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**MAKING ROOM FOR UNSPOKEN NARRATIVES:  
A COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE**

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## **Declaration**

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# Preface

## Introduction

This journey has been one like no other. One full of anxiety, joy, fear and faith. This course is by far, the hardest thing that I have ever had to endure. Still, I would not have had it any other way, as I have gained a great deal of knowledge and have learned many skills as a result. Yet, learning the power of the core conditions: Empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1957), has been my most useful learning experience to date and has shaped both my ability to provide sound therapy and undertake rigorous research.

This preface aims to introduce the three academic components that make up this portfolio. This portfolio demonstrates the importance of the core conditions within therapeutic research and practice. Thus, I will provide insight into how each component is relevant and will describe the impact of each component on my journey to becoming a qualified counselling psychologist.

## The Thesis and Article

The first component of this portfolio is a qualitative research study, which explores the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children in the UK, through the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The research question is: ***“What is the experience of Black mothers raising biracial children in the UK?”*** For this research, nine participants were recruited and spoke in an in-depth manner about their experiences of raising biracial children as Black women.

The second component is an article which will be submitted to the Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies for publication (Journal submission criteria can be found in Appendix A). This article is a condensed version of the thesis and is titled: *“An exploration of the experiences of Black women raising biracial children in the UK.”* I chose to submit to this journal as it is UK based, as was my research. Additionally, this journal has published a variety of articles pertaining to the aforementioned research area under study and therefore appeared fitting.

I utilised the core conditions with participants throughout the entire research process. During interviews, I ensured that I provided empathy. Mearns, Thorne & McLeod (2013) state that empathy communicates that we want to be with the other in their experiencing. As I do not have a biracial child, it was impossible for me to truly appreciate each participant’s experience. However, my commitment to understanding each participant’s unique experience enabled me to meet participants in their experiencing. It is also important to note that my chosen epistemology is Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), which is an epistemological position, that abides by four main tenets. However, for the purpose of this preface, I will purposely pay close attention to just one tenet: ‘The ethic of caring’. This tenet outlines a way of being with participants and suggests that the researcher must demonstrate empathy to participants to make them feel comfortable enough to express themselves (Collins, 2000). By providing the core condition empathy and by being in line with the ethic of caring, I was able to build a good rapport with participants. I would argue that it was because of this that each participant allowed me into their worlds so that I could gain insight into their experiences.

In addition, I utilised unconditional positive regard with participants. Rogers (1967) stated that unconditional positive regard dissolves the idea that one has value as long as they meet other people's conditions. I hoped that by communicating to participants that I valued them and their narratives, irrespective of the nature of what they divulged, would demonstrate the use of this condition. Thus, before interviews, I explained to participants that they could provide no right or wrong answers, as I was simply a curious researcher who was keen to gain insight into an under-researched area of study. This seemed to facilitate trust between me and the participant and as a result, I believe that valid data emerged.

Lastly, I utilised congruence with participants. Mearns, Thorne & McLeod (2013) define congruence as the ability to behave in a way so that one's internal experience matches their external comments. I was able to achieve congruence with participants, first by being genuinely curious in my response to their narratives and secondly by remaining transparent about the ethics involved with participants data (for example, how files would be stored, anonymisation, how to make a complaint etc.). Arguably, my ability to be congruent with participants allowed them to feel safer within the research process.

In my role as a counselling psychologist conducting research, I utilised the core conditions with participants. Prior to carrying out this research, I had been unaware of just how useful the core conditions could be within a research setting. Yet, using these conditions helped participants to feel safer, allowed for a stronger rapport to be built between researcher and participant and enabled richer data to emerge from interviews.

The participants who took part in the current research were Black mothers who were raising biracial children, which is a population of women who have not been adequately represented within the empirical literature. As a result, these women's experiences are minimised. However, through the use of the core conditions, participants were finally able to speak their truths. After interviews, most participants reflected on their experience of being interviewed as positive and some expressed that the process had been a powerful reflexive experience for them, as previously most participants had not considered or verbalised their experiences of raising biracial children as Black women. I was able to help participants tell their stories through the use of the core conditions as a means of gathering data, which shaped my interview style and as a result allowed participants to verbalise their untold narratives.

### **The Clinical Case Study**

The third component of this portfolio is a clinical case study, which explores my therapeutic work with a client named 'Brian' (Pseudonym) whom, upon meeting, I regarded as my outgroup. I titled this piece: ***“The core conditions in the absence of sameness”***. As Brian seemed so different from me (Brian was a White, middle-aged man and I am a young Black woman), I automatically assumed that it might be difficult to build a strong rapport with him. However, this component highlights a segment of therapy with Brian, in which I utilised the core conditions and as a result, Brian and I were able to build relational depth. Relational depth is defined as: “A state of profound contact and engagement

between two people...” (Mearns & Cooper, 2005 p. 12). Put simply, I would argue that relational depth was achieved as a result of the core conditions.

I considered using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) with Brian, as he had suffered from drug addiction. As a result, my supervisor felt that CBT and relapse prevention would be beneficial. However, I expressed to my supervisor that during my assessments with Brian, I felt that there was a real need for him to make positive connections with others and explained that I thought that a therapy focusing more so on the relationship, would be more fitting for Brian. Joseph & Worsley (2005) suggest that if a client is illtreated within the context of relationships (as Brian had been), then healing must also happen within a relational dynamic. Thus, my placement supervisor and I considered the use of person-centred, psychodynamic and gestalt therapy. However, we decided that I would utilise a person-centred theoretical framework, as the training that I had received had focused more so on teaching this modality, which meant that I felt more confident in working in a person-centred way with Brian. Thus, I decided that person-centred therapy and use of the core conditions would be useful for Brian.

Throughout our work, I aimed to provide more empathy, congruence or unconditional positive regard depending on what Brian needed on a moment-to-moment basis. I found that working in this way was challenging, as this meant that I had to be attuned to Brian and learned to adapt to his every move within therapy. However, by doing so, I was able to tailor therapy to meet Brian’s individual needs.



Moreover, Mearns, Thorne & McLeod (2013) suggest that the core conditions help the client in being able to trust the therapist and the counselling process. I believe that this was the case for Brian, as throughout our time together I was able to earn Brian's trust, which meant that he began to make use of the therapeutic space. I would argue that it was because of the core conditions, that Brian expressed that he trusted and felt safe with me, which made him realise that he could also start to trust other important people in his life. Brian also divulged his belief that it was because of the relationship that we had been able to cultivate within sessions, that meant he could speak to me about his experiences of child abuse and drug addiction, which were things that he had never felt able to tell anyone previously. I believe that the unique, open and trusting relationship that Brian and I were able to hone was conceived as a result of my use of the core conditions. It was because of this that Brian was able to speak his untold narrative, a narrative that had been neglected and silenced for many years. I regard this as a testament to the power of the core conditions.

Throughout my work as a trainee counselling psychologist providing therapy, I was able to provide the core conditions, which made it possible to build a strong therapeutic alliance with Brian. This clinical piece demonstrates my ability to provide sound therapy as a psychologist and highlights a way of being with therapeutic clients (using the core conditions), which allowed Brian to feel understood, valued and safe. Like the participants who took part in this research, Brian also harboured an unspoken narrative, that he was finally able to vocalise.

## **My Unspoken Narrative**

When I began the Dpsych at City University, London, I too held a narrative that I felt unable to verbalise. This unspoken narrative was built upon the fact that I was the first of my immediate family to go to university and I was one of few Black trainees within the cohort at City University. This gave rise to feelings of extreme anxiety and overwhelming pressure to do well. It felt as if I had something to prove, for so many reasons. Yet, I didn't feel able to articulate my narrative.

However, as my time on the Dpsych progressed, I began to experience the course as a safe and containing environment, as elements of the core conditions began to arise within personal therapy, during meetings with my research supervisor and within conversations with other supportive students at City University. As a result, I became more and more able to verbalise my once unspoken narrative and I have no doubt that this was the outcome of the core conditions. Had I not of experienced the core conditions throughout my time at City University, I am certain that I would not have spoken my narrative and perhaps I would not be where I am today, having completed the Dpsych.

## **Conclusion**

The client study, research article and thesis each demonstrate the power of the core conditions, in therapeutic, research and learning environments. This portfolio illustrates that the core conditions are cross-cutting between research and clinical work and can be effective within other settings (for example, within supervision and educational settings). The components highlight distinct ways in which the

core conditions are effective at building a relationship which supports others in being able to speak their unspoken narratives.

It has been imperative for myself as a trainee counselling psychologist to appreciate the usefulness and power of the core conditions both as a researcher and counselling psychologist. I will continue to cultivate my ability to use these conditions, as they are crucial to my work, as they allow me to develop robust and trusting relationships between myself and my participants/clients and because they aid me in also being able to speak my narrative more freely.

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**AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF  
BLACK WOMEN RAISING BIRACIAL CHILDREN IN  
THE UK**

**(RESEARCH THESIS)**

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## **Abstract**

Multiracial households and interracial relationships have become increasingly prevalent within the context of the UK, which has led directly to more individuals identifying as biracial. There is an abundance of literature exploring the experiences of biracial individuals, equally, there is a wealth of literature which provides an insight into White mother's experiences of raising biracial children. However, research focusing on the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children is limited within the existing academic literature, even though Black women raising biracial children are now a more common occurrence. This research aimed to qualitatively explore Black mothers lived experiences of raising biracial children in the UK. Semi-structured interviews with nine Black mothers were undertaken and analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Four superordinate themes emerged, offering insight into participants experiences of raising biracial children as Black women. A finding that this research offers is that each participant's experience of raising biracial children seemed to be directly influenced by their Black racial identities. Additionally, participants experienced challenges on their journeys of raising biracial children. For some, these challenges were rooted in the Black Mother-Biracial child dyad and for others, these challenges arose as a result of biases with regards to Black mothers raising biracial children and engaging in interracial relationships.

## **Terminology**

The terminology 'Black' and having 'African and/or Caribbean descent/heritage or roots' are terms that are used interchangeably throughout this piece of research. For the purpose of this research, these terms will refer to an individual who is currently residing in the UK, who has origins or background in Africa and/or the Caribbean and self-identifies as monoracial Black. The term biracial has also been used throughout this research. To be biracial often refers to an individual with one parent who is an ethnic minority of colour and the other parent who is White, but can also refer to other combinations (Mooney, 2014). In relation to this research, a 'biracial' person refers to an individual with one parent who self-identifies as being of African and/or Caribbean descent and the other parent who is White. It should also be noted that the terms 'mixed race' and 'biracial' are used interchangeably (within the analysis chapter), as a range of participant's used the term 'mixed race' in reference to their biracial children.

## Introduction

This research aims to unearth and gain an understanding of Black mother's unique experiences of raising biracial children, as to date, no empirical research has investigated this phenomenon. Yet, the experiences of White mothers raising biracial children has been explored in some detail (Barn, 1999; Caballero, Edwards & Puthussey, 2010; McKenzi, 2013; Lewis & Demi 2018). Thus, the current research aims to explore the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children within the UK, not only to begin to eradicate the race-related bias that exists within the current literature but also to provide an insight into Black women's perspectives of this phenomena.

This literature review provides an understanding of the existing literature concerning Black mothers raising biracial children. First, the review outlines the race debate (the idea that 'race' can be defined in biological terms versus the idea that 'race' is a social construct). The review then briefly summarises the history of race within the British context and goes on to examine experiences of interracial relationships. Following this, attention is given to the experiences of biracial individuals with particular focus on their interactions with their parents to provide an insight into the experiences of parents (in particular the mothers) of biracial children. This review then touches on the experiences of White mothers raising biracial children, before examining the importance of Black women's intersectional experiences as a way of truly understanding the experiences of Black mothers. This review then examines the experiences of Black mothers raising monoracial Black children and then looks at first-person narratives which speak directly to the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children, before



outlining justifications for this research and motivations for undertaking the current study.

# 1. Literature Review

## *1.1. The Race Debate*

The meaning of 'race' has evolved. The notion that 'race' is a social construct as opposed to being defined in biological terms is a well-known debate within social science literature (Morning, 2007). Omi (2001) states that 'race' is often defined in biological terms and refers to the differences in the physical expression of one's genes (for example, skin complexion, hair texture and the shape of one's features) as an indication of one's race. Moreover, Fernando (1989) argues that Even within the realms of psychiatry, 'race' is often based on the assumption that an individual's racial differences are rooted in their genetic differences. Fernando (1989) also states that in Britain, psychiatrists seldom speak about race-related issues, as in doing so, would suggest that they acknowledge racial prejudice and racism on their part.

However, literature shows that a range of studies have investigated genetic diversity within different racial groups (Molnar, 2015; Graves, 2015; Fujimura et al, 2014), of which, results show that 'race' cannot be defined in biological terms, cannot be measured reliably and does not account for genetic differences. Thus, currently, the dominant view is that 'race' does not have biological origins (Omi, 2001), but instead, 'race' and 'racial identity' have been defined as 'social constructs' (Gravlee, 2009; Hughes, 2010). This notion is clearly articulated by Pinker (2002, p.202) whom, in referring to 'race', stated that, "some categories really are social constructions: They exist only because people tacitly agree to act as if they exist".

In addition, Jung's (1958) theory of psychic infection teaches us that all human being's thoughts, feelings and creativity are heavily entwined and suggests that all human minds are connected (Meerloo, 1959). Meerloo (1959) goes on to say that humans are influenced through social dogmas and as a result, cannot claim to be the originators of their own ideas and thinking. Arguably, these ideas may explain why, for such a long time, mankind has believed that 'race' has biological origins, despite there being a lack of proof in support of these claims.

Onwuachi-Willig (2016) is also in support of the argument that 'race' is a social construct and suggests that 'race' can be fluid, as the way in which a person perceives their race can change, depending on experience, time and context.

Onwuachi-Willig (2013) illustrates this idea by providing the example of a White person engaging in an interracial relationship. Onwuachi-Willig (2013) states that White individuals regularly experience privileges as a result of their Whiteness, (for example, living in a society in which they feel safe). However, when engaging in a Black-White interracial relationship, White individuals may start to experience discrimination and prejudice as a result of their interracial relationships and therefore, may no longer feel safe or able to identify with their White racial identity as they once did (Onwuachi-Willig, 2013).

Shih, Bonam, Sanchez & Peck (2007) also refer to 'race' as a social construct and put forth an example of the experiences of biracial individuals. Shih, Bonam, Sanchez & Peck (2007) highlight the difficulties that biracial people may face when trying to fit into a specific pre-existing racial category and argue that biracial people may also self-identify with a race that society may deem unsuitable for them. Thus, Shih, Bonam, Sanchez & Peck (2007) are in agreement that 'race' and the idea of 'racial identity' only exists within our social world.

Though many have argued in support of the notion that ‘race’ has biological origins, there lacks evidence in support of these claims (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez & Peck, 2007). Instead, the literature regarding ‘race’ shows that it is a social construct which arose long after populations from different continents came together (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Thus, the notions of ‘race’ and ‘racial identity’ are subjective and can be interpreted and experienced in countless ways (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). This is in line with the critical race paradigm, which suggests that race still matters and remains a powerful social construct, which is argued to have been created in the interest of the White dominant group (Delgado & Stefanie, 2013). Still, to understand the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children, we must first gain an insight into the social construction of being ‘biracial’, starting with gaining an understanding of the history of ‘race’ within the British context.

### ***1.2. Biracial History and The History of Interracial Relationships in Britain***

The existence of biracial people has gained particular prominence since the enslavement of Black people, as White slave owners would impregnate Black female slaves (Williams, 2009). Thus, the concept of ‘race’ is deeply rooted in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, at which time enslavement and African colonialism took place and impacted the process of racialisation and altered ways in which race was viewed (Zuberi, 2007). For centuries afterwards, racial mixing was seen as distasteful (Fryer, 2007). Until the 1930s researchers believed that breeding between two very different races would be damaging and could reverse the evolutionary process to an earlier and more primitive stage (Bland, 2005). In 1924, research

was conducted on the physical characteristics of biracial individuals and found that participants inherited more 'Black' physical characteristics than White, as only five per cent of the sample appeared 'English looking' (Bland, 2005). At the time, this research 'revealed' that the child of an interracial couple could never be classified as British, irrespective of having British heritage and being born in Britain (Bland, 2005). This continues to be a notion that influences the way in which parents raise their biracial children in Britain today.

At the end of the second world war, during the 1950s and 1960s, an increased number of individuals from the Caribbean migrated to Britain, to take advantage of the British economy (which provided a range of opportunities) (Wilson, 1984). These individuals were referred to by the British as 'foreigners' or 'immigrants' and prejudice and discrimination against these migrants became increasingly overt (Wilson, 1984). During this time, Black men were stereotypically perceived as sexual predators who were believed to prey on and corrupt White women (Webb, 2016) and the government recommended that British women refrain from marrying Black men (Hosany, 2016).

In contrast, interracial relationships among Black women and White men were far less prevalent in Britain and was perceived as less threatening to the White British society (Webb, 2016). This was because these relationships usually involved the White settler and the Black native woman engaging in interracial relationships in the Black woman's native country and therefore, attracted far less attention (Webb, 2016). In addition, White men engaging in sexual activity with Black women were perceived as men simply fulfilling their sexual urges (Bland, 2005).

With the increase in immigration, Britain became increasingly diverse with regards to race and ethnicity and as a result, saw the rise of interracial relationships, particularly between Black men and White woman (Wilson, 1984). Between 1954 and 1965 the American Black civil rights movement was undertaken and the outcome was the establishment of the civil rights act, which legally prohibited discrimination of race, ethnicity, religion and national origin (Wilson, 1984). However, hostility towards interracial couples and their biracial offspring was still received from both White and Black people, which illustrates a complex picture (Webb, 2016), one that highlights isolation and a lack of belonging for both parties engaging in the interracial relationship. Not only were interracial couples the target of hostility, but so were their biracial children. During this time the children of interracial couples were referred to as 'half-caste' or 'brown babies' (Bland, 2017), these children were perceived as only half of two cultures, rather than one whole and were therefore deemed to be inferior (Webb, 2016) and represented a threat to the White British society (Bland, 2017). As a result, biracial children were usually raised within Black communities, were often the target of racism and would experience a lack of racial belonging (Bland, 2017). Some mothers were forced to give their children up for adoption, leaving these children to spend their early lives in children's homes or in foster care, as very few children were adopted (Bland, 2017).

Critical race theory (CRT) suggests that people of all races, for example, biracial, Black and White individuals are racially categorised and perceived in a certain light, depending on the socio-political context at the time, which is forever changing (Mooney, 2014). CRT suggests that our racial histories have an impact on our modern-day lives (Carbado & Roithmayr, 2014) and proposes that the

historical experience of being a biracial person or engaging in an interracial relationship will inevitably have a significant influence on these individual's contemporary experiences of the same phenomena.

Racism often contributes to the development and maintenance of negative attitudes (prejudice), inflexible and inaccurate beliefs regarding all people who are members of a particular group (Stereotypes) and a difference in treatment of such groups, both by individuals and institutions (discrimination) (Williams & Mohammed, 2013). In addition, Microaggressions are defined as: Covert forms of discrimination that may be intentional or unintentional and are often subtle insults that can be communicated both verbally, non-verbally and unconsciously (Yosso, Smith, Ceja & Solorzano, 2009). CRT argues that racism feels natural to those who reside in racist societies, as racism is an intrinsic (and often subtle) part of the fabric of social order (Delgado & Stefanic, 2013). Thus, CRT provides a useful lens that we can look through to gain a better understanding of the experiences of biracial individuals and interracial couples in contemporary Britain.

### ***1.3. Interracial Relationships***

Statistics put forward by the 2011 England & Wales census shows that approximately nine per cent of children are raised within a multiracial household, which indicates that Britain has one of the highest levels of interracial relationships in Western society (Platt, 2009). In addition, the labour force survey indicated that 34 per cent of Black women engaged in interracial relationships in comparison to 48 per cent of Black men (Platt, 2009). Still, these statistics demonstrate an overlap between the experience of raising biracial children and the

experience of engaging in an interracial relationship. Thus, to gain a complex insight into Black women's experiences of raising biracial children, we must also gain an understanding of Black women's experiences of their interracial relationships, as these phenomena are often inseparable.

Bell & Hastings (2015) recruited 19 Black-White interracial couples (of which 12 couples comprised of White women and Black men and the remaining seven were Black women and White men) and interviewed them about their experiences of their interracial relationships. Findings showed that couples experienced tension within the extended family, as well as racism and microaggressions from the wider society (Bell & Hastings, 2015). Racism is defined by Sue (2012, p.31) as 'any attitude, action or institutional structure or any social policy that subordinates' persons or groups because of their colour'.

Similarly, Vazquez, Otero & Goodlow (2019) recruited 180 interracial couples (of which 46 participants were Black, 11 were biracial and 123 were White), who completed questionnaires exploring their experiences of stigma. Vazquez, Otero & Goodlow (2019) found that participants often experienced stigma and racism with regard to their interracial relationships. Similarly, Hohmann-Marriott & Amato (2008) investigated the difference between interracial and monoracial relationships by interviewing 305 participants (Black-White interracial couples represented only 54 participants and of these, 38 participants were Black men with White women and only 16 were Black women with White men) and found that interracial couples faced family disapproval. Lack of social support and discrimination (Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008).



Additionally, Hill & Thomas (2002) utilised focused groups and individual interviews with four White woman and three Black women, who were involved in Black-White interracial relationships. Findings show that White participants believed that others perceived them as ‘rule-breakers’, and therefore reported feeling rejected by their White communities (Hill & Thomas, 2002). Whereas, Black participants spoke of the salient messages of ‘sell-out’ and ‘traitor’, which they received from their Black communities (Hill & Thomas, 2002).

While the aforementioned literature sheds light on the negative experiences that interracial couples may encounter from others, a major limitation of the abovementioned literature is that the majority of these studies comprised of predominantly White samples. Therefore, much of the existing literature pertaining to the experience of interracial relationships are focused on the experience of White individuals, in particular, White woman. Thus, within the empirical data, we are limited in our understanding of the experiences of Black individuals with regard to interracial relationships.

On the other hand, Childs (2005) interviewed four Black women who were engaging in interracial relationships. Throughout interviews, participants spoke of a lack of acceptance and microaggressions that they received from others within their Black communities (Childs, 2005). Half of the participants specifically expressed their belief that others perceived them as a ‘sell-out’ for engaging in an interracial relationship (Childs, 2005), which suggests that Black women may face difficulties when engaging in interracial relationships.

Existing literature pertaining to the experiences of Black women engaging in interracial relationships is sparse and therefore, only provides partial insight into

the experiences of Black women raising biracial children. Still, the aforesaid research offers a much-needed start for readers to begin to understand the experiences of these women. Nevertheless, it remains imperative that we diversify our understanding of Black women's experiences of raising biracial children, as these women are an extremely under-researched population. However, to achieve this, this review will explore the experiences of biracial individuals (with a focus on research that allows an insight into the way in which interracial couples raise their biracial children), in the hope that this could perhaps shed some light on how Black mothers raise their biracial children.

#### ***1.4. Experiences of Biracial Individuals in the UK***

The 2011 census states that two per cent of the UK population *self-identified* as 'mixed', which is a figure that continues to rise (Song, 2016). Due to this increase in biracial people, the field of biracial studies surfaced in the 1990s (Malin, 2013). Previously, these studies have focused on the racial identification of biracial people (Ali, 2003; Barn & Harman, 2006; Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Katz, 1996; Olumide, 2002; Tizard & Phoenix, 1993). However, because the gap in the current literature exploring the experience of Black mothers raising biracial children is so marked, the focus for this literature review has been widened to encompass the experiences of biracial individuals in order to shed light on the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children.

The dearth of literature exploring the experiences of biracial people in the UK is far less prevalent in comparison to the plethora of research examining the experiences of biracial individuals in the USA (Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson &

Harris, 1993; Fukuyama, 1999; Talbot, 2008; Lichter & Qian, 2018; Ingram & Chaudhary, 2014). However, the literature conducted within the UK provides an understanding of the experiences of biracial people within the UK. This is essential to grasp in order to gain an understanding of Black mother's experiences of raising biracial children within the UK context, which is what the current research hopes to achieve.

Rocha (2010) investigated the link between memory and biracial identity negotiation, through the use of semi-structured interviews with seven participants based in a range of locations such as: The UK, Australia, Kiribati, Germany & the USA. Findings highlight the importance of storytelling within families as a means of illustrating painful experiences of racism, prejudice and lack of belonging, as well as positive experiences which highlighted similarities and differences between generations. These stories enabled participants and their families to strengthen their bond and aided participants in learning about their culture and traditions (Rocha, 2010). This study highlights the importance of storytelling as a way for biracial individuals to learn about their culture and the realities of racism. However, this research was conducted with participants who resided in the abovementioned countries, with only two participants being based in the UK. This suggests that the results of this study cannot provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of biracial people who are born and raised in the UK. However, Rocha (2010) does state that the research is not intended to be representative of the entire population.

Alternatively, Hosany (2016) conducted a UK based study with 10 biracial individuals aged between 18 and 32. Participants engaged in interviews exploring the way in which participants experienced the construction of their identities

(Hosany, 2016). Findings show that all participants embraced their biracial identities as positive and importance was often placed on gaining knowledge of their heritage and culture from their parents (Hosany, 2016). However, a limitation of this study is that participants were aged between 18 and 32, which suggests that this research cannot provide a complete understanding of the lived experiences of older biracial people, who may have had different experiences. Still, this research demonstrates the importance that parents place on teaching biracial individuals about their culture and heritage.

Comparatively, Mooney (2014) conducted semi-structured interviews with eight female participants who identified as biracial and resided in the UK. Findings show that all participants spoke at length of their parent's relationship with their own race and the notion that this influenced how participants were able to negotiate their biracial identity (Mooney, 2014). Participants also emphasised the importance of embracing both their mother's and father's heritage as a biracial person (Mooney, 2014). However, only female participants were recruited to take part in this study, therefore this research can only provide an understanding of the experiences of biracial females. Still, this study sheds light on the emphasis that parents place on aiding their biracial daughters in negotiating their biracial identities.

More recently, Morley (2011) asked 21 adult participants to email their narratives which reflected on their childhood experiences of growing up as biracial people. It was found that most participants experienced racism and isolation as a result of being biracial. However, these participants expressed that they had experienced their parents as supportive and as having a positive attitude towards them as biracial people, which participants felt aided them in developing their biracial

identity and promoted resilience. Thus, this study provides an understanding of the challenges that biracial individuals might face as a result of being biracial, as well as the steps that the parents of biracial individuals take in order to aid them in overcoming any hardships that they face. Still, it could be argued that results may be less valid, as electronic methods make it impossible for researchers to gain clarification or probe participants, which could lead to misunderstandings and inaccurate results.

Conversely, Pang (2018) drew upon data generated from 32 in-depth interviews (which emerged from a doctoral thesis regarding the lived experiences of biracial individuals) in a Scottish based study. Participants expressed feeling as though their White parents had purposely taught them very little about their ethnic minority heritage, as participants were mainly racially socialised as White Scottish and were raised to believe that being White was preferable. This study provides insight into the experiences of biracial individuals residing in Scotland and shows that biracial people may have different experiences depending on which parts of the UK they are born and raised in. As Scotland has a predominantly White population, this will inevitably have had an impact on the lived experiences of the participants, as well as the methods that participants parents might have used in order to raise their biracial children. Thus, this study cannot provide an insight into the lived experiences of biracial people being raised in more ethnically diverse parts of the UK.

Lastly, Song (2010) conducted a cross-sectional study regarding biracial identity formation, in which online questionnaires were completed by 326 participants. From these 326 participants, a subsample of 65 participants was chosen to undertake in-depth interviews (Song, 2010). Results show that many Black-White

biracial participants experienced others as perceiving them as Black, as opposed to biracial or White (Song, 2010). Participants also expressed that their parent's ethnicities did not mean that this was the way that participants saw themselves (as most participants felt supported by their parents enough to identify as British) (Song, 2010). However, irrespective of this, most participants were taught by their parents to feel pride within both of their parent's racial heritage (Song, 2010). Thus, this study demonstrates the different layers of identity that a British biracial person might experience and shows the importance that parents of biracial individuals might place on racial pride. However, a limitation of this study is that the sample of participants was heterogeneous and contained participants with an array of racial mixes, as opposed to only Black-White biracial people. Thus, findings should only be tentatively generalised to provide an understanding of the experience of the Black-White biracial person.

It is hoped that the above studies exploring the experiences of biracial individuals will at least partly reflect the experiences of interracial couples raising biracial individuals, which in turn, could perhaps provide some understanding of Black mother's experiences of raising biracial children. While the abovementioned research cannot fully illustrate the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children, these studies imply the significance of parental involvement in biracial people's upbringing. This research suggests that an important part of parent's experiences of raising biracial children will involve aiding identity negotiation, helping biracial children to embrace their culture, cultivating racial pride and equipping biracial children in dealing with racism. It appears as though parents raising biracial children have a fundamental impact on the way that these children are able to identify as biracial and these studies highlight the role that both Black

and White parents often play in aiding the biracial child to know and understand their biracial identities. Yet, these studies do not explicitly speak to the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. However, we must gain insight into this perspective, as community-based research should speak to the experiences of women of all races, raising biracial children. Additionally, of these women, Black women are gravely under-researched within this research area and as a result, they receive less benefit from important research findings that could lead to more tailored services (which meet the needs of these women) and research that addresses the challenges that Black women face as a result of their status as Black mothers raising biracial children. Thus, the current research is particularly relevant as it seeks to shed light on the unique experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children and is, therefore, a much-needed piece of research within this topic area.

As previously stated, there is no existing literature which explores the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. Thus, to get one step closer to understanding Black women's experiences of raising biracial children, this literature review will explore the experiences of White mothers raising biracial children.

### ***1.5. Experiences of White Mothers Raising Biracial Children***

Existing literature with regards to Black mothers raising biracial children proved to be lacking, as the use of various search terms via a range of electronic databases was undertaken but yielded no results. Yet, the experiences of white mothers raising biracial children have been the focus of recent research, (which arguably could be partly a result of less Black women engaging in interracial

relationships compared to White women and also partly the result of a race-related bias within the existing literature). Thus, this review looks at the experiences of White mothers raising biracial children, given that research is abundant within this topic area and because this research is arguably very close to the research topic under study. Arguably, findings may contrast with the experiences of Black mothers, given the other aspects of their identities that may be relevant. Therefore, by no means can we assume that the experience of White mothers and Black mothers raising biracial children will be the same, as there will be idiosyncrasies within both of their experiences. Furthermore, the experiences of White women must not become the lens through which we view Black women's experiences of raising a biracial child. However, we can deduce that there may potentially be shared mothering experiences for Black and White mothers. Thus, this review will explore the experiences of White mothers raising biracial children in the UK, to gain some insight into Black mother's experiences of raising biracial children in the UK.

Barn (1999) presented findings from two previous studies (Barn, 1993 & Barn, Sinclair & Ferdinand, 1997), which explored the experiences of a sample of 133 mothers raising their biracial children within the public care system, of which 116 participants were White mothers. Participants experiences were explored through a range of qualitative and quantitative methods such as: The qualitative study of case file data, semi-structured and in-depth interviews and an analysis of department policies (Barn, 1999). Participants reported racism, lack of support and a lack of belonging as challenges that they encountered (Barn, 1999). As participants were single mothers, some also experienced feelings of abandonment and hurt, towards their children's Black fathers (Barn, 1999). This sometimes



gave rise to racial prejudices towards Blacks, which were at times, unknowingly projected onto their biracial children (Barn, 1999). Thus, this study provides insight into the challenges that White mothers may face as a result of raising a biracial child. However, this study was conducted almost two decades ago and findings are therefore dated.

More recently, Harman (2013) interviewed 30 single White mothers of biracial children in the UK. Findings indicate that many participants experienced racism and lack of support from their friends and family as a result of having a biracial child (Harman, 2013). However, participants who did receive support expressed that their mothers and their Black and White female friends had been most supportive of them (both emotionally and practically) whilst raising their biracial children (Harman, 2013). Thus, this study provides insight into the potential usefulness of female-gendered support to White mothers raising biracial children and also sheds more light on the difficulties that these mothers face as a result of raising biracial children. However, this study only explored the experiences of single White mothers, therefore findings cannot be generalised to the population of White mothers within relationships.

In addition, Caballero, Edwards & Puthussey (2010) distributed questionnaires across the UK to parents through schools and conducted in-depth interviews with 35 parent couples regarding their experiences of raising biracial children.

Questionnaires were mainly completed by White mothers and showed that they felt that it was most important for them to teach their biracial children about family history and cultural traditions, so that their children knew their heritage (Caballero, Edwards & Puthussey, 2010). Participants also explained their belief that both mother and father were most influential in aiding biracial children in

cultivating a sense of self (Caballero, Edwards & Puthussey, 2010). During interviews parents also spoke of trying to aid their biracial children with issues of belonging as well as coping with societal reactions to their biracial child's difference. Thus, this study provides good insight into the importance that White mothers may place on aiding their biracial children in feeling a sense of belonging and developing their racial identity. Still, a limitation of this study is that there was only a 12 per cent response rate to questionnaires across schools, which suggests that findings from the data can only be tentatively drawn (Caballero, Edwards & Puthussey, 2010).

On the other hand, McKenzie (2013) drew on an ethnographic study undertaken between 2005-2009, which recruited 35 working-class White mothers living in St Ann's council estate in Nottingham. Participants said that they experienced being negatively stereotyped, stigmatised and socially rejected, partly as a result of having engaged sexually with a Black man and partly as a result of having biracial children (McKenzie, 2013). However, researchers failed to set an inclusion-criteria for the age of the participant's biracial children. Thus, women with biracial children as young as six weeks old were recruited as participants. Therefore, some participants within this study may not have had long experiences as mothers raising biracial children, which may have yielded findings that were not as rich. Still, findings provide a good understanding of the challenges that White women may face, not only in relation to raising biracial children but also as a result of engaging in an interracial relationship.

Lastly, Lewis & Demie (2018) explored the schooling experiences of Black-White biracial children. For this study, data from Lewis (2013) study, exploring the experiences of biracial children were utilised. Lewis & Demi (2018) also

undertook exploratory discussions with nine parents of biracial children, as well as four focus groups with 14 biracial children and 20 semi-structured interviews with educational professionals. Findings show that many White mothers believed that Black children were often negatively stereotyped and feared that if their biracial children spent too much time with Black pupils that this could negatively impact their schooling experience (Lewis & Demie, 2018). However, the lead researcher of this study identified as a White mother raising biracial children. Therefore, it is possible that her preconceptions may have impacted the research process (Lewis & Demie, 2018), which suggests that findings could contain bias. However, this research still provides an insight into the experiences of White mothers raising biracial children of schooling age and unearths the unique concerns that White mothers may experience with regards to their biracial children.

The aforementioned studies regarding White mothers raising biracial children provide great insight into the difficulties that White mothers may face as a result of raising biracial children. These studies shed light on the experiences of racism, negative stereotyping, stigma, lack of support and alienation that White mothers may face and speaks volumes about the overarching theme of ‘lack of belonging’ that these mothers may encounter. This raises questions about the experiences that both Black and White mothers raising biracial children may encounter. Based on the notion that both Black and White mothers may have a shared identity of being ‘mothers’, the experiences of White women raising biracial children may enable us to gain some (but not a complete) understanding of Black mother’s experiences of raising biracial children. However, these experiences would be different, given the intersectional lens and experiences that Black mothers may have.

Arguably, Black mothers residing in the UK often encounter difficulties and challenges associated with racism, which shapes their experience of motherhood and inevitably makes Black women's experiences different from that of White women's (Reynolds, 2005). Therefore, to gain a more accurate understanding of Black mother's experiences of raising biracial children, research that explores just this, must be undertaken as opposed to inferring meaning from the literature regarding White women's experiences. It is important to explore the experiences of Black women as well as White women in order to begin to eradicate the race-related bias that currently exists within the existing academic literature. Thus, the current research seeks to begin to achieve this by unearthing the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children.

To understand Black mother's experiences of raising biracial children, it is first essential to gain an understanding of Black women's intersectional experiences of being 'Black' and 'women'. We must gain an understanding of the experience of being a Black woman, as this will undoubtedly shape their experiences of raising biracial children. It should be noted that UK based research regarding the experiences of Black women and Black mothers is sparse. Therefore, the literature search was widened to encompass research that was conducted within the USA.

### ***1.6. Black Women and Intersectionality***

The experience of Black women differs from that of White woman, as Black women have to deal with different types of oppression, experienced as a result of their multiple identities. Being 'Black' and a 'woman', places Black women at the intersection of racial and sexual oppression and economic exploitation, which

means that Black women face marginalisation as a result of being Black people and for being women (Brixton Black Woman's Group, 1981, as cited in Mama 2002). In addition, the category 'Black' is said to ignore the nuanced experiences of the many different groups within it, for example, Black *women* compared to Black *men* (Schug, Alt, Lu, Gosin & Fay, 2015). Thus, a true understanding of the uniqueness of Black women's experiences of racial and sexual discrimination often remain unseen, as the idiographic nature of their experiences as Black women is often lost within the collective group of either 'women' or 'Black' people (Adams & Lott, 2019).

However, Black feminists have put forth a complex and insightful analysis of Black women and Black mothers (Rodriguez, 2016). Black feminist Kimberle Crenshaw in particular, introduced the term 'intersectionality' to "address the marginalisation of Black women" (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays & Tomlinson, 2013, p. 303) and to explore Black women's unique experiences, which are often a mixture of both racism (as a result of being Black) and sexism (as a result of being a woman) (Adam & Lott, 2019). "Intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender...intersectional paradigms remind us that oppressions work together in producing injustice" (Collins, 2000, p.468).

Intersectional theory understands that there is an overlap between the racism and sexism that Black women experience and recognises that this produces an outcome that is like no other (Adam & Lott, 2019), as it is argued that the different identities that Black women hold, rely on each other to be truly meaningful (Adam & Lott, 2019). Intersectionality can provide an understanding of the different stereotypes of Black women (Rosenthal & Lobel, 2016) and refers

to the importance of the multiple and overlapping identities that Black women experience (for example, being Black, being a woman, being a mother etc.), which can provide a more wholesome understanding of these women and their experiences (Rosenthal & Lobel, 2016).

Thus, the current research seeks to utilise intersectional theory as a lens to truly understand Black women's experiences. Intersectional theory suggests that we must take into account the multiple and overlapping identities that Black women possess in order to truly grasp the experiences of Black women raising biracial children. There are multiple experiences that White and Black mothers will share when raising children, however, there are an array of experiences that they will not. Roberts (1993), provides an example: The majority of White mothers do not know the difficulties of raising a Black child in a racist society. Thus, we needed to take into account the intersectional experiences of Black women, both as 'Black' and as 'women'.

### ***1.7. Black Mothers***

A limitation of the existing literature is that it focuses more so on the lived experiences of White mothers. In which case, generalisations can only be very tentatively made to mothers of different ethnicities. Chigwada-Bailey (2003) argues that there are perhaps similarities between the experiences of White mothers and Black mothers. However, race has an impact on the experiences of both Black and White mothers and inevitably shapes their experiences of motherhood. Thus, Black and White mothers live under extremely different circumstances because of their difference in race.

### *1.7.1. Impact of the Strong Black Woman Stereotype*

Multiple racialised stereotypes have been used to describe Black women. Perhaps the most commonly referenced racialised stereotype associated with Black women in the UK is the ‘strong Black woman’ stereotype (SBWS) (Reynolds, 2005). The SBWS represents the well-educated and professional Black woman (Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas & Harrison) she is said to be resilient in response to both physical and psychological difficulties (Abrams, Hill & Maxwell, 2018), and is often ascribed two fundamental attributes: Strength and caregiving (Donovan & West, 2014). Being ‘strong’, the strong Black woman is viewed as resilient, independent and emotionally robust, and as a caregiver, she is perceived as a self-sacrificing woman who provides support to those within and outside of her immediate family (Romero, 2000).

Oshin & Milan (2019) investigated the SBWS and its impact on maternal socialisation with 194 girls and their mothers through the use of questionnaires and sorting tasks (in which participants were asked to sort cards which described themselves and their idea of an adaptive adult using 19 traits). Findings suggest that attributes which are consistent with the SBWS were valued by Black mothers more than White and Latina mothers (Oshin & Milan, 2019). However, Oshin & Milan (2019, p. 181) “included 194 adolescent girls and their mothers residing in a midsized, low-income city in the Northeast United States” which suggests that findings generated cannot be generalised to other contexts.

In addition, Elliott, Powell & Brenton (2013) undertook in-depth interviews with 16 low income Black single mothers and found that these participants highlighted the importance of sacrificing and protecting their children. Participants also

emphasised the need to be strong, by being self-reliant and taught their children to also be this way. However, both researchers conducting interviews for this study identified as White middle-class women, which inevitably would have influenced the interview process (Elliott, Powell & Brenton (2013). Still, the aforementioned research suggests that Black women are more likely to value and demonstrate attributes of the SBWS than women of other races, which will inevitably shape Black women's experiences of motherhood.

Furthermore, researchers argue that internalising this SBWS can lead to a range of negative mental health outcomes such as: Anxiety and depression (Watson & Hunter, 2015), stress (Woods-Giscombe, 2010), a reduction in emotional wellbeing (Romero, 2000), increased psychological distress (Watson-Singleton, 2017; West, Donovan & Daniel, 2016; Donovan & West, 2014 ) and a heightened risk of suicide (Green, 2019). Thus, the abovementioned research speaks volumes about the impact of the SBWS on Black motherhood and is important to understand, if we wish to gain an insight into the experience of Black mothers raising biracial children. As the use of this stereotype may provide another layer to these women's experiences.

