates and take up references. For the mother of the coming Redeemer, God chooses someone whom history, and we ourselves, would surely otherwise have utterly overlooked. Mary may well have been a good person but she had no status, no credentials, no qualifications. From a human point of view, she was a no-body. It is typical of God, who delights to reverse the world's idea of importance, that he has taken notice of an insignificant servant girl.¹⁹

However, God sees Mary as she is, and then looks beyond that to see Mary blessed by him, pregnant and still in her world as it is. Only in these terms of God's looking at Mary, can there be an expansion of his intention to include explicitly, generations to come of persons who honour him.²⁰

It is, therefore, valid to present the language of the Magnificat as establishing a link between God and a lowly peasant woman. Under the protection of God's creative overshadowing

presence and elevated within her social position, hidden in a peasant woman's ordinary life, unseen, a divine purpose is taking place. From the perspective of peasant women: Mary's silence²¹ may be seen as a male controlled woman's spiritual response to adversity; Mary's mother love²² is not unique, but shared with women and is tested by her circumstances; Mary's spiritual calm is a facet of a woman's nature which enables her to move on through adversity; Mary is a woman with worldly concerns, as a normal condition of women on the edge of poverty.²³

4.3 Mary and Crisis Management

The few other details available in the gospels present Mary as a peasant woman managing life that appears to have moved from one crisis to another. She has to manage the crisis of both family and divine expectations as an unmarried, pregnant young woman. There is crisis of Jesus' behaviour towards her as his mother. There is the crisis brought about by her son's arrest and execution. Finally, there is the crisis post Calvary. The words of Luke 1. 30 are important in all of this. Their meaning lies in the assumed ancient Mediterranean culture that a person of status and power will bestow favours on clients who, in turn, support and honour their patron. God may be understood as a patron who bestows favour on Mary, who is female and young, in a society that honours males and elders. In human affairs she is not favoured, but in the angel's proclamation she is 'favoured'. So, in whatever the crisis, she is sponsored by the Almighty One.²⁴

4.3.1 Crisis 1. Managing Contiguous Expectations

God's approach in establishing a link with Mary was made at a moment all her life of eleven or twelve years had anticipated. Her betrothal. She was a virgin engaged to a man called Joseph (Lk 1. 26-33). Society had expectations of Mary. Betrothal was a binding legal agreement between which gave the man marital rights over the young woman, to direct her life within the woman's place in the home. Any sexual involvement of the woman with other men could be punished as adultery. After betrothal the girl continued to live with her parents for about a year. Then there was a formal transfer of the bride to her husband's family home where she would live from that point on. Marriage was marked by intercourse between the couple.²⁵ Jewish expectations were for a female to

marry before the age of twelve and a half (for boys fourteen), so that the husband received the benefits of her service over a longer period of time. It also helped her father more easily to guarantee his daughter's purity (virginity) if she was married by the time she reached puberty.²⁶

All these were normal expectations for a young girl. She would expect to be overshadowed by her father's authority in all things including her marriage. She would not be anticipating any deviation from the subservient role that marked the way of life for all peasant women. Mary's parents, like all Jews, may have sought to shape her life around Prov 31. 10-13 as a dutiful wife and mother.²⁷

The girl God was to deal with was raised against the background of what was turbulent Jewish history. Mary may have been more militant and less genteel than is popularly portrayed. Her parents may also have had nationalistic views, and Mary would bring up her family in a militant Galilee. It is not unrealistic that village expectations were that Mary would be sympathetic to militant Galileans.²⁸ After all Luke portrays the revolutionary words of the Magnificat as representing the thoughts and opinions of Mary.²⁹

Luke's expectations for Mary are possibly unrealistic. She is twelve, engaged and under the threat of death, if she is with child outside the accepted structure of marriage. It is not a love match, but a contract with a legal bridal price and transfer of rights over her and this describes her subjugation. Her education is, in keeping with peasant girls, restricted. Her life-experience is tutelage to her mother, learning the lowly place of women limited to the home. Tannehill suggests the girl was too young to exercise much independent judgement.³⁰ Immediately after Mary's betrothal a series of events take place at breath-taking speed. Within a very short space of time Mary is expected to take in, and respond to, a divine revelation of such universal importance and heightened expectations, that her son's most loyal and closest followers, after three years in his company, fail to grasp the full measure and impact of his words. Gabriel comes to the virgin (vv26-27), delivers his message, receives her response and departs (vv 28-38). There are close parallels in words

and progression with the annunciation with Zechariah in Luke 1. 11-20. The sequence is: specifying the obstacles to childbearing; encountering an angel, Gabriel, using name [Mary]; responding to Gabriel; his reply 'do not be afraid', followed by explanation of events; promise of a son; objections; giving of a sign; departure of Gabriel.³¹

Reflecting on this combination of divine revelation, drama, and emotion, it is hard to see the difference between the responses of Zechariah (v.20) and Mary (vv26.27). It appears, at his age, Zechariah has learned a healthy scepticism. Mary has a child-like, spontaneous acceptance of Gabriel's pronouncements. However, what is emphasised in the narrative, is not the needs or shortcomings of Zechariah and Elizabeth or, indeed, of Mary. God is intervening in human history to bring about an everlasting kingdom. God expectations were contiguous with their own expectations of life. With divine expectation there is always contiguous power. It is the connection of his activity through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit which gives importance to the roles of Zechariah with Elizabeth and Mary in the realization of God redemptive plan. Through God's initiative and connection, Luke foreshadows the joy with which the 'little people' will receive divine favour.³² However, because Mary continued to be 'one of the little people', in the circumstances of first century Palestine, such joy was to be mixed with struggle, uncertainty and pain. In addition Mary may have feared for her elder son's involvement in politico-religious activity in a volatile, occupied state.³³

Whether the Magnificat is Luke's development of an Old Testament hymn or Mary's inspired song, there is in it a theology of Mary in adversity. It accepts the fact of adversity which has to be confronted. It emphasizes the gains and benefits when God's presence overshadows adversity to draw out of it human dignity and divine fulfillment of purpose.³⁴ Mary was to manage this and other crises by being faithful in the small things that were part of the contiguous expectations of her as a peasant woman. She was to be faithful as a wife in turning a primitive house into a warm home for her family that included her eldest son. She was to be faithful in her tireless work which was to be instrumental in her family's survival and that of her first born son. She was to be faithful as a mother in ordering her family's life so that her children, including Jesus, learned from her the skills

of confronting adversity.³⁵ Mary, Jewish peasant woman, was to be faithful in guiding her children into the way of God, and to carry the never-ending burden of watching over them into their adult years. It was the influence of the faithfulness of a peasant mother that God chose for his son, to prepare him to face the adversities that lay before him on the road to Calvary.

4.3.2 Crisis 2. Managing the Shameless Title of ‘Unmarried Pregnant Girl’.

Mary had been brought up as a Jewish woman. Her pregnancy, therefore, was a major problem. It made her shameless in the view of society. So Mary had to manage her situation within the social mores of her community. It brought dishonour on her family and on Joseph. His decency is measured by his wish to spare her community derision. Matthew, it has been suggested, unlike Luke, had a problem in dealing with this scandal. Matthew deals with it in a way that his Jewish readers will readily understand. He linked Mary with four Old Testament women to counteract her shamelessness.³⁶ Matthew never says (as Luke does) that Mary is ever told what is happening to her. Matthew’s focus is on Joseph. It is assumed that when Joseph is told that Mary’s pregnancy is ‘by the Holy Ghost’ that she, too, understands. Perhaps Joseph explains to her his change of heart by informing her of his dream. Here is a young peasant woman, silent, at the centre of controversy, never quite understanding all that is happening to her and around her, maintaining the quiet, submissive role expected by tradition of a young girl in her village. She manages this crisis by her silence and willingness to move on under the shadow of God’s presence, accepting Joseph as her husband.

4.3.3 Crisis 3. Managing the Behaviour of Jesus.

Jesus is twelve when Mary is faced with the dilemma of what we would call, ‘teenage’ self assertion (Luke 2. 41-51). His behaviour in the Temple reflected on their family. To us it may appear that Mary and Joseph were worried by what may have happened to Jesus. However, it is possible to visualise their rush back to Jerusalem in terms of shame. Jesus has failed to honour his parents, especially his father; and the play on words, ‘my father’s business’, may give support to the bewildered feelings of his parents. Within the indoor world of Mary, it is to be expected that her sons will assert themselves and seek

honour by playing their part in the outside world. They would, however, share the traditional responsibility to promote the honour of the family and Mary's wellbeing. The actions of Jesus, when he had grown up, are unhelpful in this regard.

First, the villagers of Nazareth humiliate his parents by refusing to accept his preaching. Village society sleight him and his mother with the question, 'Is this not Mary's son?' (Mark 6.3) Secondly, he publicly humiliates her. Mary is upset and fears for his health (Mark 3.20, 21) and accompanied by her family catches up with him and wants to take him home. Home is the woman's space. Jesus (the man) must be out doing his father's work. Jesus rejects the call home and ignores Mary and his family with the words, 'who are my mother and brothers and sisters....?' (Mark 3.31-35) ³⁷

Differences appear to widen between Mary and her son. It is possible that whilst she does not want to seem to stand apart in her community, by contrast her son does, as he moves away, and what people say about him might well amaze (and worry) her. Mary might feel he is not the boy she once walked and laughed with. From the available evidence it appears he has little time to be with her. It is not unreasonable to wonder if she asked God why, as she once asked an angel, how. Mary's thought process, like that of any peasant woman, might centre on the breaking point with the ever increasing burden of daily tasks and emotional stress. Perhaps her question might have been why the handmaid of the Lord was having such a struggle in her life and where was the overshadowing power to help resolve her anxieties to move on. ³⁸

A speculative picture of Mary's state of mind is that she could only look on, fearing her son had lost his senses, unaware or careless about the inevitable consequences of the popularity of his teaching as crowds gathered to listen to him. Jesus' reply to his mother was unsympathetic to her fears. It is not unreasonable to suggest she has changed from the submissive young girl, through a quietly reflective period into an older, possibly introspective woman, helpless to change what is happening to her son and to her life. Turning things over in her mind, it is doubtful that this would have been her interpretation of the outcome of Gabriel's annunciation that she would be mother of

Messiah. She deals with this crisis with the same indomitable spirit of a peasant mother, her faithfulness to her son bruised but unbowed.