#### *1.7.2. Use of Support*

Literature suggests that women often seek out support from other women in times of distress (Taylor, 2006). Equally, it has been proposed that a shared racial identity promotes higher levels of trust and safety (Davis, 2015). This is in line with claims made by Davis & High (2017), who suggest that Black women gain benefit from support provided by fellow members of both their racial and gender ingroups (Davis & High, 2017). Furthermore, the support of family and friends, in



particular, is said to provide Black women with a protective function against stressors (Broner, 2013). Moreover, the support that Black mothers often receive from their grandmothers, aunts, sisters and even female neighbours, is said to aid them in caring for their children and provides practical child care support (Collins, 2000). Additionally, research shows the importance of mothers and grandmothers as a support system for Black mothers in raising their Black children (Woods-Griscombe, 2010) and much of the existing literature regarding Black motherhood speaks of support as a fundamental part of Black motherhood.

Hunter (1997) undertook face to face interviews to explore the experiences of support in a sample of 487 Black parents and found that most participants spoke of their grandmothers as a person who was most supportive of them as parents. This may suggest that these participants learned how to be Black mothers from their Black grandmothers. The majority of the participants within this study (74 per cent) were women, which provides good insight into Black mother's experiences of female-gendered support. However, approximately 60 per cent of mothers were not married, which suggests that findings can only be tentatively applied to married populations.

Similarly, Fouquier (2011) more recently explored the experiences of three generations of 18 Black mothers through the use of open-ended interviews. An important finding of this study was that many participants from generation one (born between 1950-1970) expressed that they had learned to be mothers from their mothers and grandmothers and spoke of the support that had been provided and wisdom which had been passed down to them (Fouquier, 2011). Whereas mothers from generation two (born between 1971-1990) and generation three (born between 1991-2003) listened to other mother's narratives regarding

motherhood as well as relying on their health care providers, books and magazines as sources of support and guidance (Fouquier, 2011). This study provides detailed insight into the experiences of support among three generations of Black women. However, participants recruited were mainly of middle-class backgrounds. Thus, findings may not be applicable to Black mothers who are of a lower socioeconomic class, as these women will inevitably have very different experiences.

Alternatively, Middlemiss (2003) recruited 30 Black and 30 White low-income mothers with children aged between three and five. All participants completed questionnaires which measured stress and researchers utilised 'the parenting philosophy interview' which measured participants parenting styles (Middlemiss, 2003). Participants reported experiencing high stress levels, as well as a lack of support with regards to motherhood (Middlemiss, 2003). However, all participants were mothers of children aged between three and five years, which could potentially serve as a limitation. This could be seen as a limitation, as recruitment for participant's with older children would have generated results reflecting a lengthier experience of motherhood and associated support. Thus, results must be taken with caution.

Moreover, Abrams, Hill & Maxwell (2018), recruited 194 Black women (participant's mother status, was not specified), who were asked to complete questionnaires regarding support and the SBWS. Findings show that 'self-silencing' was a coping mechanism that was associated with endorsement of the SBWS (Abrams, Hill & Maxwell, 2018). This suggests that Black women who endorse this stereotype may feel unable to access support, as this may contradict their idea of what it means to be a 'strong Black woman'.

More recently, Liao, Wei & Yin (2020), recruited 222 African American women (again, participant's mother status, was not specified), who participated in online questionnaires regarding the SBWS, mental health (in particular, loneliness, anxiety and depression) and means of coping. Results show that the SBWS was associated with low use of 'collective-coping' (the use of one's social network to cope with stress) which in turn, was associated with negative psychological outcomes (Liao, Wei & Yin (2020). Thus, this research provides sound insight into endorsement of the SBWS, Black women's means of coping and the impact of this on their mental health. However, the studies by Abrams, Hill & Maxwell (2018) and Liao, Wei & Yin (2020) explored the experiences of Black *women*, as opposed to Black *mothers*. Therefore, findings of these studies cannot provide a full understanding of Black *mother's* experiences of support.

Overall, the existing literature regarding Black mother's experiences of support is contradictory, as some literature suggests that Black mothers are able to access support from their social networks (Hunter, 1997; Fouquier, 2011). Whereas other research suggests that Black mothers (Middlemiss, 2003) and Black women (Adam, Hill & Maxwell, 2018; Liao, Wei & Yin, 2020), may find it difficult to access support. Therefore, the current literature provides an unclear understanding of Black mother's experiences of support. In addition, the studies that explore the experiences of Black mothers (Hunter, 1997; Fouquier, 2011; Middlemiss, 2003), reflect the experiences of Black mothers raising monoracial Black children and as a result, these studies cannot provide a wholesome insight into the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children, as the support that they receive may look very different.

### *1.7.3. Concerns and Worries*

Naturally, all mothers may experience concerns for their children. However, Black mother's intersectional experiences (of racism and sexism) shape their experiences of motherhood and may impact the concerns and worries that they have for their Black and/or biracial children. Elliott & Reid (2019) analysed data collected from two studies regarding Black mothers who were interviewed and found that participants were influenced by concerns that their children would be criminalised by the police and other institutions. This study sheds light on the concerns of Black mothers raising monoracial Black children. However, a limitation of this study is that findings were drawn from two earlier studies, neither of which directly interviewed participants about criminalisation, which suggests that these studies may have missed opportunities to gather more in-depth data about concerns (Elliott & Reid, 2019).

Similarly, Elliott & Aseltine (2012) interviewed six Black, 19 White and 15 Latina mothers of teenagers and found that race, class and gender of participant's children influenced each participant's concern. Findings show that participants experienced more concern for their sons around criminality and for their daughter's concerns were much more likely to stem from their sexuality (Elliott & Aseltine, 2012). Thus, this study provides detailed insight into how a child's gender may shape their Black mother's concerns for them. However, only a small portion of the participants within this study defined themselves as Black, which suggests that further research is needed to gain a more detailed understanding of Black mother's experience of concern for their children.

In addition, Dow (2016) conducted interviews with 60 Black upper and middle-class women. Findings show that the stereotype of a ‘thug’ shaped participants concerns for their sons, which in turn influenced their parenting methods (Dow, 2016). Participants felt particularly concerned about their sons being viewed by others as ‘thugs’ and therefore attempted to manage their son’s social interactions and appearance (Dow, 2016). However, this study only recruited Black mothers who were of upper and middle-class, which suggests that these findings cannot be generalised to Black mothers who are of a lower socioeconomic status.

Lastly, Reynolds (2005) conducted in-depth interviews with a sample of 25 Black Caribbean mothers residing in the UK. Findings show that participants were typically concerned about their daughters being victims of sexual assault and being sexualised (Reynolds, 2005). Whereas participants named racial attacks and police harassment as specific fears that they held with regard to their sons (Reynolds, 2005). Thus, this study provides insight into the different concerns that Black Caribbean mothers may have about their Black children and provides a better understanding of how gender can shape a mother’s concerns for her children. However, Reynolds (2005) collected the majority of data for this study between 1996 and 1997, thus, findings are now dated and therefore should be tentatively drawn.

Findings from the abovementioned research can only be applied to the experience of Black mothers raising biracial children with caution. This is because the race of one’s child will inevitably have a great impact on the concerns that Black mothers experience. Thus, the current research aims to explore the experiences of Black women raising biracial children to fill this gap in the literature by shedding light on the unique concerns of these mothers.

#### *1.7.4. Racial Socialisation of Monoracial Black Children*

Black parents often racially socialise their children to educate them about how to survive in a society that is inherently racist (Scottham & Smalls, 2009). Racial socialisation is defined as, “verbal and behavioural messages transmitted to younger generations for the development of attitudes, values, behaviours and beliefs regarding the meaning and significance of race...” (Lesane-Brown, 2006; as cited in Scottham & Smalls, 2009, p. 807). The current literature suggests that the three most commonly used racial socialisation methods are: Cultural socialisation (which educates children about racial history and tradition to cultivate racial pride), preparation for bias (which teaches children awareness with regard to racism) and the promotion of mistrust of others (which promotes mistrust of other racial groups) (Hughes et al, 2006).

Blanchard, Coard, Hardin & Mereoiu (2018), recruited six Black mother-father dyads raising monoracial Black sons (all sons were toddlers) and interviewed them with regard to the way in which they socialised their sons. Findings show that most participants culturally socialised their sons through exposure to their culture in various ways, for example, via Black childcare environments and neighbourhoods (Blanchard, Coard, Hardin & Mereoiu, 2018). All participants also engaged in the preparation for bias with their children and four participants discussed egalitarianism and emphasised the need for their sons to perceive themselves as equal to others (Blanchard, Coard, Hardin & Mereoiu, 2018). On the other hand, this research showed that the promotion of mistrust was not often utilised by most participants (Blanchard, Coard, Hardin & Mereoiu, 2018). Thus, this study allows us to gain an understanding of the different racial socialisation methods that Black mothers may utilise when raising their sons. However,

findings cannot be generalised to Black parents raising daughters, nor can it provide an insight into the experiences of raising older children, which is important. This could be important as it could be argued that racial socialisation methods that parents utilise may change throughout the life course of a child, which is reflected within the findings of the next study.

McHale (2006) examined cultural socialisation and preparation for bias with older and younger siblings, by interviewing 162 Black mother-father dyads. Findings show that mothers utilised more socialisation methods with older children compared to younger children (McHale, 2006) and suggest that Black mothers may socialise their older and younger children differently. However, this study explored the experiences of Black mothers within a nuclear family with two children. Perhaps different findings may have emerged had differently structured families of been studied (for example, single mother families).

Additionally, Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee & Eccles (2014) utilised data from a longitudinal study which interviewed and provided questionnaires to 502 Black children and their Black parents. Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee & Eccles (2014) found that 80 per cent of parents spoke of the cultural socialisation messages that they utilised. Whereas 47 per cent of parents reported utilising preparation for bias messages to socialise their children (Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee & Eccles, 2014). However, authors put forth a range of limitations for this study, one such limitation being that open-ended participant responses were converted by researchers into dichotomous variables (Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee & Eccles, 2014). This is likely to have reduced statistical power and therefore made results less accurate (Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee & Eccles, 2014).

Moreover, Saleem et al (2016) utilised data generated from ‘the Family and Community Health study’. This study utilised questionnaires with 889 African American parents, regarding their experiences of racial discrimination, neighbourhood cohesion and the racial socialisation of their children (Saleem et al, 2016). Saleem et al (2016) found that racial socialisation appeared to be influenced by levels of neighbourhood cohesion, as parents often used the promotion of mistrust and cultural socialisation methods for their children within neighbourhoods with low cohesion. Thus, this study provides a good insight into the impact of neighbourhood cohesion on racial socialisation methods used by Black mothers. However, a limitation of this research is that parents seldom use racial socialisation methods alone (Caughy et al, 2011, as cited in Saleem et al, 2016). For a more complete understanding of racial socialisation, we must investigate the combination of socialisation methods used by all those involved with these children, which stands as a limitation for all of the abovementioned literature.

Reynolds (2005) undertook in-depth interviews with 25 Black Caribbean mothers with regards to the experiences of being a Black Caribbean mother in the UK. Participants who took part in this study reported that they had experienced racism and as a result, utilised four socialisation methods in order to aid their Black children in coping with the racism that they may also encounter (Reynolds, 2005). These methods include: Psychological preparation (aiding their children to perceive racism as motivating rather than a hindrance), monitoring of their children’s education (parents were aware that young Black people experience institutional racism throughout their educational lives), the celebration of culture and heritage (in order to cultivate a sense of belonging and pride in their



children's race and culture (as many participants believed that their children would never be truly accepted as British) and parental policing of their children in public spaces (teaching their children how to conduct themselves in public) (Reynolds, 2005). This study provides detailed insight into the experiences of Black Caribbean mothers in the UK, which is a particularly under-researched population. However, as stated above, this research only recruited Black Caribbean mothers, which serves as a limitation to the study. In addition, the researcher utilised snowball sampling and stated that she recruited personal friends as part of her participant sample, which would inevitably affect the findings that were generated, as participants may not have felt able to be completely honest with a researcher whom they knew on a personal or intimate level.

It should be noted that findings from the abovesaid literature cannot be directly applied to the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. This is because the way in which Black mothers raise biracial children, in comparison to monoracial Black children, is likely to be somewhat different. Yet, the abovementioned research could suggest that Black mothers may use similar racial socialisation methods in order to raise their biracial children, perhaps in order to aid their children in developing the Black element within their biracial identities. Still, there is no research currently providing direct insight into the experiences of Black mothers racially socialising their biracial children. Thus, the current research seeks to shed light on this under-researched area by providing an insight into the way in which Black mothers attempt to raise their biracial children.

The academic literature is able to provide somewhat of an understanding of the experiences of Black motherhood within the context of the USA. However, the

concepts ‘race’ and ‘culture’ are argued to be shaped by the socio-political issues within each context (Talbot, 2008) and therefore findings from these studies cannot accurately reflect the experiences of Black mothers who reside in the UK. In addition, this literature focuses on Black mother’s experiences of raising monoracial Black children and therefore fails to provide insight into Black mother’s experiences of raising biracial children. This means that the experience of Black mothers raising biracial children is largely ignored within the current academic literature. The abovementioned studies highlight the need for literature which examines the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children within a UK context. This gap within the current literature, suggests that the current research is a much-needed addition to the existing academic literature, as it would shed light on the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children within a UK context, which is often a minimised experience. As mentioned above, the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children have been neglected within the academic literature, which means that our current understanding of Black mothers raising biracial children is lacking. Thus, to gain insight into the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children, the search for this literature review was widened in order to encompass non-academic literature in the form of first-person narratives.

### ***1.8.Black Mothers Raising Biracial Children***

*“Swatting away microaggressions with an invisible bat has become part of my everyday survival” (Ndela Faye, 2018).*

Within the academic literature, the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children have been largely ignored. Nevertheless, there are multiple articles which speak to Black woman's experiences of raising biracial children. Though these articles are not based on empirical research, this does not detract from the insight that can be gained with regard to these Black women's lived experiences of raising biracial children. Thus, first-person narratives were utilised in order to gain further insight into the idiographic experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. These narratives shed light on the experiences of microaggressions, the challenges that these mothers face whilst trying to aid biracial identity negotiation of their children and highlight the impact of raising a biracial child on Black mothers own racial identities. All of which, are themes which have previously emerged throughout this literature review.

#### *1.8.1. Microaggressions*

Ndela Faye (2018) spoke in an online article, of her experience of raising a biracial child as a Black mother. This first-person narrative provides detailed insight into her experience of microaggressions. Faye (2018) states that she experiences microaggressions daily and provides examples of these encounters (for example, receiving stares or being asked if she was her child's Nanny). Faye (2018) explains that she feels that she is judged because she is a Black woman raising a biracial child and expresses that she is often met with questions and assumptions regarding herself and her biracial children. As a result, Faye (2018) said that her own identity has been significantly impacted by having a biracial child and as a result, she often finds herself speaking aloud to her son (for example, telling him to "say hello to mummy") in an attempt to let it be known to

strangers that she is his mother, perhaps because she has internalised others assumptions.

Similarly, Alicia Cox Thomson (2019) spoke of her experiences of daily microaggressions. Again Thomson (2019) explained that she experiences microaggressions in the form of questions regarding her status as a mother of a biracial child and expressed that she often feels awkward and embarrassed in response to others curiosity. However, Thomson (2019) went on to say that her experience of raising a biracial child has impacted her own racial identity, as she currently feels more of a sense of pride in her own Black racial identity and embraces this part of herself, even more so than before.

In another online article, Black mother Diedre Anthony (2019) spoke of her experience of microaggressions, as she explained that when others see she and her interracial family, they appear to be overtly confused. Anthony (2019) speaks at length of her experience of feeling judged daily for being a Black woman engaging in an interracial relationship and for being a mother of biracial children. As a result, Anthony (2019) explained that she feels a need to adapt, to be strong and confident in her identity as a Black mother raising a biracial child.

Lastly, Sa'lyda Shabazz (2019) spoke of her experience of being a Black mother to a biracial child and said that she is often questioned about her relationship to her son (which at times she has experienced as offensive). Thus, Shabazz (2019) urged others to be more tactful about the way in which they enquire about Black mothers and their biracial children.

The abovementioned articles provide an insight into Black mother's experiences of microaggressions, as a result of raising biracial children. These first-person

narratives do not exist as empirical literature. However, the findings that these narratives offer are nonetheless important, as they provide rich insight into the often-minimised experiences of Black women raising biracial children. In addition, these narratives provide further justification for the development of the research topic which is currently under study.

### *1.8.2. Biracial Identity Negotiation*

Anthony (2019), Faye (2018) and Thomson (2019) each spoke of the importance of biracial identity negotiation. Faye (2018) expressed that she felt unsure of how to teach her biracial son to hold pride in his Black heritage and goes on to say that she often feels lost at the thought of being unable to share her racial identity and lived experience as a Black woman, with her biracial child. Faye (2018) also spoke of her need to racially socialise her son as a way of trying to prepare him for a racist society. Yet, Faye (2018) explained that she often thought that she would need to come to terms with the idea that she would not have a shared racial identity with her biracial son. This left her feeling concerned that her son may decide that he doesn't want to identify as Black and expressed that she does not feel equipped to aid him in negotiating his biracial identity (Faye, 2018).

Similarly, Anthony (2019) explained that she often finds herself questioning whether or not she adequately aided biracial identity negotiation with her biracial children. Still, Anthony (2019) emphasises the need to help her children to identify with both their Black and White heritage and places importance on empowering her biracial children in taking pride in their biracial identity.

Likewise, Thomson (2019) also places importance on helping her biracial children to embrace both their Black and White heritage.

Much like the aforementioned studies which shed light on the experiences of Black mothers raising monoracial Black children, these first-person narratives shed light on the importance that these Black mothers place on helping their biracial children to develop their biracial identity and aiding Black racial socialisation. It seems important to these mothers that they were able to equip their biracial children to survive in an inherently racist society. As a result, these mothers appeared to emphasise Black racial socialisation, in a similar fashion to the abovementioned Black mothers raising monoracial Black children.

The aforementioned first-person narratives provide rich and detailed insight into these Black women's idiographic experiences of raising biracial children. Each of these women spoke in depth of their experiences which seemed to be characterised by difficulties and challenges such as receiving microaggressions, societal assumptions and struggling to racially socialise their biracial children. For these women, their experiences seemed to have a direct impact on the way in which they experienced their children, others and their own identity as Black women. However, the existing *academic* literature pertaining to the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children remains non-existent and it is therefore imperative that this gap is filled. This is important as we must gain a more detailed understanding of these women's unique and intersectional experiences of raising biracial children as Black women. Thus, the current research proves to be relevant as it seeks to explore the experiences of Black women raising biracial children, in order to begin to shed light on an under-researched topic area.

### ***1.9. Justification for the Current Research***

Black women have been neglected within the existing literature with regards to their experiences of raising biracial children. Historically, social science understanding of Black mothers has been simplistic, stereotypical and many social scientists speak of ‘the Black mother’ as if there was only one type, one who is limited in her education, domineering and angry (Rodriguez, 2016). As a result, scholars have argued that the current academic literature is void in its understanding of Black mothers (Rodriguez, 2016). It should be noted that the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children have not been documented within the current academic literature. Whereas research regarding the experiences of White mothers raising biracial children in the UK (Barn, 1999; Harman, 2013) and USA (Kouritzin 2016; Rauktis, Fusco, Goodkind, & Bradley-King, 2016) are readily available. This race-related bias has led to a gap in our understanding of the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. However, it is important to learn about the experiences of all mothers who reside in our society, so that we have a better understanding of each of society’s members and can, therefore, better serve these individuals.

In addition, there is an abundance of literature that explores the experience of Black motherhood. However, this research is primarily based in the USA and therefore fails to provide insight into the experiences of Black mothers within the UK context. Therefore, the current research aims to make a valuable contribution to the existing literature, by providing insight into this under-researched area by exploring the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children within the UK.

It is imperative to fill this gap within the existing literature, so that services such as education, policy, social services and particularly psychologists, have a good understanding of the experiences (in particular the challenges as well as the positive experiences), that Black mothers raising biracial children may encounter. As professionals must be confident in discussing race and ethnicity with this population. Hopefully, this research aids all readers in better understanding the unique lived experience of Black mothers raising bi-racial children. Additionally, it is a hope that this research will prompt counselling psychologists to tailor therapy to meet the unique cultural needs of these women. It is also a hope that this research will encourage psychologists to identify and create appropriate interventions and coping strategies to meet the needs of these Black women. Expectantly, this research will spark an interest in all professionals working with Black women, so that they might engage in self-reflection with regards to Black women and the multiracial family, in an attempt to put aside bias and assumptions in order to properly serve these Black women and their families. Lastly, Black women's voices are routinely minimised within the existing academic literature. Thus, perhaps most importantly, this research will give Black women their voices back, so that they can begin to be heard and as a result, become more visible.

#### ***1.10. Motivations for the Current Research***

Since my teenage years, I have been interested in gaining an understanding of the experiences of biracial people. Therefore, initially, I wanted to engage in research which gained an understanding of biracial identity formation and the way that biracial people navigate through a world in which racial categorisation is viewed as the norm. However, as I engaged with the literature within this topic area, I



noticed that there was very little existing academic literature which spoke to the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children within the UK. Thus, I began to believe that there was a race-related bias within the academic literature. It is this belief that first fuelled my desire to carry out the current research, as I hoped that this research will begin to eradicate the race-related bias within the existing academic literature.

In addition, social science understanding of Black mothers is arguably simplistic and stereotypical and as a result, scholars have argued that the academic literature is void in its understanding of Black mothers (Rodriguez, 2016). Thus, Black women are likely to receive less benefit from important research findings that may arise from research which explores their unique experiences. Thus, the current research aims to explore the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children, in the hopes that important research findings arise, that will aid professionals in developing their understanding of Black women, as well as better serving these women.

Finally, most of the academic literature that does explore the experiences of Black women/ mothers focus on their clinical presentations, such as depression (Green, 2019; Steinberg, 2014; Watson & Hunter, 2015), binge-eating disorder (Harrington, Growther & Shipherd, 2010; Lydecker, White & Grilo, 2016; Goode et al, 2020) and post-traumatic stress disorder (Coentre & Power, 2011; Sabri et al, 2013), among other clinical presentations. However, I would argue that it is just as important to gain an understanding of the often-ignored, but everyday experiences of Black women and Black mothers, which is what the current research aims to achieve.

## 2. Methodology

This chapter describes the research process. It begins by discussing the use of qualitative research methodologies and provides a rationale for choosing IPA in answer to the research question: *‘What is the experience of Black mothers raising biracial children in the UK?’* Epistemological and ontological foundations for this research are considered before the research procedure is outlined. An assessment of the quality of this research is then undertaken before methodological, epistemological and personal reflexivity are explored. Lastly, ethical considerations regarding this research are discussed. Appendices will be referred to throughout this chapter to aid readers in gaining a clearer understanding of the research process.

### 2.1. Why A Qualitative Methodology?

Qualitative research aims to gain a wholesome understanding of one’s lived experience (Creswell, 2014) and therefore, qualitative methodology is likely to be used instead of quantitative methodology when attempting to gain a rich and thorough understanding of an individual’s lived experience (Tracy, 2013).

Qualitative research seeks to gain an understanding of one’s perception of a particular phenomenon and attempts to interpret this, while taking into consideration the meanings that people attribute to their experiences (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014).

As research into the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children is currently sparse, I felt that undertaking research that was rooted in a qualitative

approach would allow a more in-depth exploration of the experiences of these women. Field & Morse (1996) also argue that qualitative research can be particularly advantageous when exploring research areas that are lacking in understanding.

## **2.2. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

This research aims to explore the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children in the UK, through the use of a qualitative methodology. Thus, in an attempt to do this, Interpretive phenomenological analysis was undertaken. The nature of IPA as well as why it was chosen as an appropriate methodology for the current research will be examined.

### **2.2.1. *Why IPA?***

Initially, IPA was utilised as a qualitative approach for exploring health, clinical and counselling psychology, however, today IPA is argued to be one of the most useful qualitative methodologies used within the field of psychology (Eatough & Smith, 2017). More recently, IPA has been used as an approach to analysing qualitative data for a variety of mental health and wellbeing topics (Davies, Mallows & Hoare, 2016; Dingle, Brander, Ballantyne & Baker, 2012; Shaw, Dallos & Shoebridge, 2009; MacDonald & McSherry, 2011; Faulkner & Bee, 2017). For this research, IPA was considered to be a sound method of analysis, as IPA is argued to be appropriate when researching at an early stage of unexplored phenomenon (Kay & Kingston, 2002) as was the case for the current research. In addition, IPA is said to be useful when the phenomenon under study is more

personal (Kay & Kingston, 2002) and when the phenomenon under study may be emotion-laden (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). A review of the literature suggested that White women raising biracial children often experience a lack of belonging (Barn, 1999) as well as feelings of being criticised (McKenzie, 2013). I would argue that Black mothers raising biracial children may also experience similar emotions and it felt important to have these emotions heard and recognised. Therefore, I would argue that it was especially appropriate to utilise IPA as a research methodology, as IPA can provide insight into a participant's personal but perhaps, often ignored, experiences through an in-depth and personal analysis (Kay & Kingston, 2002).

Other methods of inquiry were considered in the adoption of a qualitative method but these were not chosen in favour of IPA, which was more compatible with the chosen epistemology and ontology and seemed to be most beneficial in attaining the data needed to explore the experiences of Black mothers raising their biracial children in the UK.

### ***2.2.2. Defining IPA***

IPA is an approach to qualitative research that is concerned with gaining an in-depth understanding of a unique experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA is informed by hermeneutics, which is the theory of interpretation, IPA is underpinned by phenomenology, meaning that it is concerned with understanding the lived experience and IPA is idiographic, which suggests that it seeks to understand the unique experience of each individual (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Data collection for IPA is often (but not limited to) semi-structured

interviews and transcripts of each interview are analysed individually, systematically and qualitatively (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The analysis is then presented as a detailed narrative account, which is coupled with extracts from interviews conducted with participants (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

### ***2.2.3. Intellectual Origins of IPA***

#### *2.2.3.1. IPA's Phenomenological Approach*

The first major theoretical underpinning of IPA comes from phenomenology, which is the study of lived experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Husserl defined the intention of phenomenology as an attempt to “describe how the world is formed and experienced through consciousness” (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p. 3). The work of philosopher Heidegger is best linked to this research, as Heidegger argues that humans are always within context and are inseparable from the world in which we reside (Hepburn, Heidegger, Macquarrie & Robinson, 1964). As humans are embedded within this world, Heidegger coined the term ‘Dasein’, which when translated means ‘being there’ (Eatough & Smith, 2017) and refers to the experience of being in the world (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Heidegger argued that because we are inseparable from the world, during IPA the analyst brings their preconceptions to the encounter with the participant (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). However, Heidegger states that although our biases are always present, it is the task of the researcher to ensure that one’s preconceptions do not create an obstacle throughout the analysis (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Thus, we are to be aware of our preconceptions but these must be put to the side, whilst engaging with participants and data.

#### *2.2.3.2. IPA's Hermeneutic Approach*

The second major theoretical underpinning of IPA arises from hermeneutics, which is the theory of interpretation (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA is rooted in the idea that humans are always trying to make sense of their experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Thus, the account that is given by the participant is said to involve the participant attempting to make sense of their own experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). It has been argued that IPA involves 'Double hermeneutic' (Smith & Osborn, 2003), which is the notion that the researcher is interpreting the participant's interpretation of their experience and therefore, the researcher takes on a dual role of both researcher and participant within the research process (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Ricoeur (1975) suggests that there are two types of hermeneutics. The first is the hermeneutic of empathy, which aims to amplify meaning contained within the text (Ricoeur, 1975). Conversely, the second type of hermeneutics is that of suspicion, in which the aim is to reveal deeper hidden meaning (Ricoeur, 1975). However, it is suggested that analysis requires a multi-layered approach, as both suspicious and empathic hermeneutics offer different types of knowledge and together provide both understanding and explanation of a phenomenon (Ricoeur, 1975). It has been argued that this is the motivation behind the hermeneutic circle.

The hermeneutic circle acknowledges the notion that we experience an encounter, which we make sense of through our preconceptions (Schmidt, 2009). However, during the encounter, our ideas and assumptions evolve to incorporate the knowledge of this encounter (Schmidt, 2009). This idea is further exemplified by the notion of parts and whole. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) suggest that to

understand a part (the individual participant experience) one must understand the whole (the shared participant experience) and vice-versa, as this allows the possibility for a new understanding of experience.

#### *2.2.3.3. IPA's Idiographic Approach*

The last major influence on IPA comes from idiography, which is concerned with making claims with regards to the unique individual (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), rather than generalising claims from one participant's experience to the general population (Eatough & Smith, 2017). As IPA utilises small sample sizes, each participants experience can be explored in an idiographic manner, before looking for commonalities and links across each participant's data set (Eatough, & Smith, 2017). Thus, IPA commits to gaining a rich and in-depth understanding of each participant's individual and unique experience and attempts to gain an insight into how each individual interprets these experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). This warrants an in-depth, systematic analysis and seeks to gain an understanding of particular people, from certain contexts who have experienced a specific phenomenon (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

#### *2.2.3.4. IPA, An Interrogative Tool*

IPA aims to use an interrogative stance to generate its findings and attempts to do this by emphasising the role of cognition. IPA suggests that cognitions are a salient part of lived experience and are communicated and therefore known through language (Smith, 2004). Thus, language plays an integral role in the way in which the researcher is able to gain an understanding of the participants lived

experience. However, in using IPA the researcher is also able to gain an understanding of the participants lived experience, by taking into account the participant's body language and nonverbal communication. Thus, IPA aims to utilise thoughts, feelings, nonverbal and verbal communication as part of the analysis process.

I chose to utilise IPA for this research because IPA is said to allow the researcher to gain great insight into the participant's world and aids participants in reflecting, exploring and interpreting their own lived experience, perhaps in a way that they had not done so previously. There was a great need for this research to utilise a qualitative methodology which took into account identity, the participants own interpretation of their experiences, bodily feelings and nonverbal communication, in the way that IPA does (Chapman & Smith, 2002). For the participants within this research, their experience of Black racial identity and Black motherhood seemed to have influenced the way that they related to and chose to raise their biracial children and IPA allows these experiences to be explored. In this manner, IPA shares similarities with the psychological/ therapeutic relationship, which will be further discussed.

#### *2.2.3.5. IPA and Counselling Psychology*

IPA aims to help both researcher and participant gain an insight into the meanings that participants attach to their unique experiences. This can be likened to the counselling psychology approach, as counselling psychologists attempt to gain an understanding of their client's experiences and help clients to make sense of these experiences.



As aforementioned, IPA utilises both suspicious and empathic hermeneutics. This is also reflected in the field of counselling psychology. As it is often the counselling psychologist's commitment to uncovering evidence and explanation (suspicion) on the one hand and recognition of the need to understand the subjective experience (empathy) on the other hand, which provides a better understanding of a particular phenomenon.

IPA research also enables counselling psychologists to gain a more in-depth understanding of varying difficulties that have the potential to arise in counselling psychology settings. Thus, IPA research aids psychologists and clients, as it can provide psychologists with a better understanding of a client's unique experience, which in turn can also aid the client in feeling more understood.

William & Hill (2001) argue that qualitative research can help professionals to link theory and practice. In addition, Morrow (2007) suggests that qualitative methods hold great promise in providing more information in regards to both process and outcome research. As a qualitative approach, IPA allows counselling psychologists to carry out research that is in line with their interests (Ponterotto, 2005) and can potentially provide a better understanding of therapeutic alliance and relational dynamics. Lastly, Ponterotto (2005) argues that counselling psychology could grow and evolve through the use of qualitative methods, such as IPA.

### ***2.3. Alternative Qualitative Methodologies***

Though IPA was chosen as an appropriate methodology for the current research, various methodologies were considered prior to the research process commencing.

In particular, the use of grounded theory and discourse analysis were considered at most length. Thus, we will consider the use of these approaches in relation to the research question.

### *2.3.1. Grounded Theory*

Numerous qualitative methodologies were considered in order to answer the research question. The use of Grounded theory (GT) (Glaser, Strauss & Strutzel, 1968) was considered at most length, as I have adopted a critical realist view and therefore, argue that society exists as both a subjective and objective reality, which is compatible with the recent adaptations of GT (Oliver, 2011). However, GT constructs theory and seeks to explain experience (Thomas, 2012), which is in contrast to IPA, as IPA aims to capture, interpret and derive meaning from one's experience, rather than creating a theoretical account (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Arguably, experience is already meaningful, even in the absence of theory and the nature of IPA, (in that it allows us to gain an understanding of an experience rather than generating a theoretical account that explains the experience), is of more importance to my research question. Thus, IPA appeared to be more compatible than GT in answering my research question, as I desire to explore, understand and derive meaning from the unique lived experiences of my participants. Still, this IPA research will perhaps enrich the development of future GT accounts.

### *2.3.2. Discourse Analysis*

Discourse analysis (DA) was also considered as a methodology. Discourse analysts state that language itself has no meaning, but rather, through the use of mutually agreed language, the meaning is created (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Thus, the objective of DA is to interpret how language functions in a particular context and seeks to understand how an individual's experience is socially and historically constructed through the language that is used (Dijk, 1985). Unlike IPA, in which, gaining an understanding of the participants lived experience is the aim, which is achieved by taking into account the participant's verbal and nonverbal communication. DA is concerned with the social and historical context, as subjective experience is argued to be constructed by language (Dijk, 1985). However, Willig (2001) states that language alone cannot provide a true understanding of one's experience and is not the only method of communication. DA also focuses on interaction rather than content, therefore, there is a lot of caution regarding inferring any meaning about the phenomena itself (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Conversely, I would argue that subjective experience exists independently of language and therefore I would disagree with the idea that we must interpret language alone to understand the subjective experience. This piece of research seeks to infer meaning and gain an understanding of how Black women understand their experiences of raising biracial children. Thus, DA was deemed an inappropriate research methodology to use for the current research, as it felt more important to explore and interpret the experience itself, rather than focusing on the way that it was discussed.

Lastly, the idiographic nature of IPA appeared to be highly compatible with my chosen epistemology, ontology and the theory of intersectionality. IPA is compatible with my chosen epistemology (Black feminist thought), as this epistemology regards Black women as unique ‘agents of knowledge’ (Dotson, 2015 p.2350). IPA is also compatible with my ontological position (critical realism), which acknowledges that there is a subjective element to reality (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Additionally, IPA is compatible with the theory of intersectionality (this is used as a lens within the current research). The theory of intersectionality is concerned with Black women’s multiple and overlapping identities, which are said to produce unique experiences for Black women (Adam & Lott, 2019). Crenshaw (1989) suggests that if we do not use intersectional theory, then we cannot gain a complete understanding of Black women’s idiosyncratic experiences. Therefore, this research uses intersectional theory in order to gain a more wholesome understanding of Black women’s unique experiences. This is in line with IPA, which also recognises the participant’s experience as idiosyncratic. Thus, although the use of GT and DA were considered at much length, IPA seemed more compatible with the epistemological, ontological and theoretical underpinnings of the current research. Therefore, IPA was deemed to be most fitting as a methodology in answer to the research question.

## **2.4. Epistemological and Ontological Foundations of Research**

The epistemological stance taken was Black feminist epistemology by Collins (2000). This stance views Black women as unique ‘agents of knowledge’

(Dotson, 2015 p. 2350) and aims to gain an understanding of Black women's subjective experiences and perceptions of their social worlds within context (Collins, 2015). The assumptions of this epistemology that underpin my research question are as follows:

The first assumption is 'first-hand experience as a measure of meaning' (Collins, 2015). This tenet implies that there are two ways in which one can know, which is either through knowledge (for example, book knowledge) or wisdom (for example, though lived experience) and states that living particularly as a Black woman requires wisdom. Collins (2015), argues that the knowledge of Black women who have lived and endured experiences are more valid in comparison to the experiences of those who have merely read about such experiences. Arguably, this wisdom is gained only through experience and what are known as 'practical images', which involves using examples from one's own life experiences (for example, referring to the muscles in one's arms, in order to symbolise how hard working one has had to be throughout their life) to create meaning (Collins, 2015), thus a direct experience is more meaningful than indirect experience.

The abovementioned tenet implies that exploring these Black women's unique interpretations of their first-hand experiences can provide meaningful, in-depth knowledge about their perception of a particular phenomenon. This tenet is compatible with IPA, as IPA aims to gain insight into a particular experience, from individuals who are believed to be the experts of such experiences. IPA also recognises the subjectivity and uniqueness of each participant (Langdridge, 2004) and attempts to draw meaning from peoples understanding of their experiences, through interpretation (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

The second tenet is the ‘assessment of knowledge claims through dialogue’, this tenet suggests that communication must be a two-way process, as Black feminist epistemology argues that, knowledge claims often arise through communication with others and in times of connectedness, (Collins, 2000). The research question is answered through the use of IPA, via the use of interviews, in which the aim was to facilitate an interaction between myself and the participant, which encouraged the participant to tell their story (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). This, according to Black feminist thought, is essential, as knowledge claims seldom arise in times of isolation (Collins, 2000).

The third tenet is ‘the ethic of caring’ and outlines a way of being with participants which is argued to be central to knowledge validation (such as placing importance on individual expression and uniqueness, as well as the need for the researcher to be expressive and show empathy to participants, so that they feel comfortable expressing themselves), as empathy is argued to be a vital component in the creation of meaning, as this promotes honesty (Collins, 2015). In attempting to address the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children, I hoped that my position as a Black woman, coupled with my professional training and standing, would enable me to empathise with participants. Additionally, as emotional experience is argued to be one of the most salient themes within IPA research (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), all interviews were held in person, which allowed the participant and I to witness each other’s facial expressions, body language and tone. This aided me in gaining an in-depth understanding of each participant’s experience and if the participant’s found it difficult to reflect, I

provided empathy which encouraged them to feel safe and aided them in speaking more about their difficulties.

The last tenet is ‘the ethic of accountability’, which arises during the interpretation of research (Collins, 2015). It is argued that assessing one’s knowledge claims requires an evaluation of one’s character, beliefs and values because the researcher is said to have assumptions and values which are essential to the process (Collins, 2015). Thus, there is argued to be accountability of the researcher and their claims in regards to the interpretations of the participant’s experiences. With regard to IPA, this assumption ties in well with the work of Heidegger, who argues that it is impossible not to bring one’s preconceptions and prior experiences to an encounter (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). However, it is the job of the researcher, to be aware of these biases, but give priority to the participant and their data (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA helps to achieve awareness of one’s preconceptions by encouraging the researcher to engage in personal reflexivity throughout the entirety of the research process (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

I have chosen this epistemological approach because it resonates with my stance and methodological approach as a researcher, particularly as I am a Black female researcher, exploring the experiences of Black female participants. With regards to IPA, it can account for an individual's lived experience as partly a result of the society or community in which they live, as Black feminist thought does. Thus, I am suggesting that each participant’s lived experience is going to be partly created by their experience of being a Black woman/mother in a society in which being

Black and female makes some ways of being possible, but perhaps not all ways of being. In this case, this is dependent on a 21st Century British society. However, I acknowledge that perhaps different societies could have different effects. Thus, the use of IPA alongside Black feminist thought appears to be a fitting research approach, as both allow the experience of each participant to be fully expressed and honestly represented.

Additionally, for this piece of research, I have decided to take a ‘critical realist’ ontology (Bhaskar, 1979). It has been argued that the only objective knowledge that humans have, must be attained through the process of consciousness, as this is the way in which we encounter the world (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006) (a realist position). However, some lived experience will be subjective and due to outside influences, such as the effects of living within a particular context. As Heidegger states that humans are an essential part of a meaningful world, we, therefore, can only be truly understood as a function of our various involvements with the world and the meaningful world is also a fundamental part of us (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006) (a critical position). It is this critical element that I will be using Black Feminist thought as a lens to look through in regards to the current research. Although I acknowledge that there is an objective element to the world, I am interested in gaining an understanding of the subjective person in context, which includes people’s interpretations of their experiences. Thus, I have chosen to utilise IPA, as it aims to gain an understanding of the experience of the person within context and considers the meaning of these experiences (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006).



## 2.5. Procedure

### 2.5.1. Sampling Considerations and Participants

The sample size is nine participants (participant demographics table can be found in figure one), as Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) state that IPA studies can be conducted using small sample sizes. As IPA has an idiographic focus, the aim was to recruit fewer participants and interview in a more in-depth manner. As the experience of Black mothers raising biracial children has been neglected within research, arguably, the evidence base would benefit more from richer data rather than more data with lesser quality. I also utilised purposive sampling, which allowed me to gather a homogenous sample of participants who felt that the research question was significant to them. Participants demographic table can be found in figure one below. A profile of the participants can also be found in Appendix B.