4.3.4 Crisis 4 Managing the Trial and Execution of her Son

Mary would experience the restrictions common to women of her time.³⁹ Mary would not be allowed out in public unaccompanied. So, after his arrest, Mary would not have been allowed at the trial of her son. Mary was the mother of a criminal. Her son had stepped outside his status and confronted the political elite and their desire to maintain the status quo. It is possible she shared similar nationalistic feelings, yet it would have been so hard to accept his execution by the Romans. Nevertheless, she stood shamelessly at his cross. She was humiliated. She was the victim of her son's behaviour. He was to die a shameful death that would shame her. In her sadness, grief and shame it is other women who stand by her.⁴⁰

From the sparse details, the relationship at the cross appears complicated. Mary was as silent as she was in Matthew's birth narrative. It is possible that her feelings were constrained by her gender sensitivities. Patriarchal overtones may be heard when, on the cross, Jesus again calls Mary 'woman', not mother, according to the fourth gospel.⁴¹ Mary faced this crisis as she had faced so many things in her life as a peasant woman. She would accept it in silence, in keeping with the gospel's brief characterisation of Mary as silent and submissive. Humiliation was not an unknown experience for a peasant woman. The pain of the death of her eldest son would give way to the reality of survival. Other peasant women, however, would not doubt her undying love for her executed son.

4.3.5 Crisis 5. Managing Post Calvary

After Jesus' death his disciples were to see him again. It is not clear whether Mary did. Mary would have heard of Jesus appearing to his disciples, but no specific appearance to her is recorded. At the ascension when Jesus met with the eleven disciples, Mary was amongst those at the house where the disciples and fledgling Christian community were

then living. (Acts 1. 14) There is no indication Jesus asked to see her. He did meet with James, who some believe was his brother, her son.⁴²

After Calvary, Mary still has to manage her life. What does Mary do now her job is done? The answer is shrouded in mystery. Not much more of a mystery, however, than the whole of Mary's life. In this section, I will present evidence from scholars whose studies give rise to reasoned assumptions about Mary post Calvary. This may have happened to Mary might not lead to provable evidence but it might lead to an interpretation of the the annunciation and Magnificat that suggests that fading from view (her retirement) was as much within the remit of the calling, as it was in being central to God's purpose that she managed the crisis points in being Jesus' mother.

There are possibly two options available to Mary after the death of her son. One is to return home as a peasant woman to her family. The second is to stay with John and become a leader in the youthful Church, as the respected mother of Jesus. To examine which is the most likely I will attempt to establish a link between God and Mary in her post-Calvary (elderly) condition to discover whether the older Mary was overshadowed in her future role by the Holy Spirit in the same way as the young Mary.⁴³

(a) Option 1 Mary Returns Home It seems unlikely from the evidence in Luke that the term 'fear not' (1. 30) indicates that the overshadowing (1. 35) will be withdrawn at the completion of Mary's calling.⁴⁴ Perhaps the theology of the Magnificat is more positive about Mary's long term future. Luke makes it clear (1. 47) that God overshadows her in the shadows, where Mary has lived her life and fulfilled her calling. He has done great things for her and this will continue. It may have been attractive for her to return to the shadow of her roots. The annunciation and its expectations of her, as a peasant woman, child-bearer and mother, are now in her past. Without this premium calling of women there is no humanity to save. It is as vital as bearing the Messiah. A new era beckoned elderly Mary, in which she would continue to serve God's purpose. In returning home, Mary would continue under the patronage of God's name.

That Mary returned home to her family is a reasoned assumption based on the fact that she was first and foremost a mother. Carol Meyers discusses the amount of a woman's life span involved in the physical aspects of motherhood; pregnancy, breast feeding, caring for young children. She reckons they may have been one third or higher amongst ancient peasant women. With relatively few women surviving to menopause and with marriage and childbirth beginning near puberty, as much as half of a woman's life span would be taken up with maternity.⁴⁵ At the time of the cross Mary probably was beyond menopausal age. Her life span might well be coming to a close. Mary herself may not have survived Jesus by many years. There is no evidence for or against this. Mary at the time of the crucifixion, assuming Christ to be thirty three years old, must have been comparatively old, over forty five years of age. Mary may well have wished to spend her later years amongst her family and with her village community at Nazareth.

The possibility of a home return is also raised from Meyers' study of ancient Jewish women. In pre-industrial societies household functions were integrated with maternal functions. In other words, regardless of the proportion of life span taken up by in motherhood, women's work probably suffered little interruption. In subsistence, females work very hard to eke out a living and contributed nearly equally with men.⁴⁶ Peasant women like Mary might grow old prematurely, ageing under the constant round of motherhood and household work. Mary at the cross might well have looked an old, exhausted woman with one desire in her mind, to return to her home and extended family. Although James and Jude remained in Jerusalem it is reasonable to assume they remained in touch, and her sons made the journey to see her and the fledgling Church that would gather around her in Nazareth.

Mary might also have been a tough character as a peasant woman. Women had a strong role in decision making and exercised considerable power in the household when the household was central in socio-political structures. Women gained power by virtue of their technical contribution to family subsistence. This is increased when there are more family members. In the self-sufficient Jewish family a woman's expertise is crucial and domestic matters gave her the ability and right to control key aspects of family life. A

woman performed many tasks every day which involved decisions about managing economic resources. Mary, now part of the older generation, gained authority and respect within her family and extended relatives.⁴⁷ It would be at home where she might better continue her life with still a significant part to play in her household's survival.⁴⁸ This would not exclude her from a respected role in the leadership of the Church.

(b) Option 2 Mary and Leadership A case may be made that God's 'scattering the imagination of the proud, with their arrogant attitude' (Lk1. 51), might legitimately be applied to changing attitudes generally and particularly towards peasant women in the shadows of patriarchy. That the impossible may be made possible is suggested in (Lk1. 37) which states that all things are possible with God.⁴⁹ Therefore, anything is possible for Mary, a peasant woman, including leadership within her son's new-born Church, particularly in its very early history. On the positive side, Mary would attract a wide and deep respect as mother of Jesus. On the negative side, there is the absence of any mention of Mary in the rest of the New Testament, while other women leaders such as Prisca [Priscilla] and Phoebe are noted.

Patriarchy may be related to male dominance but Meyers' interprets Genesis 3.16 (and Gen 2 and 3) to emphasise the essential integration of male and female roles in the face of the crushing realities and uncertainties in sustaining life, the difficulty in understanding why life is so difficult and so much hard work is needed for simple survival.⁵⁰ She correlates these thoughts with the words of Psalms 127 and 128, where assumptions of hard work and large families are acknowledged as within the Sovereignty of God, along with accepting one's lot in life which brings its own rewards of happiness and fulfillment.⁵¹ Patriarchy, therefore, may be related to male dominance, but not equated to female passivity or lack of autonomy. As has been pointed out above, women may exert their wills and prevail over male members of society in ways that are of consequence to all members of that society. Cultural patterns may accord prestige to males rather than females but social reality may present a different picture.⁵² With this in mind and the hard work and management skills of peasant women vital to social cohesion and economic survival, it is not difficult to imagine women in leadership roles.

The possibility (already stated) that Mary's fading from view was as much within the remit of her calling as it was in being central to God's purpose of managing the crisis points of raising Jesus, strengthens the option that God shaped events for [elderly] Mary to have a leadership role in the Church. If Mary was present at ascension, as Luke states in Acts 1.14, the presence of all believers in Acts 2.1 might also include Mary. With her son, James, heading up the Church in Jerusalem, an argument could be made that she may have fulfilled a respected role in the leadership of the Church, even though in the shadows.

Osiek suggests that women played a major role in the ministry of Jesus.⁵³ His mother would be known to them and from the few references available, they and the male disciples had contact with her, certainly at Cana, at the confrontation over her son's health, at the cross, and in the opening moments of Acts 1. Osiek describes the devotion and the freedom women found around Jesus, noticeably different in normal social context, for example the Canaanite woman (Matt 15.21-28).⁵⁴ In Jesus' Galilean ministry there is what Osiek calls a complementary gender pattern.⁵⁵ Women are included with the men. The women serve or minister (Lk 8.1-3). The male function is to preach. The women serve and support the group out of their resources.⁵⁶ Women are not included in the Twelve but they are the only faithful followers at the cross and the tomb. Within this context, Mary is visible with the women at the cross. Together they witness the crucifixion and the burial (Luke 23.49, 55) At the resurrection, though Mary is missing, the women are told to remember what Jesus told them about the gospel, that he would be raised. The women are accepted as disciples, who hear and remember it in a complementary gender pattern.⁵⁷ Mary, as the mother of Jesus, might have naturally become part of that pattern. Yet, in a culture in which gender differentiation was so deeply etched on social ordering, such radical ideas in the light of the gospel, of a society where sexual conflict and cultural divisions are overcome, was not easily adapted or sustained. In line with Mediterranean social tradition, the early Church accepted to some degree, that careful control of contact between the sexes and the subordination of women, might become necessary ingredients in the Christian life.⁵⁸ However, Schussler Fiorenza argues that women's leadership and contributions to early Church history, can only become visible by moving away from patriarchal, androcentric language, which portrays women as

marginal figures in subordinate feminine roles,⁵⁹ to one which recognizes and value of women's leadership roles, as in Osiek's 'complementary gender pattern'. In Schussler Fiorenza's terms, early Christian history was 'a movement of women and men'. Schussler Fiorenza argues for a discipleship of equals in the earliest Church before such revision to inherited patterns. This means that passages that directly mention women (including Mary) cannot be taken as providing all the information about women in early Christianity and must be re-interpreted based on the understanding that Christian beginnings allow for leadership both of men and women.⁶⁰ Schussler Fiorenza concludes, that the significance of women's leadership in the early Christian missionary movement, emerges in Romans 16 and reflects the rich social mix of early Christian communities.⁶¹

4.4 Mary's Role

Mary's role in the early Christian community is open to question. Though the birth narratives are profoundly moving and memorable, they seem to have little impact on the few details of Mary's life. It is as though life is as usual for a girl growing to womanhood in Greco-Roman Palestine. Before Gabriel greets her, she is expecting what is the lot of all young girls of her age, marriage, childbearing and rearing and household management. After Gabriel's salutation and message, Mary's pattern of life appears to remain within expectations. Mary's 'job description' was to bear a child to be called 'Jesus'. This fitted into the socio-cultural pattern for women. Mary would rear Jesus along with her other children within a normal Jewish household; and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit would be in the domestic sphere where the usual gender rules would apply, with Mary and her daughters indoors, and Joseph and their sons out of doors. This thread runs throughout the chapter.

The trouble with this scenario is that it does not take into account the divine initiative and Mary's response expressed in the powerful words of the Magnificat. If these words indicate the character of Mary, then she is a more robust woman than the gospel details suggest. It is likely within the domestic setting Mary would set the tone for her children's education. Her more prophetic and revolutionary thoughts might have been passed on to her sons, (maybe her daughters too). Her actions at the Cana wedding⁶² might suggest a greater hands-on role

in directing the lives of her sons, especially if she was widowed. It might also suggest a woman gifted with leadership skills and willing, when necessary, to break convention.

Nevertheless, Mary had to work hard and endlessly. She was powerless to change her lot. Mary was lowly and accepted her gender status. She was insignificant in her social position as a woman and a peasant. With each of these details of her circumstances, the Magnificat presents the divine view of her state. Her hard work is divinely valued and blessed by God so that generations will share that blessing. Her powerlessness will feel the strength of God's arm.⁶³ Mary's lowliness allows divine love to (fill the hungry with good things) inspire her thoughts and exalt a positive attitude to see events in her life as within God's purpose. Her insignificance is a human reality of no obstacle to the divine purpose of doing great things for, and though, the life of this peasant woman.

This would appear to be borne out in the several crises Mary faced with her growing son. What appears contradictory is that, with each crisis, Mary seems to lack the understanding to join together her nativity experience and later events involving her son. It is as though it were inevitable that the earthly mother of the Messiah would increasingly face an estrangement from her son. Her son's messianic status was made evident to Peter (Luke 9) but possibly not to Mary. Perhaps this is what God wanted of Mary, the real, genuine peasant woman, not a disciple in the manner of Peter and the Twelve.⁶⁴

Mary's story which takes place in the ordinary, every day existence of a peasant woman's home is almost like a theology of a working class woman. Meyers' study of ancient Jewish peasant women, describes how their unceasing and exhausting subsistence tasks continued uninterrupted and regardless of maternal and child-raising functions. This hard work of peasant women and their accepting of their lot, and getting on with the work of survival, is reflected in the Magnificat (Luke 1.48) as mentioned above. The word 'lowly' (AV) is interpreted by Johnson⁶⁵ as an objective condition of poverty and powerlessness. The Magnificat theology points to a direct and active involvement by God with women like Mary in this condition. It is doubtful that Mary ever emerged from the shadows, or

even considered equality as necessary; but as a peasant woman constantly grappling with the vicissitudes of life, she more than earned praise for her achievements.

Osiek's briefing on the freedom women found in the presence of Jesus, and Schussler Fiorenza's study of the women in the earliest Church, together indicate a possible widening of that theological link to female involvement in leadership. Osiek's complementary gender pattern, finds resonance in Schussler Fiorenza's statement that the removal of androcentric language will allow a reassessment of the importance of women's leadership roles, and provide an understanding that the early Church was a movement of both women and men. The application of these observations to the Magnificat might suggest Mary had a revolutionary leadership role. The putting down of the mighty and rich and replacing them with those of peasant background like herself, is the first step leading to the poor and powerless finding a new era of social inclusion for generations to come. The great things the Holy One has done for Mary, is the start of great things he has planned for his chosen Israel. This suggests that what God has promised in his mercy to Israel is a new covenantal relationship growing out of and beyond patriarchal structures into a movement of women and men together, all one in Jesus.

It is impossible to come to definitive conclusions. This research has always admitted reasoned speculation has a major part to play in looking beyond the data on peasant women in general and extending it to Mary. Osiek's concept of a complementary gender pattern in the early Christian community, and Schussler Fiorenza's 'women and men together' in the early Church mission, suggests that the case for Mary's leadership amongst the disciples, is a strong possibility. Doubt about this has already been aired with the lack of reference to her in the rest of New Testament. Add to that the strength of Mediterranean social patriarchy and the inability of Christianity itself to maintain that freedom women found so attractive in Jesus, and the eventual regression of the Church into a patriarchal structure, makes it difficult to believe that Mary ever emerged from the shadows of patriarchal power.⁶⁶ Difficult but not impossible. There had to be an on-going, living tradition of her significance for the Church to come to venerate her. This is indicated by her

portrayal in the catacombs. Her son, James, was a significant player in earliest Christianity and her on-going role might have been related to him amongst other disciples as acknowledged in Acts. However, one (remaining in the shadows of patriarchal power) is not exclusive of the other (on-going living tradition of her significance). It is not beyond reason to consider that older Mary may have been regarded highly amongst the leaders of the Church in Nazareth which would be accessible to Christians throughout Israel.

It is the ability of the theology of the Magnificat to link the circumstances and events in Mary's peasant existence, with God's calling and purpose, that makes it possible to presume that which ever direction Mary's life took post Calvary, she remained under the overshadowing of God's presence. The purpose in chapter five is to discover whether or not there is a practical as well as a theological pattern common to Mary and colliery women.

Chapter 4 Endnotes

1. Carol Meyers, Discovering Eve, (New York. Oxford University Press 1988). Meyers discusses Mary as elderly and tired. See endnote 47.

2. Marina Warner. Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary (Picador 1985/ Vintage 2000). p.11.

See also Francois Bovon, A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1.1-9.50 p.56. He describes the theology of the Magnificat as an individual song of praise, the main body of which is in praise of God, that Luke probably adopted and adapted from 1.Sam 2 vv 1-10. It neither refers to a birth or to a virgin birth. David Goodling, According to Luke. p.49, says never once in the Magnificat does Mary mention she is going to be the mother of the Son of God; her joy (Luke 1v 47) is because God is acting as he is to her, as her Saviour.¹⁹ See also Robert Tannehill, Luke. p.57 who calls the Magnificat a remarkable theological statement. Stephen Farris. See The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narrative. Sheffield: JSOT 1985.

3. Luke T Johnson, The Gospel of Luke, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press 1991), p. 39. 'That she should have found favour with God and be highly gifted shows Luke's understanding of God's activity as surprising and often paradoxical, almost always reversing human expectations.'

4. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, p. 65. Mary was involved in such momentous events that the Magnificat intensifies the spiritual drama that plucks a woman from poverty and obscurity and transforms her into the vehicle of God's fulfillment of the Old Covenant. The overshadowing of the Spirit of God is in the practical reality of her life. She remains poor. She remains in obscurity. She remains the victim of the view of women

encased in the tradition of her society. Mary's elevation is within those parameters. It appears that the theology of Mary has at its core God's high valuation of a mother's work.

5. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, p. 82.

6. Francois Bovon. A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1.1-9.50 Translator, Christine Thomas, Editor Helmut Koester. (Fortress Press 2000), p. 47.

7. Johnson, The Gospel of Luke, p. 42.

8. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, p. 82.

9. Joel B Green, The Gospel of Luke. (Grand Rapids Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997) p. 101.

10. Fred B. Craddock, Luke. (Louisville: John Knox Press) p. 29. The use of the past tense (aorist) is of interest, especially when discussing Mary's future (4.3.5). It expresses certainty in God's relationship with Mary, that it is timelessly true, past, present and future.

11. Robert T Tannehill, Luke. (Nashville : Abingdon Press 1996) p. 55-56.

12. David Goodling, According to Luke. (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press 1987) p. 43.

13. Luke T Johnson, The Gospel of Luke, page 42

14. Bovon, The Gospel of Luke, p. 61. The Magnificat speaks only of social and economic conditions. When God inaugurates his throne, he shakes the mighty from their thrones and demands money from the rich. 'If he did not do so he would be neither just nor good'. The child's birth signifies the end of many privileges and oppressions.

15. Green, The Gospel of Luke, p. 101.

16. Green, The Gospel of Luke pp.103-104. See also Bovon p. 62

17. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, p. 84

18. Bovon. The Gospel of Luke, p. 86. See also Malina and Nevrey, 'First-Century Personality.'

19. Elaine Storkey, Magnify the Lord (London: Fount 1997) p. 88; Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Searching the Scriptures, Vol 1. (London: SCM), p. 728; Denise Carmody, Biblical Women. (New York: Crossroad, 1988), p. 85

20. Green. The Gospel of Luke, p. 104 To speak of God's mercy is to conjure up images of the corporate people of God and [the song] is nothing less than his initiative to make [humanity] his covenant partner despite repeated opposition to his purpose.

21. Johnson, The Gospel of Luke, page 42 Silence is the mark of Mary. In Mathew she is silent. With John she has a small part but is silent especially at the cross. In Luke silence covers most of her few appearances. Mary's silence may be her reflective response when things happen beyond her understanding.

22. Warner. Alone of All Her Sex, p.315 'Mother love' is at the centre of Mary's relationship with Jesus. Mother love is tested by being excluded from her son's life and by his execution. Warner sees the power of hope in Mary's mother love for Jesus. Warner as she contemplates Mary's unconditional mother's love, sees this quality in her as the way to paradise. See also Ann Loades, Searching for Lost Coins, p. 84. who values the spiritual power in mother love. Mary, with her unconditional mother's love, in a sense, is as unconventional as Jesus was, since her loyalty to her own, 'explodes the bounds of strict justice'.

23. Kathleen Fischer, Women at the Well, London: SPCK 1990, p. 81. On one of the few occasions Mary speaks in the Gospel is when she asks the angel 'how' she will bear a child. Once the question has been asked and the answer is that nothing is impossible with God, she is spiritually calm, reflective and receptive and moves on. See also Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendel, A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey, p. 193 f. Mary is a woman with worldly concerns. An example is at the wedding in Cana. (John 2.4) where Jesus tells her that her concerns and his are not the same. Life and family are her concern. She has to work to live. The few times she appears with Jesus she is often at odds with him. This does not negate the loving-kindness surrounding her life. She still has to concern herself with moving on with her life and next meal. See Also Jill Robson, Mary, My Sister, page 23.

24. Tannehill, Luke pp. 48-49. See Amy-Jill Levine. Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1991.

25. Tannehill, Luke p. 47. See Ulrich Luz, Matthew: 1-7. Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1990.

26. Green, The Gospel of Luke p.86.

27. Stambaugh, & Balch, The New Testament in its Social Environment p1. 3, See also Schurer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ pp. 13-15 and 20-22

28. Schurer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ p. 219 See also Christopher Wright. God's People in God's Land Exeter: Eerdmans 1990. pp. 3-4. The occupation and seizure of historic land was an emotional loss and a motivation for extremists

29. Warner, Alone of All Her Sex, p11 The Magnificat Warner describes as a bellicose and triumphalist song in content and character, very similar to the hymns of Hannah and Miriam, the sister of Moses. The hymn might have a Maccabean war background. There is reasonable doubt that the Magnificat is Mary's spontaneous response to the words of Elizabeth. Indeed, some manuscripts put the words in Elizabeth's mouth. See also, I.H. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, p. 79 who argues that it is unlikely and goes on to suggest that the Magnificat and the other hymns are not Luke's own composition but stem from Hebrew originals. Within the Magnificat there are complex allusions to the Old Testament and whilst Mary praises God, she also praises herself. If she were the author it is doubtful she would do this.