Participant pseudonym	Participants age	Participant's self-identified race & ethnicity	Age & gender of participants biracial child(ren)
Simone (pilot)	28 years	Black Caribbean	(One daughter), aged 8
Amaka	29 years	Black African & Caribbean	(One son), aged 9
Anna	53 years	Black Caribbean	(One daughter), aged 24
Cara	49 years	Black Caribbean	(Five children), three sons aged 15, 10 & 8. Two daughters aged 17 and 12
Debbie	43 years	Black African	(One son), aged 11
Gloria	63 years	Black African	(One daughter), aged 25
Lisa	40 years	Black African	(Three children), two sons aged 14 & 8. One daughter aged 6.
Ola	43 years	Black Caribbean	(Two children), a son aged 8 & a daughter aged 4
Rebecca	31 years	Black Caribbean	(Two children), a son aged 8 & a daughter aged 5
Sharon	39 years	Black Caribbean	(One son), aged 14

*Figure 1: Participant demographics table*

All participants were above the age of 18, and self-identified as a monoracial Black (African and/or Caribbean descent) biological mother of a biracial person, of eight years or above. All participants resided in the UK and were available to attend a face to face interview. Exclusion criteria were also used to ensure that participants were able to participate and to rule out any ethical reasons, (such as age or having a severe mental health or learning difficulty) as to why potential participants should be unable to participate. Exclusion criteria included: Mothers who identified as any race other than Black, foster mothers, mothers absent from their children's lives for more than three years during their early developmental years, mothers who lived outside of the UK, mothers below the age of 18 years, mothers with an eldest biracial child who was under the age of eight years old, mothers suffering from mental health issues and mothers who were unavailable for face to face interviews. Exclusion criteria were assessed during telephone screening (Inclusion/Exclusion criteria can be found in Appendix C, telephone screening protocol can be found in Appendix D).

Participants were recruited via flyer advertisements that were posted in a variety of locations such as in local Caribbean takeaways, nail shops and hair-dressers, as well as on social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat and through word of mouth in order to reach a wide variety of people (research advertisement can be found in Appendix E). Participants who contacted me received an information sheet via email. After 24 hours (during which the participant could familiarise themselves with the information), I then arranged a screening phone call to determine eligibility. This also allowed potential participants the

opportunity to ask questions. Once it was identified that participants met the criteria, semi-structured-interviews (SSI) were then arranged.

### ***2.5.2. Materials***

#### *2.5.2.1. Information Sheets*

Participants who contacted me received an information sheet via email and had at least 24 hours to familiarise themselves with the information. Information sheets provided a summary, aims, procedures and possible risks of the research as well as eligibility information and information regarding how to contact myself (the researcher) and my supervisor (Information sheet can be found in Appendix F).

#### *2.5.2.2. Informed Consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before SSI's took place to ensure that they had a sound understanding of the research. Consent forms addressed the ethical considerations of confidentiality, right to withdraw and data storage. Participants had the opportunity to ask any questions and check their understanding of the research before signing consent forms. (see Appendix G for informed consent form).

#### *2.5.2.3. Debrief Forms*

Once the interview was complete, participants were given debrief forms. Debrief forms contained external links and resources, the Samaritan number and

emergency NHS 111 and 999 numbers for further support if needed. Forms also included references and information in the case that participants wanted to embark on further exploration of the topic area. (see Appendix H for debrief form).

#### *2.5.2.4. Recording Materials*

A digital voice recorder was utilised to record interviews and recordings were then transferred to a laptop and data was anonymised. These files were stored securely and the laptop was password-protected, which only I had access to. The recordings were safely deleted after the submission of the thesis.

### *2.5.3. Interview Process and Schedule*

#### *2.5.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews*

The research methodology that was utilised within this research were SSI's, as this is a commonly used method within IPA and gives the participant a voice (Flowers, Larkin & Reid, 2005). It has been argued that SSI's are good data collection methods when attempting to explore beliefs, values and attitudes (Smith, 1975), as they allow the researcher to build a rapport with the participant, which can generate a better understanding of data (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). SSI's are argued to allow interviews to be structured but flexible, which permits a degree of comparability between interviews (Scratchfield & Bailey, 1988) and allows the researcher to probe participants to elaborate, which gives rise to richer narratives of each participant's experience.

The initial interview questions were based on aims of the research and therefore intended to gain insight into the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. Throughout interviews, open-questions coupled with probes were utilised to gain clarification and increase nuance and richness of the data. (See Appendix I for interview schedule). The interview schedule was created as a result of exploring the literature in regards to the experience of Black motherhood. Questions regarding participant's own Black racial identity were also asked, as were questions around Black motherhood and the experiences of both joys and challenges in regards to raising biracial children were included within the interview schedule.

#### *2.5.3.2. The Pilot Interview*

The interview schedule was piloted and reviewed to develop the interview schedule to ensure the research question was being answered adequately. One participant was recruited for this pilot interview through word of mouth referral. Having reflected on the outcome of the pilot interview, I realised that I had been so focused on being 'objective' as a researcher, that I had hindered the research process as I had been unable to build a good rapport with this participant. Listening to the interview, I felt that I came across as unfeeling. I did not seem interested in gaining an understanding of this participant's experience (even though I was very much interested in this). This taught me to be more like myself throughout the interviews that followed and although I remained professional, I was able to come across as more understanding and relatable, which allowed me to more deeply explore each participant's experience.

#### ***2.5.4. The Analytic Procedure of IPA***

The first step of IPA began once the interviews had been conducted and transcribed. I first ‘immersed’ myself into the data by reading transcripts, listening to interview-audios and making note of salient interview-observations (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Step two involved the development of my initial notes (which included descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments), with the aim of developing a more comprehensive set of notes in regards to the data (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

During step three I attempted to reduce the amount of detail whilst maintaining the complexity of the notes by making connections across the initial notes in order to create ‘themes.’ A ‘theme’ is defined by Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009, p. 92) as a “concise and pithy statement of what was important in the various comments attached to a piece of the transcript”. Once the initial themes had emerged, I began step four, in which an initial table of themes was created (an example of an initial table of themes can be found in Appendix J ), this involved organising themes in a way that I believed fitted together and discarding themes that failed to answer the research question (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Once each of the above steps was complete, I moved onto each of the remaining participant’s transcripts and repeated steps one to four (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). I ensured that I treated each case individually in order to uphold IPA’s idiographic underpinnings (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). (A segment of analysis of transcript can be found in Appendix K).

During the fifth step I looked for patterns across all cases by comparing each table of themes (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) and in particular, I looked for themes that most powerfully answered the research question. During this stage it was helpful to differentiate between emergent ‘superordinate themes’ and ‘subthemes.’ Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009, p. 101) define superordinate themes as “higher-order concepts” which the majority if not all of the cases shared, whereas subthemes are defined as themes that sit within superordinate themes and could be different across cases (a table of superordinate and subthemes, with participant extracts, can be found in Appendix L). The final step of analysis involved identifying patterns across cases, through the use of a visual aid (cross-analysis visual aid can be found in Appendix M) and creating a finalised table of themes (which can be found in Appendix N), which illustrated the positioning of both emergent superordinate themes and subthemes within the analysis (Smith, Flowers & Larkin 2009)

Throughout the process of analysis, I attempted to bracket. Fischer (2009) argues that Bracketing involves acknowledging and then putting assumptions, interests, personal experiences and beliefs, aside (Fischer, 2009). Thus, within IPA, my feelings regarding the analysed cases were bracketed, so that I could analyse the next case sufficiently and then I identified patterns across cases (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

#### ***2.5.5. An Evaluation of IPA***

Although IPA is increasingly being used as an approach to qualitative inquiry (Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009), some have argued that there are limitations to

using this approach. One such limitation is the focus on perception when using IPA, as the aim is to gain an understanding of lived experience. However, IPA fails to explain why these experiences occur (Tuffour, 2017). Willig (2001) argues that research aiming to understand an experience should also shed light on the context that triggered the event. Yet, Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) argue that the nature of IPA, being that it is phenomenological, hermeneutic and idiographic, does indeed, aim to gain an understanding of the person and their experiences within context.

Another limitation of IPA is the question of whether or not the IPA researcher can accurately gain an understanding of the meaning attached to the participant's experience, rather than merely capturing an opinion of it (Tuffour, 2017). Willig (2001) goes on to say that IPA is suitable for the researcher and participant who are both able to communicate effectively, in which case the details of experiences can be understood. To overcome this Tuffour (2017) argues that we must take extra care to collect rich data and be attentive to the participant.

Lastly, Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) recognise that gaining an understanding of the lived experience takes place within the context of language. As a result, IPA heavily relies on the participant's ability to be able to effectively articulate their experiences to the researcher. Special attention must be given to this limitation of IPA, as not all individuals are capable of utilising language as a vehicle of communication and therefore these individuals may find it challenging to express the nuances of their experiences. Thus, we must be attuned to the participant through both verbal and non-verbal language in order to gain an in-depth understanding of each participant's experience in a more accurate and wholesome way.



## **2.6. Assessing the Quality of the Research**

There has been much debate concerning the assessment of the quality of qualitative research (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), in particular, Lucy Yardley (2000) has put forth four well-known principles in order to assess the quality of qualitative research.

The first principle is 'sensitivity to context', in which Yardley (2000) states the ways that sensitivity to context can be established. The first way is sensitivity to the context of theory (Yardley 2000). There exists no academic literature pertaining to the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children in the UK. However, I have studied the existing literature within this topic area, to gain an awareness of the literature that currently exists within this area of investigation. Thus, sensitivity to the context of theory was undertaken for the current research.

Yardley (2000) also suggests that sensitivity to the socio-cultural setting of the study is important in regard to context, as the function and meaning of all phenomena are argued to be rooted in social interaction, language and culture (Yardley, 2000). The current research investigates the experiences of Black British women within the UK and recognises that findings generated from exploring these women's experiences are dependent on a 21<sup>st</sup> Century, multiracial/multicultural British context and therefore understands that findings are not fully applicable to Black women within different contexts. Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009), also states that IPA researchers provide sensitivity to context, as the rationale to use IPA is centred around idiography, which is concerned with making claims regarding the unique individual in their unique context.

Lastly, Yardley (2000) states that the researcher may show sensitivity to context through an appreciation of the relationship between researcher and participant. It is said that the researcher contributes to what the participant divulges through verbal and nonverbal cues (Yardley, 2000). Thus, I have had to be sensitive and tentative with regards to the language that I use. Throughout interviews, I was also very much aware of my body language and attempted to maintain a neutral posture throughout. As a researcher conducting IPA, I have had to be aware of the interview process, which required me to be empathic, to negotiate power dynamics and recognise and understand difficulties within the interview process (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Yardley's (2000) second principle for assessing the quality of qualitative research is commitment and rigour. Commitment can be understood as a lengthy engagement with the topic under study (Yardley, 2000). I have demonstrated commitment as I have engaged with this topic of research for approximately three and a half years, during which time I remained committed to the research process. My commitment can also be demonstrated through my use of IPA, as IPA requires the researcher to be attentive to the participant during the interview process, through diligent analysis and competence (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Rigour refers to the thoroughness of the study (Yardley, 2000). Rigour is demonstrated within this research throughout each stage of the research process (for example, through the homogenous sample of participants who were recruited for this research, in the quality of the interviews that were conducted and throughout the rich and in-depth analysis). In addition, I redrafted all materials

that were used as well as chapters of this thesis on multiple occasions, until the research was rigorous.

Yardley's (2000) third principle of the quality of research is transparency and coherence, this principle applies to research during write up and presentation stages. Transparency refers to the clarity of stages within the process of research (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). I have maintained transparency throughout the research process by providing detailed stages of the entire research process. My commitment to transparency is illustrated through my use of appendixes as well as in-depth details of my thought process throughout the research project, which is demonstrated within my research journal and step by step details of the analytic procedure used.

Conversely, coherence refers to the research being logical and consistent throughout (Yardley, 2000). This research is coherent as the research question, epistemological and ontological positions fit together coherently. The themes that have been generated from the analysis marry together and answer the research question and the implications and conclusions for this research are presented in a logical fashion.

Yardley's (2000) fourth principle of quality of qualitative research is 'impact and importance'. Yardley (2000) suggests that the theoretical and practical impact of research is known by whether or not the reader learns useful or interesting information from the research. Impact and importance of research can also be known by whether or not a new way of understanding the topic is uncovered and if perspectives are challenged (Yardley, 2000). As stated above, there is no existing literature pertaining to the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial

children within the context of the UK. Thus, the current research offers the existing literature important and novel findings. These findings shed light on the impact of Black female identity on raising a biracial child and highlights the importance of taking into consideration Black women's multiple overlapping identities and how these identities shape their realities. Findings also shed light on the challenges that Black mothers can experience as a result of raising biracial children. These findings may aid professionals in working with Black women raising biracial children or more broadly speaking, findings could aid professionals in working with multiracial families.

## **2.7. Reflexivity**

### ***2.7.1. Methodological Reflexivity***

IPA, like other qualitative approaches, places a large amount of importance on epoche throughout the research process (Kim, 2010). Epoche is described as bracketing or suspending judgement regarding the phenomenon that is under study (Moustaka, 2010). This is because the purpose is for the researcher to engage with the research with as little preconceptions as possible so that the researcher is as open as they possibly can be to gaining an understanding of the participant's experience (Moustaka, 2010). Moustaka (1994) argues that it is not possible for one to bracket all preconceptions and therefore, it is impossible to ever truly achieve complete epoche. However, I strived towards achieving epoche through the use of reflexivity journals, personal therapy and research supervision. I did this in an attempt to separate my preconceptions from each participant's

lived experience, in order to understand the participants lived experience and their inner worlds more objectively.

Spradley (1979) argued that the use of a reflective research journal could aid the researcher in acknowledging their preconceptions and the ways in which these preconceptions could potentially impact research. Lincoln & Guba (1985) also suggested that reflective research journals can be useful for researchers, as this can aid them in exploring, creating multiple meanings and becoming aware of interpretations that are potentially rooted in bias. My research journal and personal therapy allowed me to reflect on the reasons that I decided to conduct this research and aided me in considering my personal values as a Black woman which could impact my research. I found that research supervision was also particularly helpful in uncovering some of the assumptions that I had about this research. Also, supervision reminded me not to assume that I knew the participant's experience and aided me in remaining focused on the research question at all times.

### ***2.7.2. Epistemological Reflexivity***

Reflexivity in regard to feminist epistemology explores the power dynamics within the research process (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007, as cited in Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas & Caricativo, 2017), which examines the ways in which gender-based differences impact research. Dowling (2006, as cited in Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas & Caricativo, 2017), suggests that it is important to be reflexive throughout any piece of research, which utilises feminist epistemology. This is because the researcher must be able to identify with her female participants

and must, therefore, be aware of her own preconceptions throughout the research process (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas & Caricativo, 2017).

Hesse-Biber & Piatelli (2007, as cited in Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas & Caricativo, 2017) suggests that this type of reflexivity works under the assumption that there exists a partnership within feminist research between researcher and participant. Thus, researchers must be reflexive as this can create a more complete and in-depth understanding of the participant's experience, which is particularly important for the feminist research of those who are marginalised or oppressed (Hurd, 1998).

Many feminist researchers use intersubjectivity reflection, which involves the researcher reflecting on themselves in relation to the participants (Hurd, 1998). Researchers utilising intersubjectivity reflection may spend time considering their emotional investment in the research, as well as the relationship that they have with the participants and how this may impact the research process (Hurd, 1998). I have reflected on my investment and passion for this research area, my insider/outsider status and on myself in relation to each of my participants. I have been able to do this through the use of a reflective journal and during fortnightly personal therapy and research supervision sessions.

### ***2.7.3. Personal Reflexivity***

#### *2.7.3.1. The Conception of This Research*

During my childhood, I was very aware of the prejudice that was directed towards my biracial cousin, by her own Black father, as well as by other members of our

extended family. As a result, in later life, I developed an interest in the potential impact of racial prejudice on biracial identity, as well as other potential factors that could shape biracial identity formation, for example, family influences (Crawford & Alaggia, 2008; Poston, 1990), society and context (Perkins, 2013), Labelling (Talbot, 2008) and sense of belonging (Kelcholiver & Leslie, 2007). As I submerged myself within the literature within this topic area, I noticed that there was little existing academic literature exploring the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. Thus, I believed that there was a race-related bias towards Black women, as they had been neglected within the literature. This left me feeling Angry. I felt angry because I did not expect this bias to be present within the academic literature, as I felt that it should be of equal importance to gain an understanding of Black women's experiences of raising biracial children and therefore expected to see at the very least, one or two pieces of literature exploring this phenomenon. However, this was not the case. Still, once I had reflected on my emotional investment in this topic area, my feelings of anger were converted into a feeling of duty, which through continual reflection I was able to acknowledge and bracket. I chose to conduct this research, in order to begin to eradicate the race-related bias that exists within the current academic literature, to give these Black mothers a voice and to gain empirical insight into this under-researched phenomenon. It is my hope that through this research we are able to gain a better understanding of multiracial households and the Black mothers within them.

### *2.7.3.2. Insider/Outsider Perspective*

Arguably, a researcher can be an insider or an outsider with regards to their perspective within the research. Kanuha (2000) states that a researcher is an insider when they are conducting research with populations of people, of which they are also members. Equally, an outsider is argued to be a researcher who is conducting research with a population of which they are not members. For this research, I would argue that I am both an insider and an outsider.

#### Insider Status

Insider status is said to aid researchers in quickly creating a rapport with participants and is argued to promote acceptance between participant and researcher (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). As an insider, I may have impacted research as the participant may have perceived me as their ingroup. Arguably, this could have aided me in building a rapport with the participants and being more accepted by them than an outsider might have been, which could have resulted in richer data collection.

On the other hand, being an insider could also have posed a challenge to the research. Upon reflection, I realise that during my pilot interview, at times I over-identified with the participant by assuming that I understood the meaning that this participant attributed to her experiences. Throughout this interview, I responded to the participant by saying “I know...” and “I understand...”, which, in hindsight, may have hindered the participant in being able to express herself. In which case, I seemed to have fallen ‘victim to the seduction of sameness’ (Oguntokun, 1998). However, having reflected on this (through use of research supervision in



particular), I realise that it was important for me to acknowledge but put aside my understanding of what I believed the participant was saying. I did this in order to allow space for the participant's narrative to naturally unfold and so that I could (more objectively) continue to explore participants experiences with them. I also came to understand that just because I am also a Black female, does not mean that myself and the participants will have the same experiences. I came to understand through reflection that my status as a Black woman did not provide special insight into my participant's experiences of raising biracial children as Black women.

In addition, I engaged in personal therapy and utilised a reflexive journal which both aided me in bracketing many preconceptions that I held about Black women and the attributes of Black racial identity. As a result, themes such as strength, culture and language emerged (in relation to Black racial identity), which I was able to reflect on with my psychologist and within my journal. Thus, when interviewing participants, I was able to develop a greater awareness of what belonged to me, what belonged to the participants and what belonged to us both. I would argue that as a result, my own ideas regarding what it meant to me to be a Black woman had less of an effect on my engagement with participants. I would also argue that the use of personal therapy and the reflexivity journal made me much more aware of my Black racial identity. I would argue that as a result of undertaking this research, my race has become a much more salient part of my identity and I feel increasingly connected to my fellow Black female community. I realise now that my intersectional positioning (particularly my female gender identity and Black racial identity) impacts every part of my life and is indeed a lens through which I interact with and understand the world.

### Outsider Status

The outsider status is believed to aid researchers in remaining objective. However, there is often a concern from participants that the researcher who is an outsider will not fully have the ability to understand and appreciate the participants lived experience (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). In regard to this research, I acknowledge that I am not a mother. Therefore, I could not truly understand the experience of raising a biracial child as a Black mother. In addition, during the time of data collection, I was engaging in a monoracial Black relationship. Thus, I could not fully appreciate the experience of engaging in a Black-White interracial relationship. Yet, no participant asked me if I was a mother, nor was I asked about my relationship status. Furthermore, after interviews, participants did not express that I appeared unable to understand their experience but rather, most expressed that the interview had been a valuable experience for them. In addition, I was able to build strong rapports with all nine participants and I attribute this to my insider status and my empathic, genuine and accepting interview style.

### **2.8. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from City University, London, prior to commencing research (ethics application and ethical approval can be found in Appendix O). An ethics form was submitted to two members of staff. This form included information about the nature of the research and aims and procedures for this research. Research also complied with British Psychological society ethical guidelines (BPS, 2014).

All nine participants were screened to ensure that they met the inclusion criteria for this research and received information sheets. Participants who were recruited were above the age of 18, with no currently reported mental health problems. Informed consent was attained prior to interviews taking place. Participants were made aware that their interviews would be recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes and participants were told that all data collected would be kept in a secure cabinet and on a password-protected computer, which only I had access to. All interview locations were public but were private enough to conduct the interview in an environment that respected the ethical principle of confidentiality, for example, in library rooms.

Participant confidentiality was also maintained throughout the research process, as participant identifiable information was protected via the use of pseudonyms. I did not foresee any physical or psychological harm to participants as a result of this research taking place. Still, participants were given the right to withdraw at any point prior to the submission of this thesis, without repercussions. Once interviews were complete, participants were verbally debriefed and debrief forms were provided. Participants were also given an adequate amount of time for the debrief to take place, in which the aim was to reduce any emotional distress that was experienced during the interview. Participants did not receive any incentives for taking part in this research and travel expenses were not reimbursed. Lastly, participants were given the option to receive a copy of this research once completed.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

The aim of this research is to conduct a methodologically sound piece of research, which explored the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children in the UK. This research successfully recruited nine participants who were interviewed in a face to face and semi-structured fashion. IPA was then utilised in order to gain a better understanding of each participant's individual experience of raising a biracial child in the UK.

### 3. Analysis

Participants within this research provided detailed accounts of their unique experiences of raising biracial children in the UK. IPA yielded four superordinate themes from the accounts that participants provided, each of which are presented within this analysis. These superordinate themes are as follows: ‘The experience of being a Black woman’, ‘the experience of Black motherhood’, ‘challenging experiences uniquely concerning the Black mother-biracial child dyad’ and ‘biases’. From each theme, two to three subthemes emerged. A table of themes can be found below.

To maintain transparency, throughout the analysis, raw extracts from participants interviews will be provided, coupled with interpretations of these extracts. Within these quotations ellipses “...”, indicate one, two or three missing words, as a result of accidental word repetition of phrases that do not appear to add to the spoken narrative, for example, “kind of...” or “ so yeah...”, Empty brackets “[ ]” were also used to indicate lengthier missing text and commas “,” indicate pauses within participant’s speech.

Superordinate themes	Subthemes
The experience of being a Black woman	Black female identity formation
	Feelings associated with Black racial identity
The experience of Black motherhood	Learned Black mothering
	The experience of support
Challenging experiences uniquely concerning the Black Mother-Biracial child dyad	Experiencing the biracial child as distinct from the self
	Biracial identity development
	Black mother’s concerns about their biracial children
Biases	The experience of microaggressions
	Societal assumptions

*Figure 2: Table of themes*

### **3.1. ‘The Experience of Being a Black Woman’**

This superordinate theme encompasses the experience of identifying as a Black woman by examining the subthemes: ‘Black female identity formation’ and ‘feelings associated with Black racial identity’. This emergent superordinate theme provides a better understanding of the unique experience of identifying as a Black woman, and how this influences the experience of the participants in this research. Thus, this superordinate theme sets the scene and allows us to gain a more wholesome understanding of the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children in the UK.

#### ***3.1.1. ‘Black Female Identity Formation’***

All participants spoke at great length of the different factors that influenced their process of Black racial identity formation. While some participants seemed to have experienced their Black racial identity as innate (nature), others identified that environmental factors were the driving force behind their Black identity formation (nurture). Arguably, the experiences that enabled these participants to develop their Black racial identity would have an impact on the way that these participants experience motherhood and raise their biracial children.

##### ***3.1.1.1. Nurture***

All participants experienced themselves as Black women and three participants attributed this to having learned about Black history whilst growing up.

Cara explained: “*We had to learn about our Black history, we had to learn about great Black figures and so, identifying with all of that and knowing that you actually rightly or wrongly had a bit of a flag to fly for it.*” (Cara: 9, 359-363)

It is interesting to note that Cara’s mother is Caribbean and Cara’s father is Malaysian. Thus, others might suggest that Cara is, in fact, a biracial woman. However, Cara self-identified as a Black Caribbean woman. It seems that she came to identify as a Black woman more so than with her Asian heritage, which she attributed at least partly to learning about Black history throughout her childhood. The phrase ‘flag to fly’ suggests that through learning about Black history, Cara not only began to develop her Black racial identity but also became proud of this part of herself and because of this, she came to identify as a monoracial Black woman. This raises questions about the impact that this might have on the way in which Cara, among other participants (who also experienced a sense of pride in their racial identity), may attempt to help their biracial children to develop their biracial identities. In later sections, a variety of participants did express that they felt pride within their Black racial identity and links were inferred regarding the impact that this may have had on their experience of raising their biracial children.

Two participants spoke about their experiences of racism and prejudice that they felt specifically aided them in *forming* their Black racial identity. These participants expressed that the racism and prejudice that they experienced both at school and in the workplace enabled them to identify as Black women.

Cara highlighted her experience of racial prejudice as a significant contributory factor for identifying as a Black woman:

*“Growing up in, especially in the 80s really, you know, it is quite a racist environment and there, it’s very much pitted against Black people. So, when you’re growing up in school, you are more aware of being Black...And it makes you want to take on being Black. So, you would identify as a Black person because that’s the bit that you need to show.” (Cara: 9, 344-355)*

It could be suggested that because Cara grew up in a school that she experienced as racist, she regularly had to defend her Blackness and because of this, Cara’s Black racial identity became the most salient part of her racial identity, which aided her in identifying as a Black woman. It could be suggested that Cara’s formative responses to racism may be active in her decisions about how she might aid her children in dealing with racism (which becomes evident and is further discussed in later themes) as Cara later explains that she often educates her biracial son about how to cope with racism and prejudice.

Like Cara, Sharon found herself battling against the judgements of others. This happened when Sharon secured a job at a bank, which led, even more so, to her identifying as a Black woman and therefore, forming her Black racial identity:

*“A poignant point was... the way that you speak, people form opinions already on that thing. So, the shocking horror was when you speak to somebody on the phone and then you go and see them, they’re like ‘oh, you sound White’. That’s what I used to get...Because I’m like, how you gonna sound a colour?” (Sharon: 16, 579-590)*

It seems that Sharon found herself identifying as a Black woman even more so when she secured this job, as she was acutely aware that she was a Black woman among the majority of employees who were White men. In addition to this,



Sharon's Black racial identity was perhaps further developed by people's shock, at the fact that she is indeed a Black woman, as she had been told that she did not 'sound' Black on the telephone. It seems that this experience of prejudice may have caused a sense of confusion or hurt, which could have created a negative association with Blackness, but did not. Rather, this experience within the workplace appeared to play a major role in aiding Sharon in forming and further developing her Black racial identity.

Cara referred to the racism that she experienced at school, whereas Sharon spoke of her experience of racial prejudice at work. Yet, both participants acknowledged that these experiences played a role in aiding Black identity formation. Cara, in particular, expressed that these experiences influenced the way in which she tried to raise her biracial children and the way that she attempted to educate her biracial children about racial prejudice.

More than half of the participants also named their culture as a major influence in forming their Black racial identity. Ola referred to her Caribbean heritage, but emphasised her parent's birthplace in the Caribbean:

*"I've been raised... from Caribbean parents, with a strong Caribbean influence growing up, when we were younger we used to go and visit our grandparents abroad, got half brothers and sisters who live in the Caribbean, lots of relatives who are still there, so the influence has always been there about the Caribbean being 'home.'"* (Ola: 16, 565-571)

It appeared as though Ola experienced her racial identity as one that had an extra (Caribbean) dimension, which potentially makes it more complex. Speaking with Ola, it was clear that to some degree she also experienced the Caribbean as

‘home’, as well as the UK and I got the sense that Ola may also want her biracial children to also experience this, which could influence the way in which she chooses to raise her biracial children.

These extracts suggest that some participants were able to develop their Black racial identity as a result of learning about their culture and heritage. Each participant was able to form their Black racial identity through these abovementioned experiences, which will inevitably impact the way in which they experienced and raised their biracial children (which will be discussed in later themes).

#### *3.1.1.2. Nature*

Five of nine participants within this research referred to biological factors (nature), which aided them in developing their Black racial identity. When first asked how she formed her Black racial identity, Ola expressed that she was simply born this way:

*“What do you mean? Just, I was born, I was born that way.” (Ola: 15, 548-549)*

For Ola, identifying as a Black person almost feels predetermined if you are racially Black. It is as if Ola is saying that because she was born as a Black female, she would inevitably grow up to identify as a Black woman. Ola asking me what I mean suggests that her Blackness is deeply ingrained.

This extract also reflects other participants narratives and suggests that some participants did not feel that they had a choice in the way that they racially identified because they were born as Black females. For these participants,

racially identifying as a Black woman felt innate or predetermined from birth, However, it also created a challenge for these mothers in terms of how they aided their children in developing their biracial identity. Ultimately, if these participants experience their racial identity as organic or innate, then their Blackness may not be something that these participants feel that they can teach or instil into their children. Interestingly, in later themes, we find that this *is* something that these participants struggled with when trying to aid their biracial children in forming their biracial identities. Some participants expressed a sense of not knowing how to best aid their children in developing their racial identity and others believed, in a similar way to themselves, that their children would develop their biracial identity organically and/ or would also have this innately within them.

### ***3.1.2. 'Feelings Associated with Black Racial Identity'***

All nine participants expressed their feelings regarding being Black. Mainly two feelings arose when participants spoke about their experiences of identifying as a Black woman: Feelings of pride and strength. It could be argued that the way in which these participants feel pride and strength in their Black racial identity will impact the way that they try to aid their biracial children in valuing their Blackness (which is discussed further in later themes) as these women may experience a desire for their children to value their Blackness.

### 3.1.2.1. Pride

Lisa (along with four other participants) expressed pride within her Black racial identity:

*“I feel now at forty, urm... I feel like I’m the Blackest I’ve ever been [ ] I am so unapologetic about this and I’m not gonna make excuses for it and I’m gonna do Black things and I’m gonna wear my headwrap in these peoples office and I’m going to urm, laugh loudly because that’s how I laugh, I’m going to eat my ethnic foods whenever I want to eat them because they’re my foods...” (Lisa: 13, 449-458)*

Lisa explained that now, at forty years old, she is ‘the Blackest I’ve ever been’, which suggests that at this point in her life, she is the proudest of her Black racial identity. Lisa expressed that she is not going to hide her Blackness, but instead she is confident and is embracing her Black racial identity and because of this, Lisa is the Black woman that she wants to be without regrets. Here, Lisa acknowledges that others may make judgements and appears to be defensive about this, but expresses that she does not care and shows strong links between her Blackness and expressing this through her actions. For Lisa, like many other participants, it felt as though there was a sense of not only pride but confidence in their Black racial identity. These participants did not need to tell me that they were confident and proud of their Black racial identity, as their narratives simply showed it. It is also interesting that some participants placed importance on raising their biracial children to be proud of their Blackness. Perhaps this is rooted in the pride that these participants experience in relation to their own Black racial identity.

### 3.1.2.2.Strength

Four of the nine participants associated their Black racial identity with strength.

Cara recalled a time when she had to attend her younger son's school for a meeting with the headteacher and her sons class teacher and upon reflection, she remembered feeling assertive, dignified and strong:

*“But I was very conscious that I was there as a Black mother. I can become a Black mother if I have to become...I am a Black mother when I have to deal with the children...I am not gonna leave anything. I am gonna get every single answer that I need...I’m gonna make sure you understand what it is I’m telling you and I expect this to be resolved and I expect to never see your face again [ ] But there was a lot of dignity in it because I was a Black woman ... I am a strong Black woman.” (Cara: 33, 1282-1354)*

As Cara spoke, I felt the force of her strength. Cara expressed that she became very conscious of participating in this meeting as a Black mother/woman. The idea that Cara could ‘become’ a Black mother implies that during trying or important times, in which Cara feels that she needs to show strength, she will experience herself as a Black woman. Thus, perhaps during this meeting, in order to protect and defend her child, Cara's Black racial identity became most salient. It is as if Cara wears her Blackness proudly, as a badge of honour. For Cara, it appears that she experiences strength, which is rooted in her Black racial identity. It is also important to note that throughout Cara's interview she emphasised raising her children to be strong. Perhaps this is rooted in the strength that she experiences which stems from her Black racial identity.

Amaka also identified with the idea that she and other Black women that she knows are strong. However, Amaka expressed that she was aware that this strength can at times be a hindrance which can result in difficulty requesting help from others, perhaps because, for Amaka, strength implies independence:

*“I think it’s the fact that we are quite strong, so I don’t really ask for help, so that could be another problem really.” (Amaka: 12, 402-404)*

For Amaka, showing strength as a Black woman feels very important and perhaps because of this Amaka may experience herself as trying to be too strong, which could create a problem for her in accessing the support that she may need.

These extracts suggest that participants feelings of strength and pride have emerged in relation to their own Black racial identity. This could also potentially be active in their experiences as Black mothers raising biracial children. In later themes, we explore the emphasis that participants place on instilling a sense of pride and strength in their biracial children, which seems to happen with the intention of aiding their biracial children in associating their Black racial identity with pride and strength as participants do.

This superordinate theme ‘the experience of being a Black woman’ examines the formation of Black racial identity and explores the feelings of pride and strength that are associated with participant’s Black racial identities. The understanding of the participant’s experiences and their positioning as Black women was an important emergent theme and is integral in order to gain an understanding of the participant’s experiences of raising biracial children. Thus, we must take into account the experience of being a Black woman, as this superordinate theme

provides a lens through which we can gain a better understanding of the unique experience of identifying as a Black woman and raising a biracial child in the UK.

### **3.2. 'The Experience of Black Motherhood'**

This superordinate theme gives an insight into each participant's experience of Black motherhood. The emergent subthemes include: 'Learned Black mothering' and 'the experience of support'. This superordinate theme stems from participants espousing their unique experiences of being Black mothers (of their biracial children), in the UK, which captures the intersectionality of being a Black woman and a mother. Thus, the understanding of the participant's experiences as Black mothers was a vital emergent theme and is crucial to the understanding of each participant's experience of raising their biracial children. It could be said that this theme coupled with the previous theme 'the experience of being a Black woman' provides a solid foundation on which we can build our understanding of what it is like to be a Black mother raising a biracial child in the UK.

#### ***3.2.1 Learned Black Mothering***

More than half of all participants spoke about what they had learned from their Black mothers. These participants spoke of how their Black mothers influenced the ways in which they chose to mother and raise their biracial children and each participant's experience of their mother, fundamentally impacted the way that participants came into their own identities as Black mothers.

Cara expressed that she felt that she was being a Black woman when she had a school meeting with her child's teachers and during the meeting felt that she had to defend her child:

*"The way I was holding myself...I was mirroring a lot of what my mum would have been like." (Cara 35, 1368-1370)*

As mentioned previously, many participants spoke at length about the feelings of strength that they associated with being a Black woman. Interestingly, Cara also expressed that she felt like a strong Black woman, which is something that she learned from her mother. These feelings of strength that Cara spoke of, appear to be rooted in her mother's Black racial identity and were passed down to Cara so that she too would view herself as a strong Black woman.

Ola expressed her belief that children should respect their parents, which she learned from her Black mother:

*"I'm trying to transfer the sort of discipline from my mum, like children behave in a certain way and respecting you because I think that's a big thing as well, I think children need to really respect their parents but then also allowing them to kind of express themselves a bit and kind of urm, not to be too much of an iron fist." (Ola: 7, 233-237)*

Ola refers to her Black mother and uses the word 'transfer', which suggests that she is trying to also discipline her biracial children in the same way that her mother disciplined her. However, Ola also appears to want her children to be able to express themselves, which implies that perhaps Ola feels slightly conflicted about how to raise her biracial children. This need for respect appears to be



something that Ola learned from her Black mother and may, therefore, be rooted in Ola's mother's and Ola's own Black racial identities.

For these participants, knowing how to be a Black mother was learned from their Black mothers and was adapted to suit each participant's preferred parenting method. Previous themes spoke to the cultural influences that aided these participants in forming their Black racial identities and it appears that it is also this Black racial identity that plays a role in the way that each participant's mother taught them how to be, as Black mothers. This is couched in their placement of importance on discipline, strength, use of cultural remedies and the importance placed on respect. The lessons learned with regards to how to be a Black mother seem to be rooted in each participant's Black racial identity and participant's mother's Black racial identities.

### ***3.2.2. The Experience of Support***

Few participants referred to their child's White paternal family as a source of support. In addition, no participants spoke positively about the external support that they received when raising their biracial children. However, most participants spoke at length of the support that they received from their Black families and friends when raising their biracial children. This suggests that perhaps these participants primarily sought out support from their Black families when looking after their biracial children, rather than looking for external support or support from their child's White paternal families.

### 3.2.2.1 Support from the child's paternal family

Two participants spoke about the support that they received from their child's paternal White family:

*“The families are lovely, I don't think the other parents (Rebecca's biracial child's White grandparents), they don't see it as my grandchild is Black they just love them regardless, so in terms of the other side, they're really really supportive and sort of...really really good [ ] they also want for her to embrace their culture and learn the language and learn the customs and the traditions, which is brilliant!” (Rebecca: 28, 1087-1098)*

Rebecca emphasised just how supportive her children's paternal White family was in the upbringing of her biracial children and suggests that her children's paternal family also aided her children in embracing both their Black and White heritage. In addition, Rebecca expressed feeling as though her child's paternal grandparents did not view her biracial children as Black but rather, seemed to experience her children as unique, which suggests that they were able to be fully involved with her children and their upbringing. Rebecca having stated, “they don't see it as my grandchild is Black, they just love them regardless” perhaps highlights a suspicion within Rebecca that her biracial child's White paternal grandparents may not have been as involved with their biracial grandchildren, had they viewed them as Black.

Only two participants commented on the support that they received from their child's paternal White family. This may suggest that these women were either offered little support or did not request much support from their biracial child's paternal families and perhaps this is rooted in these women's Black racial

identities. Previously, participants spoke of the feelings of pride and strength that they associated with their Black racial identity. Although participants did not explicitly express it, I wonder if these feelings of pride and strength hinder these Black women in asking for support from their children's White paternal families.

#### *3.2.2.2. Support from Black Family and Friends*

Almost half of all participants mentioned the support that they received from their own Black families. It could be argued that these participants found it especially comforting and helpful to receive support from their Black families. Perhaps there is something especially helpful about the support that these participants received from the Black women within their families in particular. Arguably, receiving this support may have aided participants in instilling Black racial identity into their biracial children, as well as teaching these participants how to be Black mothers, by learning from those who supported them. Lisa spoke of the support that she received from the Black woman within her family and from her friends:

*"I have a built-in support system of other Black women and my mum and my sisters and cousins and stuff like that, where urm, I'm around a lot of Black people..." (Lisa: 17, 617-620)*

The term 'built-in' suggests that Lisa experiences her support system of Black women as almost innate and perhaps this support plays an integral role in her being able to successfully raise her biracial children.

Cara also spoke of the support that she received from the Black women within her family:

*“I had a very supportive family and my extended family so, so, I would have, I would have my aunt coming over... when my mum was at work my aunt would come over to look after me. So, I’d never had that issue. I haven’t had to sort of stumble through...” (Cara: 4, 129-134)*

Cara mentions that she did not have to ‘stumble’ through motherhood. The idea that Cara was ‘looked after’ suggests that not only was her baby cared for but she too was cared for. This implies that because of the support and guidance that she received from the Black woman within her family, she was able to experience a less challenging and perhaps less isolated version of motherhood. For both Cara and Lisa, it could be suggested that because they received support from the older (more experienced) Black women within their families, they may have found more comfort in this support because it had come from Black women whom they could trust, who also shared their Black racial identities and could thus, provide a kind of support that would perhaps be tailored to the needs of Black mothers.

Lastly, Gloria explained that she would have much preferred a member of her family to look after her biracial child:

*“I would have preferred someone I know, someone from the family to look after my child but instead I had to find a, a childminder and my first childminder was a White woman, my baby wasn’t there for long because it just wasn’t working.”*  
(Gloria: 25, 755-769)

Gloria went on to explain that when she moved to the UK from Africa, she had to seek out support from a childminder. However, Gloria expressed that she would have preferred a family member to provide this support. Though Gloria does not go into detail, she clearly states that she did not experience having a White

childminder as beneficial and as a result, Gloria removed her child from this woman's care. Thus, it seems that it was more meaningful for Gloria to have her own family be involved in the upbringing of her biracial child.

It appears that participants found it particularly comforting to have the guidance and support from family members who shared their gendered and/or racial identities. This could potentially be because support received from other Black people will likely be rooted in Black racial identity. As a result of this, those providing support are likely to share the same norms and values as participants. For example, the importance placed on respect, discipline, culture and feelings of pride and strength within Black racial identity. Thus, perhaps there is something unique about the support that can be provided by the fellow Black female community, that perhaps cannot be provided in the same way by those who are outside of the Black community.

#### *3.2.2.3 External Support*

Two participants spoke passionately about their experiences of external support. These participants encountered a lack of support from external services as well as difficulties in accessing these services.

Amaka explained:

*“Support outside no... it wasn't given, like other people said, ‘oh I moved into this flat and they gave me £1,000.00’ and I'm like how did you get that? ‘Oh. I spoke to my social worker...’, for some reason they all seem to have social workers...it's like why do you have a social worker? You're the same thing as me, we went to*

*the same primary school, we have grown up the same way, the same situation, I mean I don't want one but why have you got one?" (Amaka: 41, 1504- 1513)*

Amaka may have felt that she had to work harder than perhaps her White counterparts to access these services, perhaps because of her age and/or race. When speaking about having a social worker, it is interesting that Amaka says that she does not want one. Amaka expressed her idea that this inability to access such services is partially rooted in her Black racial identity. It was previously mentioned that some of the participants, including Amaka, felt that they were 'strong Black women', which was experienced as part of their Black racial identity. Thus, Amaka felt that accessing external services for support would make her feel weak, as this was not in line with her idea of what it meant to be a 'strong Black woman.'