30. Tannehill, Luke p. 48.

31. Green, The Gospel of Luke p. 83

32. Green, The Gospel of Luke p. 84.

33. Stambaugh & Balch. The New Testament in its Social Environment p95 Mary might also have mourned over the failure of her son's mission.

34. See Psalm 8. 6, 7; 2 Cor 12. 7 -10; Romans 8. 37 See also Jer. 31.3 The same idea of strengthening for success is behind the words in Luke's Gospel. Gabriel uses the same phrases with Mary as he used meeting Daniel (10. 11-13; 19) to give her his strength to succeed. See also Johnson p37 -39 and Marshall p65, 81) See also J.P Lange Commentary on Isaiah-Lamentations: Edited by Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1960. p263. God's proactivity spoken about in the Magnificat is a central and positive part of its theology. Eternal love is the only ground for all divine activity.

35. Beverley Gaventa, Mary, Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus p29 With all that was expected of women, stress of womanhood was a possibility for peasant women like Mary (See Meyers below). Mary stores things in her mind. She lacks space and opportunity in her domestic role which may lead to a low level of expectation and low self esteem.

36. Beverley Gaventa, Mary, Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus, p.38- 44. suggests a problem with Mary's pregnancy, possibly Mary was raped. Matthew's focus is on convincing his mainly Jewish readers that Jesus

is the Messiah. Though there are but glimpses of Mary even in the birth narrative, it is important that she gives credence to Jesus as the Messiah. Gavanta suggests that Matthew handles this in the genealogy by placing Mary in the company of Tamar, who played the part of a harlot; Rahab was a harlot; Ruth, who seduced Boaz and Uriah's wife, who committed adultery. What the stories of the four women have in common is that each of them are presented as threatening the way things ought to be, but also that each were part of God's plan to bring in the Messiah. The entire stories according to Gavanta are dominated 'by the dynamic of threatening and being threatened.' See Margaret Davies, Matthew (Sheffield: JSOT 1993). W. D. Davies, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew (Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1988). R.T.France, The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Leicester: Intervarsity Press 1985).

37. Marina Warner, Alone of All Her Sex, p.14 Outside the birth narrative Mary appears in Mark 3.31f. Earlier Jesus is pressed in on every side by crowds to the point where he and his disciples hadn't time even to eat Mark 3.21 and his friends try to 'lay hold on him for they said, 'He is beside himself.' He is particularly angered when scribes accuse him of doing the devil's work in Matthew 12.46f and Luke 8.19f. See Robert Mounce, Matthew (San Francisco: Harper and Row 1985); Craig Keener, Matthew (Leicester: Inter-Varsity 1997); Robert Smith, Matthew (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Pub House 1988).

38. Marina Warner, Alone of All Her Sex, p.15-17 Mary and the family have come in vain. In front of the crowd there is no attempt at a relationship with Mary. In Matthew's Gospel as we have already mentioned there is no hint from the birth narrative as to Mary's understanding of her son's role. It is hard to understand her assessment of Jesus. From this story and in the story in Matthew 13.53-58 [his rejection at Nazareth] there is a growing feeling of estrangement between not just family but also the community and Jesus. The implication is that there's nothing noteworthy about the family, and though the names of brothers and sisters are mentioned, from such a background can Jesus possibly be as wise as he claims to be? Their attitude says, surely not. It seems evident that Jesus is frustrated by the lack of support given by Mary and his family as he determines to carry though the work of his Father. Their arrival provides an opportunity for his teaching. He does not acknowledge their family relationship.

39. Jerome Neyrey, The Social World of Luke- Acts, pp. 61- 64. See Ilan. Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine on women, especial widows under male protection.

40. Again it is hard to know how Mary would feel. It may be reasonable to speculate she had tried to rescue Jesus from what seemed to be a reckless course of confrontation with the authorities although she might have shared his aims. She might have felt now it was almost bound to come to this. She would hardly be surprised that the harsh and unjust sentence was politically motivated. One certainty is that a sword had pierced her soul. (Luke 2.35) Like any mother she would suffer the pain of love for her first born son. Mary was likely to return to her submissive role as mother and back to her space inside looking out on events 'through the window' in common with other peasant women in her community.

41. John 19.26 (see also John 2.4). Mary's silence may suggest either as a woman she is submissive to the elder son as the one with authority over her, or she does not understand why there is an apparent distance between them. John, close to Jesus as he was, may have related well to Mary's family and his friendship was welcomed by all her family. This might remove Mary from the sceptical gaze of Nazareth society for a time.

42. Leon Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (London: The Tyndale Press 1958), p. 207. Nothing more is known of the appearance to James. Some think that it is James the Lord's brother and that this was the appearance that led to his conversion and that of his brothers. They did not believe on Jesus (Jn 7.5) but as early as Acts 1.14 they appear amongst the believers. See also Robert Grant, After the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1967); Turid Karlsen Sein, Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke/Acts (Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1994).

43. There were socio-political and personal issues for Mary at the death of her son. There were issues of gender and sexuality which the fledgling Church had to contend with as it built up its membership from the Greco-Roman and Jewish world in which age old traditions prescribed roles and status for women, especially peasant women. The practical and personal issues are hinted at and are reasonably open to

interpretation which might be summarised in the two questions. It seems reasonable to suggest that Mary may believe her place was in her home to care for the rest of the family and she might have felt obliged or even wanted to be to at home with her children and grandchildren. [Matt 13.56; Mark 6.3 mention Jesus' brothers and sisters. It is probable Mary's daughters were married and most probably, apart from Jesus, the sons as well]. As a peasant woman she would be at the heart of the extended family.

44. Indeed there are firm undertakings in Isaiah and John which suggest that the continuity of not fearing is because of the continuity of his overshadowing. In Isaiah 43.1 God speaks to Israel when he says; 'fear not for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name, thou art mine' the evidence for continuity appears in verse 2. In John 17.11, Jesus asks that those who are his may be kept safe by the power of God's name so continuing what Jesus started. It is hardly credible that Jesus excluded Mary from this prayer.

45. Carol Meyers, Discovering Eve, (New York. Oxford University Press 1988) p. 167.

46. Meyers, Discovering Eve p.169.

47. Meyers, Discovering Eve pp.174-175.

48. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, pp.168-169 quotes Titus 2vv3-5 in describing what elderly women are expected to do in the way of home teaching and virtue. 1 Tim 4v7 is much more hostile to women's involvement in teaching and to widows who refuse to remarry. It smacks of patriarchal control. Exum, Potted, Shot and Painted, pp. 92-97 has a similar attitude. That women are important is not in question, referring to Exodus 1 and 2. The survival of the Israelites as a people would not have been possible without their ingenuity and courage. Whatever praise is given for the importance of the role of women they are still confined to their domestic status. Whatever their achievement, the public arena belongs to men. Women in reality served an androcentric agenda by suggesting that women should be satisfied with their power behind the scene'. So Mary fades from view and possibly, maybe unsurprisingly, back into domesticity.

49. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, p. 84.

50. Meyers, Discovering Eve, p. 118.

51. Meyers, Discovering Eve, p. 119.

52. Meyers, Discovering Eve, p. 30.

53. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p.136. It is possible that behind these meetings lay a greater familiarity with Mary than is evident in the text. See Ben Witherington. Women in the Ministry of Jesus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1984); Susan Miller. Women in Mark's Gospel (London: T&T Clark International 2004).

54. Osiek & Balch. Families in the New Testament World, p. 139 The woman expresses this freedom to argue the case for her daughter's healing even to the point of 'outwitting' Jesus in response to his apparent reluctance and she changes his mind by the sheer force of faith and intellect. Osiek mentions amongst others, the woman who anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair in front of the males present wins the gratitude of Jesus. (Matt 26. 6) Other women followed Jesus and ministered to him (Matt 27vv55-57). Mary Magdalene freely expresses her friendship and devotion to him and is rewarded with his first appearance after the resurrection (Matt 28.1; 9-10) with the other Mary. Peter is not mentioned in Matthew's resurrection narrative. Later however (28. 7) Matthew removes the Christophany to the male disciples and their leader Peter.

55. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p. 140.

56. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p. 141. The word, diakonia/diakonos, servant, very early became a title, to be a deacon, or a minister. Luke, it is thought, narrowed the meaning to exclude

leadership. Luke appears to restrict leadership to males. Though Jesus' ministry is dominated by males, numbers of women express their devotion and freedom.

57. Osiek & Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p. 128.

58. Osiek and Balch, Families in the New Testament World, p. 146. See also Stambaugh and Balch. The New Testament in its Social Environment pp 54-5 supports Osiek's view of women's leadership in the early decades of the Church summarized in Galatians 3v28. They also mention the passages which indicate the imposition of a more patriarchal order by the next generation of Christian leaders that reflected Greco-Roman and Jewish family life. See also Mary Hayter, The New Eve in Christ, p158

59. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, 'Missionaries, Apostles, Co-Workers: Romans 16 and the Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History', in Word and World 6.4 1986 pp. 420-33. See also Ann Loades. Feminist Theology A Reader. (London: SPCK 1990), p. 58.

60. Schussler Fiorenza, 'Missionaries, Apostles, Co-Workers', p. 60.

61. Schussler Fiorenza, 'Missionaries, Apostles, Co-Workers', pp. 61-71. An example [of women as co-workers] is the role of Phoebe at the church at Cenchreae. (Rom 16) Phoebe was the leader of a local community. Her ministry was of the whole Church at Cenchreae. Phoebe has the same title as the charismatic preachers in Corinth. She, however, had a good relationship with Paul and is acknowledged as preacher and leader of the seaport in Corinth dedicated to the ministry of the saints. Phoebe was given the same title 'co-worker with Paul, minister and our sister', as Timothy. (brother and God's minister' 1Thes. 3.2) Schussler Fiorenza concludes that the significance of women's leadership in the early Christian missionary movement emerges in Romans 16 and reflects the rich social mix of early Christian communities.

62. John 2. 1-11.

63. Deut. 33.27; Isaiah 40. 29-31; Rom.5. 1-5 express the strength of God's arm. Moses, 'underneath are the everlasting arms'; Isaiah, 'rise on wings like eagles'; all in Paul's words as 'experiences of God's grace' (2).

64. It should be made clear that this does not relegate Mary to a 'mere' subordinate peasant woman's role; in human reality as well as divine terms it is of equal value and in terms of human survival and human attainment more vital than most other activities.

65. Johnson, The Gospel of Luke, p. 42.

66. Mary Hayter, The New Eve in Christ (London: SPCK 1987), pp.158-161.

CHAPTER 5

MARY AND ‘LOWLY’ WOMEN

5.1 Introduction

The thesis began with social history, attempting to re-orientate the social history of Denaby colliery women (Ch 1 & 2). The thesis then sought to derive from scholars the clearest picture possible of the biblical Mary as a peasant woman of her time. As there is little direct data on Mary, indirect data had to be extracted from material set in other contexts and for other purposes and then applied to Mary in the light of the gospel narrative (Ch 3 & 4).

The Magnificat has been investigated in an attempt to plot the steps God takes in matching Mary to a specific task. The thesis has constructed a hypothesis of Mary’s life, post Calvary to provide a practical ‘whole life’ perspective. This is necessary in investigating the parallel circumstances and events of colliery women and Mary. This chapter now attempts to analyse the results of all the research data presented. The primary method is based on a structure developed in Chapter Two and followed in Chapter Three. Thus there is a drawing together of the parallel significant threads from both chapters. The data contained in them is essential in the quest, first to compare the lives of first century peasant women and colliery women; and from the results, secondly, to confirm the life of Mary, as a peasant woman, so that, thirdly, a comparison may be made between Mary and colliery women. This will be the basis for discussing the relationship between Mary and colliery women in Denaby.

Comparison of first century peasant women and colliery women will be undertaken by examination of significant threads (5.2). The research will try to determine as closely as possible which facts from both groups of women produce positive convergence outcomes. Evidence, which lacks convergence or has no reasonable parallel, will be listed under negative convergence outcomes noted in Appendix 4. Whilst there are Significant Sayings in Chapter 2, noted in Appendix 2, the lack of direct evidence in Chapter 3

makes it impossible to directly quote from Mary or women of her time. Any data in the Sayings which has resonance to both groups will be listed under 'positive outcomes'.

The 'positive convergence outcomes' will be filtered into 'strong' and 'weak' outcomes. From the evidence a judgement will be made whether there is or is not sufficient support for a practical social history link between Mary, a woman of her time, and colliery women of Denaby Main.

Finally, the research will use the evidence in Chapter 4 to investigate the plausibility of the condition of lowly colliery women being raised to a theological relationship similar to that of Mary. The outcome will depend largely in determining the value of the social history of lowly colliery women compared with that of Mary, in the purpose God has for humanity as revealed in Mary's son.

Gerd Theissen¹ describes the term plausibility as the coherence of historical sources. When sources independently testify to the similar events, the prospect that you are dealing with authentic material is enhanced.² In applying this to our sources, the use of the word 'enhanced' rather than 'proved', allows judgement to be flexible on the plausibility of the nature of the sources which are from different eras.

The two main sources in this thesis about colliery women and peasant women independently testify to the same reality of CW and PW managing survival in poverty conditions, subordinate in a male dominated environment. The direct testimony of CW merges with the portrait of PW by contemporary scholars and constitutes a strong claim to authenticity.

The third source in the thesis is the gospel verses about Mary (4. 2 & 4. 3). Theissen³ maintains that in determining contextual appropriateness only that which can be derived from the context can be authentic. In this case, the better the evidence fits into the concrete Jewish context of Palestine and Galilee, the more claim it has to authenticity. Contextual appropriateness has the nature of open-endedness about it, accepting levels

below absolute fact. Plausibility is a claim to an appropriate level of authenticity. Insofar as the brief appearances of Mary in gospel verses converge with the PW data then it fits into the first century context of Palestine and has a claim to authenticity.

The scarcity of direct evidence about Mary has made it inevitable that hypotheses would be necessary in this thesis to develop a meaningful picture of Mary. Theissen, suggests that this is a legitimate tool of research. He says that everything in Jesus research is more or less hypothetical. He then suggests that the relativizing built into all hypotheses, which says, ‘It could have been otherwise,’ makes it certain that there was something that could have been otherwise. He concludes with the thought that the persuasive character of the hypothetical becomes the foundation of certainty.⁴ The reasoned assumptions about Mary in this thesis are made on the basis that they seek to interpret the history of PW and gospel verses in terms of Mary. By Theissen’s definition, as hypotheses, they may constitute a plausible and realistic portrait of Mary.

In what follows, this key will be used:

Key: PW= Peasant Women; CW= *Colliery Women*.

Numbers in brackets (3.3.2) refer to thesis sections.

Negative Convergence Outcomes are to be found in Appendix 4

5.2 Comparing Peasant Women and Colliery Women: Significant Threads

5.2.1 Servants in the Shadows

(a) Overview (PW 3.3.2; CW 2.6.2)

There is clearer (explicit) evidence about PW in this section because the title, ‘In the Shadows’, covers a wider field. There are reasonable similarities in some experiences of CW though they are not evidentially convergent with PW, whose experiences represent first century Palestinian/ Mediterranean culture. From the evidence only three are judged positively convergent. However, several negative outcomes resonate with CW [1, 3].

(b) Positive Convergence Outcomes

1. PW. Women were economically oppressed and gender-disparaged by social structure
CW. Education was not necessary for girls
2. PW. Women secure children's lineage, honour husband by her work in house
CW. The colliery woman's management of her husband was decisive factor
3. PW. Women restricted by social traditions which confine her in the house for her family
CW. Young women knew that their lives would be devoted to serving their husbands and families.

5.2.2 Unequal in a Man's World

(a) Overview (PW 3.3.3; CW 2.6.3)

The convergence in this section is mostly explicit, allowing for time difference. and that CW are witness statements and PW are scholarly conclusions. There is a strong sense, in the data, of life experiences converging positively. Even negative outcomes [1 & 2] reflect (echo) life in CW lives; women wearing shawls and having no property rights, living in pit cottages only because their men were miners.

(b) Positive Convergence Outcomes

1. PW. Women do not make history, men make history.
CW. It was a man's world. Colliery wives got what was left from his wages.
2. PW. Women are to be sensitive to male honour and male ideal of feminine modesty.
CW. In managing their poverty, colliery women prioritized their husbands who were free to do what they wanted.
3. PW. Womanly values (honesty, friendship and hard work) include accepting subordinate role.
CW. Each witness testifies to the unceasing service of a colliery wife to her husband's every need. They agree she spoilt him.
4. PW. The intelligent wife makes a man happy by honouring his authority.

CW. Colliery women's lives set to the times of her husband's meals which were ready whatever time he came home.

5. PW. Wife who is silent and modest is a gift from the Lord, her restraint is beyond worth.

CW. A colliery wife was up every morning 'to shout' him up. Without her he would never have got to work. When he was on overtime wives would meet them at the pit.

6. PW. Wife's honour is measured by fulfilling her part in natural order, subordinate to a man.

CW. Colliery women played their part in the natural order by their weekly procession to the pawn shop on a Monday when their men, worse the drink, missed their shift or they had no wage earner. Many survived on tick

7. PW. Women's lives, children, work, and earnings belong to household controlled by men.

CW. Women, hard pressed and with families, had to manage with what money was left over after a miner had budgeted his 'pocket money' from his wages.

5.2.3 Strong Mothers

(a) Overview (PW 3.3.4; CW 2.6.4)

In this section convergence is reasonable and explicit in most cases. The CW testimonies give eye-witness evidence of mothers managing family life. The more formal setting of PW and the managing of family survival in first century Palestine, gives a more generalized picture with enough indirect detail from scholarly writers to derive plausible positive outcomes. Even the negative PW convergences might have threads of meaning for CW. (Thread 1 might bear comparison to CW preparing snap tins (sandwiches) and Dudleys (drinks) for husbands down the pit. Thread 2 might be analogous to the urbanization of Denaby village with industrial coal mining).

(b) Positive Convergence Outcomes

1. PW. Women are essential to their household's economic, social wellbeing and reputation

CW. Colliery women were devoted mothers, always at home, never still.

2. PW. Women worked in unheated homes, no chimneys, ovens outside for cooking.
CW. They had to manage homes that were small and lacking amenities.
3. PW. Women cooking, spinning, weaving, pot making took place in open courtyard. Women collected water from limestone cisterns or drew it from wells, spring or stream. Women would probably bake weekly for the whole family, ovens were essential.
CW. There was no inside toilet or bathroom, with gas lights on the walls, peggy (dolly) and tub for washing and endless baking on a coal fire with an oven alongside
4. PW. Women worked for extended families, wives, children, children of married sons.
CW. There is a laid-back feel in the data to the shared experience of enjoying family life. Simple pleasures created a secure home background.
5. PW. Lifespan of women and children was shortened by poverty conditions.
CW were always tired. They worked from small hours of the morning till midnight.
6. PW were the hub of family life in Galilean villages trading goods with local villages.
CW. Little money, hand down clothes, did not stop children enjoying life. The data indicates family life as warm, secure and fun. Colliery women were the great stabilizing factor.
7. PW. A mother managed impact of urbanization on their family.
CW created their world of family with great pride despite the difficulties of urbanized Denaby. Most men, busy at the pit, did nothing in the home.

5.2.4 Managing Loss and its Consequences.

(a) Overview (PW 3.3.5; CW 2.6.5).

The dependence of women on men, the severity to both PW and CW of the loss of husband and high mortality rates are important areas of convergence. The evidence on widowhood is a positive outcome. However, cultural traditions emerge strongly

especially in negative outcomes. (Loss for PW is seen in the much wider terms of shame and honour systems. However, the poverty underlying [5] and the protection of their children [6] might resonate with PW).

(b) Positive Convergence Outcomes

1. PW lost independence to the household of their husbands and were totally dependant on his control.
CW. Colliery women were totally dependant on their husbands.
2. PW. Widows (dismal state) and orphans were treated as the weakest members of society.
CW. Family survival depended on the character of colliery women. There was no room for sentimentality. Colliery women had to be the realistic ones.
3. PW. As a widow they suffered economic loss.
CW. Death brought harsh reality of loss into a colliery woman's life.
4. PW. Women suffered child mortality rates of one third of children dying before age ten.
CW. High infant mortality rate: her children faced increased health problems in the village.
5. PW. Women faced by death support each other communally.
CW. The support net-work in Denaby was immediate and generous.