Similarly, Rebecca also found it difficult to access support from external agencies:

*"My sons got learning difficulties, he's got autism and he's got ADHD and the only difficulty was that...again, it's support...there's no support! Even if there is support, you're not necessarily told how to access that support." (Rebecca: 16, 565-571)*

Rebecca appeared hurt and perhaps at the end of her tether. Rebecca expressed that *"there's no support!"* This may suggest that Rebecca felt unsupported, alone and perhaps completely disregarded.

Rebecca goes on to say:

*"They just seem to think that one size fits all and it doesn't. They don't cater for cultural differences or racial differences." (Rebecca: 16, 571-576)*

This suggests that Rebecca experienced her race and culture as barriers that stood between herself and the support that she was entitled to. As a Black woman raising a biracial child, Rebecca appeared to feel that services supporting children with difficulties are not tailored to meet the needs of mothers of colour and because of this Rebecca may feel that external support systems are discriminatory. It seems that Rebecca's experience of the lack of support that she received from external services made her feel very angry, unsupported and ultimately disappointed in the mental health system.

Participants within this research all spoke of their experiences of support. These participants spoke of the abundance of support that they received from their Black families as well as the support that they received from their child's White paternal families. However, only two participants spoke at great length of the lack of support that they received from external services as Black women. Interestingly, other participants did not mention the support (or lack of support) that they received from external services. External support not being mentioned by the majority of the participants may suggest that this kind of support was not a salient part of most participant's experiences of raising their biracial children. Instead, most participants identified that their Black families had played a big role in supporting them to raise their biracial children.

Participants within this research explored their experiences of Black motherhood. Throughout this superordinate theme, these participants spoke of learned Black motherhood, which participants learned from their own mothers and participants also spoke about their experiences of support, which was received from both their Black families as well as their child's White father's families. However, two participants expressed that they had negative experiences of external support and

for the majority of the participants, external support was not mentioned as part of these woman's experiences of raising their biracial children.

As the experience of being a Black mother is so unique, we must take into account the intersectional experience of Black woman. Thus, it is essential that we were able to gain an understanding of Black woman's Black female identity (which was achieved by theme one) as well as Black woman's mother identity (which was achieved by theme two). Thus, it appears that the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children are characterised at least partly by Black mother's experiences of being Black women, as well as their experiences of being mothers. In the following superordinate theme, Participants espouse the challenges that they experienced that arose as a result of being a Black woman raising a biracial child in the UK.

### **3.3. 'Challenging Experiences Uniquely Concerning the Black Mother-Biracial Child Dyad'**

This superordinate theme presents the challenging experiences uniquely concerning the Black mother-biracial child dyad. Here the word 'dyad' refers to sensations, interactions, thoughts and feelings experienced by the Black mothers within this research that directly relate to their biracial children. Encompassed within this superordinate theme are three emergent subthemes that illuminate the unique challenges experienced by these individuals in regards to raising biracial children as Black women. These include: 'Experiencing the biracial child as distinct from the self', 'biracial identity development' and 'Black mother's concerns about their biracial children'. These unique challenges are heavily



influenced by each participant's experience of being a Black woman and in turn, the inevitable impact that this had on how these participants experience motherhood as Black women.

### ***3.3.1 'Experiencing the Biracial Child as Distinct from the Self'***

All but one participant within this research spoke at great length about their experiences of feeling in some way, distinct from their biracial children. This could suggest that most participant's experiences of difference are perhaps more prominent than their experiences of sameness. This feeling of distinctness seemed to be influenced by a range of factors, including: The difference in skin complexion, the difference in hair texture and the difference in food preference, which was a challenge for these mothers. However, a third of the participants also emphasised feeling as though their children were unique, irrespective of their distinctness.

#### ***3.3.1.1 'Skin Complexion'***

Participants placed emphasis on the fairness of their children's skin. These participants appeared to be acutely aware of the colour difference between themselves and their children, which often presented as a challenge. For example, Sharon recalled her experience of the first time that she held her biracial son:

*"I looked at the baby and I was like, that baby don't look like it's mine. Straight, straight hair, obviously very light, if I wasn't awake, I would've sworn they switched that baby."* (Sharon 3: 105-108)

It appears that Sharon experienced a sense of disbelief at the physical appearance of her son, so much so, that she perhaps found it difficult to comprehend the differences between her and her child. Sharon's reaction to her son demonstrates just how impactful the difference in physical appearance between her and her biracial child was for her. Which is illustrated by Sharon's idea that if she had been asleep, she would have assumed that she had been given someone else's child.

This is also echoed by Gloria, who, in just a few words emphasised the stark difference in complexion between her and her daughter:

*"Because I am Black Black and this baby is White White." (Gloria: 6, 175-176)*

Here, the repetition of White and Black accentuates the difference that Gloria experiences between her and her daughter and gives rise to the idea that perhaps Gloria found it difficult to relate to her daughter in terms of skin tone. I also got the impression that Gloria felt surprised at just how light in complexion her baby was. It is also interesting to note that when discussing skin complexion in the above extracts, both Sharon and Gloria refer to their biracial children as "that baby" and "this baby" rather than "my baby", which could also suggest a difficulty in relating to their biracial children when discussing skin complexion alone. It seems that complexion between mother and child, coupled with others reactions to the colour difference between participants and their children could have left these participants feeling frustrated, as skin tone appeared to serve as a constant reminder that mother and child were different.

### 3.3.1.2 Hair Texture

Hair texture was another important factor that played a role in the unique challenges faced by participants. Two-thirds of the participants made reference to the difference in hair texture between themselves and their biracial children. This was often challenging for participants as they experienced their biracial child's hair texture as unfamiliar territory. Thus, many of these participants had to adapt and learn how to take care of their biracial children's hair, which is a challenge that monoracial mothers raising monoracial children may not have to contend with.

Sharon explained:

*"I just remember praying every day hoping that his hair would get a little bit afroey or something, that it would look like mine..." (Sharon: 4, 112-115)*

For Sharon, once her son was born, she was faced with the challenge of having a child whose hair texture was different from hers. Thus, Sharon found herself wanting her son's hair to resemble her own, perhaps because it would be easier for Sharon to take ownership of and raise a child who looked more like her.

### 3.3.1.3 Food Preference

In addition to the experience of difference in hair texture and skin complexion, two participants made reference to the difference in food preferences between themselves and their biracial children, which often presented as a challenge.

Sharon expressed that her son enjoyed eating savoury pie, which is a more traditionally British dish. Whereas Sharon herself did not enjoy Pie, which emphasised the difference in their heritage:

*“Rico is very English sometimes too, because he likes pie.... I don’t like pie (laughs)... but that was their (Rico and his father) cheeky meal that they would have during the week” (Sharon: 22, 805-808)*

It appears that Sharon would prefer her son to enjoy the same foods that she does but understands that pie is part of her son’s English heritage and can appreciate that this is also part of his identity. For Sharon, the experience of mothering a biracial child seems to include the need for extra conscious thought. Sharon appears to have to consider her son’s White heritage and perhaps put her assumptions regarding more ‘British’ foods aside, so that he can have a connection with all parts of his racial identity.

Similarly, Debbie also experienced a difference in food preference between her and her biracial son. Debbie expressed that on some days, she would cater to her son’s more stereotypically ‘British’ fast food request, whereas, on other occasions, she would not:

*“If my son hears jollof rice he is like, ‘oh can I have chips instead?’ or ‘can I have this?’ or ‘I’m not hungry’, some of those days I will take the bowl and I will put it in front of him and I will say, ‘sit down, you are eating it’...” (Debbie: 17, 6000-605)*

For Debbie, there seems to be some level of internal conflict, as part of her experience seems to be characterised by wanting to stick to her norms and expectations in regards to wanting her son to also enjoy her cultural foods.

However, part of Debbie also seems to want her son to enjoy the foods that are perhaps more stereotypically 'British' and having to balance the two.

It seems as though both Sharon and Debbie may hold a desire for their children to value or enjoy their cultural foods because these participants may experience their cultural food as part of their Black racial identity. As Debbie and Sharon's biracial children preferred more traditionally British foods rather than participants cultural foods, this could highlight another difference between participants and their biracial children, as these participants appear to have felt a sense of pride regarding their cultural foods, whereas their biracial children perhaps did not. Thus, this difference in food preference understandably presented as another challenge to these mothers, as they were keen for their biracial children to value their Black mother's cultural foods but equally felt the need to support their child's wishes to also consume foods that were more traditionally White British. Thus, these participants would often have to compromise when it came to meal times in order to ensure that they and their children remained in harmony. Therefore, part of these participant's experiences of raising biracial children is about internal conflict and perhaps having to weigh up these mother's own wishes for their sons (for example, valuing their Black culture) alongside wanting their sons to maintain a connection with their White culture and heritage.

Overall, most participants spoke of their biracial child's skin complexion, hair texture and food preference as features about their children that were dissimilar to themselves. In theme two: 'The experience of Black motherhood', many of these participants talked about learned Black mothering and about the way in which they had learned how to be Black mothers from their experiences of their own Black mothers. However, as most of these participant's mothers did not raise

biracial children, participants were unable to learn from their own mothers about how to cope with managing their biracial children's hair, difficulties that might arise from having a lighter skin complexion or differences in food preference.

#### *3.3.1.4 Experiencing Their Children as Unique Individuals*

Conversely, three participants experienced their biracial children as unique individuals.

Debbie: *"I think they should not just see their child as biracial, they should just see their child as a person."* (Debbie: 33, 1248-1249)

This extract suggests that Debbie is able to look past her child's colour and can appreciate her as a human being.

Gloria also explained that she was only aware that her child was different from herself when others made her aware of this difference:

*"It doesn't even occur to you that...your baby's mixed race. That's the thing with me. It's only when other people make you aware of it."* (Gloria 6: 159-163)

Gloria's extract highlights the impact that external society has on these participant's experiences of raising biracial children. This extract suggests that we cannot deny the influence that society has on the way in which these participants view their biracial children (which will be further discussed in theme four: 'Biases') irrespective of whether or not participants aim to view their biracial children as unique.

Overall, participant's experiences of raising biracial children as Black women appeared to encompass a range of feelings. Participants seemed to feel a sense of

disbelief in regards to the physical appearance of their children. These participants also experienced feelings of difference from their biracial children, which at times left many participants feeling frustrated, confused or yearning for sameness. Though most participants focused on the differences that emerged between themselves and their biracial children, two participants did focus on feeling the same as their biracial children. These participants spoke of the similarities between themselves and their children but expressed feeling as though this was difficult for others to also see, due to the stark physical differences between mothers and their children. Lastly, some participants also acknowledged their children as unique individuals and highlighted the feelings of acceptance that they felt towards their children. This provides a powerful reminder that the differences between mother and child can perhaps be experienced as secondary in comparison to the primary experience of raising a child who is perceived as a unique individual.

### ***3.3.2. 'Biracial Identity Development'***

Almost all participants spoke at length about the experience of helping their biracial children to negotiate their racial identities. Seven participants emphasised exposing their children to their own Black, and their child's father's White culture. Additionally, some participants felt that society would perceive their children as Black and perhaps because of this, some participants played a major role in helping their biracial children to feel pride in their Black heritage. Thus, an important part of the experiences of these participants was not only aiding biracial identity formation but for some, it was also about Black racial socialisation.

### 3.3.2.1. *Negotiating Biracial Identity*

Some participants experienced biracial identity as ‘unknown territory’, however, they did what they could to aid the process of racial identity formation. For most, a key component of raising a biracial child was helping their children to embrace their Black and White heritage as equal, whereas others believed that this could happen organically.

For Lisa and Ola, the experience of aiding biracial identity negotiation was partly characterised by feeling unable to identify with their children’s experiences of growing up as biracial people. Perhaps because of this, for these participants, there was an element of self-doubt regarding their ability to aid their children in biracial identity negotiation:

*“How do I show them who they should be? because I don’t know what it’s like to be mixed race.” (Lisa: 23, 823-824)*

Lisa phrases her statement as a question which suggests that she may still have unanswered questions and could still feel conflicted about how she should raise her biracial children because she is not a biracial woman.

Ola said: *“It’s difficult when you haven’t been raised in that way to know how to raise them [ ] it’s unknown territory because I’m not that, I’m not mixed race, I’m not biracial myself so I can’t identify with what they’re feeling because I don’t really know.” (Ola: 21, 741-744)*

Ola saying ‘I don’t really know’ in the present tense also suggests that her uncertainty is current.



As a result of the difference in race between mother and child, participants seemed to be more aware that they were different from their children in a way that perhaps a mother raising a monoracial Black child is not. It seems that because of this, these participants may have struggled to decide how best to help their children to negotiate their biracial identity and as a result there appears to be a struggle in terms of empathising and understanding their biracial children's experiences.

Previously Lisa and Ola both spoke of the ways in which their own Black racial identities had formed and it was suggested that both of these participants experienced their Black racial identity (at least partly) as innate. This could explain why Ola and Lisa found it difficult to aid their children in forming their biracial identities. As these participants experience their own racial identity as innate, they seem to be left with feelings of uncertainty with regards to how they should go about aiding biracial identity negotiation with their children. Thus, for these participants, raising a biracial child as a Black woman appears to be experienced at times as quite a challenge. This experience of challenge seems to encompass an experience of uncertainty alongside a willingness to adapt.

Three participants took sole responsibility for aiding their children in negotiating their biracial identity. Ola expressed feeling that as a Black woman she must explore the concept of racial identity in a slightly different way with her biracial children:

*“As a Black woman, I think maybe the additional thing that I would face...raising a biracial child...is that I've got to... sort of deal with the concept of identity with them maybe slightly differently...to what other mothers might have to do, other*

*mothers might not have to think about it and I'm quite conscious of it.”(Ola: 20, 705-709).*

Perhaps Ola feels that other mothers may take for granted the complexity of her role as a Black mother raising biracial children, as they may not have to consider the concept of racial identity at all. As Ola feels racially different from her children, she appears conscious of the idea that she needs to adjust when aiding racial identity formation. In addition, Ola uses the phrase “*I’ve got to*” which suggests that she feels that this is her duty, which implies added pressure or challenge.

This idea that it is perhaps the mother’s duty to aid her children in negotiating racial identity, is echoed by Cara, who emphasises the importance of the mother’s role in regards to racial identity negotiation:

*“I think the mother is the first educator... I think a woman in her head, she knows what she needs to give the children to survive out there. And I think it’s the mother who instils this sense of identity [ ] I think that there are roles.” (Cara: 18, 696-705)*

Cara used the strong word: ‘Survive’, which suggests that she believes that she is fundamental to her children’s survival. This implies that she experiences added pressure or responsibility for her children’s existence.

In the previous superordinate theme ‘the experience of Black motherhood’, participants spoke about the impact that participants Black mothers had on their childhood and parenting methods. Both Ola and Cara expressed that their Black mothers had a strong influence on the way that they had grown into adults. Thus,

perhaps because of this, Ola and Cara also experienced the feeling that they too would have a big impact on the way that their biracial children turn out as adults. As a result, Ola and Cara seemed to experience the added pressure of raising their children to have a strong sense of their biracial identity.

Most participants also placed equal importance on their children embracing their mothers Black and their father's White heritage.

Rebecca expressed:

*"I don't think I raised them Black (laughs) I wouldn't say, 'I'm Black you have to embrace my Blackness'... No. You are who you are, you need to embrace your Blackness but you also need to embrace, erm, your other roots... Yes, your mother is Black but also, your dad is not."* (Rebecca: 8, 273-292)

Rebecca stating 'I don't think I raised them Black' and laughing afterwards, interested me. This laugh seemed to be an awkward one that relates to later comments that Rebecca makes about being perceived as a 'traitor' to her race, in the eyes of fellow Black people because she has a biracial child. Rebecca placed emphasis on teaching her children to embrace both their Black and White heritage, as she expressed hope that her children would identify with all parts of their identity. Rebecca's statement 'you are who you are' appears to be in defence for her biracial children for not being 100 per cent Black or White, but instead, Rebecca believes that her biracial children have the right to identify as a Biracial person if they so choose. Perhaps this is important to Rebecca because of her concerns regarding the potential prejudice and discrimination that her child could face as a result of being a biracial person. Thus, because of these concerns,

Rebecca may try to prepare her biracial children within their biracial identity so that they confidently and proudly know all parts of their heritage.

Ola spoke of the difficulties that she faced when trying to educate her daughter about her Black and White heritage:

*“I introduced it a little bit too young and completely confused her, ‘but I’m White like daddy.’ ‘No, you’re not, you’re not’ and then she decided that she was peach skinned. ‘No, you’re not peached skinned’...” (Ola: 21, 726-769)*

Ola could mean that it was easy to get things wrong and even confuse her daughter when trying to aid her in negotiating her biracial identity. This suggests that part of Ola’s experience as a Black mother raising a biracial child is feeling as though she got something wrong and perhaps feeling doubtful or uncertain at times, of her parenting methods.

Ola later goes on to say: *“Again it’s trying to sort of... trying to give them a balanced view and not just be focused on the one view.” (Ola: 35, 1257-1259)*

Ola makes a special effort to remain balanced and to emphasise both parts of her child’s biracial identity, perhaps so that her children are able to be in touch with all parts of their identity.

In addition, two participants self-identified as single-mothers who had no contact with their children’s fathers. However, irrespective of this, these mothers also placed importance on their biracial children learning about both their Black and White heritage in a balanced manner. Thus, these participants made a concerted effort to educate their children about their father’s culture as much as they could,

so that their children would grow to identify with both parts of their heritage equally:

*“You don’t want that child to lose their identity, at the end of the day they’re not just this culture, so it’s nice to be open if they’re single-parents like myself, to learn about the other culture so that they can help the child not to have identity problems or crisis, where they don’t really know who they are. So, it’s about embracing and helping their child to embrace who they are.” (Debbie: 34, 1274-1281)*

Amaka also wanted her son to know his father’s roots, regardless of his absence in her son’s life, which was difficult, although she tried her best:

*“His dad’s not around at all so I tried my best to sort of, to make him know his identity as him being (White)Latin American, try and teach him little bits I can. Obviously, because I don’t really know, I do as much as I can and research things and stuff but I do let him know his whole heritage. I took him to Barbados to meet the family over there and try my best to see both sides and I don’t want him to just think he is just African Caribbean, that’s it... I do think it’s important you know you’re from both sides...” (Amaka: 11, 385-392)*

Though Debbie and Amaka shared that their children had little to no contact with their fathers, they still made an effort to gain a better understanding of their child’s father’s culture, so that they could help their children to negotiate their biracial identity. Debbie and Amaka both emphasised the importance of helping their children to value all parts of their identity and spoke proudly of the way in which they had tried to compensate for their biracial children’s absent fathers.

Overall, two-thirds of the participants appeared to wrestle with how best to aid their children to negotiate their biracial identities. Yet, these participants appeared to share the common goal of trying to aid their children to embrace both the Black and White parts of their racial identity. This seemed to be important for most of the participants. Most participants appeared to want their biracial children to be able to celebrate both parts of their racial identity and appreciate themselves as a unique blend of their Black mothers and White fathers. For these participants, there may not be a straight forward way to aid biracial identity negotiation. As a result, these women may have experienced a need to adapt in order to be able to support and guide their biracial children throughout the process of biracial identity formation.

### *3.2.2. Black Racial Socialisation*

Most participants spoke of the ways in which they had tried to racially socialise their biracial children. For four participants, a key part of their experience was instilling Black racial identity as positive, alongside educating their children about racism. Additionally, a third of the participants also seemed to hold a strong belief that society would perceive and judge their biracial children as Black, which could be the driving force behind emphasising Black racial socialisation for some participants.

Three participants expressed the belief that society would consider their biracial children as Black because they had Black heritage. As a result, these participants placed importance on educating their children about racism, Black history and the way that society would potentially view their biracial children as Black.

Ola placed importance on educating her son about how society would perceive him:

*“I’m also of the view that basically if you’ve got any tinge of Black in you then you’re Black... So, I’ve got to try and make them understand that look, you are a mixture of mummy and daddy but actually, society will see you as Black...and they do that’s the reality.” (Ola:23, 744-752)*

Ola then explained the way in which she educated her son about Black history and racism:

*“I was explaining to my son about Nelson Mandela and who he was, explaining that you know, there was urm...apartheid, explaining what it was about and how some people didn’t treat people right because of colour of their skin...so they’re not completely blind to it.” (Ola: 27, 951-958)*

By speaking to her son about Nelson Mandela, Ola was able to carefully and gently introduce the notion of racism. This seemed important to Ola and maybe this as something that Ola wanted to get right. Perhaps because of her belief that society would view her biracial son as Black, Ola felt that she needed to explain the concepts of slavery and racism to her son. It seemed important for Ola to raise some unpleasantness with her son as part of the process of Black socialisation so that he will be fully equipped as a young biracial man within society.

Having interviewed Lisa, it was also clear that she held belief in the notion that society would perceive her biracial children as Black. Thus, perhaps, as a result, Lisa wanted to prepare her children within their Black racial identity. It should be noted that the majority of participants wanted their children to embrace both their

Black and White identities. However, Lisa was the only participant who explicitly stated that she purposely exposed her biracial children to multiple Black role models, in an effort to aid them in developing their Black racial identities. However, Lisa still appeared unsure about whether or not her socialisation methods were good enough and posed the question of if she was doing them a disservice:

*“Am I doing them a disservice by just showing them a whole bunch of Black people and it’s not up to me to show them anything? I mean, we live in a White society, they’ve got plenty of White role model vomit, if they wanna look up to them, I mean, even saying that just really makes me angry!” (Lisa: 23, 825-831)*

Lisa appears to feel torn about the best way to racially socialise her children. In addition, a part of Lisa could feel guilty about focusing more on instilling Black racial identity. However, it seems that as a Black mother, Lisa felt that she needed to ensure that her children were exposed to positive Black role models in the same way that she was as a child growing up. Lisa also expressed anger regarding raising her children in the UK and perhaps feels that it is a challenge raising biracial or Black children in a society that she perceives as predominantly White. Lisa using the word ‘vomit’ suggests a feeling of repulsion and disgust at the idea of her child being exposed to too much Whiteness and not enough Blackness. It appears that Lisa needed/wanted to readdress this balance by showing her children positive Black people.

Cara also implied that she held the belief that society would view her biracial son as Black, which is reflected in the advice that she often gave to her son:



*“So, I’ve had to say that to him, ‘put your hood down.’ Because we are in a society that’s quite racist. [ ] You know, ‘keep your hood down, keep your back straight, you don’t have to look like someone that plays Call of Duty’...” (Cara: 6, 233-235)*

It seemed that Cara worries about her son and perhaps is fearful of what the implications of looking ‘too stereotypically Black’ might be. My understanding is that ‘call of duty’ is an online game that perhaps Cara associates with Black people, in the same way that she associates people with their hoods up and back’s hunched, with Black people. It seems as though Cara does not want her son to be associated with negative stereotypical aspects of Blackness. Instead, Cara is trying to teach her son that he can identify as biracial or Black without giving others a reason to associate him with the negative stereotypes of Blackness. Thus, it appeared that in an attempt to protect her son from racism, Cara advised him to try and look less ‘stereotypically Black’.

Cara also makes a conscious effort to educate her older children about Black history and places importance on this:

*“I can sometimes be quite harsh about... I could be quite full-on about my Black history and stuff like that.” (Cara: 8, 282-284)*

Cara expresses that she can come across as quite forceful when trying to teach her children about Black history, perhaps because Cara was also educated about Black history as a child. This may also be of high importance to Cara, as during the interview she described her eldest son as looking typically biracial, perhaps because of this, Cara feels that she needs to ensure that her eldest son is aware of his Black history as others may perceive him as Black.

Perhaps in response to the belief that society may perceive a biracial person as Black, these participants attempt to instil a sense of Black racial identity into their biracial children. Interestingly, the methods that each participant used to aid their biracial children in forming their racial identity reflects the ways that participants learned about their own Black racial identity whilst growing up. For example, Lisa ensures that her biracial children experience positive Black role models in the same way that she did as a child. Cara experienced racism as a child, therefore, she takes special care to advise her son about how to behave in a society that she experiences as racist. Lastly, Cara and Ola educate their biracial children about Black history, which both participants learned about as children. Thus, the way in which each participant attempts to aid Black racial socialisation appears to be rooted in their own experiences of forming their own Black racial identities.

As a result of the belief that society would perceive their children as Black, some participants took it upon themselves to instil Black racial identity as a positive experience in their children, which did not appear to be a challenge for participants but instead seemed to come effortlessly, perhaps because these participants were also proud of their Black roots. Participants Cara, Lisa and Anna all referred to the importance of their biracial children feeling a sense of pride within their Blackness. These participants made a concerted effort to demonstrate to their children that identifying as Black was positive and placed emphasis on their children being able to experience pride in their Black racial identity.

Cara explains: *“They’ve also got to be proud of their Black heritage.”* (Cara: 11, 403-404)

I would argue that Cara's extract also reflects a range of participant's ideas about the importance of instilling pride within their biracial children's Blackness. Cara says: 'They've also got to...' which implies a necessity. This phrase suggests that Cara's children are required to feel a sense of pride within their Blackness, perhaps in the same way that she does. Interestingly, throughout theme one: 'The experience of being a Black woman', five participants, spoke of their sense of pride with regards to their Black racial identity. Interestingly, it appeared important to these participants that their biracial children also value and feel a sense of pride in their Blackness, in the same way that these participants do. This need for these participant's children to feel proud of their Black heritage also suggests that these participants will ensure that they do what they can to instil Blackness as positive within their biracial children.

### *3.2.3 Autonomy Within the Negotiation Process*

Though four participants placed emphasis on the Black socialisation process, other participants also spoke to the importance of autonomy with regards to the development of their biracial children's racial identities. These participants expressed their feelings that biracial identity formation was an organic process.

Ola had originally expressed wanting to help aid biracial identity negotiation, by providing her children with a balanced view of their heritage. However, she had an epiphany and then expressed her reformed belief that biracial identity formation was probably a natural process, which could happen, simply through children spending time with their Black and White families:

*"Maybe it's organic because the reality is, they've got two families and they spend time with both families that are very different, so they'll just learn their own way. I*

*don't even know if I really need to teach them anything, other than that they understand where my family is from...his (their father) responsibility is to make them understand where his family is from... [ ] they will just learn who they are themselves.” (Ola: 23, 806-824)*

There is perhaps a sense of relief that Ola does not need to feel solely responsible for her children forming their biracial identity. However, Ola tentatively says: ‘Maybe it’s organic’ and ‘I don’t even know’, which suggests that she is still unsure and is wrestling with this idea.

Rebecca also expressed importance in her children’s ability to make decisions in regards to their racial identity:

Rebecca: *“It’s important for them to know who they are, not only from my point of view but find their identity and not be like, ‘I’m Black or I’m White’ but be like, ‘I’m Jasmin and this is my identity.’” (Rebecca: 15, 538-542)*

It seems that Rebecca is explaining that race is important but perhaps for her, this is not the most important part of her children’s identity. Rebecca acknowledges that her biracial children are a mixture of both White and Black but expresses that there is more to identity than just race.

These extracts suggest that participants felt that their children had the autonomy to make decisions about how they wanted to racially identify and proposes that irrespective of how participants tried to aid biracial identity negotiation, in the end, it seems that these participants trusted in what they regarded as an organic process. For some of these participants, this idea of autonomy could be rooted in the notion that their Black racial identity is organic and perhaps because of this

more importance was placed by these participants on supporting their biracial children to identify in the way that they felt most comfortable.

Overall, participant's experiences of negotiating biracial identity included a range of feelings. Many participants seemed to feel some level of responsibility when aiding their children in negotiating their biracial identity and wanted their children to value and experience both Black and White parts of their heritage equally. Thus, though participants identified as monoracial Black, there remained an intense need to help their children to embrace their Black and White heritage. Other participants also appeared uncertain or confused in regards to how they should go about aiding biracial identity formation. Still, a crucial part of each participant's experience was also feeling a need for their biracial children to experience pride within their Blackness in the same way that participants did.

### ***3.3.3. 'Black Mother's Concerns About Their Biracial Children'***

Four of the nine participants expressed that they often felt concerned for their biracial children. Two participants expressed concern about how others might perceive and treat their children. Whereas another participant spoke at length of the worry that she experienced when considering others intentions towards her biracial child and another communicated concern about her biracial son feeling different from others because of his race.

Cara expressed that she felt worried about how her son might cope with the assumptions that others might have about him as a biracial person:

*“The police and prospective job interviews. It’s when you have these strangers who have your life in their hands, how do you come across? Are you ready for that?... So yes, so in those two, you’re absolutely right, it’s about preparing them within their racial identity.” (Cara: 31,1201-1206)*

It seems that Cara’s worry was in regard to how others in authority, might judge her son, based on his skin colour. Perhaps Cara’s worry was therefore not only about keeping her son safe but also about how her son would cope with this racial prejudice and how this might affect him, which was potentially why she felt the need to ‘prepare’ him. It appears that this need for Cara to protect her son is rooted in her own childhood experiences of racism. Perhaps because of this Cara felt the need to prepare and educate her son about the prejudice that he might encounter as a biracial person. Part of Cara’s experience seems to include elements of fear and hurt but also protectiveness. It appears that the wounds of having experienced racism herself are largely re-exposed when she is dealing with her own biracial child, as it seems that Cara experiences feelings of determination to keep her son safe.

Lisa also made reference to the perceptions of society and placed importance on educating her son about the way in which society may view him, as she worried about how others might perceive him:

*“Now that my eldest is nearly 15 I get worried about... how everybody else is going to see him [ ] I mean, I know what it’s like being a Black person and having these perceptions of you and then to see this young Black guy...well, Black*

*appearing guy...and... it's me just worrying about how...he's the nicest boy in the world but people just seeing his skin colour and features and hair texture and automatically thinking that he's something else."* (Lisa: 6, 196-213).

For Lisa, there seems to be a worry in regards to the stereotypes that she believes that society holds about Black people. As Lisa holds the belief that society may perceive her biracial children as Black, she feels that her son could potentially be mistreated because his features suggest that he has Black heritage.

Both Cara and Lisa made reference to feeling as though their sons are 'lovely' and 'polite'. However, irrespective of this, these participants still worried about the way in which society would treat their sons, because of their son's perceived race. Interestingly, Cara and Lisa previously expressed the belief that society would perceive and treat their biracial children as Black, which could be the driving force behind these women's concerns. In addition, Cara and Lisa also tried to educate their sons about the perceptions of society when their sons were aged 14 and 15, potentially because early teenage years are a time in which these mothers are more aware that their sons are becoming increasingly independent and autonomous and perhaps because of this, these participants became more concerned about the safety of their sons.

Debbie found herself feeling worried about how her Biracial child could be impacted if she found a Black partner and had monoracial Black children in this relationship:

*"I am worried about the fact that my son is mixed... if I dated a Black guy... how does my son feel? ...And if I decide to have other children with this Black person*

*and they (Debbie's other children) are a different colour (monoracial Black) then he will be the only person that is of a different colour in the family and... he had that conversation with me to be fair, he said to me: 'Oh, I don't want you to marry a Black person because then I'm going to be the only one, fair-skinned White person in the family'..." (Debbie 10, 330-340)*

Debbie's concerns seem to be rooted in the idea that her son would feel ostracised if she was to welcome a Black man into their home as her partner, as her son would then be the only biracial or lighter-skinned person within the immediate family. As a result, Debbie may feel a sense of pressure, to eventually find a partner who is White or racially ambiguous, in order to ensure that her son does not feel alone. For Debbie, it seems that her experience of having a biracial child involves her trying to consider her biracial son's place within the monoracial Black family. As a result, Debbie appears to feel internally conflicted and perhaps has to constantly engage in a balancing act weighing up both her own and her son's needs.

Overall, for these participants, the experiences of raising biracial children as Black mothers seems to involve a range of feelings. Participants explicitly expressed feelings of concern and worry in regards to their biracial children. Additionally, it appears that part of each participant's experience of raising their biracial children also involved feelings of protectiveness towards their biracial children.

The participants within this research explored the challenging experiences uniquely concerning the Black mother-biracial child dyad. Throughout this superordinate theme, these participants spoke of: 'Experiencing the biracial child as distinct from the self', 'biracial identity development' and 'Black mother's



concerns about their biracial children'. These experiences highlight the challenges that the Black mothers within this research experienced as a result of raising biracial children.

Arguably, these unique challenges appear to be rooted in each participant's Black racial identity. For example, the way in which participants came to experience their own Black racial identity (including, for example, experiences of racism, the experience of cultural foods, the experience of pride) plays a significant role in the way that these participants aid their children in racial identity negotiation, it shapes the concerns that these participants have regarding their biracial children and influences participant's experiences of feeling distinct from their biracial children. These participants appeared to have experienced raising a biracial child as rewarding yet challenging and I would argue that this experience could have been a very different one, had these women not have identified as Black.

There seems to be a need for participants to learn and adapt as they go along, throughout their journey of being a Black mother raising a biracial child. It seems that there is a need for these participants to balance and weigh up their own wishes for their children (for example, enjoying their Black mother's cultural foods) alongside allowing their biracial children to identify with their White cultures (for example, eat foods that participants regarded as more stereotypically 'British' foods). Participant's experiences also included the need to learn and adapt to being the mother of a biracial child. These participants also had to teach their biracial children and aid them in coping with the prejudices of society, as well as being able to tolerate their worries and concerns with regards to their biracial children. Thus, for these participants, the experience of raising a biracial child as a Black woman appears to be one that involves feelings of uncertainty

and confusion, feeling somewhat different from one's child and feelings of concern and protectiveness.

This superordinate theme presented the unique challenges experienced by participants with regard to the Black mother-biracial child dyad. Next, the final superordinate theme will comprise of the challenges that these women face in relation to biases received from the external world.

### **3.4. 'Biases'**

This superordinate theme speaks to participants experiences of biases with regards to raising a biracial child. Arguably, there is an intersectional experience that these participants encounter because they are Black, as they are women and because they are mothers and therefore often experience racism as a result of being Black, sexism as a result of being female and judgement for being mothers. These multiple and intersecting identities inevitably give rise to an experience of oppression that can create a way of being that makes the process of raising a biracial child more complex.

This superordinate theme is made up of two subthemes that shed light on these biases. These are 'the experience of microaggressions' and 'societal assumptions.' It could be argued that these unique experiences shape the way that participants experience both wider society and their own Black families and friends. These experiences of microaggressions and assumptions also shed light on the beliefs that participants hold about the assumptions, judgements and stereotypes that they experience society as holding about them as Black women raising biracial children. As the experience of Black mothers raising biracial children is complex,

it should be noted that sub-themes within this superordinate theme overlap at times. However, there are very important distinct elements within this theme which provide an understanding of each participant's experience of bias.

### ***3.4.1. 'The Experience of Microaggressions'***

Most participants spoke of their experience of microaggressions, which they received from the wider society, the Black community and their own Black families and friends. Arguably, the experience of microaggressions or the absence of microaggressions would significantly contribute to each participant's experience of raising a biracial child as a Black woman. Not all participants used the term 'microaggressions' to describe their experiences. However, two participants, in particular, did use this term, which seemed to be a concept that was fitting as a description for most if not all participant's experiences.

#### ***3.4.1.1. 'Experience of Microaggressions From Wider Society'***

Four participants spoke of their experiences of microaggressions that they received from the wider society, which they believed resulted from being Black mothers of biracial children. For these participants, microaggressions were communicated through comments and unpleasant stares. The microaggressions that participants experienced were subtle, nevertheless, the impact was long-lasting.

Amaka divulged that she had experienced microaggressions but in the form of stares which made her feel uncomfortable:

*“It’s just constant staring and they always look straight at him and then they look at me and it’s like, they’ve got a look of disgust” (Amaka: 37, 1331-1335)*

For Amaka it seemed that when strangers realised that her son was biracial, she felt that she and her son became a target. It would appear that as a result of this, Amaka may experience others as disapproving or critical. The word ‘disgust’ is very strong and suggests that Amaka felt that others feel a sense of revulsion when they look at Amaka and her son. Perhaps this could have a negative impact on Amaka’s ability to maintain non-judgemental and genuine relationships with others, as I sensed that Amaka constantly feels under scrutiny because she is a Black mother raising a biracial child.

Lisa expressed:

*“It’s not racism in the sense of KKK, you know spray painting epithets on your lawn, it’s that drip drip microaggressions stuff that absolutely drives me crazy.” (Lisa: 32, 1150-1153)*

Lisa’s sense-making of her experience could also reflect the feelings of the other three participants who spoke of their experiences of societal microaggressions. The microaggressions experienced by these participants were covert and therefore were hidden in the things that others said, the looks that others gave and actions that they took. By Lisa saying “drip drip”, this appears to be slow but steady microaggressions that eventually wore away at her. The phrase ‘drives me crazy’ implies that Lisa feels aggravated when she experiences others as communicating microaggressions. It is possible that when this happens, Lisa may feel angry to the

point of almost losing control. Perhaps this is also a reflection of the aforementioned participant's feelings and thoughts.

The experience of microaggressions from society could be linked to participants concerns that were discussed in theme three: 'Challenging experiences uniquely concerning the Black mother-biracial child dyad'. For example, Lisa previously spoke of her worries in relation to how her biracial son will cope with societies judgements. It seems that this concern for Lisa's son is rooted in her own experiences of microaggressions. It appears that Lisa experiences an increased need to racially socialise her son so that he is appropriately equipped at coping with any microaggressions that he may also experience.

#### *3.4.1.2. 'Microaggressions Received from the Black Community'*

Two-thirds of the participants spoke of the microaggressions that they received specifically from 'the Black community', which was a term that participants often used. It could be argued that this concept of 'the Black community' is deeper than just skin colour, as it provides a sense of belonging and unity among fellow Black people. Perhaps, as a result, participants who experienced microaggressions from the Black community seemed to feel a deeper sense of hurt, than those who received microaggressions from the wider society.

Rebecca expressed that the microaggressions that she experienced in relation to being a Black mother of biracial children were received from other Black individuals:

*"Yes! It's little remarks...but funny enough, it's racism but it's racism from other Black people. Not racism from White people." (Rebecca: 6, 183-185)*

Rebecca uses the word 'racism'. Though one could debate about whether or not Rebecca's experience is accurately represented by the term 'racism', it seems much more important to consider the meaning of this word in regards to her experience. Arguably, use of the term racism suggests that Rebecca may experience other Black people as viewing her as inferior because she has procreated with a White man and has biracial children. As a result of this, Rebecca may experience a lack of belonging, as she may feel that she is no longer accepted or welcome by the Black community, as she is raising a biracial child. I would argue that humans are social beings and seek connection with others. Thus, the idea that Rebecca may feel as though she does not belong carries immense weight and should not be overlooked as an important part of her experience as a Black woman raising a biracial child. Rebecca also says 'funny enough', which implies that she may be surprised that she is on the receiving end of the microaggressions that she experiences from other Black people.

Debbie explained that her mother treats her biracial son differently because he is biracial:

*"My mum treats my child like a White child basically, she calls him 'pepperless' because he doesn't eat spicy food. So, she calls him 'pepperless,' she says, 'oh it's because he's White'..." (Debbie: 14, 497-501)*

It seems that rather than directing the microaggressions towards Debbie, Debbie's mother directed her ill feelings towards Debbie's biracial son. This experience of microaggressions would inevitably have an impact on both Debbie and her son and raises the issue of belonging and suggests that at times, Debbie and her son may feel like outsiders. Thus, Debbie may feel as though she and her son no

longer belong to Debbie's own Black family. Debbie also explained that her mother treated her son as though he was a White child, which implies that Debbie's mother views and treats Debbie's son differently in comparison to her other grandchildren. Throughout theme two: 'The experience of Black motherhood', Debbie also spoke of the importance of respect and made reference to her own upbringing and having to be respectful towards her elders. Thus, this creates a complex picture. One that suggests that Debbie resents the microaggressions that she and her biracial child receive from her family but at the same time implies that Debbie would experience the need to be respectful to her family, which may create a feeling of incongruence within her.

For these participants there was an experience of microaggressions, not only received from the wider society but also from the Black community and perhaps even more impactful from participants own Black friends and families. Based on participant accounts, it seems that for the Black community, there is an unwritten rule, that suggests that a Black woman should not be in a relationship with a White man and this notion appears to also be echoed by wider society. Many participants described their experiences of members of wider society as invasive and disapproving and many of these participants also expressed their experience of the fellow Black community as ignorant and critical. These experiences of microaggressions have left many participants with feelings of disbelief, frustration, lack of belonging and feeling insulted, simply because they chose to procreate with a White man and raise biracial children. Participants did not speak of whether or not their experiences of microaggressions had an impact on the relationship dynamic with their biracial children. However, participants interactions with wider society seemed to be impacted by these microaggressions,

as participants felt more defensive as a result. Furthermore, there appeared to be a need for participants to be more and more assertive with those who communicated these microaggressions.

### ***3.4.2 ‘Societal Assumptions’***

All but one participant reflected on their beliefs about societies perceptions of themselves as Black women raising biracial children, as well as societies assumptions regarding Black women in interracial relationships and societies assumptions around participants ‘mother’ statuses. Thus, for these participants, it is clear that societal assumptions have a profound impact on their experiences of raising biracial children as Black women in the UK.

#### ***3.4.2.1. ‘Assumptions Regarding Black Mothers and Their Biracial Children’***

Seven of the nine participants spoke of the beliefs that they held with regards to how society perceived them as Black mothers raising biracial children. Whether participants experienced society as holding positive, negative or no assumptions/expectations about them as Black mothers raising biracial children, this would arguably have a big impact on their overall experience of raising biracial children. This could potentially impact the way that participants viewed themselves and society either positively or negatively, depending on whether or not participants internalised or externalised such assumptions.