5.2.5 Managing Adversity

(a) Overview (PW 3.3.6; W 2.6.6)

Adversity is difficult to quantify and compare when different cultural and emotional factors play a part in restraining or motivating responses to harsh environments. Nevertheless, the evidence provides many examples of the way both PW and CW constantly achieved high levels of success by their domestic skills, the constant labour of their hands and their willingness to take on extra work to confront poverty and the survival of their families. There are plausible positive outcomes which will be indicators when we consider Mary at home as a mother. Negative outcomes reflect responses

particular to first century Palestine. Whilst there are no direct examples there are resonances of shared life styles [3-9]

(b) Positive Convergence Outcomes

1. PW. Women managed survival in primitive homes lacking sanitation.
CW. Number 1 Firbeck Street epitomised the homes built by colliery women. With so few amenities they achieved remarkable standards.
2. PW. Women by the labour of their hands created homes reflecting their character.
CW. They made them warm/ welcoming/ well managed/ secure homes.
3. PW. Women achieved this, though domestic affairs were always under male scrutiny.
CW. Colliery women never bought anything for themselves without their husbands permission. They were always there for their children. They were proud of their homes and had pride in the appearance of their husband and children.
4. PW. Women managed survival their children worked as soon as they were strong enough.
CW. Colliery women were uncompromisingly realistic and determined to survive.
5. PW. Women at home daily reared and educated her children and won respect.
CW. Colliery women in pit homes taught family values and loyalty.
6. PW. Women had to achieve earning their daily bread, family dependent on food. Women in deprivation struggled with realities of economics.
CW had a presence and a capacity patiently to confront poverty.
7. PW. Women depended on husband's income working in small scale occupations. They and children survived by helping father in small workshops Women and family earned extra income in small farms seed time, harvest, fruit picking. Women ground flour made bread washed clothes, cooked, worked wool, prepared beds. Women made dough for sale in market.
CW had an unending work routine, and meals were ready at all times. CW inherited a legacy from a long line of hard working colliery families.

8. PW. Women were skilled in weaving, with customers as a shopkeeper, making their homes welcoming as hotels and in hairdressing to help family income.
CW often had lodgers living with them which helped money-wise, as well as work at the glass works, in the fields, or cleaning. CW always baked. Their homes were open to all their neighbours.

5.2.6 Quintessential Humanity of Peasant Women and Colliery Women

(a) Overview (PW 3.3.7; CW 2.6.7)

This section also gathers data from 5.2.5 and other parts of the thesis to try to assess character and humanity of both groups of women. Humanity (2.6.7) has been described as the essence of that nature in colliery women which accepted the responsibility for the welfare of husband and family as their own, regardless of the inherent injustices in male dominance. This section, as a summary of data, will help to form an opinion about the nature and character of PW and the plausibility of convergence with that of CW.

(b) Positive Convergence Outcomes

1. PW accepted their role under male control and were praised within their kinship group for fighting for their family survival regardless of primitive living conditions.
CW. In their fight for family survival colliery women were indefatigable and humorous, accepting their domestic role and were proud of it.
2. PW struggled with deprivation and faced realities of economics, without food you go hungry. They plotted survival out of sight at the back of the house always under male scrutiny.
CW faced destitution and were judged for it.
3. PW. The measure of a peasant women's honour was fulfilling her part in natural order, subordinate to a man, by marriage and child-raising.
CW. Young women knew that their lives would be devoted to serving their husbands and families.

4. PW were essential to their household's economic, social wellbeing and reputation. Their unceasing labour was in unheated homes and ovens outside for cooking. Their lifespan shortened by these poverty conditions.
CW. They had to manage homes that were small and lacking amenities. There was no inside toilet or bathroom, with gas lights on the walls, peggy (dolly) and tub for washing and endless baking on a coal fire with an oven alongside. Each witness testifies to the unceasing service of a colliery wife to her husband's every need. They were always tired. She spoilt him.
5. PW knew it was unrealistic their husbands forbidding them to go to market place when they knew to survive they had to earn to find their daily bread
CW. They perceived realities men failed to see.
6. PW. Women and their children helped husbands working in small scale occupations. As much as women depended on his earnings, he depended on the extra income from her work on farms and making dough for the market
CW. They understood the misconception that colliery women alone were dependant on their men.
7. PW. Women knew men depended on them for their work at home, from daily rearing and educating their children, making bread, washing clothes, cooking working wool, in addition to serving customers as a shopkeeper and welcoming guests to help family income.
CW understood their partnership to be a two-way shared dependency.
8. PW. Peasant women worked long and hard to create homes that reflected their character. They spent their lives serving husbands. They devoted themselves to family survival under harsh circumstances. They were at hub of family life in Galilean villages trading goods with other local villages. Fathers who were absolute rulers of their house spent little time in the woman's space where they felt ill at ease.
CW understood what love was all about. For many women it was unspoken commitment, hard work, sticking together (or going it alone) and in the end maybe winning. They made up for the short comings of their husbands.

5.3. Significant Threads: Comparing Mary with Colliery Women

The final summary of the converged significant threads (5.3.1) suggests there is strong enough evidence of parallel experiences (5.2.1- 5.2.6) between colliery women in Denaby and peasant women in Palestine that might be used to demonstrate an organic relationship between Mary and colliery women. Whilst the works of the scholarly witnesses does not allow any claim to a direct link with Mary, their academic assessments of life in first century Palestine, do allow the legitimate formulations of reasoned assumptions and plausible ideas about Mary who lived in the era that they have as their speciality.

The positive significant threads in (5.2.1-5.2.6) have been filtered down to thirty eight. This has been attempted on the basis of plausibility. A reasoned judgement was made to identify those threads that have the strongest and most plausible similarity in the social histories of PW and CW. They have been divided into strong and weak convergences. Twenty three were judged to be strong and fifteen weak. Mary's name will, for the first time, be inserted in place of 'peasant women' to personalise the possibilities that her experiences and character have some common ground with Denaby colliery women.

5.3.1 Mary compared in Colliery Women Categories

(a) A Servant in the Shadows

For young colliery women it was thought that education for girls was unnecessary. They were 'only girls.' They knew their lives would be devoted to serving their husbands and families. Before marriage they were expected to take full time menial, low paid work.

Young Mary's life was limited because she was a girl. She was restricted to the home. Mary's capacity for hard work was profitable to their father and negotiated in her marriage contract. Her future was limited to marriage and child-raising.

(b) Unequal in a Man's World

Colliery women lived in a man's world. Many wives got what was left over from her husband's wages. Despite managing their poverty colliery wives made sure their

husbands were free to do what they wanted. They gave unceasing service to their husbands' every need, and spoilt them. Their life was set to the times of her husband's meals. They were always ready whatever time he came home. A colliery wife's value was measured every morning when she was up first to shout her husband up. Without her he would never have got to work. When he was on overtime she would meet him at the pit gates with sandwiches. Many were hard pressed but somehow managed their family survival by their weekly procession to the pawn shop on a Monday when some of their men, missed their shift. Many survived on tick. This was their role in fulfilling their part in the social order of their world.

Mary had no history of own. She would be expected to live up to male ideal of feminine modesty and act sensitively to maintain the honour of her father or husband. In her subordinate role, Mary as a wife was valued for her womanly virtues of honesty, friendship and hard work. She would never think in terms of sex equality. Mary, as a peasant wife, would expect to be silent and modest, characteristics which were seen as a gift from the Lord and beyond worth. Mary would also expect her life, children, work and earnings to be controlled by men. Honour and respect in home and society for Mary would result from her fulfilling her part in the social order of her world.

(c) Strong Mothers

Colliery women were devoted mothers, always at home and never still. They had to manage in homes that were small and lacking in basic amenities. There was no inside toilet or bathroom, there were gas lights on the walls, peggy (dolly) and tub for washing, endless baking on a coal fire with an oven alongside. Colliery women created their world of family with great pride whilst most men, busy at the pit, did nothing in the home. Colliery women were the great stabilizing factor, making family life warm secure and fun when there was little money and hand down clothes.

Mary's family depended on her. Her skills and unceasing labour were essential to their economic, social wellbeing and reputation. Mary worked in an unheated house, no chimneys, an oven outside for cooking. She would spin, weave, and mould pots in an

open courtyard. Along with other women, Mary collected water from cisterns or drew it from wells. She would look after extended family, including children and children of married sons. Mary was the hub of family life in her Galilean village.

(d) Managing Loss

Children in colliery families suffered increased health problems and mothers faced high child mortality rates. They were dependant on their husbands and death brought the harsh reality of loss into their lives. Colliery women found the support net work immediate and generous in Denaby. Family survival after the loss of the man, depended on the character of the colliery woman. There was no room for sentimentality. Colliery women had to be the realistic ones.

Mary lived in a society that suffered high child mortality rates, many children failed to survive to ten years of age. The loss of independence and her role limited to domestic affairs would leave Mary at a disadvantage when death took the bread winner. Women in Galilee, when faced by death, supported each other communally. The death of Joseph would leave Mary, a widow, vulnerable to the practical reality of surviving in the socio-political conditions of her time especially after the death of her eldest son. With orphans, Mary was treated amongst the weakest members of society. Rabbis would encourage her to remarry.

(e) Managing Adversity

The homes colliery women created had so few amenities it was remarkable they achieved such high standards for their families. They made them warm, welcoming, well managed, secure homes. Colliery women were always there for their children. They were proud of their homes and in their own and their husband and children's appearance. Colliery women were uncompromisingly realistic and determined in their fight to survive. They taught their children family values and loyalty. Most colliery women had a presence and capacity to patiently confront poverty. They had an unending work routine which they inherited from a long line of hard working colliery families. 'She was the Matriarch we looked to, to solve our problems'.

Mary, as a peasant wife, lived and worked in primitive conditions in a home lacking sanitation. By the hard labour of her own hands she created a home that reflected her own character. Mary's struggle in her domestic affairs was always under male scrutiny. Like other peasant women, Mary's fight for survival required children to work as soon as they were strong enough. Mary's success in rearing and educating her children, which was part of her daily work, would lead to her being held in great respect. In her struggle daily with the realities of deprivation economics, she knew that without food you go hungry. She depended on her husband's income from work in small scale businesses (such as carpentry) and added earning extra income from work on small farms in addition to her domestic duties.

(f) Quintessential Humanity

Colliery women were used to their family expecting them to fight for their survival and they did it with courage, commonsense and humour. Colliery women faced severe poverty on the death of their wage earner. They had to be judged by the parish before receiving a small amount of help. They were proud to be colliery women. Colliery wives fully appreciated the value of family life. They were proud of their domestic role. Colliery wives perceived realities men failed to see. They also understood how ill-conceived it was to think that only colliery women were dependant on their husbands. They knew their partnership was a shared dependency. Colliery women understood that love was an unspoken commitment to hard work, sticking together and sometimes winning. They made up for the shortcomings of their husbands.

Mary faced the realities of her situation, the need to eat to survive and plotted their survival in the women's place at the back of the house. It is plausible that Mary did this with courage, commonsense and a sense of humour. Mary was essential to the wellbeing, social and economic, of her husband's household and his reputation. Should her husband die, Mary would face the reality of poverty but continue her fight for survival. It is plausible to suggest she would be proud to be peasant women. Mary would appreciate the value of family life. Her unceasing labour in cold houses with outside ovens, were partly

to blame for her shortened lifespan in poverty conditions. It is plausible to suggest she would be proud of her domestic role. Mary was dependant on her husband's wages from small scale carpentry work. Mary knew it was unrealistic for her husband to try to keep her at home. To survive she had to find their daily bread. It is not unreasonable to suggest Mary perceived realities men failed to see. Mary knew her husband depended on her work at home, from daily rearing and educating their children, and a list of domestic chores as well as work to earn extra income. Mary knew their partnership was a shared dependency. Mary worked long and hard to create a home to reflect her character. Her life was spent serving her husband, devoting herself to her family, being the hub of family life. It is most plausible to suggest that Mary understood that love was an unspoken commitment to hard work and sticking together. Mary's husband would dominate his wife and oversee her domestic actions. But it is probable that he, along with other men, felt ill at ease in the woman's space. It is plausible that Mary made up for the shortcomings of her husband. Mary might well have become the family's matriarch.

5.3.2 Mary Revealed: Plausible Twelve Characteristics

In summary it is plausible to say that Mary shared twelve characteristics⁵ with Denaby colliery women that are broadly based on sections 2.6.7 and 4.3.5

- Mary was a tough character to survive as a peasant woman
- Half of a Mary's life span would be taken up with maternity
- By the labour of her own hands she would create her home which reflected her own character. Her men were her priority.
- Mary faced the realities of her situation with commonsense, a sense of humour and self-sacrifice.
- Mary would be proud to be a Jewish peasant woman
- Mary would be proud of her domestic role
- Mary perceived realities men failed to see.
- Mary would know her partnership with Joseph was a shared dependency.
- Mary would understand that love was an unspoken commitment to hard work and sticking together.
- Mary made up for the shortcomings of her husband.

- Mary aged prematurely under the constant round of motherhood and household work. At the cross, she might well have looked an old, exhausted woman
- Mary was, to her family, the Matriarch.

5.4 Conclusion

The chapters of this thesis have attempted to create a structure similar to the tiers of a wedding cake. The research set out to try to discover whether or not there might a contextual link between Denaby colliery women and Mary. If a reasonable case suggested that a link existed, a second aim would be to investigate whether there was a theological relationship between Mary and colliery women. These are the final two layers. The first layer has already been put in place. Section 5.3 presents plausible characteristics that Mary shared with colliery women.

5.4.1 God's Dealings with Mary

The final layer to be put in place is to discuss the possibility of a theological link between God and Denaby colliery women, similar to that between God and Mary. If the twelve characteristics outlined above, shared by Mary and colliery women, are as reliable as can reasonably be expected, I suggest that the theology of the Magnificat might also apply to colliery women within their different context. There are a number of interesting features in God's dealing with Mary (4.2) that may impact favourably with other lowly women.

- God's proactive love upgrades lowly Mary, and makes her worthy of divine protection and spiritual power.
- God acts within the context of the life of a peasant woman existing in the shadows, in adversity and struggling with poverty.
- God elevates the daily struggles of Mary (including the series of crises outlined in Ch 4) to an importance far outweighing the lowly expectation of her sex.
- God wanted Mary to be Mary. Her unique individuality was important to him.
- God's power was to strengthen Mary within her innate nature as a woman.

- God values Mary's intuitive love, ingenuity, her acceptance of her status and her pragmatism in dealing with survival and male power.
- God elevates Mary's ordinary daily struggles into the activity of his eternal love to bring about his desired outcome.

The next step is to weave these features into the plausible reality of Mary's life as a first century Palestinian, Jewish, young peasant woman. Living in the most inauspicious circumstances of insignificance, poverty and ceaseless toil to survive, Mary is engaged to give birth to God's Son. All she has to do is be her faithful self and get on with her life.

The important question is why God's proactive love chose to upgrade lowly Mary. It was a sovereign choice. Mary was not worthy to be chosen nor fit to carry out God's purpose as channel of divine salvation. In fact she appears to have understood little of what was to happen to her. Mary seemed unaware that her daily down-to-earth love could participate in God's great purpose. God's plan was to send his son into the world and the way it was to work required his Son to come among humanity as one of humanity, flesh and bone. Lowly Mary was the means for this to happen. This was a specific one-off task, to be undertaken by Mary in the course of her struggle to survive. One girl grew up accepting a life time under male authority. In silence and modesty she accepted what was expected of her. God's expectations for her were far greater. Mary would mature in the harshness of the Galilean environment, with its socio-political and religious demarcation lines, the Roman occupation and the dangers inherent in her primitive surroundings. This, by itself, would test the resolve of Mary's unique individuality. Mary would need to be tough enough to face the realities of her situation and have the courage, commonsense and humour not to buckle under the pressure of waking up each morning faced with another day to keep her family alive. Living with this constant round of maternity and household duties made demands on the innate nature of Mary as a woman. God proactively would strengthen and inspire Mary's intuitive love, her ingenuity and pragmatism. These were the elements that were essential to the success of his purpose. Into the equation of daily living, Mary is given the task to complete God's plan for the birth and upbringing of his Messiah. Mary's status and insignificance would be transformed above a mere exercise in

existence-living and into the activity of God's eternal love to bring about his desired outcome.

5.4.2 God's Dealings with Colliery Women

The final step is to weave the theology that formalized Mary's relationship with God, with the lives of lowly colliery women. The idea is to see whether God's dealing with colliery women correlates with his calling of Mary. The twelve characteristics of Mary were developed from the characteristics of colliery women. God was proactive in the specific task of lowly colliery women which was the social historic activity of continuing humanity in Denaby Main. They were the means of making this happen. As argued elsewhere, the continuation of the human race is as important as the birth of the Messiah. No human race, no Messiah. Mary's job was specific to her. The continuation of the human race was specific to all women in their generation and environment. So it was for colliery women, and was to be undertaken in the course of their struggle to survive. So it was for Mary. The Messiah was to have brothers and sisters, perhaps even nieces and nephews. Young girls in mining villages were brought up believing their gender set them on the road to a life time of serving male priorities. The witnesses accepted this role, in modesty if not always in silence. God's expectations for them were far greater than the social traditions that marked their lives. They were proud to be colliery women and proud of their domestic role with their unique individuality. They perceived realities men failed to see. They were to mature in the harshness of post-Victorian industrial society with socio-political traditions that favoured private ownership of collieries and an 'underclass' of deferential colliers and their families. With the innate nature of women, colliery wives navigated an environment of constant fear and uncertainty of pit disasters, strikes and evictions and dangers inherent in primitive surroundings with skills of intuitive love, ingenuity and pragmatism. By these instinctive elements so important to survival, colliery women made up for the shortcomings of their husband and coped with the stress that condemned many wives to premature ageing under the stress of the constant round of motherhood and household work. The status and insignificance of miners' wives would be transformed above a mere exercise in existence-living and into the activity of God's eternal love to bring about his desired outcome. The accomplishment of their specific

task was the continuation of humanity in their village, a community of people along with all humanity, which need the Messiah.

These potted case histories of Mary (based on plausible assumptions) and colliery women (based on witnesses) are précis of the in-depth descriptions in the body of the thesis and the significant threads. It may be surprising there are so many points of contact in the context of the lives of women from vastly different eras of human social history. There is especially the unique individuality, the innate nature of women, their intuitive love, ingenuity and their pragmatism to fulfil God's specific tasks which took place within the ordinary, every day homes of Mary and lowly colliery women. They were, like Mary, powerless to change their lot and insignificant in their social position as women, as colliery or peasant wives. This was the job of the overshadowing presence of God, developing an inner confidence in both Mary and colliery women.

What interest did God have in the lives of Denaby colliery women? As with Mary, God's interest was in their gender ability to bear children. The problem to be dealt with was male supremacy and the misconception that women needed men, but not the other way round. Colliery women were well aware their men needed them as much as they and their children needed him, in a complementary strategy. It was a partnership. It was never the intention of the Creator that a woman should be inferior to man.⁶ Male and female constitute a partnership of humanity which has been created in the image of God. Within their shared humanity there is the differentiation between the sexes which is the means of procreation. Sexual differentiation was not meant to lead to hierarchy and male dominance, but this was the socially accepted norm both for Mary and colliery women.

God's interest in Mary and colliery women is set against the background of inequality. Procreation was the easier part. God was interested in what happened after that. Mary and colliery women were useful to God by being who they were in the social history that was being acted out by them and around them. God's interests lay in their [God given] gender ability, despite the restrictions that subjected them to male dominance and poverty, to ceaselessly strive to turn adversity into opportunity. He was interested in their

amazing capacity to present future humanity with generations of those, both male and female, whose very survival was testimony to colliery mother's innate feminine ingenuity and exhaustive labour, and whose character was hewn out of their own.

5.4.3 Final Thoughts

It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that, from the positive evidence presented in this thesis, there is a plausible link between the circumstances and events of the lives of Denaby colliery women and the interests of God, in much the same way as the Magnificat indicates God's interest in Mary. Weaknesses in the thesis have already been discussed and prevent the presentation of a definite conclusion. This does not detract from the strong facts and the learned foundations on which assumptions have been made indicating a strong likelihood that the lives of colliery women have found favour with God. Their tasks were made more difficult by socio-political and religious inequality and it appears from Mary's Magnificat, that God is always ready to invest generously in the exaltation of the lowly. Mary, in bearing God's Son, became a model of God's loving kindness for future generations. This includes lowly humanity such as colliery women, and the importance of *their* children for the future of humanity. God will bless Mary and lowly women by constantly doing great things for them. God will always be there for them shaping their destiny, over-ruling human power and plans. God will be gracious in his mercy towards the lowly, like Mary, who need reassurance in their struggle to survive. Under the protection of God's creative overshadowing presence and elevated in her social position, hidden in a lowly woman's ordinary life, unseen, a divine purpose will continuously take place. It has been completed in Mary, as it has been in lowly Harriet. It is taking place amongst the lowly in the early decades of twenty first century, but that is for future investigation.