Rebecca provided her opinion:

*“They don’t even have to have a reason, they’re just prejudice and have this misconception in their mind ...erm...Black single mothers raising drug dealers or raising children for the prison system.” (Rebecca: 19, 1060-1063)*

Rebecca appeared to be angry, disappointed and upset, perhaps because she felt that others did not have a reason to judge her in the way that she feels that they do and possibly because of this, she believes that she and her child are unfairly judged. Perhaps because Rebecca is a Black woman, she may feel that societies members hold the negative stereotype that her children will inevitably end up in the prison system or selling drugs. However, Rebecca does not appear to have internalised the racial prejudice that she believes society holds and instead she is angry about it. This raises questions about how this experience might impact Rebecca as a mother. Perhaps this experience would make Rebecca a more ambitious mother.

This is echoed by Amaka, who also strongly expressed feelings of being judged by others:

*“It’s all the time, you’re battling judgements because your child is Biracial, you’re battling judgements because you are young, it’s just constant judgements all the time!” (Amaka: 32, 1148-1150)*

Amaka used the word ‘battle’, This suggests that Amaka is fighting. Fighting against judgement and labels, fighting for her right to have a child with the man of her choice, irrespective of his race and fighting for her right to be a Black woman raising a biracial child. Thus, part of the role that Amaka sees for herself seems to

be someone who needs to fight. When we consider Amaka's words, these have the potential to reflect the feelings and voices of most of the participants within this research.

#### *3.4.2.2. 'Assumptions and Attitudes Regarding Interracial Relationships'*

Often, the biracial child is the first indicator of an interracial relationship. Not only did participants experience certain assumptions and views in regards to being a Black mother raising a biracial child but these participants also experienced this regarding their interracial relationships. For participants within this research, these experiences were inseparable and therefore gaining an understanding of the participant's experiences of interracial relationships, provides a more wholesome understanding of the overall experiences of these participants raising biracial children in the UK. Eight participants expressed that society held assumptions about their interracial relationships and four participants spoke of their belief that society held prejudice views about their interracial relationships. Oppositely, four participants felt that society had actually become more accepting of their interracial relationships.

Anna spoke of her experience in which a Black male questioned her about the race of the father of her biracial child, which left her with feelings of complete dismay:

*"A young Black male and he just said, 'Is that a White man's baby?', I said, 'yeah'. That was the only time but I was so gobsmacked!" (Anna: 7, 305-311).*

For Anna, this intrusive question is experienced as shocking and perhaps is a phenomenon that is not easily forgotten.

Amaka expressed her feelings that there was more prejudice directed at her as a Black woman who had a relationship with a White man than a White woman would experience if she had a relationship with a Black man. Thus, Amaka speaks of the looks that she and her biracial child receive which she felt communicated a message of betrayal:

*“For Black people, it’s so frowned upon, like how could you do that, like you’ve failed the race basically. Like you have let us all down...but for a White person it’s like, oh well maybe she’s inheriting ...embracing our culture or whatever, it’s totally different. It’s like oh you know she’s come over to our side but for us (Black women), it’s like no you’ve let down the whole race...” (Amaka: 39, 1412-1421)*

It seems that as a Black woman, Amaka has experienced society as unforgiving and critical of her because of her decision to date a White man. Additionally, Amaka saying ‘you’ve failed the race’ is very extreme and holds negative connotations. This suggests that Amaka may experience a lot of pressure to make her race proud but having been in an interracial relationship, she may also feel elements of shame or disappointment if she internalises this failing. Amaka may also feel a sense of inequality, hurt or defensiveness.

For Amaka it appears that there was a need to make sense of her experiences of bias:

*“Because of slavery and whatever [ ] I think it’s partly ignorance urm, they (Black people) just view every White person to be the same and everyone’s a racist...” (Amaka: 4, 122-159)*

Amaka explained her idea that the historical slavery of Black people had left many modern-day Black people with the perception that all White people were racist. It could, therefore, be Amaka's belief that because of this there is a notion held by Black people that perhaps it is wrong for a Black person, to entertain an interracial relationship with a White person. It seems that Amaka has had to rationalise her experiences to make sense of the microaggressions that she receives and in order to aid her in coping. It also seems that part of Amaka's experience is perhaps the belief or feeling that others view her as a traitor. This could affect Amaka as she may feel as though she has done something intrinsically wrong by having a child with a White man, which could leave her feeling guilty if she internalises this view or perhaps annoyed or frustrated if she externalises it.

Rebecca expressed that she felt as though she had been labelled 'a traitor' by other Black people because she had been in an interracial relationship. By using the word 'traitor', Rebecca is saying that others had made her feel as though she had committed an act of betrayal by having a child with a White man. Perhaps Rebecca could potentially have been left feeling as though others perceived her as disloyal to her fellow Black community:

*"The problem is with Black people, they sort of look at it and think...they kind of say like... 'Oh you know...you've...you've...you're a traitor...you're a traitor'... [ ] because for them, Black women should not be procreating with a White man, to dilute the Black race..." (Rebecca: 13, 450-458)*

The impact of Rebecca's belief could be that Rebecca may feel awkward or even guilty when among other Black people when speaking about her interracial

family, as she may feel as though she is no longer truly welcome. This could perhaps have been the unconscious process that played out when, in theme three: ‘Challenging experiences uniquely concerning the Black mother-biracial child dyad’, Rebecca explained that she had not ‘raised her children Black’, which was followed by an awkward laugh. This could possibly indicate feelings of guilt or awkwardness. These feelings may have arisen as a result of Rebecca having to explain herself to me (a Black woman), someone that she might believe may also perceive her as a traitor.

Amaka and Rebecca mention the Black race, in terms of having ‘let the Black race down’ or ‘diluting the Black race’. This implies that these participants may experience society as condemning and perhaps this perception of society leaves these participants feeling as though they are not accepted. Thus, these participants may feel like outcasts because of their decision to be with a White man and/or have biracial children.

Lastly, Debbie informed me of her mother’s and aunt’s opinions of her, having entered into a relationship with a White man as a Black woman:

*“... ‘Does she think she was too good for Black men?’ That was my mum’s initial reaction... My aunty was like, ‘of all the countries in Africa, she couldn’t find anybody’ you know? ‘and then she went and brought home a White man’...”*  
(Debbie: 20, 715-721)

Perhaps because of these comments, Debbie may have felt attacked or as though she had let her family down by having a child with a White man. Debbie

expressed a sense of pressure to live up to her family's expectations, even if this is not particularly in line with her own wishes.

Each participant spoke about their experiences of microaggressions received from the Black community and the wider society. Previously, throughout theme one: 'The experience of being a Black woman', some participants associated feelings of pride and strength with their Black racial identities. However, the experiences of microaggressions received from the wider society and in particular from participants Black communities, families and friends could lead to participants feeling a sense of condemnation, guilt or lack of belonging for raising biracial children and for procreating with a White man.

On the other hand, four participants described feeling as though society was more accepting of their interracial relationship:

*"I think that society urm, I think I've never really felt much, I haven't felt like people are looking at me or judging me or anything [ ] I think maybe people are more accepting."* (Ola: 30, 1076-1092)

*"I think now people are gradually learning to accept, I think especially in this country now, there's so many intermarriages."* (Gloria: 23, 708-)

Both Ola and Gloria expressed feelings of acceptance in regards to their interracial relationships. For both participants, extracts suggest that society is 'gradually' accepting or is 'more' accepting than it previously was towards interracial marriages. This implies that perhaps these participants do not feel completely accepted by others but feel more accepted and a greater sense of belonging than they may have previously felt.

### 3.4.2.3. 'Assumptions Regarding One's "Mother" Status'

Seven of nine participants spoke in great detail about their experiences of others having questioned their 'mother' status. Many of these participants encountered others who had either overtly or covertly assumed that these participants were not the mothers of their biracial children. For these participants, it seems that there was an ongoing battle to be recognised and accepted as the mother of their biracial children.

Lisa and Ola reflected on times in which they had arrived to collect their biracial children from school. However, both participants were met with resistance, as teachers found it difficult to make the connection that Ola and Lisa were Black mothers of biracial children:

*"I'm like 'where the hell is Nicole? Where is she?' ...So, the teacher comes up and she's telling me about Simone and I'm like, 'Simone?' and she's like 'oh you're Simone's mum, aren't you?' I'm like 'no! I'm Nicole's mother' I mean she's (Nicole) going and saying, 'mummy' and she's (the teacher) like, 'oh, oh, I didn't know' and it's happened to me so many times! Like, me and Simone's mum look nothing alike...other than we are fairly heavy-set Black women, we don't look alike at all!" (Lisa: 27, 976-992)*

When Lisa recounted this story, she said 'Where the hell is Nicole?', which suggested that she was demanding her child and seemed to feel angry about having to do this. However, I sensed that underneath this anger was anxiety. Perhaps this anxiety was rooted in Lisa temporarily being denied the right to her child. Lisa also explained that she and Simone's mother did not look alike apart

from the fact that they are both Black women. Thus, perhaps Lisa may have felt overlooked and disappointed because of this stereotype.

For both of these participants, there seems to be an experience of not meeting others expectations. Ola and Lisa were met with their children's teacher's assumption that they could not be the mothers of their biracial children and because of this, both participants were directed elsewhere for a more 'suitable' Black child. These experiences seem to have left these participants feeling frustrated and overlooked. Ola and Lisa appear to have experienced others as doubting of their role as mothers and because of this perhaps both participants may have felt a sense of desperation and an intense need to retrieve their children. Arguably, this experience of others as doubting is one that most parents would take for granted, as most parents are not often questioned about the ownership of their child. However, for Ola and Lisa, this is an important part of their unique experiences of raising biracial children as Black women.

Additionally, Anna made reference to an occasion in which she was assumed to be her biracial child's carer:

*"An Asian woman has said 'am I the baby sitter?' I said no, 'I'm the mother, that's my daughter in there' but I wasn't offended I just found it quite intriguing. Because people are going by the colour that you are, expecting your child to be that same colour."* (Anna: 8, 321-328)

Anna explained that she had felt intrigued that there had been an expectation placed on her that her child would be of a similar colour to herself. Anna did not appear to be phased by this assumption, but rather part of her experience involves



feeling fascinated by the way that others perceive her in relation to her biracial child, which suggests that Anna feels confident and unphased as a Black mother raising a biracial child.

Additionally, Gloria told me about an experience that she had in a supermarket, in which she had been made to feel uneasy by a fellow shopper:

*“One day I went in the supermarket with my mixed child. Now my baby's... really really White, you know? So, while I was in the shop I happened to be standing in the door (doorway) and people were coming in and going and then this White man stops and really stares at my baby. I wasn't quite sure... what he was thinking but later I thought, oh! did he think I had stolen this baby or something?”*  
(Gloria: 6, 163-175).

Though nothing was said to Gloria, she experienced this stranger and the encounter as judgemental and critical of her and her biracial child. As Gloria and the stranger did not exchange words there is no way that Gloria will ever know for sure what the stranger in the supermarket was thinking. However, it could be considered that perhaps Gloria had concluded that the stranger believed Gloria had stolen her baby because of all of the prejudice and microaggressions that she had experienced prior to this incident. Arguably, these prior experiences could have made Gloria more susceptible to drawing the conclusion that others will assume that she could not be the mother to her biracial child. The impact of this could be that Gloria was left feeling intimidated and perhaps feeling confused about this experience. This could also have caused her to second guess the meaning of her interaction with this stranger and strangers that she may also encounter in the future.

Overall, a range of feelings appear to be rooted in each participant's experience of raising biracial children as Black woman. Though some participants expressed their feelings of acceptance, particularly with regards to their interracial relationships, other participants had a different experience. These participant experiences included feeling scrutinised and judged by society's members. Perhaps these participants also felt isolated or a lack of belonging because of their beliefs about how society perceives them as Black women raising biracial children. Thus, the assumptions that society holds about these participants engaging in interracial relationships and raising biracial children appear to greatly impact participants and can have huge effects on the way in which these participants view themselves and the societies that they live in.

It appears that most participants who took part in this research, experienced microaggressions received not only from the wider society but also from the Black community. It is also important to note that often, for these participants, their biracial children were perhaps the first indicator that these Black women had been involved in interracial relationships, which may have been the cause of further bias. In addition, participants also held a variety of beliefs in regards to the ways in which society viewed them as Black women raising biracial children, perhaps because there was a need to understand why others had directed microaggressions at them. Lastly, it seems that many expectations had been placed on these participants. These included expectations around what a Black mother's child would look like, as well as what a biracial child's mother might look like and in most cases these participants and their biracial children failed to meet such expectations. Thus, at times this could perhaps have led to some participants feeling as though they were being questioned about their role's as

mothers of biracial children, which arguably is a very intimate and personal phenomenon to be questioned about. It appears that prior to becoming mothers, many of these participants may have held their own expectations about how they would experience motherhood. However, this was perhaps overturned by their experiences of bias.

A range of feelings emerged for the Black women within this research in regards to societal assumptions, such as feeling misunderstood and overlooked, feelings of frustration and often (but not always) feeling unaccepted by others and a lack of belonging. It is ironic, to say the least, that we often refer to the UK as a multicultural /multiracial society. Yet most of the participants who took part in this research regularly experienced some form of bias as a result of raising biracial children and/or as a result of engaging in an interracial relationship.

### **3.5. Summary**

As explored throughout the chapter, four superordinate themes emerged from the analysis process (each with subthemes), in relation to participants describing their lived experiences of being Black women/ Black mothers who are raising biracial children in the UK. Participant accounts appeared to suggest that their experiences of being Black women influenced all dimensions of their experiences of raising biracial children. From their experiences of Black motherhood to the challenges that participants experienced in relation to the Black Mother-Biracial child dyad, as well as their experiences of biases. Participant's Black female identities seemed to infiltrate every part of their experiences of raising biracial children. Thus,

special care was taken to gain an in-depth understanding of each participant's experience of their own Blackness. The emergent themes suggest that raising a biracial child as a Black woman is an extremely complex process. One in which participants regularly encounter difficulties and challenges in relation to themselves, their biracial children, their friends and families, as well as the wider society. These emergent themes appear to reflect two overarching experiences: One of growth, adaptation and learning and the other of tolerance, resilience and coping.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative IPA research was to gain an understanding of the unique experiences of Black mothers raising their biracial children in the UK. Throughout this chapter, each superordinate theme will be interpreted, with reference to the existing academic literature. Implications of findings will be explored, particularly with regards to the mental health of Black women who are raising biracial children. Potential limitations of the current research will be outlined and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

### **4.2. The Interpretation**

#### ***4.2.1. 'The Experience of Being a Black Woman'***

A range of participants explained that they felt an urge to help their biracial children to identify with their Black and White racial identities. This, coupled with participants themselves having Black racial identities (which many experienced as innate) left many participants doubting their parenting and socialisation methods. As participants themselves did not identify as biracial women, many appeared to feel ill-equipped and unsure of how might be best to aid biracial identity negotiation, which appeared to be a source of discomfort for participants.

Conversely, some participants spoke of their Black racial identity as if their parents had instilled this into them through racial socialisation methods. As a result, these participants found that they also used these methods (that their parents had used with them) with their biracial children, to aid them in developing the Black elements of their biracial identities. Thus, the current research develops the existing literature, as it demonstrates that the methods of racial socialisation that Black mothers themselves endured are often translated into the ways in which these Black mothers attempt to racially socialise their biracial children.

The existing literature is in line with participants experiences, as it suggests that parents typically racially socialise their children based on their own experiences of racial identity formation (Rockauemore, Laszloff & Noveske, 2006, as cited in Tashiro, 2012). However, within interracial families, the racial socialisation of biracial children is argued to be incredibly challenging because unlike monoracial parents raising monoracial Black or White children, these parents cannot use their own experiences of having developed their racial identity to aid the racial identity formation of their biracial children (Snyder, 2012). Thus, findings from the current research advance the existing literature by providing insight into the challenges that *Black mothers* face when trying to aid the biracial identity negotiation of their children, as the current literature is more concerned with the experiences that White mothers face when raising their biracial children. In addition, participants within the current research were based in the UK, as opposed to the USA, which is also novel and therefore provides insight specifically into the experiences of Black mothers within the UK.

Most participants within this research spoke of their feelings of Pride, which they experienced as an attribute that was rooted in their Black racial identity. As a

result, many participants spoke of their need to raise their biracial children to also feel pride within their Blackness. Research demonstrates that Black parents aim to instil racial pride into their Black children, by educating them about their heritage and through instilling feelings of unity among other Blacks (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Hughes, 2003). Literature also states that Black mothers in particular, often place emphasis on instilling racial pride into their children (Thomas & King, 2007; Everet alt, Marks & Clarke-Mitchell, 2016) and Scottham & Smalls (2009) suggest that Black parents whom themselves experience racial pride are likely to try to help develop their children's feelings of group membership by instilling pride in Black racial identity. Thus, findings of the current research add to the existing literature by highlighting the added pressure that these participants experience as a result of trying to ensure that their biracial children valued their Blackness in the same way that they did and suggests that there may be an emotional cost to feeling unable (or struggling) to instil Black pride into their biracial children.

Participants also reflected on their need to be strong Black women. Those who highlighted strength as part of their identity, linked this attribute to their Black racial identities, which appeared to serve as both a strength as well as a weakness. Some participants expressed feeling that their strength was helpful, as it aided them in dealing with societal biases that were directed at them and at times helped to protect their biracial children. However, other participants experienced strength as an unhelpful coping mechanism, as it hindered them in seeking support in raising their biracial children from external agencies. Thus, the current research accentuates the idea that for these participants, the strong Black woman stereotype (SBWS) can have a helpful as well as an unhelpful function.

The current research emphasises findings within the existing literature. Literature shows that strength is often a fundamental part of Black woman's racial identities and suggests that Black women are often viewed by society as strong, which Settles, Pratt-Hyatt & Buchanan (2008) argued can be internalised by Black women as a positive attribute. This SBWS has created a particular archetype, in which the strong Black woman is strong, resilient, and independent (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). Though the SBWS is argued to be crucial for the survival of Black woman (Mullings & Schulz 2006), this can also arguably be problematic, as this could potentially hinder Black women from seeking help or showing any sign of distress (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). The current research supports the existing literature pertaining to the SBWS. However, this research also builds on the narrative in this research area, as most studies conducted on the SBWS are based in the USA. The current research, however, provides an in-depth understanding of the 'strong Black woman' raising a biracial child within a British context, which is novel.

Two participants expressed that their experiences of racism aided them in identifying as Black women. These experiences unknowingly had an impact on how these participants decided to raise their biracial children. As a result, these participants placed high importance on educating their biracial children about racism, to equipped them in being able to survive in a society that participants perceived as racist.

This is in alignment with the existing literature, which States that Black women often experience racism throughout the course of their lives (Nuru-Jeter, Williams & Laveist, 2008) and suggests that parents who experienced racism are more likely to socialise their children to be more aware of racism within society



(Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Still, the current research enhances our understanding, as findings provide first-hand insight into the way that the experience of racism can shape the way that Black mothers choose to socialise their biracial children, to also be able to deal with this racism.

Lastly, it is important to note that of all of the participants who were recruited to participate in this study, one participant (Cara) had a Black mother and Malaysian father. As a result, Cara explained that others often categorised her as a biracial woman. Though, Cara herself identified as Black. It seems that Cara's experiences of racism, along with having learned about Black history, aided her in identifying solely with her Black heritage. However, Cara explained that although others may view her as a biracial woman, she still experienced strength and pride in her *Black* racial identity. Moreover, Cara felt that it was imperative that her children also be raised to feel a sense of pride within the Black element of their biracial identities (in the same way that other participants did). Furthermore, Cara felt that it was important to raise her biracial children to identify with both their Black and White heritage equally (as did the other monoracial Black participants). Thus, Cara's experiences support the current literature which states that 'race' and 'racial identity' are fluid social constructs, which are dependent on experience, time and context, as opposed to genetics (Onwuachi-Willig, 2016).

To conclude, First, this superordinate theme improves our understanding of the effects of Black racial identity on raising a biracial child, as it provides important idiographic detail to the already existing literature. Secondly, this superordinate theme highlights the idea that 'race' and 'racial identity' are social constructs and demonstrates this through Cara's narrative. Lastly, this superordinate theme reveals the need to gain an understanding of Black mother's experiences of their

Black racial identities within a UK context, in order to truly understand their narratives. Thus, this superordinate theme shows that there is a clear need to look through an intersectional lens when attempting to gain an understanding of Black women's experiences of raising biracial children, as their experiences are multifaceted.

#### ***4.2.2. 'The Experience of Black Motherhood'***

This research expands the existing literature as most participants referred to the different ways in which they had learned to be Black mothers, which is a topic area that is sparse. For participants, the experience of learned Black mothering involved learning about discipline, learning to show strength, learning the importance of respect and cultural norms. Interestingly, these participants expressed that they had learned these methods from their Black mothers and therefore, suggests that these methods of mothering have strong ties with Black racial identity.

The notion of learned Black mothering is somewhat supported by the existing literature, which suggests that Black women are impacted by what they are taught by their mothers and grandmothers (Woods-Griscombe, 2010) and often learn how to be Black mothers through their Black mothers and grandmothers (Broner, 2013; Fouquier, 2011; Collins, 2000). Though research within this area is sparse, research exploring the impact of grandmothers, in particular, shows that within the Black community, the grandmother is someone whose role is to guide the next generation (Chancler, Webb & Miller, 2017), to educate, provide wisdom and to pass on norms and values to the following generations (Gibson, 2002). Thus, the

current research reflects the existing literature, but also speaks to the importance of intergenerational teaching and highlights the impact of Black racial identity on Black mother's experiences of raising biracial children.

Support was also a fundamental part of the experience of Black motherhood for all participants within this research. The experiences of Black mothers raising their biracial children appeared to involve a need for connectedness and support from other members of the Black family and Black friendship groups. Thus, for participants, their experiences of a Black support network appeared to highlight the need for support of a unique nature, perhaps so unique that participants may have felt that this support could only be provided by fellow Black people. It is possible that for these participants, it is important that they and their biracial children received support from others who share their Black racial identity, as this appears to be experienced as more helpful to them, maybe because this support is tailored to participants racial and cultural needs.

The current research reflects the existing literature which states that within the Black community support received from Black friends and family is a fundamental part of life (Taylor, Forsythe-Brown & Chatters (2013). The literature claims that Black women cope by seeking support from others with similar racial and gendered identities (Collins, 2000). Greenway, Peters, Haslam and Bingley (2018) suggest that the reason for this is because, to Black women, fellow Black women have similar experiences, these women may view the social world from a similar point of view and may attach a similar meaning to a particular experience. In addition, Collins (2000) expressed the need for the woman-centred extended family, as this type of support has a unique purpose as it

aids Black mothers in caring for their children and protects Black mother's children whilst growing up in racist environments.

On the other hand, the existing academic literature regarding Black mother's experiences of external support is largely ignored. However, the current research develops the existing literature by providing an insight into participants' apparent lack of external support. Though the existing literature regarding Black women and external support is limited, the available literature suggests that as a result of Black women's need to be strong, their psychological distress can often go unnoticed (Abrams, Maxwell, Pope & Belgrave, 2014). Thus, Ward & Brown (2015) advise that we tailor external support to meet the needs of Black women, as this could potentially increase access to external support and could reduce disengagement and dropout rates. Therefore, the current research begins to provide much-needed insight into Black mother's experiences of support whilst raising their biracial children in the UK. Still, this research also demonstrates the need for a fuller understanding of Black mother's experiences of external support.

Overall, the current research appears to be consistent with the existing literature concerning learned Black mothering and family and friend support and begins to advance the current narrative around Black mothers and external support. These findings also add nuanced detail to the existing literature as this research highlights the importance of support for Black mothers raising biracial children. Additionally, this research also demonstrates the need to gain a holistic understanding of Black woman's experiences of Black motherhood, in order to truly gain a wholesome understanding of Black mother's experiences of raising biracial children in the UK.

#### ***4.2.3. 'Challenging Experiences Uniquely Concerning the Black Mother-Biracial Child Dyad'***

A third of the participants were convinced that society would perceive their biracial children as Black. This supports the literature which suggests that 'race' and 'racial identity' are subjective social constructs and therefore can be interpreted and experienced in infinite ways (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Still, the idea that race is a social construct raises questions about the impact of this on biracial people. This idea urges us to consider the difficulties that biracial people might face when attempting to navigate through a society that may racially categorise them in a way that is incompatible with the way in which they view themselves. Therefore, in an attempt to counteract potential difficulties that participant's biracial children might encounter (as a result of being viewed by society as Black), a range of participants expressed a need to raise their children to be aware of the idea that society would potentially view and treat them as Black. These participants spoke of the added pressure of needing to prepare their children to be able to appropriately deal with and tolerate any racism or racial prejudice that they might experience as a result of being perceived as Black. For these participants, their Black racial identities appeared to aid them in educating their children about racism and helped them to equip their children to live within a racist society.

The idea that 'race' is a social construct and the subsequent notion that society could view biracial children as Black, is reflected in the experiences of biracial people within the existing literature. In their study, Khanna & Johnson (2010) found that most biracial participants expressed their belief that others perceived them as Black as opposed to White or biracial. Similarly, Perry & Bodenhausen

(2008) found that racially ambiguous individuals were more likely to be labelled as Black rather than White. Thus, findings from the current research provide a different perspective to the narrative that is currently in this topic area, as it provides an insight into the perceptions that Black mothers (as opposed to their biracial children) may have of society. This research also sheds light on how these beliefs shape the way in which these mothers might attempt to raise their biracial children and clearly demonstrates the notion that 'race' is indeed a social construct.

This supports the existing literature, which states that often mothers engage in discussions with biracial children regarding race-related issues in order to equip children in being able to deal with any challenges that they may encounter as a result of being biracial Csizmadia, Rollins & Kaneaku (2014). Rockquemore & Laszloffy (2005) argue that parents can aid biracial identity formation, by preparing biracial children for societal biases that may arise as a result of being biracial and by educating their children about the various empowering labels that biracial individuals can use to define themselves (for example, mixed race, biracial, multiracial etc.).

On the other hand, a range of participants within this research expressed their belief that their biracial children were autonomous with regards to negotiating their biracial identities. These participants held a belief that their biracial children would develop their biracial identity in an organic fashion, so long as they had access to both their White fathers and Black mother's cultures. For these participants, the idea that their children would naturally develop their biracial identity seemed reassuring, as these participants felt less responsible for aiding

their biracial children to negotiate their racial identities. This is in agreement with Rollins and Hunter's (2013) suggestion, which is that simply by interacting with both parents, the biracial child will naturally gain an understanding of their racial heritage.

Additionally, four participants experienced concern for their biracial children, for a range of reasons. Interestingly, participants concerns were unique to being Black mothers, suggesting that these concerns were rooted in their Black racial identities. Participants concerns were also in relation to the difficulties that their biracial children may encounter as a result of being perceived as Black or because biracial children were half Black. However, this contradicts the literature regarding the experiences of biracial people, which has found that biracial people often experience a lack of belonging, rejection and hostility from the Black community, as they are often not perceived to be part of this ingroup (Campion, 2019). Still, irrespective of the realities of biracial individuals, the concerns that participants within the current research felt for their biracial children affected the way that participants chose to raise and educate their children.

Though the existing literature pertaining to Black mother's experiences of concern for their biracial children is lacking, research has been conducted with regards to Black mother's concerns for their Black children. Many of the Black mothers within the current research spoke of their view that society would perceive and treat their biracial children as Black, which suggests that some of the concerns that these women experience may be similar. Research suggests that Black mothers raising Black children feel concerned, particularly for their sons, as they fear that they could be convicted and/or killed (Elliott & Reid, 2019). A longitudinal study by House & Nomaguchi (2013) showed that Black mothers

often feel stressed and concerned for the wellbeing of their children, which worsened as their children grew older. Whereas Elliott & Aseltine (2012) found that rather than age, a child's gender shaped the concerns that Black mothers experienced (for example, Black mothers were more likely to experience worry concerning criminality for their sons and sexuality for their daughters). Thus, the existing literature provides sound insight into Black mother's concerns regarding their monoracial Black children. However, the literature fails to provide insight into Black mother's experiences of concern for their *biracial children*. Thus, findings from the current research greatly improve the existing literature by providing further idiographic insight into the worries and concerns of Black mothers raising biracial children within the UK.

Most participants within this research experienced their biracial child as distinct from themselves mainly as a result of the difference in the hair texture and skin complexion between mother and child. This research develops the narrative in this topic area as it highlights just how much of an impact this distinction between mother and child can have, as this difference influenced the way in which participants were able to relate to their biracial children. For example, a range of participants within this research expressed that it took them some time to adjust to the idea that their biracial children looked distinct from their Black mothers, some participants spoke of the idea that their biracial children had not met their expectations, though they were unsure of what exactly they had expected. Whereas other participants found that they had to remind themselves that their biracial children were still theirs, even though they looked different from their Black mothers.



Though the existing literature does not directly explore the experiences of Black mothers feeling distinct from their biracial children, the literature *does* provide an insight into the experiences of biracial people feeling distinct from others. Chiong (1998) suggest that often, biracial children are identified with the race that their physical appearance (for example, their hair texture and skin complexion) most closely resembles, which may or may not be in accordance to the way in which the biracial person views themselves. Tate (2007) also explored the way that biracial women experience themselves within society and found that these women were often regarded as being different from other Black women, because of their fairer skin complexion and more European hair textures. Research also suggests that biracial young people may experience racism, a lack of support and a sense of alienation from others as a result of being biracial, which can have an effect on their feelings of belonging and can reinforce feelings of distinctness (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Thus, findings from the current research amplify the existing literature as it explicitly provides an insight into the feelings of distinctness that Black mothers may feel towards their biracial children.

It is also interesting to note that the literature suggests that fairer skin and European hair are often more desired within society (Mohamed, 2000). However, this contradicts the findings of this research as many participants within this research expressed a need for their biracial children to have a hair texture and skin complexion that resembled their own, as perhaps there was a desire for their biracial children to look somewhat similar to their Black mothers, so that participants might feel a greater sense of ownership with regards to their biracial children.

The current research also strengthens the argument that ‘race’ is a social construct (which has been created in the interest of dominant White groups) which exists in order to maintain segregation and oppression within society (Delgado & Stefania, 2013). Thus, the current research provides first-hand insight into the way in which race functions as a means of making people feel distinct from one another and demonstrates the impact that race/ perceived racial difference can have on the relationship between Black mother and biracial child.

The existing literature largely ignores the experience of challenges that arise from the Black mother-biracial child dyad. However, this research adds clarity to the narrative in this topic area as it elucidates the experiences of Black mothers attempting to aid their biracial children to negotiate their biracial identities. This research also advances the existing literature by highlighting the concerns that Black mothers may face regarding their biracial children and provides insight into the feelings of distinctness that Black mothers often endure as a result of the racial difference between themselves and their biracial children. In sum, this superordinate theme provides a much-needed insight into the challenges that the Black mothers within this research faced as a result of raising their biracial children. Perhaps because of the aforementioned challenges, participants developed the need to adapt and therefore demonstrated resiliency.

#### **4.2.4. ‘Biases’**

All participants within this research reported the salient experience of bias, in the form of societal assumptions and microaggressions, which is a novel finding that this research offers to the existing literature. Participants experienced

microaggressions from the wider society (not only as a result of being Black mothers of biracial children but also for engaging in interracial relationships) which often left participants feeling confused, insulted and discontented. Participants also received microaggressions and judgement from their Black communities, including friends and family members, which left many participants feeling as though other Black people perceived them as traitors and many participants experienced feelings of a lack of belonging and hurt because of this.

Participants within the current research spoke of the societal assumptions that they experienced. Many participants spoke about the prejudice that they felt was directed towards their interracial relationship, as well as their belief that others were unaccepting of their interracial relationships. Only a few participants mentioned the idea that society had become more accepting of the interracial relationship than it previously had been.

This is in step with the existing literature as there is evidence suggesting that stigma is still associated with the interracial relationship (Herman & Campbell, 2012). Childs (2005) found that Black women involved in interracial relationships felt a lack of acceptance from the Black community including their own families and friends. Childs (2005) suggested that at times there is also a lack of acceptance towards the biracial children of the interracial couple. Other research has found that interracial couples experience microaggressions (Vazquez, Otero & Goodlow, 2019), racism from the wider society, tension within the extended family (Bell & Hastings, 2015), disapproval from the extended family (Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008) and stigma received from family, friends and the wider society, which was associated with increased anxiety and depressive symptoms (Rosenthal, Deosaran, Young & Starks, 2019). These findings are in unison with

findings that arose from the current literature, as participants spoke at length of their experiences of racism, judgement and microaggressions from the wider society and the Black community as a result of their interracial relationships. Still, findings from the current research provide a rich understanding of Black British women's experiences of their interracial relationships, which is missing from the existing literature. The existing academic literature appears to predominantly shed light on White women's experiences of interracial relationships within a USA setting. Thus, findings from the current research provide a much-needed insight into Black women's first-hand experiences of interracial relationships and interracial dating in a UK setting.

Most participants also spoke of the assumptions regarding their status as mothers and felt that it was an ongoing battle to be recognised as their biracial children's Black mothers (as participants were often mistaken for their biracial child's nanny or carer) and some named the frustration, judgement and unease that they experienced as a result. These participants also spoke in-depth of their experiences of microaggressions that they received (as a result of raising biracial children) from their fellow Black communities as well as the wider society. These experiences of bias impacted the ways that participants experienced the wider society, the Black community, participants friends and families and therefore shaped participant's overall experiences of raising their biracial children.

The academic literature pertaining to the experience of bias towards Black mothers raising biracial children is non-existent. Yet, the internet is saturated with first-person narratives (as opposed to academic literature), which speak directly to Black mother's experiences of biases as a result of raising biracial children. These narratives highlight the experiences of societal assumptions for Black women

raising biracial children. For example, the experience of strangers questioning these women's status as Black mothers of biracial children, or the experience of others assuming that these Black women could not be the mothers of the biracial children that they are sighted with (Faye, 2019; Anthony, 2019; Shabazz, 2019). Such encounters often leave these Black mothers feeling judged, hurt and at times, embarrassed (Faye, 2019; Anthony, 2019; Shabazz, 2019). These narratives are in line with many of the experiences of participants who took part in the current research and illustrate the impact that these experiences can have on Black women. Still, the current research greatly improves the narrative in this topic area as it provides rich and rigorous academic findings which shed light on Black mother's experiences of bias as a result of raising biracial children in the UK.

In summary, the current research provides a valuable contribution to the existing literature, as it gives a rich and detailed understanding of Black mother's experiences of biases, as a result of engaging in interracial relationships and raising biracial children. In addition, it is invaluable that the academic literature is able to provide an insight into Black mother's experiences of bias as a result of raising biracial children. Currently, there is an abundance of academic literature exploring White mothers experiences of bias, as a result of raising biracial children (Barn, 1999; Kouritzin, 2016; Rauktis, Fusco, Goodkind & Bradley-King, 2016; Harman, 2013; Fusco & Rautkis, 2012), but none which explores the experiences of Black mothers. Thus, findings generated from the current research begin to combat this race-related bias that currently exists within the academic literature. Lastly, the current research supports and strengthens the argument that 'race' is indeed an extremely powerful social construct (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez & Peck, 2007). This research shows that the social construction of 'race' alone, has

the power to divide individuals, communities and families and can give rise to stigma, racism, racial prejudice, microaggressions and societal assumptions.

### **4.3.Critical Reflections and Implications for Counselling Psychology**

#### ***4.3.1. Microaggressions***

Most participants who took part in the current research named microaggressions as part of their experience of raising biracial children as Black women.

Microaggressions are defined as: Covert forms of discrimination that may be intentional or unintentional and are often subtle insults that can be communicated both verbally, non-verbally and unconsciously (Yosso, Smith, Ceja & Solorzano, 2009). The academic literature with regards to the experience and impact of microaggressions is vast and research outcomes suggest that microaggressions have a negative impact on an individual's psychological functioning and can be damaging to the interpersonal relationships of those who experience it (Torino, Rivera, Capodilupo, Nadal & Wing Sue, 2018).

Davis (2018) argued that often the initial reactions to microaggressions are confusion, worry and a need to process the encounter, as often the subtleness of the microaggressions can leave the recipient feeling unsure of what had occurred. It has also been suggested that the long-term effects of microaggressions may be: Anxiety (Davis, 2018; Williams, Kanter & Ching, 2017 ) traumatic stress (Nadal, 2018), substance use (Blume, Lovato, Thyken & Denny, 2012), depression and suicidal ideation (Hollingsworth et al, 2017), and a reduction in self-esteem (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff & Sriken, 2014). With regards to Black women, in particular, the literature states that microaggressions can increase feelings of

powerlessness (Davis, 2018) and can have a harmful effect on the psychological functioning (Donovan, Galban, Grace, Bennett & Felicie, 2012) and the physical health of Black women (Taylor, Williams, Makambi, Mouton & Adams-Campell, 2007).

Though there is an abundance of literature which provides insight into the experiences and impact of microaggressions, findings presented within the current research are novel, as these findings shed light on Black women's neglected experiences of microaggressions directly stemming from their positioning as Black mothers raising biracial children. For the participants within this research, Microaggressions were an impactful part of their experience of raising biracial children and was spoken about with great passion. Participant's experiences of microaggressions appeared to have a profound impact on their lives and the way in which they viewed themselves, others and the world. Thus, gaining an understanding of each participant's experience of microaggressions is helpful as it provides insight into the very unique experience of these Black women, which is an experience that is often overlooked.

Findings from this research could expand many professional's knowledge of microaggressions as well as those who experience it. Perhaps this research will encourage mental health practitioners, particularly counselling psychologists, to try to better understand the impact of microaggressions, in order to effectively serve the Black mothers of biracial children who experience them. It is imperative that counselling psychologists understand the effects of microaggressions in order to aid them in working with individuals who experience microaggressions and so that they are aware of the impact of microaggressions and can, therefore, take

extra precautions so as not to replicate the client's experiences of microaggressions within the therapy setting.

Within the therapy setting, Sue (2013) argues that counselling psychologists who are working with ethnic minority clients may unintentionally communicate microaggressions. During therapy, microaggressions can arise in different ways, for example, by psychologists providing treatment interventions that are not tailored to the client's cultural needs or by minimising or ignoring cultural issues within therapy (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). Thus, counselling psychologists must be aware of the notion that personal biases can affect therapy (Sue, 2013).

Research suggests that client's experiences of microaggressions in therapy can lead to clients experiencing a lack of respect and lack of validation, which can negatively impact the therapeutic alliance (Owen et al, 2011) and as a result can affect treatment outcomes (Constantine, 2007), as the therapeutic alliance has been identified as a significant predictor of therapy outcomes (Horvath et al, 2011). Thus, Owen (2011) suggests that therapists must take the cultural messages that they communicate to clients into consideration, as well as identifying strategies or engaging in 'check in's with clients' in order to enable counselling psychologists and clients to begin to have a conversation about race, culture and its impact.

It is not always possible to prevent microaggressions from arising within therapy. In which case, when microaggressions do occur, it is imperative that this is addressed. Owen, Tao, Imel, Wampold & Rodolfa, (2014) found that clients and therapists who can engage in a narrative regarding the occurrence of microaggressions within the therapy setting resulted in a stronger therapeutic alliance in comparison to clients and therapists who felt unable to discuss



microaggressions after they had occurred. This arguably highlights the importance of transparency throughout therapy (Safran & Murran, 2000) and suggests that a strong therapeutic alliance can still be maintained so long as microaggressions that occur throughout the therapeutic process are discussed.

The current research also seeks to encourage professionals and scholars to begin to identify or create adaptive coping strategies that will aid those who experience microaggressions. Such strategies should aim to manage and reduce the negative effects of microaggressions that are experienced by clients within their everyday lives and should aim to equip these clients in being able to deal with and process their experiences of microaggressions. This research can also be recommended by counselling psychologists to Black mothers raising biracial children, or Black women engaging in interracial relationships in order to facilitate understanding of the experiences of microaggressions and its effects. The aim here is to validate and normalise these women's experiences of microaggressions. To communicate to these women that they are not alone and to shine light on a very idiosyncratic experience that is often minimised. By simply beginning a dialogue regarding Black women's experiences of biases (such as microaggressions) with regard to their interracial relationships and/or biracial children, we can begin to increase societies awareness of the nature of microaggressions and its impact on Black mothers raising biracial children. Hopefully, this will begin to reduce the frequency at which people communicate and therefore experience microaggressions, which could aid Black mothers who are raising biracial children to feel a greater sense of acceptance and belonging within their fellow Black communities, as well as among the wider society.

#### ***4.3.2. Strength***

Most participants who took part in the current research perceived themselves as strong Black women. Strength was regarded as a way of being that was rooted within these participants Black racial identities. Literature shows that ‘strong’ is possibly the single most widely used word describing Black women (Walker-Barnes, 2009). This Strong Black woman stereotype (SBWS) is characterised by the ability to withstand pressure, remain independent and support the family (Walker-Barnes, 2009), as well as showing psychological, physical and emotional strength (Baker, Buchanan, Mingo, Roker & Brown, 2014). This need to be strong is said to be beneficial, as it has been argued that being ‘strong’ is a survival mechanism that aids Black women in enduring hardship (Woods-Giscombe, 2010) and promotes self-efficacy (Watson & Hunter, 2015). However, scholars have highlighted a range of disadvantages that often accompany this SBWS, such as: Overeating and obesity as a way of coping with distress (Harrington, Growther & Shipherd, 2010), depression (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Mitchell & Herring, 1998; Donovan & West, 2014), overall increased psychological distress (Watson-Singleton, 2017), anxiety (Watson & Hunter, 2015) and reduction in emotional wellbeing (Romero, 2000).

For many of the participants within this research, being a strong Black woman was a fundamental part of their experience of raising biracial children and was an attribute that some participants acknowledged was rooted in their Black racial identities and others regarded as an attribute that had been learned from their own Black mothers. For most participants, their need to be strong Black women influenced the way in which they raised their biracial children to also be strong, impacted the way that participants utilised their strength in order to protect their

children and at times hindered participants being able to access external support. Thus, counselling psychologists must be aware of the impact of the SBWS on all aspects of Black women's lives. Thus, it is imperative that counselling psychologists working with Black women are aware of just how damaging (but also useful) the SBWS can potentially be to those who internalise it.

It is also important that counselling psychologists are able to acknowledge the idea that the SBWS may hinder Black women from being able to access external support and could prevent Black women from feeling able to be vulnerable with another person, particularly someone whom they regard as their outgroup. Thus, counselling psychologists must take special care to utilise and communicate the core conditions (empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence) (Rogers, 1957) to Black women whom they work with in therapy. This is in order to build a strong therapeutic alliance, in the hopes that with time, these women are able to step away from over employment of the SBWS and instead might be able to share the difficulties and challenges that they may be experiencing.

Arguably, because of this need for Black women to remain strong, an alternative approach to counselling should be taken. Abrams, Hill & Maxwell (2018) suggest that individualistic approaches to counselling psychology may be ineffective for Black women. Thus, counselling psychologists must be aware of the uniqueness of this client group. Abrams, Hill & Maxwell (2018) suggest that Black women may benefit more from professionals acknowledging Black women's social and cultural backgrounds and validating their use of strength as a way of being that often serves as a helpful function. Ward & Brown (2015) argue that tailoring psychological interventions to meet the needs of these Black women could reduce client dropout rates and is argued to be four times more effective than the use of

traditional interventions. Therefore, perhaps this research will encourage counselling psychologists to engage in psychoeducation with Black women, specifically with regards to the implications of being strong, for example, the lack of support sought out by Black women for their physical and mental health difficulties and the lack of self-care and overburdening of oneself (Davis, Levant & Pryor, 2018).

It may also be beneficial for counselling psychologists to help Black women to consider societal expectations of them, in comparison to their own values and expectations of self (Speight, Isom & Thomas, 2013) as this may help these women to differentiate between what society expects of them and what they want for themselves. Counselling psychologists should also create interventions that could aid Black women in utilising other coping strategies or ways of being, instead of overuse of the SBWS and it could perhaps be helpful for counselling psychologists to engage in dialogue with Black women to gauge their understanding of the SBWS and explore how this is embedded in their self-narrative.

Counselling psychologists should also make this research accessible to others who are not Black women, as it is imperative that others are aware of the SBWS and the effects and implications that this way of being can have on Black women. This research could help others to gain an insight into the need for and function of the strength that Black women exhibit and the potential impact of this on these women's physical and mental health. The aim is to broaden the knowledge of others and to prompt individuals to consider issues of diversity.

#### ***4.3.3. Support***

Social support is defined as providing instrumental, emotional and informational help to another (Thoits, 1995). Research suggests that in particular, Black women heavily rely on family support (Taylor, Forsythe-Brown, Taylor & Chatters, 2013). This was the case within the current research, as all participants named kin support as particularly beneficial whilst raising their biracial children. The counselling psychology community needs to be aware of the difficulties that Black women face when considering whether or not to access external support. Abrams, Maxwell, Pope & Belgrave (2014) argue that psychological distress can often go unnoticed because of the need for Black woman to be strong and independent. This way of being is argued to act as a barrier, which prevents Black women from seeing the need to access support from psychological services (Abrams, Hill, Maxwell, 2018), which could be the reason that scholars such as Brody, Pratt & Hughes (2018) have argued that Black women are unlikely to seek support from mental health services. Thus, counselling psychologists need to introduce Black women to psychological services in environments that they are familiar with (for example, in their homes and in their places of worship) in order to aid Black women in accessing such services (Abrams, Hill, Maxwell, 2018). Counselling psychologists should also engage in psychoeducation with Black women to highlight the effects of total independence and social isolation on psychological functioning (Kohn, Oden, Munoz, Robinson & Leavitt, 2002). Counselling psychologists can also support these women by helping them to consider alternative and more balanced cognitions regarding the meaning of support seeking (Watson-Singleton, 2017). Watson-Singleton (2017), put forth the idea that psychologists could do this by challenging the Black and White thinking

of independence versus dependence, by emphasising the cultural relevance of helping others, while accepting help and suggests that there is a benefit to mutual reliance between individual and group support, which is important to emphasise to these women (Watson-Singleton, 2017). Perhaps if more Black women feel able to access external support, the psychological difficulties that these women have to contend with, as well as the concerns and challenges that these women face as a result of raising biracial children, could be spoken about in a safe therapeutic space.

#### ***4.3.4. Implications for the Biracial Child***

Some participants within the current research viewed their biracial children as unique, as opposed to Black, White or biracial and expressed their belief that society should also adopt this view. Considering what we have learned regarding the notion that society may perceive and categorise the biracial person as Black, implications can arise. Should Black mothers view their children as unique, rather than a particular racial category, these mothers may place less emphasis on aiding their children with racial identity negotiation and socialisation processes, such as cultural socialisation, preparation for bias and the promotion of mistrust. This could potentially leave biracial individuals feeling a lack of pride within their racial identity or ill-equipped in dealing with the racism and prejudice that they may experience from others who do perceive them as White, Black or biracial and could potentially lead to these biracial individuals feeling confused about how they should racially identify and where they fit in.

If Black mothers choose not to aid their biracial children to develop their racial identities or refuse to support their biracial children in racially categorising themselves, they may be unintentionally hindering their biracial children in identifying their 'racial homes'. A racial home is a racial category in which an individual identifies with and is said to aid biracial individuals to develop their racial identity and allows biracial people to feel a sense of racial belonging as well as providing an ingroup in which they can seek support in dealing with racial stressors (Binning, Unzueta, Ho & Molina, 2009). In addition, Omi & Winant (1994, p.6) state that "without a racial identity, one is in danger of having no identity at all". Research suggests that racial identity is associated with self-esteem, health and wellbeing (Allen, Garriott, Reyes & Hsieh, 2013) and therefore, racial identification and categorisation appears to be essential to the identity development and overall wellbeing of the biracial person. Thus, it is imperative that counselling psychologists working with Black mothers raising biracial children are aware of and can empathise with the challenges that Black mothers may face when attempting to aid their biracial children to negotiate their biracial identities. It is important that Black mothers are educated about the importance of racial identity negotiation and balancing Black and White identities. Black mothers should also be taught about the notion of having a 'racial home', and the importance of making their biracial child aware of the way in which society may potentially perceive them to be Black individuals as opposed to biracial or White. The counselling psychology community may further support these women by creating therapy groups, support groups or online forums for mothers raising biracial children, in order to bring together women who have

similar experiences as a way of supporting each other, sharing experiences and exchanging advice.

#### ***4.3.5. Expanding Research***

This research should also be made accessible to counselling psychologists, both qualified and currently in training, as more research exploring the experiences of ethnic minority women raising biracial children within the UK needs to be conducted, as research within this topic area is currently non-existent. Yet, the counselling psychology ethos endorses a commitment to “recognise and promote the awareness and understanding of different identities and cultures in the UK as well as their intersections” (Division of Counselling Psychology Networks, BPS, 2019). Thus, it is imperative that the counselling psychology community takes a much more active role in providing research that offers a fuller understanding of individuals from a variety of backgrounds who have a variety of experiences (such as the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children) in order to begin to eradicate the race-related bias that currently exists within the academic literature.

#### ***4.3.6. Scope Beyond the Counselling Psychology Field***

This research may have implications for schools. Pupils may benefit from this research being made readily available to teaching staff so that teachers can be aware of the issues that Black mothers and their biracial children may experience. This research may make teachers aware of the challenges that can accompany biracial identity formation as well as the racism and prejudice that biracial individuals may encounter. Hopefully, as a result, teaching staff will understand



the need to support biracial young people in the development of their racial identities and teachers may become more aware of the importance of educating other pupils about race and culture in order to reduce the likelihood of racism and racial prejudice/discrimination among students.

Black mothers raising biracial children may also benefit from parenting workshops/classes that provide support specifically to mothers raising biracial children. 'CAMHS' and Charities such as 'open door', who provide parenting advice, may benefit from accessing this research as findings may provide a more complex understanding of the experiences of Black women raising biracial children, which in turn, would mean that these services could tailor their advice services in order to meet the unique needs of these Black mothers.

#### **4.4. Limitations**

The themes which emerged within the analysis provide a much-needed insight into the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. However, conclusions should be tentatively drawn, as findings may not be representative of the experiences of all Black women raising biracial children in the UK. Thus, findings should be understood whilst considering the limitations of the small sample size of this research study and context in which this research took place, as these factors reduce the external validity of the research findings.

The aim was to recruit eight to ten participants across a wide age span. However, the sample of participants that were recruited was between ages 29-63 years, (the mean age being 43 years). Participant's biracial children's ages ranged from 4-26 years (the mean age being 12 years) and the majority of participant's biracial

children were aged 14 years or below. Although all participants spoke in detail about their experiences of having biracial children, which allowed rich data to emerge from the analysis. This research would also have benefited from gaining insight into the experiences of younger and older Black women, who were beyond the age range of the participants who were recruited. As arguably, these individuals may have had a different perspective regarding their experiences of raising a biracial child in the UK. For this research, Part of the inclusion criteria was that participant's children had to be above the age of eight years, so that insight could be gained into lengthier experiences of raising biracial children. The research may also have benefited from the recruitment of older Black women, as two participants spoke specifically about their experiences of raising biracial teenagers and the worries that arose from raising older biracial children, which appeared to differ from participants concerns regarding younger biracial children. Unfortunately, Black women over the age of 63 and under the age of 29 did not come forward to participate in this research. Therefore, insights from older and younger Black women are missing. However, the recruitment of a more diversely aged group of participants may have offered more balanced findings by providing an insight into the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children over a sustained period of time.

All participants in this research resided within urban areas of London, apart from one participant who lived in Manchester. The culture of London may have affected the experiences of each participant, particularly as London is regarded as a city that is multicultural and multiracial. Yancey & Emerson (2008) argue that interracial dating and interracial families are more accepted within more diverse communities. This may have had an impact not only on the way in which

participants were perceived by others but also on the way that participants experienced the phenomena of raising a biracial child as a Black woman. It could be argued that conducting this research in a less urban city may have generated very different results. Although rich data was generated from the sample of participants, it would also have been interesting to gain an understanding of the experiences of Black women who were raising biracial children outside of the UK, as this may have allowed for a richer understanding of a more diverse sample of Black women and may have further aided the understanding of this phenomenon. However, this research acts as a starting point for future research into Black women raising biracial children and perhaps it is the job of future research to investigate whether or not the experiences of Black women raising biracial children within other contexts will be different or similar to the experiences that have been touched upon within the current research.

I chose to use IPA within the current research, which gave rise to an additional limitation. A limitation of IPA that greatly impacted the current research was the role of language. For this IPA research, semi-structured interviews were utilised as a qualitative data collection method. Thus, during semi-structured interviews, language was used as a vehicle of communication by participants, as a way of expressing their experiences of raising biracial children. As I am also a Black woman, I found that on many occasions the meaning of language was shared (between myself and the participants), as participants did not seem to feel the need to explain what they meant. For example, one participant said that she would ‘bend her child up in the shop’, which meant that she would physically discipline him. Another referred to her biracial child’s hair as ‘good hair’, which suggests a looser curled and more European hair texture. As I am also a Black

woman, I seemed to have a shared understanding of what the participants meant when communicating many of (but not all of) their experiences. However, I had to be careful so as not to over-identify with the participants or assume that I always knew what the participant meant, as I could potentially have run the risk of misunderstanding what a participant meant which would have greatly affected the analysis. Being a Black woman could have affected the interview process, as participants may not have felt a need to divulge certain experiences, which could have been crucial to the analysis process. As a result, on many occasions during the interview process, I had to stop and check my understanding with the participant to ensure that I was not assuming the meaning of the language that was being used. I would encourage future research exploring the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children to utilise alternative qualitative research methods in order to overcome this limitation of IPA.

#### **4.5. Recommendations**

There are multiple directions that future research could take in order to continue to develop an insight into the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children and the experiences of interracial families. First, future research could explore the experiences of single Black mothers raising biracial children. It should be noted that the relationship status of the participants was not considered as part of the inclusion/exclusion criteria for this research. This is because the exploration of the current literature shows that this group of participants are under-researched and because of this, it was important not to excessively narrow the inclusion criteria. As this research area is still in its infancy, it is imperative to allow Black mothers, both single and in relationships, to speak their narratives, so that we can gain a

better insight into the experiences of all variations of these women, which will provide richer data. Nonetheless, two participants within the current research said that they were single mothers and had no contact with their biracial child's paternal families. These mothers seemed to experience the added pressure of trying to teach their biracial children about their own Black, as well as their child's fathers White heritage (which appeared to present as more of a challenge in comparison to the participants within this research who were still in contact with their children's fathers and/or White paternal families). These participants also experienced a lack of support from their biracial children's White paternal families, which also presented as an added difficulty. Thus, it is important that future research tries to gain a thorough understanding of the experiences of single Black mothers raising biracial children as the relationship status of these Black mothers appears to have a significant impact on the way that they experience raising a biracial child.

The mother-daughter relationship is argued to be a significant relationship in any female's life course. This relationship is said to be complex, lifelong and is argued to affect all phases of any female's development (Everet Atl, Marks & Clarke-Michell, 2016). Similarly, the literature suggests that mothers also have a significant impact on the way in which their sons mature into men (Morman & Whitely, 2016). Thus, future research could explore the Black mother-biracial child dyad with a particular emphasis on unearthing the impact of gender-based differences on the relationship between Black mother and biracial child. Findings generated from the current research suggest that participants experienced gender-based concerns for their biracial children. For example, some mothers spoke of

their concerns regarding their biracial sons being negatively racially stereotyped, whereas, one participant, in particular, spoke of her concerns with regards to her biracial daughter being fetishised as a biracial person by young Black and White men. Thus, future research could focus on the gender-based concerns that Black mothers experience with regards to their biracial sons and daughters, as these mothers may experience very different challenges and concerns which arise from their experiences of raising their male and female biracial children.

In addition, the current literature shows that there are few studies that explore the experiences of White fathers raising biracial children (Durrant & Gillum, 2017). Even more invisible is research exploring the experiences of Black fathers raising biracial children. Due to the limited number of studies exploring the experiences of fathers raising biracial children, another suggestion is that future research should explore the experiences of fathers raising their biracial children. It is imperative that an understanding of the interracial family and the experience of each person within it is understood, in order to create a more wholesome understanding of these individual's experiences. Thus, perhaps family studies could be undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of the experiences of each family member and the interactions that take place within the multiracial family.

As the experiences of different minority groups may differ, another suggestion for future research could be to explore different racial mixes within the interracial family. It would be interesting to see if there are any commonalities or differences between the different ethnic groups. For example, exploring the experiences of

White fathers, Black mothers and Black-White biracial children, compared to the experiences of Black fathers, Asian mothers and Black-Asian biracial children. The current research specifically focused on the Black-White interracial family from the perspective of Black mothers and because of this perhaps there was a limit to the data that arose.

All participants within the current research spoke of the support that they received from their Black female friends and families. This suggests that Black women perhaps feel more able to seek out support and speak about their difficulties and experiences with other Black women. In addition, Collins (2009) states that for Black women, understanding arises during times of connectedness. Based on these ideas one could argue that future research would do well to replicate the current research but perhaps could employ the use of focus groups, alongside semi-structured interviews. Perhaps during focus groups, Black women may feel more able to express their true selves if they perceive other members of the focus group to be their ingroup, which could generate richer data and provide a better understanding of the experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children. I would also argue that Black women will gain much more from the experience of partaking in focus groups, rather than semi-structured interviews alone. Participants would be able to bounce ideas off of each other. Participants would also be able to hear the experiences of other Black women who are raising or have raised biracial children (which could both validate and normalise these women's experiences of bias and other unique challenges that may arise). Lastly, participants could learn new ways of coping with any challenges that they encounter (as Black mothers raising biracial children) from other participants.

Lastly, the 2000 census states that 1.2 per cent of the UK population was biracial and this figure continues to rise (Lewis, 2010). Thus, it could be argued that it is important to understand the experiences of biracial mothers raising biracial children, as it seems logical to assume that in years to come, many biracial women may be raising biracial children. Thus, it is important to gain insight into their experience also.

#### **4.6. Post-research Reflexivity**

When engaging in qualitative research enquiry it is imperative to be reflexive throughout the research process. Thus, I will reflect on the way in which I carried out this piece of research.

##### ***4.6.1. Conducting Interviews***

After conducting my *first* interview, my supervisor and I discussed its content. My supervisor noticed that I often said ‘I know what you mean’ and reflected this to me. It is worth considering, but difficult to know how much this impacted my interactions with this participant. For example, this could have stopped her from being able to elaborate, as I had assumed that I knew what she meant. However, after having discussed this interview, I was able to see, with the help of my supervisor, that I needed to give each participant space to reflect on their experiences, to explain themselves and to properly consider the meaning of what



they were communicating. As a result, the following interviews were richer and more explorative.

#### ***4.6.2. Participant Feedback***

Many participants reported finding the interview process beneficial and many said that they felt that the interview had been a positive experience. These participants also said that the interviews prompted them to reflect on their experiences of raising their biracial children, which was something that they had not previously considered in such depth.

#### ***4.6.3. Conducting the Analysis***

Initially, I found the amount of data that I had accumulated to be anxiety-provoking. However, my supervisor advised me to write my research question down and display this at my work station, so that I could see this each time I engaged with the data. I found this extremely helpful as this kept me focused on answering my research question. Once I got started, I found transcribing and initial note-making to be enjoyable as these stages allowed me to get to know my data and therefore proved to be crucial in conducting a thorough and meaningful analysis.

When developing emergent themes, I can recall finding it challenging to capture each participant's experience within theme names. My supervisor looked at my attempt at doing so and told me to re-read the book that I had been reading regarding IPA (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) and advised me to "try to capture the nuances of each participant's experience". Thus, I attempted this step of the

analysis again. This time I added a note above my work station which read, “what does this say about the participant’s experience?”, which helped me to capture each participant’s idiographic experience. After I did this, it felt easier for me to name the themes within each transcript.

Once the aforementioned stages of analysis were complete, I was able to create a table of emergent themes for each participant. I found this part of the analysis most enjoyable, as I would describe myself as a visual person and each table of themes allowed me to see that the analysis was coming together.

Next, I looked for similarities between the table of themes for each participant, which provided me with superordinate themes. I revised my superordinate themes countless times. However, by submerging myself in the analysis process this aided me in capturing the meaning that participants attributed to their experiences and helped me to name each emerging superordinate and subtheme appropriately.

#### ***4.6.4. The Researcher’s Role***

My role as a researcher and my supervisor’s role required much reflection throughout the research process. As I and my supervisor are Black British women, the manner in which meaning was created was directly influenced by my own and my research supervisor’s backgrounds. I would argue that there was a shared understanding between myself and my supervisor with regards to the data that emerged. Although this was helpful at times, as we did not have to use much time to discuss the meaning of certain concepts or phrases, we also had to be particularly careful so as not to ‘fall victim to the seduction of sameness’

(Oguntokun, 1998), regarding myself and my supervisor in relation to the participants.

Being a Black British woman may have also served as a limitation, as this gave rise to the assumption that I might have a shared understanding regarding the experiences of being a Black woman, which may not have always been the case. Additionally, being a Black woman who is in a monoracial Black relationship, may have also had an influence on the research process to some degree and may have hindered me in gaining a full understanding of the difficulties and challenges that the participants faced as a result of being Black women engaging in interracial relationships and raising biracial children.

Thus, as a result of my role as a Black female researcher, I ensured that I regularly wrote in my research journal and discussed my reflections during therapy. As my counselling psychologist was a White man, I was able to also discuss ideas with someone in a confidential setting, who did not share the same understanding of Black female identity as my supervisor and I did, which proved to be helpful. I also believe that being a Black woman aided me in building a good rapport with participants, which I would argue, helped the participants to be transparent during the interviews and therefore, gave rise to richer and more valid data.

#### ***4.6.5. Epistemological Reflections***

The first tenet of Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2009) is ‘lived experience as a criterion of meaning’. However, I was unable to adhere to this tenet, as I am not a mother. Therefore, throughout the research process, I did not know through first-hand experience, what the lived experience was for participants raising biracial

children. Yet, I would regard the process of data collection to be intense and intimate and as a result, throughout each interview, it felt as though each participant had allowed me a sneak-peek into their worlds. Thus, undertaking semi-structured interviews with participants and having a biracial niece of my own who I regularly take care of in my personal life, aided me in getting as close to the participant's lived experience as possible.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

The analysis reflected four emergent superordinate themes in answer to the research question. These themes have been interpreted and implications have been discussed. Limitations of the current research have been outlined and recommendations for future research have been suggested. Lastly, post-research reflexivity has been explored. In sum, the existing academic literature neglects the perspectives and experiences of Black mothers raising biracial children in the UK. Thus, the current research attempts to begin to fill this gap within the literature, as it provides rich narratives that begin to provide a basis on which we can build a better understanding of Black mother's experiences of raising biracial children in the UK.

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## 5. Appendices

### 5.1. Appendix A – Journal Submission Criteria

#### 1. General guidelines

- Manuscripts are accepted in English. Oxford English Dictionary spelling and punctuation are preferred. Where alternatives are given, ERS prefers the first one. 'Ize/ization' suffixes should be used in preference to 'ise/isation' ones, although note 'analyse' and not 'analyze'. 'Focused/\_focusing' and 'inquire/inquiry' are preferred to 'focussed/focussing' and 'enquire/enquiry' respectively. Spelling practices must be consistent throughout the article, except that the spelling used by the authors of quoted matter should always be respected; however, do not sprinkle 'sic' throughout text that contains numerous obviously idiosyncratic spellings. Please use double quotation marks, except where “a quotation is ‘within’ a quotation”. Long quotations of 40 words or more should be indented without quotation marks.
- The required length of regular articles is between 5000 and 8000 words or word equivalents inclusive of all material. Papers in excess of the upper limit will not be accepted. Authors are required to enter the word count of their submission during the submission process on ScholarOne. In estimating the word-equivalence of tables and figures, please allow 250 words per item .
- The use of upper-case letters should be kept to a minimum.
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- Authors should use gender-free language, avoiding masculine terms when the intention is to cover both genders. However, this instruction should not be followed at the expense of committing grammatical solecisms; where there is a temptation to do this, the sentence should be reformulated.
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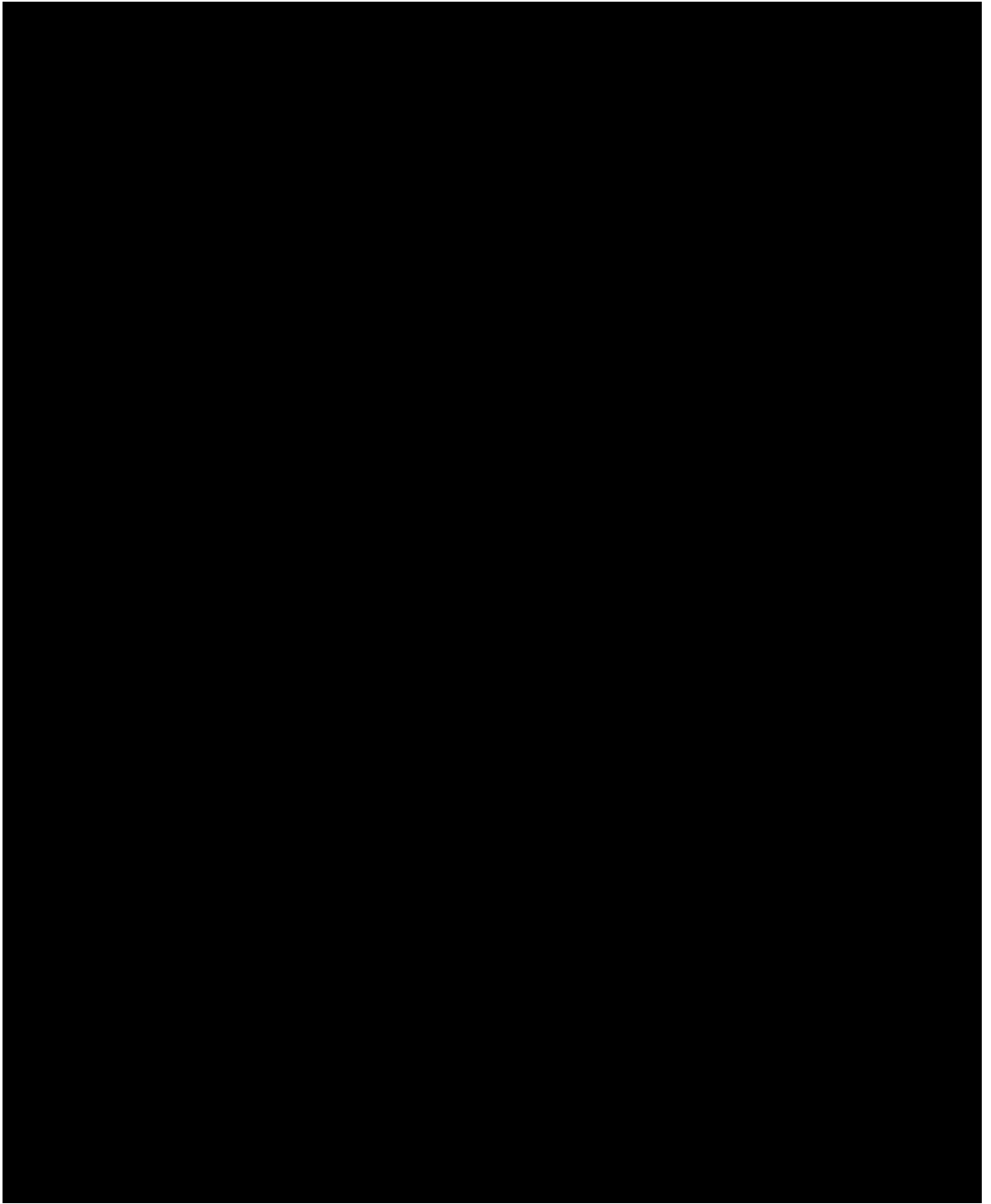
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## 5.2. Appendix B – Participant Profiles



### 5.3. Appendix C - Inclusion/ Exclusion Criteria

Although there is no upper age limit, there is a lower age limit and all participants will be over the age of 18, they will self-identify as monoracial Black (of African and/ or Caribbean descent) and would have at least one bi-racial child either biological or adopted of at least eight years of age (no upper age limit). All participants will be residing in UK and available to attend face to face interviews.

Exclusion criteria:

Mothers of any race other than Black (African and/ or Caribbean descent), for example, the mother is White, Asian or Multi-racial/ bi-racial herself. This falls under exclusion criteria because culture is expected to shape and impact one's experiences in regards to raising a child. Thus, I have decided to focus on one race (Black) in regards to the mother in order to accumulate richer data regarding the experience of one race rather than comparing the cross-cultural experiences of different mothers raising their children and because the current literature fails to adequately explore the experience of Black mothers raising their bi-racial children.

As there is very little literature regarding the experience of the Black and Asian mothers raising their bi-racial children in comparison to the White mother, I was torn between exploring the experience of either of Black or Asian mothers. However, I decided against focusing on the experience of Asian mothers of bi-racial children as there are low rates of Asian ethnic groups in inter-ethnic relationships and having bi-racial children (The National Achieves, 2014) in comparison to Black mothers. In addition, it is argued that 9.5 per cent of married couples identify as interracial and of these couples, 7.9 per cent identified as Black-White couples (Johnson & Kreider, as cited in Stone & Dolbin-MacNab, 2017). Thus, I decided to focus on the experience of Black mothers of bi-racial children, as they are more likely to be part of a multi-racial family. However, once this research has been conducted, it would then be wise to investigate other racial mixes and how mothers of different cultures experiences raising their bi-racial children.

Mothers who had been absent from their children's lives for any more than three years during their childhood early developmental years. This is a part of exclusion criteria as disrupted attachment could hinder mothers in development of an attachment with their children and may have prevented them from going through the longitudinal experience of raising their bi-racial children.

Mothers who live outside of the UK or unable to attend face to face interviews. I am excluding mothers who live outside of the UK, as I will be unable to meet them for face to face interviews due to my inability to travel outside of the UK. I also do not feel the need to recruit participants from outside of the UK, as the UK is multi-cultural and I feel as though I can recruit a diverse enough sample, in order to produce empirically sound research. In addition, much of the research conducted on the experience of mothers raising their bi-racial children is based in the US and very little research is based in the UK or provides an insight into the unique experiences of mothers raising their bi-racial child in the UK, which arguably, would differ to the experience of a mother raising her child in the US. Thus, this piece of research seeks to recruit participants who reside in the UK and have been for at least eight years.

Mothers below the age of 18. Although it is unlikely that there will be any harm or risk, these individuals will be excluded from this research, firstly because this is a more

vulnerable age group and secondly because they are unlikely to have raised a child for eight years. In which case, they are less likely to have had as long of an experience in raising their children, and my wish is to conduct research regarding the longitudinal experience of these mothers.

Foster mothers and mothers with an eldest bi-racial child who is under eight years old. These mothers are part of exclusion criteria, because as mentioned above, I wish to study the longitudinal experience of the Black mother raising a bi-racial child and arguably, foster mothers and mothers of children below eight years will not have had as long of an experience in raising their child in comparison to mothers who have raised children above eight years old.

Mothers currently suffering from mental health issue(s). This is part of the exclusion criteria, as ill mental health could influence their experience of raising their bi-racial child and topics discussed within the interview could potentially give rise to difficult emotions. Thus, it would be unethical to include this population.

Individuals unavailable for face to face interviews will not be included within research, as I would argue that it is important to meet with participants so that there is a physical face to face exchange and I would say that body language, facial expression and tone all contribute to the research and will aid me in developing a better rapport with the participant which will encourage richer material

## 5.4. Appendix D – Telephone Screening Protocol

### Basic questions:

What is your name?

Is this the number that I should call you back on, in the case that the phone call cuts out?

How would you like to be contacted regarding the study (email, mail)?

What are the details of the chosen contact method?

Thank you for calling to find out more about my research study, my name is Dayna Wilson and I am a Trainee counselling psychologist, studying at City, university London and I am conducting a piece of research regarding the experience of Black mothers raising their bi-racial children. In order to investigate this, I will be asking participants to participate in face to face interviews about their experience as a Black mother raising a bi-racial child, which will last approximately 45 minutes to 90minutes.

So far do you have any questions or concerns now that you have a basic understanding of the study, and do you think that you might be interested in participating?

**My reply if caller says they do not wish to participate:** “No problem, thank you very much for calling”

**My reply if caller says that they wish to participate:**

That is great! But before enrolling people on to the study I need to determine if you are eligible to participate, so I will need to ask you a series of short questions in order to determine your suitability, which should only take three to five minutes. Please remember that your participation is voluntary so you do not have to answer these questions and please feel free to stop me at any time if you have any questions, concerns, or wish to terminate this screening process. Lastly, all information that you disclose via telephone including your name and any other identifying information will be kept confidential.

Do I have permission to ask you the screening questions?

**My reply if the caller says ‘no’:** “No problem, thank you very much for calling.

**My reply if the caller says ‘yes’:**

### Section A

Are you 18 years or above?

Do you have African and/ or Caribbean roots?

Do you reside in the UK?

Do you have a bi-racial child, who is at least 8 years old?

Are you available to attend a face to face interview at a place that is convenient for you?

**If caller has answered ‘yes’ to the questions from section A, then the following questions will be asked:**

### Section B

Have you been absent from your bi-racial child’s life for any more than three years during your child’s early childhood developmental years?



Are you currently suffering from any mental health issue?

**If the caller answers 'yes' to either of the questions from section B then I will reply:**

Unfortunately, based on your responses, you are not eligible to participate in the study but thank you so much for your call and interest in this piece of research. Although you were not eligible for the study, would you like me to send you a debrief form with information regarding this topic area or some support?

**If the caller answers 'no' to either of the questions from section B then I will reply:**

Based on your answers to the questions, it appears that you are eligible to participate in this study. Having received the information sheet in regards to the study, do you have any questions or concerns?

If you are happy to participate, would you like to arrange an interview date and time.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. If you have any questions or concerns in regards to the interview or this piece of research, please feel free to contact me. My name is Dayna Wilson and my email address is [Dayna.wilson@city.ac.uk](mailto:Dayna.wilson@city.ac.uk). I look forward to hearing from you.

## 5.5. Appendix E – Research Advertisement



### Study Advertisement

**Are you a Black British Mother of a bi-racial child of 8 years old (or above)?**

**Are you of African and/or Caribbean heritage?**

**Are you over 18 years of age?**

**Will you talk to me in confidence about your experiences?**

**This study aims to explore the experience of Black mothers raising Bi-racial children.**

All participants will need to be available to attend a semi-structured interview regarding their experience of raising their bi-racial children which should last on average between 45-90 minutes.

Participants will also need to be available for an initial telephone screening call to ascertain suitability to participate in research. All data gathered will be kept anonymous and confidential and participants are free to withdraw themselves and their data from the study at any point, **prior to the submission of the thesis**, without repercussions.

If you would like to participate in this piece of research, or require further information please feel free to contact the researcher via the details mentioned below:

Researchers email: [REDACTED]

Research supervisor's email: [REDACTED]

Although there are no financial incentives offered, all data collected will provide an in depth understanding of the experiences of Black mothers raising their biracial children.

The researcher is also happy to travel to your nearest library, place of work or community/religious centre in order to conduct interviews.

This piece of research has been ethically approved by City University London (ETHICAL APPROVAL CODE **PSYETH (P/L) 17/18 83**)

Should you have any complaints regarding any aspect of this research, please contact the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee [REDACTED]

## 5.6. Appendix F – Information Sheet



### Information sheet

#### **Raising a bi-racial child in contemporary UK: An exploration of the experiences of Black British mothers.**

Before you decide whether you would like to take part in this piece of research, it is important that you understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve of you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Should you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss this with me. I would like to give you at least 24 hours to think about whether or not you would like to participate, so please contact me on the email address at the bottom of the sheet, if you would like to participate. If you do not contact me, I will contact you within 72 hours of having received this information sheet.

#### **Background:**

This study has been undertaken as part of the Dpsych counselling psychology doctorate at City, University of London and aims to focus on the experiences of Black mothers, who have African and/or Caribbean roots and are mothers of bi-racial children.

There is currently a wealth of literature exploring the experience of White mothers raising bi-racial children. However, research exploring the experience of Black mothers raising bi-racial children is sparse. Thus, we know very little about the bi-racial family dynamic from the perspective of the Black mother. However, it is imperative that we do learn about the experience of the Black mother raising her Bi-racial child, as this will provide better understanding of the formation of racial identity and deeper insight into the potential difficulties faced by not only black mothers but multi-racial families, which could aid health professionals to effectively tailor services in order to serve these families.

#### **Eligibility;**

You must self-identify as a Black (with African and/ or Caribbean roots) mother of a bi-racial child

Your bi-racial child must be at least 8 years of age

You must be living in the UK

You must be over 18 years of age

#### **What it involves:**

This study will involve a semi-structured face to face interview, that will last approximately 45-90 minutes. You will be asked a range of questions in regards to your experience in raising your bi-racial children. The interview will take place in on City university London campus in private rooms or in public places agreed between myself and participant (for example, the participants workplace, library rooms).

All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and all identifying characteristics such as name, home address etc will be removed from transcripts, so that participants information is kept anonymous.

All information will be confidential and original audios of the interview will be kept in locked storage in the researcher's home and then will be safely destroyed after use.

All data provided will be analysed and will be used in the write up of a thesis, in order to answer the abovementioned research question, and could potentially be published. The information provided by participants within this research will be analysed using IPA, within which direct quotes will be used, but these will be anonymised, and no identifiable information will not be used. If you do decide to take part in this piece of research, if you would like to receive the completed thesis via email attachment or via post on a USB stick, then research findings will be sent to the participant.

**If you change your mind:**

If you change your mind about participating in this piece of research at any stage throughout the research process, you can withdraw at any time, **before the thesis has been submitted**, without giving a reason and without repercussions. If you do participate in the study for any length of time, you will be debriefed.

**If a problem arises:**

If you have any problems or complaints about this study, you can speak to myself, the researcher Dayna Wilson. Alternatively, you could ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through City's complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is:

**Raising a bi-racial child in contemporary UK: An exploration of the experiences of Black British mothers.**

**Ethics approval code: PSYETH (P/L) 17/18 83**

You could also write to the Secretary at:

[REDACTED]  
Research Governance & Integrity Manager  
Research & Enterprise  
City, University of London  
Northampton Square  
London  
EC1V 0HB  
Email: [REDACTED]

City holds insurance policies which apply to this study. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

**Further information and contact details**

Dayna Wilson

[REDACTED]

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.**

## 5.7. Appendix G – Consent Form



### Consent form

**Title: Raising a bi-racial child in contemporary UK: An exploration of the experiences of Black British mothers.**

**Ethics approval code: PSYETH (P/L) 17/18 83**

**Researcher:** Dayna Wilson

**Researchers email:** [REDACTED]

**Research supervisor:** [REDACTED]

**Research supervisor's email:** [REDACTED]

Please read the following statements and if you agree, initial the corresponding box to confirm agreement and then sign below:

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

Initials

I understand that my participation is **voluntary** and that I am free to withdraw at any time **before the submission of the thesis** without giving any reason or repercussions.

I understand that my data will be treated confidentially and although direct quotations from my interview may be used, any publication resulting from my interview will **not** identify me.

I agree that the researcher may contact my GP and/ or emergency services, in the case that I appear overly distressed, or present an issue of risk to myself, or others.

I freely agree to participate in this study.

Tick here ☐ to receive a copy of the completed thesis via email or on a USB stick via post

Please fill out your GP's details below

GP details

Name of doctor's surgery.....
Name or senior doctor at practice .....
Address.....
.....
.....

Signatures:

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant (block capitals)	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Researcher (block capitals)	Date	Signature

## 5.8. Appendix H – Debrief Form



**Title of project:** Raising a bi-racial child in contemporary UK: An exploration of the experiences of Black British mothers.

**Ethics approval number:** PSYETH (P/L) 17/18 83

**Researcher:** Dayna Wilson

**Researchers email:** [REDACTED]

**Research supervisors' email:** [REDACTED]

Thank you for taking part in this study.

As most of the research in this area has looked into the experience of White mothers raising their bi-racial children, this study attempted to explore the experiences of Black mothers raising their bi-racial children, through the use of semi-structured, face to face interviews.

It was anticipated that both positive as well as potentially difficult experiences of Black motherhood would be explored. Thus, in the case that any participant has found the interview experience at all distressing, a list of external resources has been provided in order for you to secure the appropriate support.

In regards to your data, all interviews will be transcribed and both transcripts and original audios will be stored securely and safely. Transcripts will also be anonymised and once the study has been completed all audio recordings will be disposed of safely. Please note that you have the right to withdraw any or all of your data **prior to the submission of the thesis**, without giving any reason and there will be no repercussions.

Please contact myself Dayna Wilson via the abovementioned email address if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study. Please also feel free to contact me if you decide that you would like a copy of the research thesis once it is completed.

## **List of resources**

### **Emergency resources:**

If you are feeling suicidal you can call the Samaritans hotline on 116 123 or email them at [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org). The Samaritans are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Alternatively, you can contact NHS on 111, you can call 999 for an ambulance, you can take yourself to your nearest A&E or see your GP

### **Non-specialist resources**

NHS choices page

<https://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>

If you feel that you would like therapy to deal with any issues, mind is available

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Mind also offers information and advice for families with concerns about their child/children's mental health

<https://www.minded.org.uk/families/index.html#/>

If you would like couples counselling to deal with any issues, relate is available

<https://www.relate.org.uk/>

### **Specialist resources for women:**

If you would like support as a woman, there are charities available for ethnic minority women;

<http://imece.org.uk/services/women-only-space/>

In the case that you are a single mother and would like some support, there are also groups available;

[www.singlewomeninmotherhood.com](http://www.singlewomeninmotherhood.com)

<http://www.singleparents.org.uk/organisations>

If you need further support the woman's centre is available

<http://enfieldwomen.org.uk/>

### **Specialist resources for Black women**

If you need somewhere to talk there are forums available for Black mothers;

<http://www.circleofmoms.com/black-mothers-support-group>

There is support available for Black women in regards to health and family support;

<http://www.bwhafs.com/>

If you feel that you would like therapy or would like to be connected to a Black therapist in particular, the following link is available; <https://www.baatn.org.uk/free.htm/>



### **Relevant reading**

T.F. Charlton. 2013. "The impossibility of the good Black mother," in *The Good Mother Myth*. New York: Seal Press. Explores the negative stereotypes that Black mothers face in their everyday lives through a combination of personal essay and gender and race theory.

Patricia Hill Collins. 2000. *Black feminist thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge. Explores the uniqueness of Black women's perspectives and develops an accessible critical social theory.

Dorothy Roberts. 2002. *Shattered bonds: The colour of child welfare*. New York: Basic Civitas Books. Examines the racist underpinnings of the child welfare system and the consequences for Black families and communities.