Chapter 5 Endnotes

1. Gerd Theissen, Quest for the Plausible Jesus, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), p.174
2. Gerd Theissen, Quest for the Plausible Jesus p. 177

3. Gerd Theissen, Quest for the Plausible Jesus p. 180

4. Gerd Theissen, Quest for the Plausible Jesus pp. 258, 259

5. To strengthen the reliability of the twelve characteristics, it would be helpful to know what Mary's sons and daughters thought about their mother and their life together. Apart from their meeting at Cana (John 2) and Jesus' refusal to return home with Mary (Mark 3. 20-33), and Jesus' words from the cross to John about her future, there are no other facts and these incidents give little information about how the family felt towards each other or towards Mary. It is plausible that words expressing attitudes of families to colliery mothers might translate into words indicating how Mary's family felt about her. (See Appendix 2; 2.6.4 (d. 5) 'You could tell mum things. You knew she loved you'. (d. 6) 'She'd make things better.' (d. 8) 'She was always the same. She was always there.'

6. Mary Hayter, The New Eve in Christ. London: SPCK, 1987, pp. 88, 89.

APPENDIX 1

A SURVIVOR'S STORY

Percy Murgatroyd was a survivor of the Cadeby Colliery Disaster. His daughter, Marjorie, wrote a letter to me, in which she enclosed details of her father's experiences at the time of the explosions. She wrote, 'This is his story in his own words'. This is the only extant description of the disaster by a survivor. It is in the Chapel archives.

'I had joined the rescue team on the morning of the ninth of July, when everyone was in a state of tension. Mr Douglas Chambers and Mr Pickering instructed me to go with them to make an inspection. We each took breathing apparatus. Arriving at 114s level they examined the roof and tested the air with their lamps and pronounced it all clear'. Murgatroyd continued 'I was surprised to see them discard their respirators and was told to leave mine also. I had been wearing it a few hours, the weight was 112 pounds, but I declined and kept it on. We went forward through an old crossgate, and approached the coalface. The air was very warm. By now I realised that an explosion had taken place and had originated here and still, no one had told me anything. 'I was instructed to go and inspect as far as the coalface boundary. I could see nothing 'Red' but it certainly felt like it. I returned wet through with perspiration. The Manager and Mines Inspector conferred again and decided it would be ok to ventilate again. We returned passed the old cross gate walking carefully between the rails not to jar our safety lamps of two candle power. Feeling warm and weary they decided to rest awhile. While they were chatting about the situation, there was the trembling of the air and a fearful roar like the boom of a canon. Then clouds of dust and smoke were surging all around us. We were in total darkness. The explosion had extinguished our lamps. 'I think we were stunned. I do not think they could have lived for more than a minute or two in that atmosphere. [Incidentally, one of that party survived. This was never reported]. I sat for a few minutes scared and boiling with perspiration in absolute silence. If I was to live I had to move and with the rails as my life line, I grabbed and shuffled my way on hands and knees in the blackness.

I struggled over bodies attempting my escape along the rails for what seemed like miles. 'Eventually I came to a door which if I could open. I knew there would be fresh air beyond it. With a lot of effort I finally opened it and felt for the rail but it had gone. There had been a fall. The junction had collapsed with the force of the explosion. 'The monoxide I had inhaled was dimming my memory. I sat down and knew that I couldn't get through hundreds of tons of dirt. The phones had been ripped out. The thought came into my mind that this was the end. 'I thought I heard a shout. I ignored it thinking it I had imagined it. I heard it again. Still I ignored it. The third time I answered. A road was made over the fall and they brought a can of water. Unable to believe I was alive and free I sat rocking the water as though it was a child. Weeks afterwards I was engaged in recovering the bodies for burial.' (See Ch 1; Endnote 36).

APPENDIX 2

SIGNIFICANT SAYINGS

2.6.2 Colliery Women as Servants in the Shadows

(d) Significant Sayings

1. 'She was a girl.' W1
2. 'I will never forgive'. W1
3. 'That's out! Two years! You get a job'. W2
4. 'I lived in a world of whispering and of superstition and fear'. W3
5. 'I had to be sneaky to learn anything' W3
6. 'It left me in a narrow, small world'. W3

2.6.3 Colliery Women Unequal in a Man's World

(d) Significant Sayings

1. 'Mum was up at 4am. He would never have made it to work without her getting up'.
She was baking by five o'clock. W32, W33
2. 'You put the boots on.' 'Well, you've got half of it [the wages].' W15
3. 'Home made pies and pastry and mum never saw his wage packet'. W20
4. 'She gave him freedom to do what he wanted'. W34

2.6.4 Colliery Women as Strong Mothers

(d) Significant Sayings

1. 'Ten children and a lodger. Life was hard but we never noticed it'. W27
2. 'We had nothing and enjoyed it'. 'It was a brilliant growing up environment'. W23
3. 'She never owed a penny. 'She never asked for anything. 'The quality of her life was lovely'. 'She was happy with her lot'. W34
4. 'The door was open to everybody. You could walk in and make yourself a cup of tea. The street was one big family'. W20, W23

5. 'You could tell mum things. 'You just knew she loved you'. W30
6. 'She'd make everything better'. W35
7. 'Life was lovely. Together we'd toast bread on a fork in the fire. After that the rest for her was work'. W22
8. 'She was always the same and she was always there.' W34
9. 'She was the perfect mother.' W22

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2.6.5 Colliery Women Managing Loss and its Consequences

(d) Significant Sayings

1. 'You really had to be destitute'. W51
2. 'Mother was well into the battle for survival. Proud, with head held high she would walk down the road and go straight through the front door of the pawn brokers'. W57
3. 'It was better than crying poverty and asking help from anyone'. W52
4. 'Evelyn, you go to bed, love. I'll look in on you soon.' W18
5. 'Well, you can't do anything about it. It's keeping you in a job'. W58
6. 'She'd walk and not wait for a bus' to save on the fare. W42
7. 'She'd push two bags of coal in a barrow'. W43
8. 'A knock on the dividing wall [of the home] would bring immediate help'. W19
9. 'Manners have got to be right', she would say, keeping up standards. W44

2.6.6 Colliery Women as Achievers through Adversity

(d) Significant Sayings

1. 'We were taught loyalty. Never hear bad news against the family'. W56
2. 'You could tell her things and she would say, never mind, cock you've done well'. W30
3. 'Her head held high she would walk straight through the entrance of the pawn brokers'. W57
4. 'Well, you can't do anything about. It's keeping you in a job'. W58
5. 'She was the 'Matriarch' we looked to, to solve our problems'. W55
6. 'Dad never showed affection. Elsie made up for him'. W59
7. 'Mum did it all. She never stood up to him. She kept a lot back from him.' W41

2.6.7 Quintessential Humanity of Colliery Women

(d) Significant Sayings

1. 'She put the kettle on and made some tea, her remedy for everything that happened, and then went into the living room to see dad'. W52
2. 'It was mother who intervened to make it [going to college] possible'.
[It was during the 1984 strike] 'I realised how much my mother had sacrificed for me and the family'. W61
3. 'When he [my father] showed little interest in us it was mum who made up for him'.
W61
4. 'Mum substituted for him and made up for it all'. W41
5. 'I love her, you know'. 'Tell her, dad, tell her.' W63
6. 'I loved him, I really did'. W63

APPENDIX 3

LITERATURE SURVEYED

The number of potential scholarly witnesses is vast. Full bibliographic details are given in the Bibliography. The following indicates something of the literature survey undertaken:

Avigad, Nahman. Discovering Jerusalem, 1980 (83-139)

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APPENDIX 4

NEGATIVE CONVERGENCE OUTCOMES

5.2.1 Servants in the Shadows

1. PW. Women's femininity and sexuality controlled by caste system.
PW. Women met social expectation only by marriage and child-raising.
2. PW. Women more likely than men to bring shame on their family
PW. Women seduced/raped dishonour males, for failure to protect them
PW. Women damaged goods if raped or pregnant outside the cultural structures
PW. A daughter's future productivity is profitable and negotiated in marriage contract.
3. PW. A daughter honours her father by accepting [husband] father chooses for her.
PW. Daughters have no right to choose their partner but settled by parents.
PW. Daughter's intelligence measured by her obedience to her father.
4. PW. Women: men avoid conversations even if there is reason to speak her.
PW. Wives should not speak to their own husbands for fear of public suspicion.

5.2.2 Unequal in a Man's World

1. PW. A woman's ambitions are restricted by her husband to protect her
2. PW. Women must cover her head in public to avoid men admiring her
3. PW. Women never consider equality of sexes. Equality not an issue
4. PW. The ideal is wife is obedient, beautiful and increases a man's self-esteem
5. PW. Women were non-stake holders in the most precious asset, land
6. CW. *'Mum was up at 4am. He would never have made it to work without her getting up'.
She was baking by five o'clock.*

5.2.3 Strong Mothers

1. PW. Prepare 'packed lunch' for young males looking for work in town.
2. PW. Families might work in fish packing factories, construction, shipyards and tourism.

3. PW. Women peasants worked land to support villages bore crushing burden of taxation.

5.2.4 Managing Loss and its Consequences

1. PW. In occupied Galilee PW in danger of loss of virginity by Roman forces.
2. PW. To conceive after being raped PW unjustly lost of caste eligibility.
3. PW. Women not raped, but nearby, irretrievably lost their prospects as a bride.
4. *CW. Colliery women worked and waited at home. As mothers they had double reason to fear the loss that might come with the pit siren and the pit ambulance.*
5. *CW. Pawnbrokers, 'tick', debt and going to the Parish awaited them. The loss of self esteem was humiliating. Dignity was hard to maintain but most held on.*
6. *CW. It (fear of loss) brought them high levels of stress. They kept the children as free from worry as was possible.*

5.2.5 Achievers through Adversity

1. PW. They achieved domestic survival out of sight at the back of the house.
2. PW. Living under male control PW won respect in kinship group.
3. PW. They managed survival aware of vulnerability to drought and famine.
4. PW. Women raised all their children, different to normal Roman practice.
5. PW. Women needed to bear five children for two to reach the age of twenty.
6. PW. As mothers, familiar with herbs, PW learned skills treating illnesses, made good midwives.
7. *CW. Many were keen to pass on their love of learning.*
8. *CW were the 'matriarchs' families expected to solve their problems).*

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