**Thank you again for taking part in my study and for sharing your experiences.**

## 5.9. Appendix I – Interview Schedule

**Question: Can you tell me about your experiences of becoming a mother?**

**Prompt:** What were your expectations of motherhood, prior to having a child?

**Prompt:** How did you expect yourself to be as a mother?

**Prompt:** What had you learned about motherhood from your own experiences or what you witnessed, from your aunts or mother for example?

**Question: Can you tell me about your experience as a Black mother raising your bi-racial child in the UK?**

**Prompt:** Have you enjoyed your experience of motherhood thus far and why?

**Prompt:** can you elaborate on this?

**Question: I would like to talk to you a little bit about how you came to identify yourself as a Black woman?**

**Prompt:** We are talking about your racial identity here, how do you think that this developed over time?

**Prompt:** How do you feel about yourself as a Black woman/Black mother?

**Question part A: How has your racial identity, if at all, informed the way that you raised your bi-racial child?**

**Prompt:** How, if at all, do you think your experience might differ from a White mother raising a bi-racial child?

**Prompt:** How, if at all, do you think your experience might have differed if you were raising a monoracial Black child?

**Question part B: Can you tell me what it is like to raise a child who is of a different race than yourself?**

**Prompt:** What experiences regarding your upbringing, your race and/ or culture, have shaped the way that you raised your bi-racial child?

**Prompt:** What feelings would you associate with this experience?

**Prompt:** Do you feel that raising a bi-racial child may have impacted your own racial identity, how so?

**Question: I would now like to discuss with you about any difficulties that you may have had, having raising a bi-racial child, as a Black mother. Can you tell me about any potential difficulties, if any, that you may have encountered as a result of raising a bi-racial child?**

**Prompt:** Did you overcome this difficulty? If so, how did you overcome it?

**Prompt:** How did this impact/ influence your parenting of your child?

**Prompt:** How might this have impacted your relationship with your child?

OR

**Prompt:** Can you tell me about what you regard as a difficulty?

**Question: Have you ever experienced racism, discrimination or prejudice, in regards to having or raising a Bi-racial child? If so, how did you experience this?**

**Prompt:** Can you tell me about any significant events that come to mind?

**Prompt:** Did you overcome this issue? If so, how did you overcome it?

**Prompt:** How did this experience make you feel?

**Question:** To what degree do you think other people understand your experience as a Black mother raising a bi-racial child?

**Prompt:** What, if anything, do you feel that others have failed to understand or overlooked in regards to your experience of being a Black mother raising a bi-racial child?

**Prompt:** How does it make you feel, having spoken about that?

**Question:** In regards to the aspect of support, tell me about your experience of any support that you received when raising your bi-racial child?

**Prompt:** Where there any times that you felt as though you were receiving too much or too little support? If so, can you tell me about this?

**Prompt:** Did you ever feel a sense of isolation, separation or alienation when raising your bi-racial child? If so, can you tell me a little bit about this?

**Question:** Having reflected on your own experience as a Black mother, raising a bi-racial child, is there anything you would have done differently?

**Are there any particular instances that really stand out in your journey so far?**

**Prompt:** is there anything that you would have done differently?

**Prompt:** Is there any particular advice that you would relay to other mothers of bi-racial children

**Question:** Is there anything else that you would like to add?

## 5.10 Appendix J – Example of Initial Table of Emergent Themes (for Participant Cara)

Emergent themes	Page/ Line	Key Words
Motherhood- a difficult process	1/ 4&5  1/ 11  1/ 19-20	'It's amazing, it's very difficult, you're never prepared for it at all...'  'Very very full on, you have to be very organised...'  'so yeah, it's been a, it has been a fantastic experience but, but hard. Hard. Rewarding but very hard...'
Perceptions of motherhood prior to having a child	2/71-79  23/993-1000	'...And as I said there are so many questions that you will never have answered because you won't have thought of asking them. And those are the issues, the issues that you cannot anticipate are the things that bring you down. Really. You know, "why isn't my child feeding?", "Well it's fine, it doesn't matter, it will feed when it wants to feed". You know, really the things that cause anxiety and issues, these, really there's so many questions that remain unanswered for these mothers...'  Unless you're in the situation, you have no idea. You don't just have no idea, you have no inkling [ ] You don't know. You know? So, so, no. I don't think anybody, I don't think it factors
Mistake making as a mother	39/1660-1667	'I think I've made loads of mistakes as a mother. Loads of mistakes, you know? All sorts of things, you know, constantly making mistakes but as, specifically you asked me, as a biracial, a mother of biracial children, I don't believe I've done anything in terms of that, with regards to their identity. I don't think I've done anything wrong, because it hasn't been possible for me to have done anything wrong...'

Needing to be adaptable	40/1716-1721	'You can't have a list of tick boxes, you can't because, it's what you said before; every situation needs a different approach. I think what I would say is you need to be flexible, you have to be flexible emotionally. You have to be practically flexible as well but whilst being flexible you have to stick to that...'
	39/1675-1679	'I'm feeling, with the children getting old, like, Ella becoming 17 this year, for God's sake and Tom's going to be 15, I can see we're embarking on the next phase; I feel that it is a different way of parenting now...'
	40/1715-1721	But I think in general terms, I think, it has to be that way. You can't have a list of tick boxes, you can't because, it's what you said before; every situation needs a different approach. I think what I would say is you need to be flexible, you have to be flexible emotionally. You have to be practically flexible as well but whilst being flexible you have to stick to that.
Difficulty knowing the nature of motherhood prior to having a child	1/25-28	'Do you know what? I honestly don't recall, I really don't. You know when you're young, you think about having children but you don't think about the actual logistics of it, you don't see yourself having to cradle a small baby...'
	1/32-33	'What I always saw were young children around so you (mothers) seem to be always coping...'
	1/ 38-42	'I didn't think it would be as full on as it was. Definitely did not expect that. Didn't expect the births to be as difficult or painful or as drawn out. Didn't expect my body to take so long to heal after the pregnancy. All this stuff you do not hear about...'
	2/46-51	'You hear about pain relief and what you do in the first six weeks and the first couple of months, but really the reality is so different from what they give you in the books. In fact, I've always felt that they should completely

	4/147-159	revise that. I think more experienced mothers should be available to help new mothers...
	26/1132-1134	‘Nothing, because, you only see two extremes, I think. You only see extremes, you only either see mothers when their children are quiet it doing okay or you see mothers going through hell [ ] Screaming children or babies. You see them looking knackered, I don’t think you get a real picture of motherhood at all. Everything is a caricature really, everything that you see before you have children yourself. I think you really have to be in it yourself to understand what mothers go through, you really do...’
	3/117-118	‘I would just, it’s same as the answer to motherhood. It’s like when completely different and maybe it’s related in a way to people perceptions of motherhood is...’
		So, yeah, so my ex, my, my, expectations of motherhood were very different from the reality
Experience of support.	3/106-109	Yet I think a lot of women stumble into it with romantic notions about it and get scared stiff when the reality comes in and there actually isn’t much support out there especially if you don’t have family...’
	3/118-123	but the fact is that I had, I had a very supportive family, and my extended family so, so I would have, I would have my aunt coming over, you know, when my mum was at work my aunt would come over to look after me. So, I’d never had that issue. I haven’t had to sort of stumble through...
	27/1153-1158	‘Not with regards to having a biracial child. I mean obviously I’ve always had my mum, about the fact that you’ve got your Black history month and you’ve got to, you know, I’ve always had that. But not in relation to having a biracial child. The support having a child definitely but not a biracial child...’

	39/1669	'I have too much support around me...'
	38/1636-1653	'No. No. Because once again, I have a huge family. So, as you go through stuff, you talk about it [ ] so even if you make mistakes, you can rectify them [ ] Quite quickly because you have the support. And also, family makes you change direction if you have to. You know, right, I'm going down here, I'm getting lost, and then somebody's going to say, you're wrong. You know, come back and do it this way. And it's not a friend, gently trying to give you advice, it's somebody close to you going, 'you're wrong!' You know? 'Stop, because what you are doing is incorrect...'
Motherhood- an isolating barrier	36/1557-1561	I realised I wasn't saying to people "oh she's really sick, it's really bad". What I was doing was "give me a diagnosis, you tell me, you're standing, you tell me what's wrong with my daughter" [ ] you know, it's horrible [ ] so in that sense, is motherhood, the issues, the traumas you face, from a daily basis, that's isolating...'
The joys of having a biracial child	7/283-287  7/291-294	'I love them the fact, I love it when I, I love the fact that they don't look White. I love the fact that they look different and they look really mixed race. You will not mistake any of them even Ella, they tease her, you know she's mixed [ ] You definitely know she is mixed...'  'And I love that, so I've never had any issues about having biracial children. Really, at all. I love it, I think they look beautiful and I love what they stand for as well...'
Societies stereotypes and prejudices	5/200-219	'He looks very mixed race. So interestingly, so talking about, so what I would say, and what I have said to him, for example, is you know. He is a typical teenager, he is 14, he loves going out with, wearing his hood up. And I've actually constantly said to him, that you know, Tom, you don't have to wear that hood up all the time. [ ]

	7/267-272	Because that gives a perception of you and you look really stereotypically mixed race. And you don't wanna add to the stereotype. So I've had to say that to him, 'put your hood down'. Because we are in a society that's quite racist. [] You know, keep your hood down, keep your back straight, you don't have to look like someone that plays Call of Duty...'
	19/803-909	'I think Amy will give, as a mixed-race child, I think she will survive more because she's got that feature, 'Oh look at her, she's got blue eyes'. You know, and it's a horrible thing, I'm not saying it's a positive thing. I think it feeds into our stereotypes of what is acceptable. That's, that's Amy.
	9/367-374	'But I think it's because we are talking about what society deems as acceptable, you know? The children are light skinned children. I don't know if, if they were dark skinned (if they would experience more racism), because that's the society we live in [ ] But Dayna I think, I think there would be more coming from me having so many children, when we go out as a group of five, because there was so much prejudice about people with big families, yeah. I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of the negative comments were probably more around that...
Aiding negotiation of racial identity	30/1285-1289	'We don't have that on the Black side. So that's what made me first and foremost identify as a Black woman, as opposed to me being biracial, why I leant onto that side and that's why it's a big deal for my children that I make sure they understand that, yeah, you are Greek, that's really important. You know, you have got that English heritage and I'm never going to play it down, I'm not an extremist. I'm never going to play it down, I think it's really important that they understand that. But they've also got to be proud of their Black heritage...'
	15/641-646	'I don't think it's right to bombard them with your baggage or what you were brought up



	16/668-673	<p>with. It's about getting them comfortably at this equilibrium where they understand their racial identity but they are more than their racial identity [ ] Their strength should come from their racial identity not their colour...'</p> <p>I think in the home, I think the mother is the first educator. Dads are amazing. They are amazing, I mean, Jim's is amazing with the children, okay. But I think a woman in her head she knows what she needs to give the children to survive out there. And I think it's the mother who instils this sense of identity. Umm, and that's not denigrating father because as I said, they are amazing and I think there are, interestingly, I think that there are roles, there are roles.</p>
	16/675-679	<p>I'm talking about us being in this melting pot growing up in this country. I think you're less likely to do that because I think you yourself aren't into your own culture as much as that so it would depend on making a concerted effort and I can relate to that because obviously my children are part Greek and I don't know anything about Greece.</p>
	17/700-702	<p>I try and bring that in but it's an effort. So, I'm saying in the same way I have to make an effort reminding them of their Greek identity, I would assume that a White mother with a Black husband, she would have to make an effort to bring that into her children's...</p>
Instilling Black racial identity instilled as positive	9/374-378	<p>'It is about culture identity and culture heritage, it's about instilling that in your child but it's also about not getting hung up about it...' [ ] But they've also got to be proud of their Black heritage...'</p>

Participants Black racial identity development	8&9/312-366	<p>'When I was growing up okay, because my dad is from Malaysia, so my mum is from the Caribbean, she's from St Lucia. Umm, so what made me identify as Black? Because there was never a problem with the Malaysian side. You know, nobody questions, there's never an issue is there, about having that Asian [ ]</p> <p>But growing up especially, like, I'm nearly 50 now, so growing up in, especially in the 80's really, you know, it is quite racist environment and there, it's very much pitted against Black people. So when you're growing up in school you are more aware of being Black.</p>
	9/378-394	<p>And it makes you, it made me, and very same for my sister actually, it made you want to take on being Black. So, you would identify as a Black person because that's the bit that you need to show, like 'Hang on a second, we you know, we matter'. So Black history was always a thing. My mum made us go to Saturday school every Saturday for years and years and years. You know we had to learn about our Black history, we had to learn about great Black figures and so, identifying with all of that and knowing that you actually rightly or wrongly had a bit of a flag to fly for it. You did, you did because, see I remember, I remember even in school I remember you know, the idea of umm, people who were Black in real life, you know inventors, philosophers, scientists, all these people , if you were to just say it to your peers, they would be like, 'are you sure?'</p>
	10/370-376	<p>It's like that and we would come across some quite racist teachers, so you know, we've got Black composers, we have Black Tudors we have got Black classical composers. You can go all the way back to the, you know, 17th century and stuff. But you mention it, the first response really is, 'what you sure, Black people can't make that sort of music'. [ ]</p>
	10/380-387	<p>And when you're constantly hearing that, you know, it does make you self-identify a lot more on that side of yourself. Because as I said the Malaysians, I could turn around and tell anybody about the great Malaysians around I could talk about the Sultans, I could talk to you</p>

	<p>10/391-394</p> <p>13/491-493</p> <p>11/407-419</p>	<p>about...nobodies gonna bat an eye, they'd go, 'Oh yea wow, that's interesting'. [ ]</p> <p>We don't have that on the Black side. So that's what made me first and foremost identify as a Black woman, as opposed to me being biracial, why I leant onto that side</p> <p>'...like I said I think society makes it (racial identity) develop [ ] if it were not an issue you would not have it as your main priority, we wouldn't be thinking about the fact we're Black...'</p> <p>'Black rights have been lost. So we haven't sorted that out but we now have another bandwagon. And that's it, you know. And I don't even think Black people notice it. That's what makes me really angry about them. They're not standing up and saying, 'hang on a second, we are still not sorted' [ ] We don't have equality, yet now I'm supposed to be flying these other flags in the name of equality. So, so it sticks with me. [ ] It really sticks with me. Umm, so yeah, so that's, that's why I identify as a, more as a Black woman.</p>
The experience of racism, prior to becoming a mother	<p>8/ 321-325</p> <p>8/345-350</p>	<p>'But growing up especially, like, I'm nearly 50 now, so growing up in, especially in the 80's really, you know, it is quite racist environment and there, it's very much pitted against Black people. So when you're growing up in school you are more aware of being Black...'</p> <p>'It's like that and we would come across some quite racist teachers, so you know, we've got Black composers, we have Black Tudors we have got Black classical composers. You can go all the way back to the, you know, 17th century and stuff. But you mention it, the first response really is, 'what you sure, Black people can't make that sort of music'...'</p>

	20/844-845	'So, but I've had though, as me, myself, I've grown up in, you know, with Jim I've had racism...'
	20/849-888	well, it was, we were in this Australian bar in the Angel, this was years ago about twenty years ago. And we were just going out. And, I remember I was at the bar with him and we were just chatting and suddenly his face set and I was like, 'what the hell, what are you talking about?'
	22/926-939	And he wasn't talking to me, I said, 'what's wrong what's wrong?', and he sort of made, he gave the impression, he said something about the man behind him, you know, saying something. And he was really getting, I mean I thought, 'what on earth was said', because it looked like James was ready to start a fight. So I umm, I calmed him down, I said, 'don't be stupid, we're out, we're having a, you know, nice time.' Just to ignore it and you know?
	8/341-343	We finished our drink quite quickly because he was so agitated and we went out. And umm, I thought it might be because the guy, I don't know what I thought. He said, but nothing racial. But it was only when we got outside (laughs), James told me that he was actually saying some nasty racist things about me... [ ] so I was calming him down. So, the reason he left it is because I was telling him, I want you to leave it. [ ] I'll never forget that (laughs). I was so shocked; I was so shocked...'
	26/998-1013	'Not from Black people, which is interesting and it's probably a generational thing because I remember you know, obviously, like, my mum and, you know mixed race people suffered a lot you know, when I was young. Mixed raced people suffered... I remember being in school and I, and I, one of the girls was quite, this White, trashy girl, she said to me, she looked at me and she said to me, 'are you a nigger or a paki? [ ]', so I had to deal with her but It's quite interesting, this was the 80s. This was the 80's, you know. You had a lot more open racism.

		<p>'...see I remember, I remember even in school I remember you know, the idea of umm, people who were Black in real life, you know inventors, philosophers, scientists, all these people, if you were to just say it to your peers, they would be like, 'are you sure?' ...'</p>
Importance placed on knowing Black history	9/356-360	<p>'Because as I said the Malaysians, I could turn around and tell anybody about the great Malaysians around I could talk about the Sultans, I could talk to you about...nobodies gonna bat an eye, they'd go, 'Oh yea wow, that's interesting'...'</p>
	8/333-339	<p>'My mum made us go to Saturday school every Saturday for years and years and years. You know we had to learn about our Black history, we had to learn about great black figures and so, identifying with all of that and knowing that you actually rightly or wrongly had a bit of a flag to fly for it. You did, you did because, see I remember, I remember even in school I remember you know, the idea of umm, people who were Black in real life, you know inventors, philosophers, scientists, all these people , if you were to just say it to your peers, they would be like, 'are you sure?' ...'</p>
	12/513-519	<p>'...we've got many Black Catholic saints. We have The Black Martyrs or Africa. We've got Martin de porres. We've got (inaudible), we've got, you know Saint paquita, you know. She was a slave...'</p>
	30&31/1303-1329	<p>'There's a part in it (The Malcom X film), I can remember, where there, he's on the steps of umm, I don't know, congress or something and a White woman, a young White woman comes up to him and she says, and this is actually in the book . In his life, in his head, it's a controversial thing that he reflects on later, actually, when he calmed down.</p>

	36/1430-1433	And I thought, you know nothing about Malcolm X, you know nothing, you think he is this fighter. You're jumping, you're not willing to go into the history of it, you're blindly just jumping onto...'
Importance placed on faith	10/397-399	'You know at the top and at the forefront of all this before my race and everything? It's my faith. So, it's my Catholicism...'
	10/402-404	'If they were to list the qualities or the things that are important, I think the Catholic bit would go at the top...'
	10/425-426	'Your generation much more than mine has come completely away from your faith...'
	10/435-440	'What I'd like to try and instil in my children is: yes you are mixed-race, of course you are mixed-race and you have to fight for your rights as a mixed-race person but before that you have a duty as a Christian and if people can't see that you might as well forget about everything else.
	10/405-412	'I've always said to the children that the flag, for want of a better word, the flag you should be flying or the...your loudest voice should be about your faith [ ] And if that's not your loudest voice nothing else matters...'
	10/417-423	'I actually think that where we have fallen down as a community is that we've lost our faith...'
	10/430-435	'And you come from a very strongly faithful background, you know? You've got your aunts and your mother and that generation they were seriously strong in their faith. And yet you've gone one generation, two generations and I think your generation has by and large, has lost that...has lost that reliance...'
	11/456-457	'If faith were up there then none of this would matter...'

	11/471-476	'I very rarely see, now I'm getting much older so I went through that whole radical stage in my 20's, you know, I was a young person I was a teenager in school, in my 20's at university, I have done all of that. And, as I've gotten older, it's not about my racial identity now. It's just about my faith. And I really mean that genuinely, I honestly do. What I want people to see is me trying to live out my faith...'
	12/482-484	"...more important than anything, more important than anything else in the world is my identity as a Christian..."
	12/487-489	'...Having that faith together and making that journey together, even in this difficult situation the situation where it's two bedrooms whatever. But we're, we are happy ...
	12/501-512	'I wish I could have that'. But it's not finding peace where you are. So, going back the question, it is this thing of umm, trying to live out my faith and trying to get people to understand that that's what gives you peace...'
	17/713-717	'My point would be to raise a strong child, a strong person with a strong sense of identity. A strong person with a strong sense of identity grounded in, in a real traditional, and I would say Christian, that Christian morality. Being able to let go and not have the hang ups that make you self-conscious is enough to get you through anything. I think that's what I would have hoped to instil...'
	18/780-781	'...It goes back to what I said about the Catholic identity being overriding'...
	13/537-540	'And there's strength in that but I think we've lost that. Because we are so polarised on race. Because we live in such a difficult society and because we haven't got God, all we do is fight...'

	22/947-950	'This is just a faith thing, I just don't care, genuinely don't care. We have a responsibility to be a certain way in this society that, to me, is quite messed up and we, you know, have to, we're too old now, Dayna...'
	23/960-966	'Ella is amazing. I look at her and she is a worse version of me...and she's worse when it comes to faith and she's worse when it comes to cultural identity...'
	40/1707-1709	'Umm, I can't say anything without saying, you have to have faith. You have to because that's where you will have your peace...'
	40/1722-1729	'...you have to stick to your cultural and your faith identity...'
	40/1707-1713	Umm, I can't say anything without saying, you have to have faith. You have to because that's where you will have your piece. That's where you will have that calm to be able to... You'll make loads of mistakes, it doesn't matter what anybody says to you, you're always going to make hideous, horrible mistakes that you're gonna go to bed thinking, why did I do that that was horrible.
	40/1721-1729	I mean, I will say that two things I will stick to. I, You have to stick to your cultural and your faith identity. If you can stick to that, and at least that is your, what's the word, that's your, well I don't know what it is. That... your boundary or your line, as long as you can stick to that, then you know, you have to navigate life with that. Because you can't, was what you said, you know, you might have a child going through certain things, same as that mother but it's how you're coping with it...'
'Becoming' a Black woman to defend your child	28/1184-1201	'But I was very conscious that I was there as a Black mother. I can become a Black mother if I have to become... I am a Black mother when I have to deal with the children. I am and [ ] I am not gonna leave anything. I am gonna get every single answer that I need [ ] I am gonna make

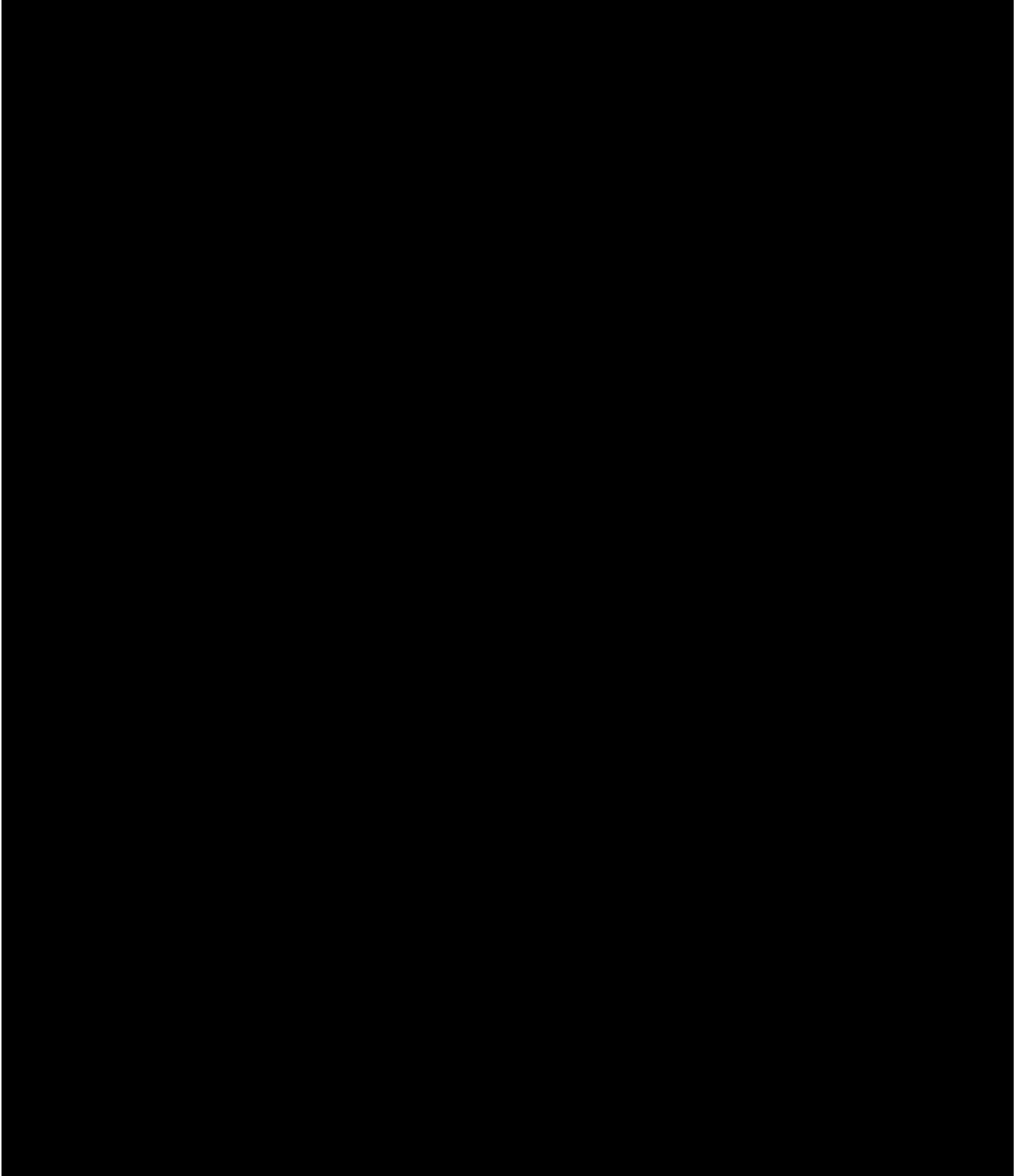


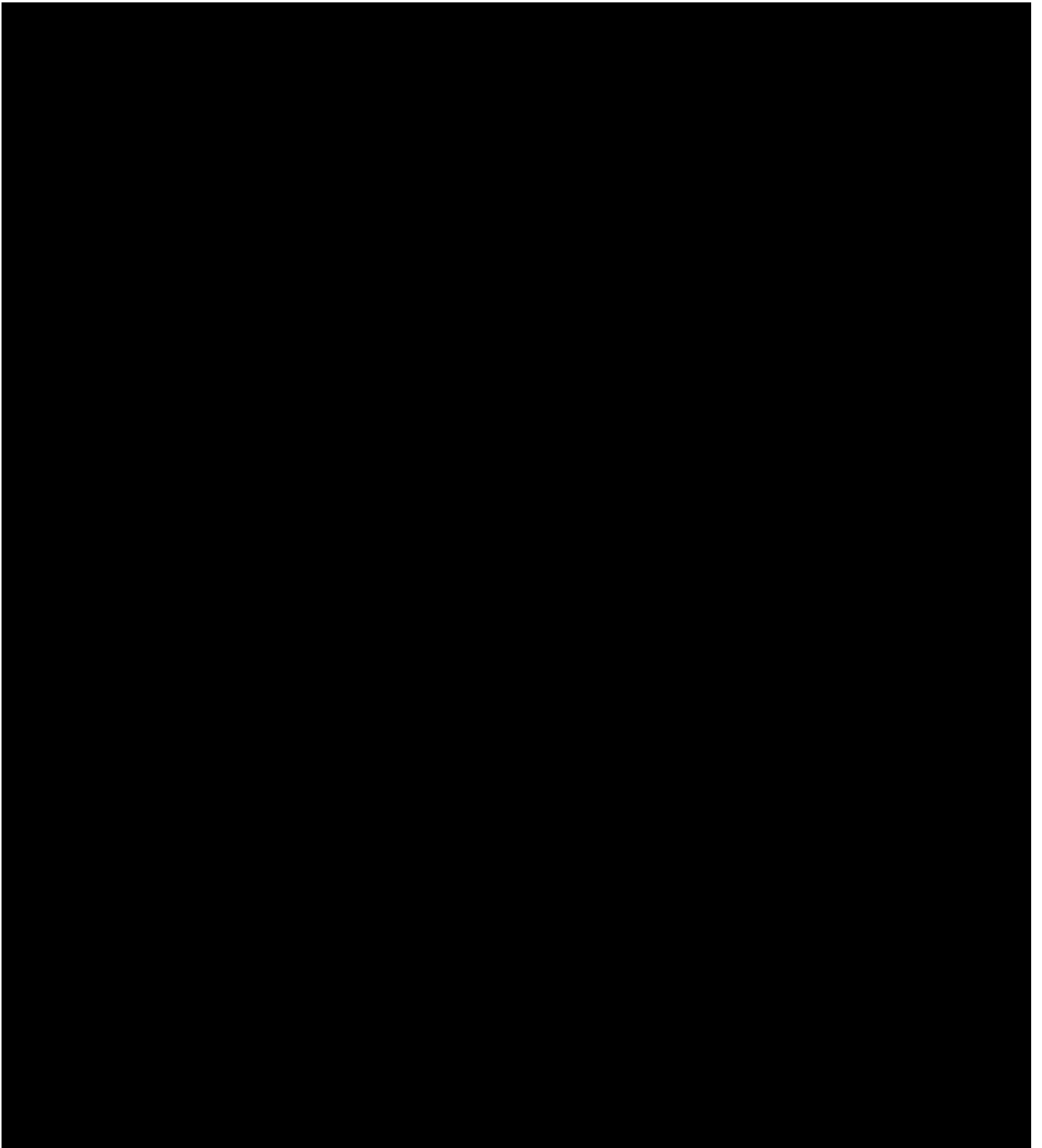
	<p>29 &amp; 30/1222- 1272</p> <p>34/1443- 1458</p>	<p>sure you understand what it is I'm telling you and I expect this to be resolved and I expect to never see your face again...;</p> <p>'So I felt I had to say, 'so hold on a minute, you know, stop it'. And to be fair by the end of it, he completely stopped. He completely stopped. But I felt that I was being a Black woman [ ] and not in a negative stereotypical way. I mean, how we are supposed to, the same way our parents were our mothers were [ ] and their mothers. That sort of thing, you know? [ ] I felt that, I, there was a lot of dignity in the way I handled the situation beside the fact that I shouldn't have done that. But there was a lot of dignity in it because I was a Black woman [ ] I was a Black woman and despite the fact that his White, this deputy, who I love to death, she's so lovely and she was great in the meeting but I needed him to know that I am a, I don't think I'm a pushover. I am a strong Black woman. So that's when that was coming to me. [ ] When I've had to deal with situations like that [ ] then I'm suddenly much more aware of who I am [ ] the way I was holding myself, it was very, I was mirroring a lot of what my mum would have been like [ ] even just down to the fact that my back was straight...'</p> <p>'Because of how I had to defend my child [ ] that's why it (the Black racial identity) came out [ ] I know what my mum was like. I know what her sisters are like. I know what the women in my family are like [ ] and that's what came out</p>
A mother's worries	24/1021-1066	<p>I cannot help talking to the boys, especially John, now about it, you know? You can't trust the police, John. I'm not one of these people who say, I said you know, I can't trust one of your, you can't trust the police, John, you know so, just lay low, you know. Because it doesn't matter what you are doing, just lay low and don't cause trouble, you know and I find myself even now, even though he is only fourteen, he doesn't do anything when he's in school. He's a lovely boy, he's very polite...I would still say that to him. When Gregg is getting to that age, I</p>

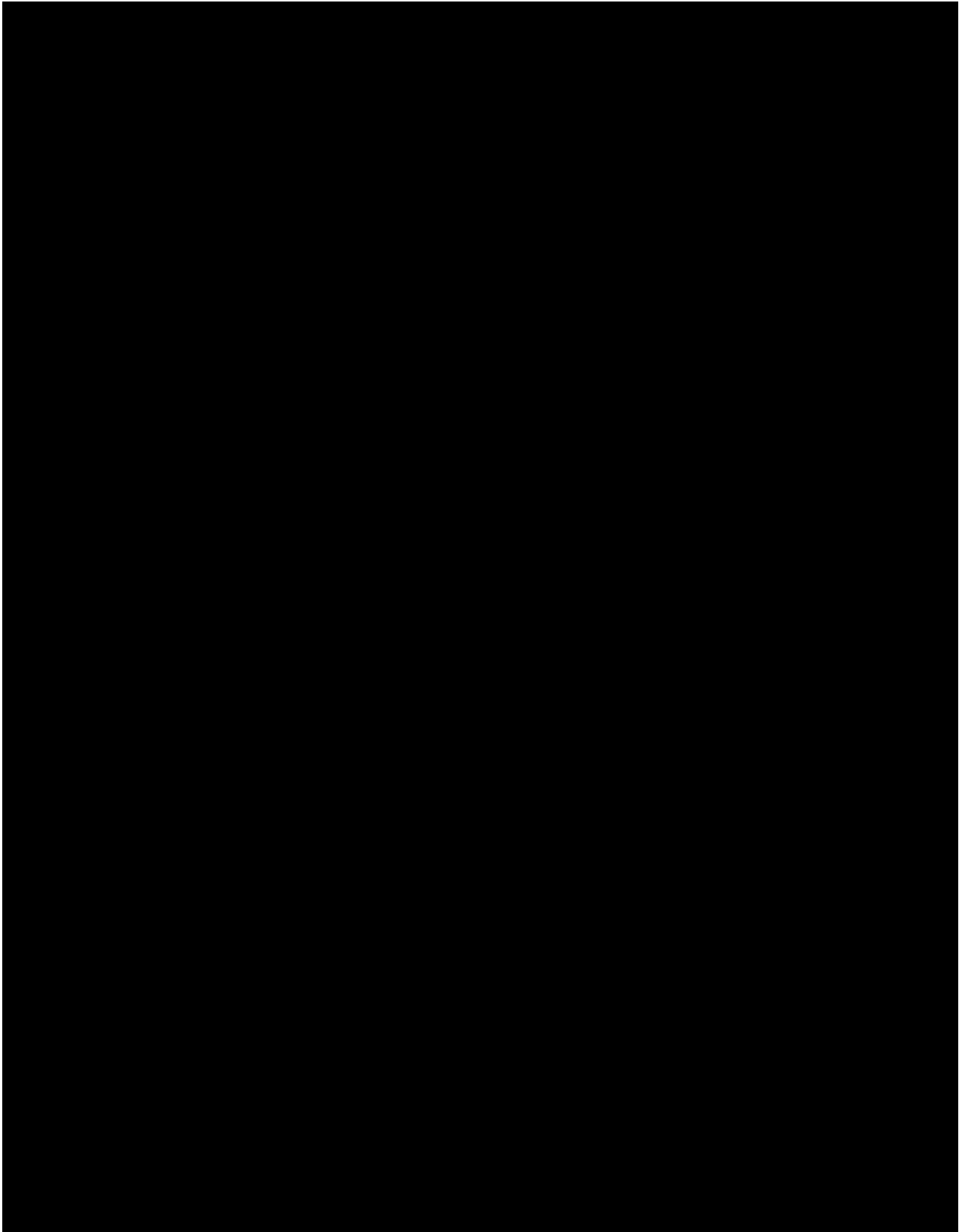
	26/1110-1121	<p>will say the same thing to him. And my cousin, he used to own a jeep, in the early 80's, he had to sell his Jeep because he was constantly being stopped by the police. You know, I, you know, I find it difficult, I can't, I have, very difficult to deal with the police [ ]</p> <p>So they're gonna treat them like that. But, obviously, because they're mixed, you wouldn't want them to go out in to the world and think, well I've got really light skin so the police are not gonna target me. And do you know what, and that's really interesting, isn't it because, that's the only group that I feel they need to be conscious about their cultural heritage about.</p>
	31/1200-1208	<p>'The police and perspective job interviews. It's when you have these strangers who have your life in their hands, how do you come across? Are you ready for that, you know? So yes, so in those two, you're absolutely right, it's about preparing them within their racial identity. Yeah, you're absolutely right. So, a lot of the stuff I'm saying to, you're bringing out of me, I've never articulated before, I've never thought about before... But yeah, those are the areas...'</p>
Pps strong sense of cultural identity	14/596-607	<p>'...going back this whole cultural identity thing, that is the innate sense of my cultural identity; it has nothing to do with my colour. Umm, that's what I think has been the most positive, the most enduring and the most beneficial thing I've been able to pass down to my children. Because I know they may rebel against it, they may hate it, they may, you know, be the typical children but I do genuinely feel, when they grow up, this will come back... They will have that sense.</p>
	14/558-573	<p>'It's having innately, inside me, a true understand of family, identity and respect. So that's why, if the children are disrespectful, and I to (inaudible) disrespectful, it would hit me, perhaps harder, than some of my friends who aren't Black because I have a strong sense of what it means to be respectful to your elders...'</p>

	28/1216-1217	'but I did feel at the same time and I did go away feeling a little bit bad because he (the teacher) did calm down because he was trying all this bravado and I thought a part of me, I have to say, felt my cultural identity...'
	30/1277-1281	There's a lot, there was a lot there, that definitely came from exactly the stuff you're talking about; that cultural side of things. So, it is, it's constantly subliminal, but I think that when it comes to your children, I think you have to hold back. I think it has to be appropriate.
	31/1343-1347	'So, I think that this idea of your cultural identity, is an emotion...it's not about heritage anymore, it's an emotion a lot of the time and that's wrong...'

### **5.11 Appendix K – Three-page Segment of Analysis of Transcript (for Participant Lisa)**







## 5.12 Appendix L- Table of Superordinate and Subthemes, With Participant Extracts

Superordinate themes	Subthemes	Example of participant extracts which speak to the corresponding themes
The experience of being a Black woman	Black female identity formation	<i>"We had to learn about our Black history, we had to learn about great Black figures and so, identifying with all of that and knowing that, you actually rightly or wrongly had a bit of a flag to fly for it" (Cara: 9, 359-363)</i>
		<i>"I've always had a very healthy sense of who I am, down to the schools that I went to, the teachers that I had, the encouragement that I had, my own family, my own family's investment in Blackness and growing up near a museum of African American history and going to it a lot" (Lisa 12, 442-447)</i>
		<i>A poignant point was... the way that you speak, people form opinions already on that thing. So, the shocking horror was when you speak to somebody on the phone and then you go and see them, they're like 'oh, you sound White'. That's what I used to get...Because I'm like, how you gonna sound a colour?" (Sharon: 16, 579-590)</i>
		<i>"I went to a farm school where we used to go to work in the fields first in the morning and then in the afternoon we would go to school, urm and that urm, that way we didn't pay any school fees...Yeah that one was tough [ ] It was tougher than when we were walking five miles every day to go to school (Gloria: 10, 296-311)</i>
		<i>"I've been raised... from Caribbean parents, with a strong Caribbean influence growing up, when we were younger we used to go and visit our grandparents abroad, got half brothers and sisters who live in the</i>

		<i>Caribbean, lots of relatives who are still there, so the influence has always been there about the Caribbean being home” (Ola: 16, 565-571)</i>
		<i>“I always identify myself as Caribbean but then I can’t forget that my dad is from Africa but urm, I’ve always been around him and stuff but he doesn’t really identify himself as African. If you see him you’ll think oh he’s west Indian, he acts like it, he doesn’t even go back home anymore so it’s been tough [ ] I haven’t been around it as much so it’s (African culture) a bit hard to identify myself with [ ] because I’ve grown up with my mums side of the family a lot more, they’re all Caribbean’s so I identify there a lot more and go to the Caribbean a lot more ” (Amaka: 7, 234-253)</i>
		<i>“Uh, it had a, yeah. Probably a small impact at the time, I don’t think you realise all that’s going in, until you look back on your childhood and you think oh yeah, silly things like he done sugar sandwiches. I would never give my children a sugar sandwich...You know? Proud of doing me sugar sandwich and you know, a certain way with a little lid on it. Umm, just certain things that you done. I still remember and I’m sort of thinking oh, you know so he wasn’t your typical role model dad but he was the only dad I had. So, that’s the only one I can learn from” (Anna: 14, 579-592)</i>
		<i>“My skin colour, my parent skin colour so yeah that’s how I identify myself as a Black woman” (Debbie: 4, 146-147)</i>
		<i>“It’s my culture. I was born in the Caribbean and... it’s just who I am... I don’t need anyone to tell me I’m Black, I know culturally I’m Black, racially I’m Black and that’s what I am” (Rebecca: 7, 228-233)</i>
	Feelings associated with Black racial identity	<i>“I feel good, I think I do a damn good job (laughs). I think I do a very very and I’m actually proud of myself” (Rebecca: 8, 243-245)</i>
		<i>“I don’t really like saying Afro Caribbean or African because were all different flavours. We are all from Africa but were all different flavours and I don’t think we should just... I was gonna say White wash it...Black wash it...we shouldn’t, we should embrace” (Ola: 18, 656-662)</i>



		<i>"I just felt like I am a Black woman, this is who I am...I'm really really pleased to be this, urm for so many reason" (Lisa: 10, 361-362)</i>
		<i>"I'm Black you haven't given me a form Black African; I will tick it there nice and clean" (Debbie: 9, 302-303)</i>
		<i>"I'm so proud, I feel so proud. thank you for asking that question. I get so troubled now...with Black women and it's almost all of them, this long hair...I can't stand it...I cannot ...I don't...it makes me so sad to be honest, it just makes me so, so sad, I want my ...this hair" (points to her hair) (Gloria: 13, 372-380)</i>
		<i>"I think it's the fact that we are quite strong, so I don't really ask for help so that could be another problem really" (Amaka: 12, 402-404)</i>
		<i>"It's my friends that tell me that I'm strong and amazing" (Anna: 14, 606)</i>
		<i>"But there was a lot of dignity in it because I was a Black woman ... I am a strong Black woman" (Cara: 33, 1284-1354)</i>
		<i>"How do I feel about myself...? Umm, I feel, I feel strong, umm, I feel that a good role model to the kids..." (Sharon:12, 445-446)</i>
The experience of Black motherhood	Learned Black mothering	<i>"Discipline is something that I've kind of learned from my mum about you know, children need to behave in a certain way [ ] Obviously, the influences that we talked about from my own mother are gonna influence me and that's gonna come from her mother (Ola's mother)and there's probably a bit of a Caribbean influence there as well in terms of how to raise your children" (Ola: 6, 219-698)</i>
		<i>"So it's...that's the really difficult bit trying to find a balance between okay African- don't talk to your mother like that and okay be free to say it if that's how you feel, I'm sorry, so for me that's the really difficult bit because growing up and knowing that don't even say anything if your mother or your father or anybody older than you is saying anything" (Debbie: 3, 97-103)</i>

		<i>"My mother said...oh there's a cultural way to stop that pain...and it was a very funny...you know...cultural way of doing it...that you take the baby outside early in the morning, put the baby on the ground, on wet ground, wet grass, in the morning like dew...and then someone picks it up quickly...and it gets rid of the pain" (Gloria: 2, 45-55)</i>
		<i>"I was being a Black woman and not in a negative stereotypical way. I mean, how we are supposed to, the same way our parents were our mothers were, and their mothers. That sort of thing, you know? [ ] I felt that... there was a lot of dignity in the way I handled the situation...But there was a lot of dignity in it because I was a Black woman...I don't think I'm a pushover. I am a strong Black woman" (Cara: 34, 1324-1354)</i>
		<i>"If you had a Caribbean mother you know that if you step out of line that you've got to fetch the belt [ ] but it just helps me to keep them grounded and instil discipline in them, I don't believe in smacking my children but I do discipline them in a way and I am very stern" (Rebecca: 14, 481-490)</i>
	The experience of support	<i>"it was nice; families were very, very, very supportive" (Sharon: 3, 97-98)</i>
		<i>"The families are lovely, I don't think the other parents, they don't see it as my grandchild is Black they just love them regardless, so in terms of the other side they're really really supportive and sort of...really really good [ ] they also want for her to embrace their culture and learn the language and learn the customs and the traditions, which is brilliant" (Rebecca: 28, 1087-1098)</i>
		<i>"There were always people around me, family was always around me, so much that I knew urm, I've got a lot of help" (Gloria: 3, 90-95)</i>
		<i>"I have a built-in support system of other Black women and my mum and my sisters and cousins and stuff like that where urm, I'm around a lot of Black people..." (Lisa: 17, 617-620)</i>

		<i>"I had a very supportive family and my extended family so, so I would have, I would have my aunt coming over... when my mum was at work my aunt would come over to look after me. So, I'd never had that issue. I haven't had to sort of stumble through" (Cara: 4, 129-134)</i>
		<i>"Support outside no... it wasn't given" (Amaka: 41, 1504- 1513)</i>
		<i>"I had loads, urm... we had loads because, my husband was really ill when my son was three months old, so much that he nearly died...and yeah, so ever since then, my friends would say, let's have the children for a couple days, let's have them for the weekend..." (Anna: 35, 1456-1462)</i>
		<i>"like I said most of the support I've received is by my friends..." (Debbie: 28: 1051-1052)</i>
		<i>yeah just in terms of raising a child, I don't think it's extra support in terms of being bi racial just normal support that you get from family, friends...grandparents, aunts, uncles...yeah we've had that like everybody else really, nothing in addition (Ola: 41: 1459-1466)</i>
Challenging experiences uniquely concerning the Black Mother-Biracial child dyad	Experiencing the biracial child as distinct from the self	<i>"I looked at the baby and I was like, that baby don't look like it's mine. Straight, straight hair, obviously very light; if I wasn't awake, I would've sworn they switched that baby" (Sharon 3: 105-108)</i>
		<i>"Because I am Black Black and this baby is White White" (Gloria: 6, 175-176)</i>
		<i>"He's very fair in complexion on the scale of different colours, his dad is White Greek Cypriot and urm me being Afro-Caribbean, so...without looking at him he could be mistaken as being Middle Eastern or something" (Ola: 8, 287-291)</i>
		<i>"He looks just like me but it's just the fact that he's light" (Amaka: 1, 32-33)</i>
		<i>"That's the main thing; it would be the hair. Because really, that's the issue with mixed race children. What's their hair going to be like?" (Anna: 27, 1118-1120)</i>

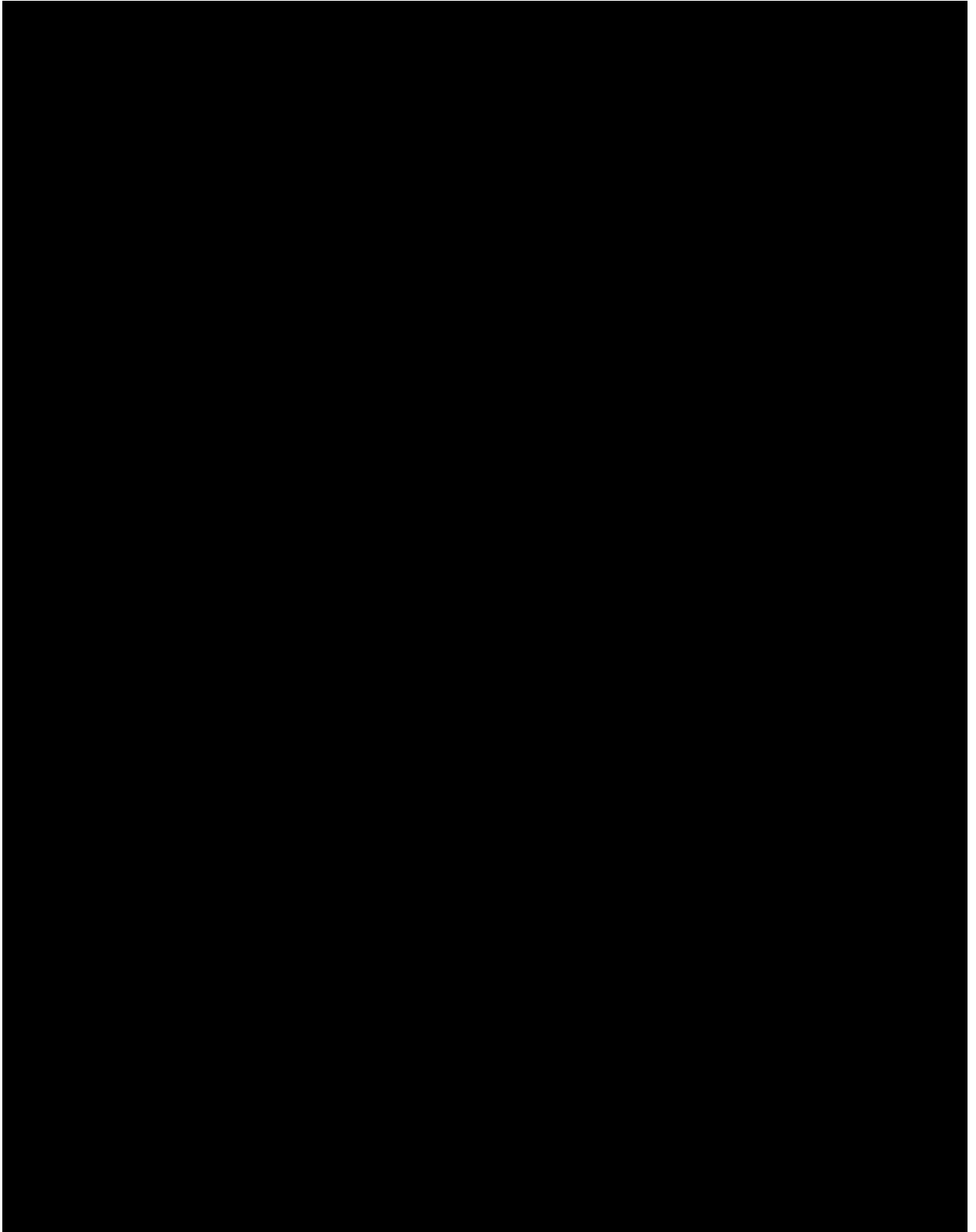
		<i>"Raising a Black child...it wouldn't be that I'm raising a child with good hair or fair skin...it would be I'm raising something that is the same as me"</i> (Rebecca: 11, 392-349)
		<i>"It was a shock for me to have a child who looked like that...because I wasn't expecting...I don't know what I was expecting... which is a silly thing to say but I certainly...that was a massive learning thing because I have a child that doesn't look like me and this is not...and I struggled with that for a bit, for a long time actually. I was like jheezee, she doesn't look like me. She can't use my hair products...she can't, you know, all these things and then I'm like, she's still your daughter. She's still you know...so it doesn't matter that she doesn't look like you, you need to kind of process that..."</i> (Lisa: 21, 772-788)
		<i>"If my son hears jollof rice he is like 'oh can I have chips instead?' or 'can I have this?' or 'I'm not hungry', some of those days I will take the bowl and I will put it in front of him and I will say 'sit down, you are eating it'..."</i> (Debbie: 17, 6000-605)
	Biracial identity negotiation	<i>"How do I show them who they should be? because I don't know what it's like to be mixed-race"</i> (Lisa: 23, 823-824)
		<i>"As a Black woman I think maybe the additional thing that I would face...raising a biracial child...is that I've got to... sort of deal with the concept of identity with them maybe slightly differently...to what other mothers might have to do, other mothers might not have to think about it and I'm quite conscious of it"</i> (Ola: 20, 705-709).
		<i>"I think the mother is the first educator... I think a woman in her head she knows what she needs to give the children to survive out there. And I think it's the mother who instils this sense of identity [ ] I think that there are roles"</i> (Cara: 18, 696-705)
		<i>"I don't think I raised them Black (laughs) I wouldn't say: I'm Black you have to embrace my Blackness... No. You are who you are, you need to embrace your Blackness but you also need to embrace, erm, your other</i>

		<i>roots... Yes, your mother is Black but also your dad is not.” (Rebecca: 8, 273-292)</i>
		<i>“You don’t want that child to lose their identity at the end of the day they’re not just this culture, so it’s nice to be open, if they’re single-parents like myself to learn about the other culture so that they can help the child not to have identity problems or crisis where they don’t really know who they are, so it’s about embracing and helping their child embracing who they are” (Debbie: 34, 1274-1281)</i>
		<i>“His dads not around at all so I tried my best to sort of, to make him know his identity as him being (White)Latin American, try and teach him little bits I can.” (Amaka: 11, 385-386)</i>
		<i>“it just came naturally, it’s what they saw...” (Anna: 45, 1822)</i>
		<i>“I think that me taking her to my home country and such an age was really...at that age she...how can I say...she was able to learn from my culture, something she never forgot...” (Grace: 14, 433-437)</i>
	Black mother’s concerns about their biracial children	<i>“The police and perspective job interviews. It’s when you have these strangers who have your life in their hands, how do you come across? Are you ready for that...So yes, so in those two, you’re absolutely right, it’s about preparing them within their racial identity” (Cara: 31, 1201-1206)</i>
		<i>“Now that my eldest is nearly 15 I get worried about... how everybody else is going to see him [ ] I mean, I know what it’s like being a Black person and having these perceptions of you and then to see this young Black guy...well, Black appearing guy...and... it’s me just worrying about how...he’s the nicest boy in the world but people just seeing his skin colour and features and hair texture and automatically thinking that he’s something else” (Lisa: 6, 196-213).</i>

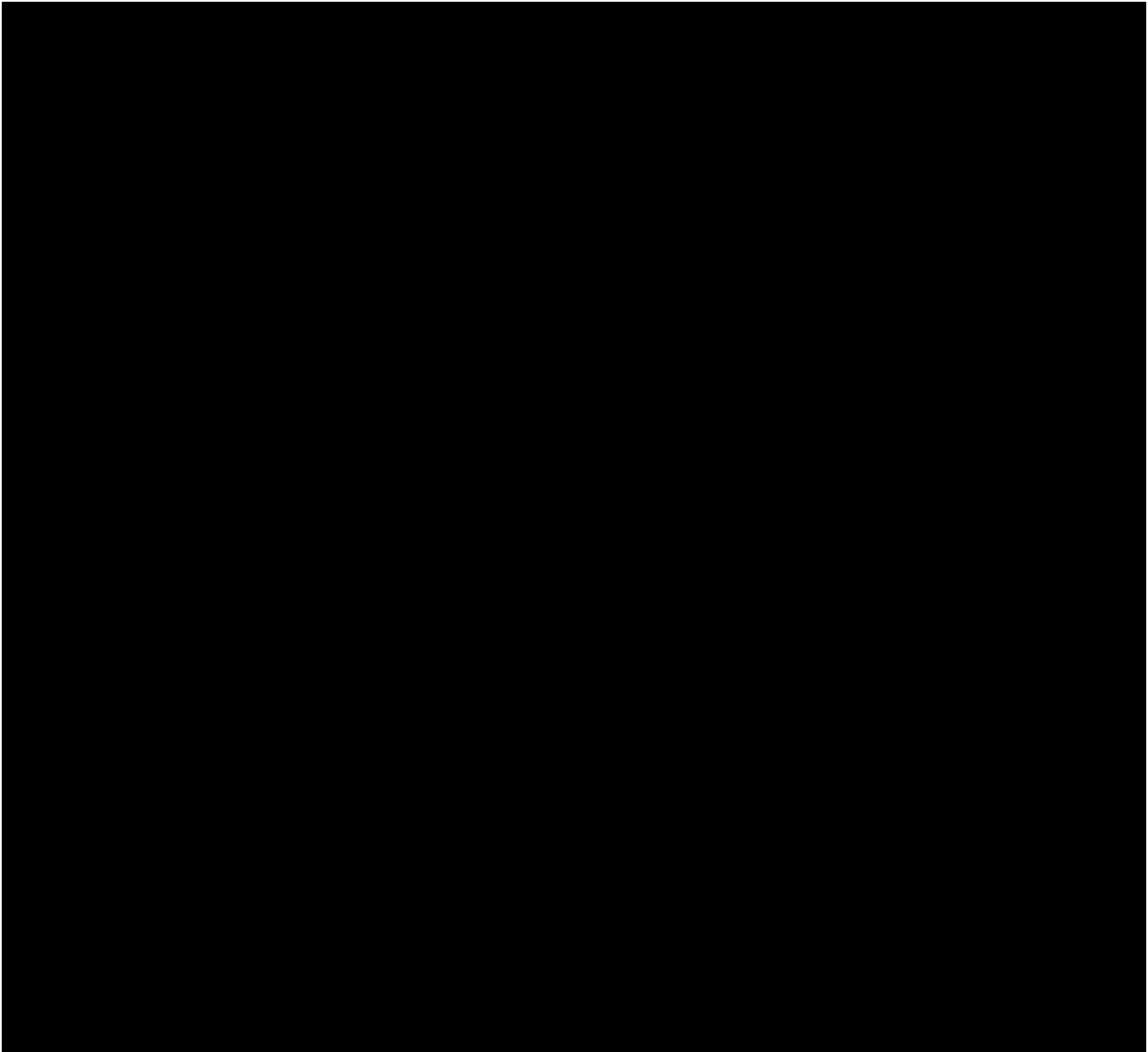
		<p><i>"I am worried about the fact that my son is mixed, if dated a Black guy... how does my son feel? ...And if I decide to have other children... with this Black person and they are a different colour then he will be the only person that is of a different colour in the family and he had that conversation with me to be fair he said to me: 'oh, I don't want you to marry a Black person because then I'm going to be the only one, fair skinned White person in the family'..." (Debbie 10, 330-340)</i></p>
		<p><i>"because people don't understand, they really don't understand, they see you and they think aww you've got a pretty child, your child's so cute...but they don't understand all of the sleepless nights, the hard work and everything that goes into it..." (Rebecca: 29, 1074-1078)</i></p>
Biases	The experience of microaggressions	<p><i>"It's not racism in the sense of KKK, you know spray painting epithets on your lawn, it's that drip drip microaggressions stuff that absolutely drives me crazy" (Lisa: 32, 1150-1153)</i></p>
		<p><i>"It's just constant staring and they always look straight at him and then they look at me and it's like they've got a look of disgust" (Amaka: 37, 1331-1335)</i></p>
		<p><i>"Yes! It's little remarks...but funny enough, it's racism but it's racism from other Black people. Not racism from White people" (Rebecca: 6, 183-185)</i></p>
		<p><i>"It was a Black woman, because he was in a sling, she looked at me and said 'that's not your child...' I said 'yeah, I think he is, last time I looked I think he is mine'..." (Ola: 8, 295-304)</i></p>
		<p><i>"I still felt that here when among my people, some of my people, yeah still do that, look down upon you" (Gloria: 20, 609-611)</i></p>
		<p><i>"but she didn't make any conscience effort to want to bond with him if that make sense erm, and then she said something about me going to bring home some White child" (Debbie:25, 898-901)</i></p>

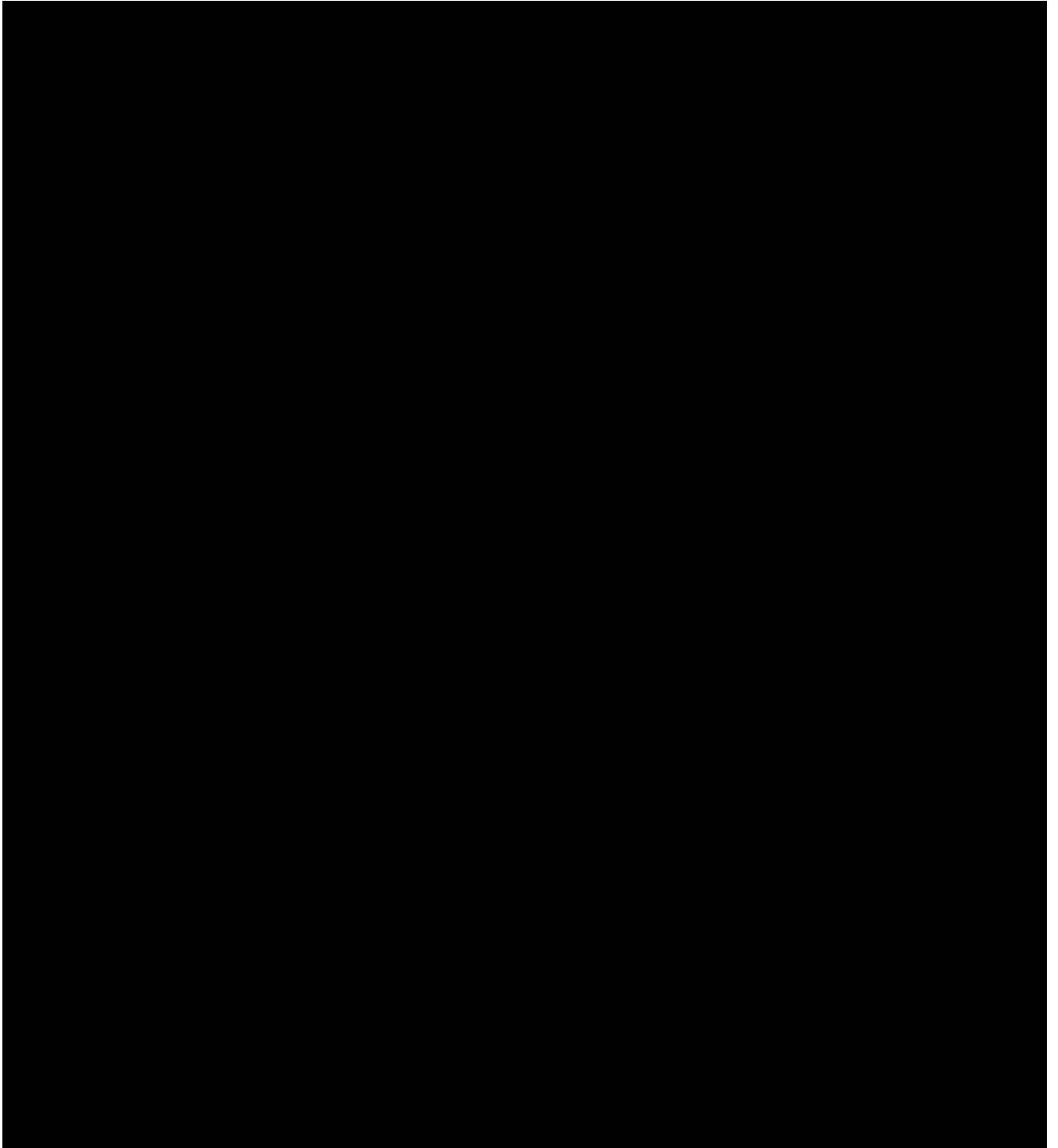
	Societal assumptions	<i>"... 'Does she think she was too good for Black men' that was my mum's initial reaction... My aunty was like... 'of all the countries in Africa, she couldn't find anybody' you know? and 'then she went and brought home a White man'..." (Debbie: 20, 715-721)</i>
		<i>"I think, I think there would be more coming from me having so many children, when we go out as a group of five because there was so much prejudice about people with big families, yeah. I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of the negative comments were probably more around that than what they look like" (Cara 25, 976-982)</i>
		<i>"If I was White with John nobody would question that that was my son...but when you're Black, people expect when you're the mother, they expect that the skin tone is nearer to you than the dad" (Ola: 10, 350-357)</i>
		<i>"They don't even have to have a reason they're just prejudice and have this misconception in their mind ...erm...Black single mothers raising drug dealers or raising children for the prison system" (Rebecca: 19, 1060-1063)</i>
		<i>"It's all the time, your battling judgements because your child is Biracial, your battling judgements because you are young, it's just constant judgements all the time" (Amaka: 32, 1148-1150)</i>
		<i>"A young Black male and he just said 'Is that a white man's baby?', I said yeah. That was the only time but I was so gob smacked" (Anna: 7, 305-311).</i>
		<i>"yeah I think that there's one segment that sees you as some sort of traitor, there's another segment that sees you as some sort of healer and then I think there's a big seg in the middle that just does not give a damn..." (Lisa: 33, 1186-1189)</i>
		<i>"but later I thought...oh did he think I had stolen this baby or something, because I am Black Black, this baby is White White..." (Gloria: 6, 173-175)</i>

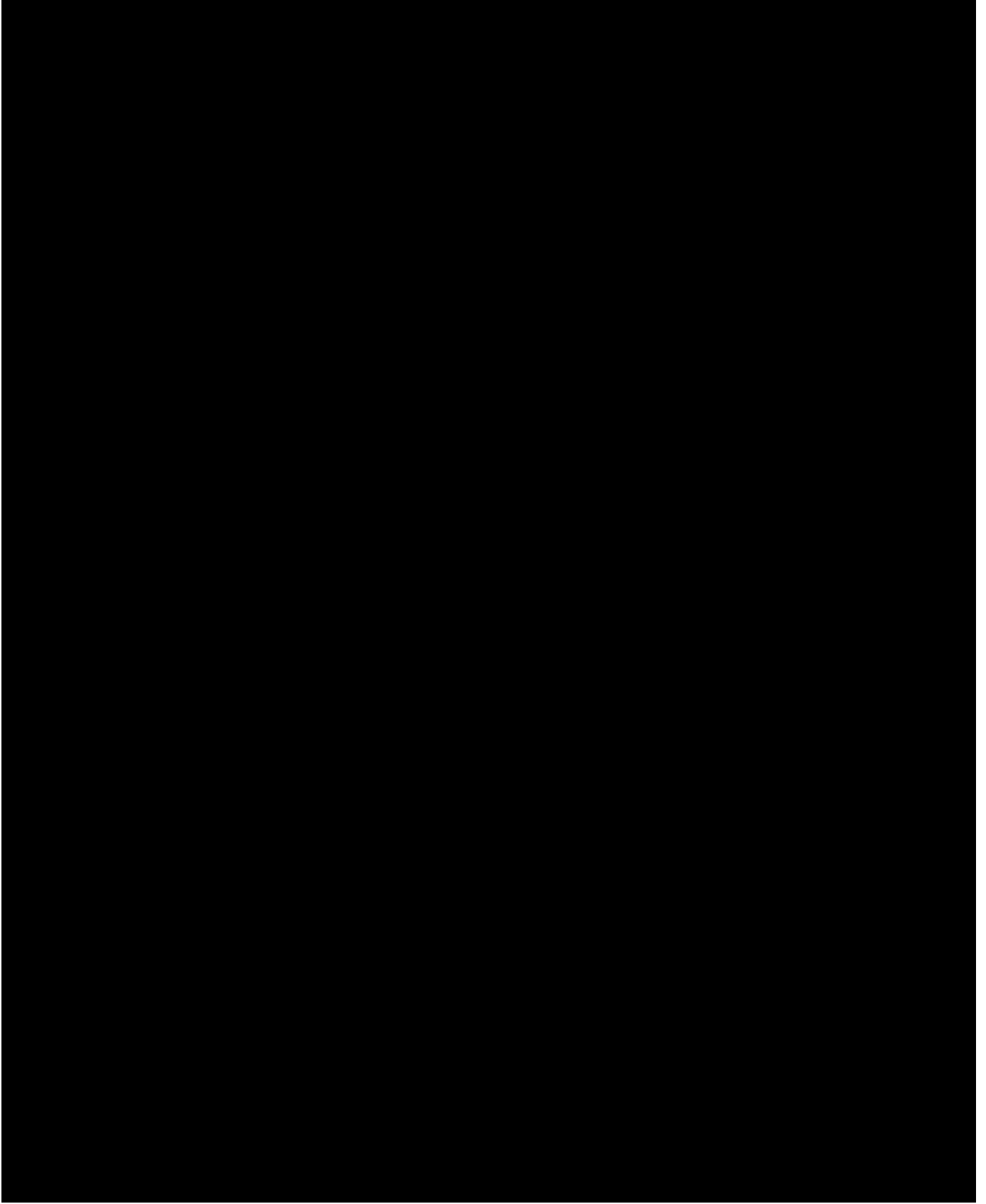
### 5.13 Appendix M – Cross-analysis (Visual Aid)



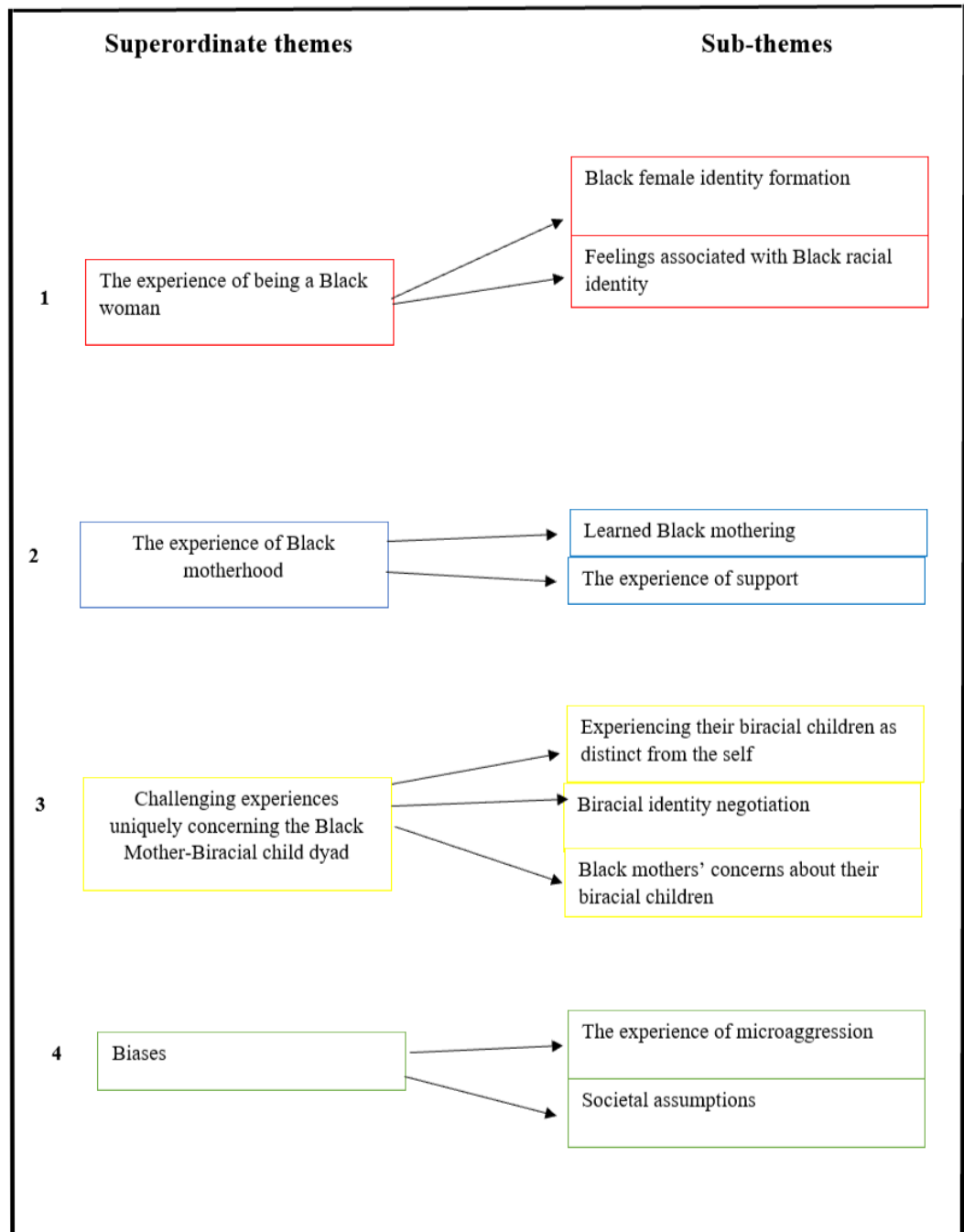








## 5.14 Appendix N – Finalised Table of Themes



## 5.15 Appendix O – Ethics Application and Ethical Approval Forms

### Psychology Department Standard Ethics Application Form: Undergraduate, Taught Masters and Professional Doctorate Students

This form should be completed in full. Please ensure you include the accompanying documentation listed in question 19.


Does your research involve any of the following? <i>For each item, please place a 'x' in the appropriate column</i>	Yes	No
Persons under the age of 18 <i>(If yes, please refer to the Working with Children guidelines and include a copy of your DBS)</i>		X
Vulnerable adults (e.g. with psychological difficulties) <i>(If yes, please include a copy of your DBS where applicable)</i>		X
Use of deception <i>(If yes, please refer to the Use of Deception guidelines)</i>		X
Questions about topics that are potentially very sensitive <i>(Such as participants' sexual behaviour, their legal or political behaviour; their experience of violence)</i>		X
Potential for 'labelling' by the researcher or participant (e.g. 'I am stupid')		X
Potential for psychological stress, anxiety, humiliation or pain		X
Questions about illegal activities		X
Invasive interventions that would not normally be encountered in everyday life (e.g. vigorous exercise, administration of drugs)		X
Potential for adverse impact on employment or social standing		X
The collection of human tissue, blood or other biological samples		X
Access to potentially sensitive data via a third party (e.g. employee data)		X
Access to personal records or confidential information		X
Anything else that means it has more than a minimal risk of physical or psychological harm, discomfort or stress to participants.		X

**If you answered 'no' to all the above questions your application may be eligible for light touch review.** You should send your application to your supervisor who will approve it and send it to a second reviewer. Once the second reviewer has approved your application, they will submit it to [psychology.ethics@city.ac.uk](mailto:psychology.ethics@city.ac.uk) and you will be issued with an ethics approval code. You cannot start your research until you have received this code.

**If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions, your application is NOT eligible for light touch review** and will need to be reviewed at the next Psychology Department Research Ethics Committee meeting. You should send your application to your supervisor who will approve it and send it to [psychology.ethics@city.ac.uk](mailto:psychology.ethics@city.ac.uk). The committee meetings take place on the first Wednesday of every month (with the exception of January and August). Your application should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the meeting you would like it considered at. We aim to send you a response within 7 days. Note that you may be asked to revise and resubmit your application so should ensure you allow for sufficient time when scheduling your research. Once your application has

been approved you will be issued with an ethics approval code. You cannot start your research until you have received this code.

<b>Which of the following describes the main applicant?</b> <i>Please place a 'x' in the appropriate space</i>	
Undergraduate student	
Taught postgraduate student	
Professional doctorate student	X
Research student	
Staff (applying for own research)	
Staff (applying for research conducted as part of a lab class)	

<b>1. Name of applicant(s).</b> (All supervisors should also be named as applicants.)
Dayna Wilson & Dr Ohemaa Nkansa-Dwamena
<b>2. Email(s).</b>

<b>3. Project title.</b>
Raising a bi-racial child in contemporary UK: An exploration of the experiences of Black mothers.
<b>4. Provide a lay summary of the background and aims of the research.</b> (No more than 400 words.)
<p><b><u>Background:</u></b></p> <p>Multi-racial households are on the rise (Fryer, 2007) and research suggests that monoracial parents from two different ethnic backgrounds may aid their children in forming their racial identity differently to monoracial parents from the same ethnic background (Cunningham, 1997). It is argued that racial socialisation is a method used, often by Black parents in order to prepare their children to cope with racial discrimination, prejudice and gain an understanding of their race (Hughes et al, 2006, as cited in Saleem et al., 2016). However, racial socialisation occurs when parents and children share the same racialised status, as parents usually socialise their children based on their own experience of racial identity formation (Rockquemore, Laszloffy &amp; Noveske 2006, as cited in Tashiro, 2012). This process is more difficult for monoracial parents raising bi-racial children as these parents have no experience of forming a bi-racial identity (Samuels, 2009).</p> <p>Research also suggests that multi-racial families experience unique challenges (McClurg, 2004), as parents tend to racially socialise their children based on their own experiences (Stone &amp; Dolbin-MacNab, 2017), which can be difficult when both parents aim to socialise their child differently, and can complicate racial identity</p>

development. However, research has only recently begun to focus on the multi-racial family. Current literature within this area appears to focus mostly on the experience of bi-racial identity formation and bi-racial individuals experience within the multi-racial household (Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson & Harris, 1993), (Talbot, 2008), (Song, 2010), (Morley, 2011), (Rocha, 2010) & (Mooney, 2014), or the experience of the White mothers raising their bi-racial children within multi-racial families (Barn, 1999), (Kouritzin, 2016), (Rauktis, Fusco, Goodkind & Bradley-King, 2016), (Harman, 2013) & (Fusco & Rautkis, 2012). Of the abovementioned studies reoccurring themes were the experience of racism, isolation and difficulty in creating a bi or multi-racial family identity. However, although this research provides an insight into the experiences of bi-racial people and their White mothers, these studies have limitations such as being racially biased and failing to take into account the father's or Black mother's role or experience, in regards to raising their bi-racial child. Additionally, these studies are not recent and mostly, based in the USA and may utilise methods of data collection that are arguably less sound.

As mentioned above, the experience of Black women, has been neglected in regards to their experience in raising their bi-racial children, it is possible that their experience might be different compared to White mothers. We can also theorise that these women would potentially still have endured some form of difficulty, seclusion or racism when raising their bi-racial children, as White mothers did. Historically, social sciences understanding of Black mothers has been simplistic and stereotypical and many social scientists speak of the 'Black mother' as if there was only one type, one who is limited in her education, domineering and angry and it has been said that the current literature is void in its understanding of Black mothers (Rodriguez, 2016). This race-related bias has led to us having less of an understanding about the experiences of Black mothers that hold a place within our society. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap through exploration of the experience of the Black mother raising her bi-racial child. It is imperative, particularly for counselling psychology, however, that we do learn about the experience of the Black mother raising her bi-racial child, as this will provide better understanding of the experience of Black motherhood, formation of racial identity and deeper insight into the potential difficulties faced by these mothers and multi-racial families. This could aid health professionals to effectively provide services and support in order to serve these families.

**Aim:** To explore the experiences of Black mothers (mothers who have African and/or Caribbean roots), raising their *bi-racial* children.

I have chosen to focus on Black women. For the purposes of this piece of research, this encompasses Black women of African and/or Caribbean descent. Although there may be variation within this participant group, there are also some commonalities, this may provide a more in-depth understanding of the varied experiences of Black women in relation to this topic area.

## **5. Provide a summary of the design and methodology**

**Research design:**

This is a qualitative piece of research investigating the lived experience of a specific population- Black mothers of bi-racial children. Due to this fact, the research design that will be utilised will be IPA.

IPA allows participant and researcher to build a rapport which aids participants in self-expression of their experiences and provides the researcher with the opportunity to gain insight into the participants' lived experience through interpretation (Alase, 2017). Thus, a two-stage interpretation process is utilised (Smith, 1975). The first involving the participant interpreting their own experience and the second being the experimenter interpreting the participant's interpretation of their experience.

The analytic process of IPA involves reading and listening to the data multiple times, note taking of semantic content (through descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments), and developing themes that emerge from the data (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

**Epistemology:**

The epistemology that will be used will be Black feminist thought, as this stance appears to integrate well with both IPA and my research question. Black feminist epistemology makes two main assumptions; that first-hand experience is a measure of meaning and that knowledge claims can be assessed through dialogue (Collins, 2000). Arguably, these assumptions made by Black feminist epistemology go hand in hand with IPA, as each view the participant as having their own unique experience and allows the participants narrative to unfold. Data gained through IPA and Black feminism epistemology allows us to gain a rich and detailed understanding of a specific population, which is what I hope to achieve through my research of Black women and their experiences in raising their bi-racial children.

**Research methodology:**

Once potential participants contact me, I will arrange a time that is convenient for them, for us to have a phone call so that they can be screened in order to determine their suitability for the study (Screening phone call can be found in If the participant is eligible to take part in the study, they will be sent an information sheet about the study and I will give them at least 48 hours, so that they can familiarise themselves with it. I will then arrange with participants when and where they would like to meet and consent forms) will be given to participants prior to research interviews taking place.

Research methodology that will be utilised will be semi-structured interviews, as this is a commonly used method within IPA. Semi-structured interviews are argued to allow interviews to be structured but are flexible, which permits researchers to probe participants to elaborate, which gives rise to richer narratives of the participants lived experience. Throughout interviews open questions will be used rather than closed questions in order to stimulate richer responses and lead to better understanding of the participants' experience.



**6. Provide details of all the methods of data collection you will employ (e.g., questionnaires, reaction times, skin conductance, audio-recorded interviews).**

Data collection will be through audio recorded semi-structured interviews that will be transcribed after interview, encrypted and then stored in a locked safe in the researcher's home. All data that is stored on the computer will be password-protected and only the researcher will have access to its content. The semi-structured interview guide consists of 10 questions (as suggested by Smith, flowers & Larkin, 2009), and all questions will be open ended, coupled with probes.

Example:

Question: What has it been like for you to raise your bi-racial child/ children?

Probe: Which aspects of the experience particularly stood out to you?

Probe: In regards to the aspect of support, can you tell me about any support that you received in regards to raising your bi-racial child?

Questions regarding difficulties and privileges in raising a bi-racial child, the effect these mothers believe that they had on their bi-racial child's upbringing, any differences between their own and their partners methods of raising their child, how understood these mothers felt by others and if their experiences met their expectations in regards to raising a bi-racial child will be included.

**7. Is there any possibility of a participant disclosing any issues of concern during the course of the research? (e.g. emotional, psychological, health or educational.) Is there any possibility of the researcher identifying such issues? If so, please describe the procedures that are in place for the appropriate referral of the participant.**

I will provide all participants with debrief forms listing resources, as well as reading that might be helpful.

In the case that a participant discloses any issues of concern or becomes distressed at any point during the research process, I will check in with them and see if they would like to continue with the interview, if they would like a break or if they would like to terminate the interview. I will use my counselling skills learnt while on the doctorate at City, university London and would attempt to contain the participant. I would do this without taking on the therapist role, but would do this by empathising, showing unconditional positive regard and congruence.

Although it is unlikely in this situation, if the participant did disclose an issue of risk, I would inform their GP of the risk and I would have secured details of their GP prior to our interview, and would explain to the participant that I would never need to contact their GP unless they presented as a danger to themselves or someone else. If the risk appears imminent, (for example, If the participant tells me that she wants to kill herself, harm herself or harm someone else and had plans and intent to do so when she leaves my presence) then I will call an ambulance or the police, as well as contact their GP. I would also immediately report this to my research supervisor.

GP details would be attained during the consent process, as part of the consent form

**8. Details of participants (e.g. age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria). Please justify any exclusion criteria.**

Although there is no upper age limit, there is a lower age limit and all participants will be over the age of 18, they will self-identify as monoracial Black (of African-Caribbean descent) and would have at least one bi-racial child either biological or adopted of at least eight years of age (no upper age limit). All participants will be residing in UK and available to attend face to face interviews.

**Exclusion criteria:**

Mothers of any race other than Black (African and/ or Caribbean descent), for example, the mother is White, Asian or Multi-racial/ bi-racial herself. This falls under exclusion criteria because culture is expected to shape and impact one's experiences in regards to raising a child. Thus, I have decided to focus on one race (Black) in regards to the mother in order to accumulate richer data regarding the experience of one race rather than comparing the cross-cultural experiences of different mothers raising their children and because the current literature fails to adequately explore the experience of Black mothers raising their bi-racial children.

As there is very little literature regarding the experience of the Black and Asian mothers raising their bi-racial children in comparison to the White mother, I was torn between exploring the experience of either of Black or Asian mothers. However, I decided against focusing on the experience of Asian mothers of bi-racial children as there are low rates of Asian ethnic groups in inter-ethnic relationships and having bi-racial children (The National Achieves, 2014) in comparison to Black mothers. In addition, it is argued that 9.5 per cent of married couples identify as interracial and of these couples, 7.9 per cent identified as Black-White couples (Johnson & Kreider, as cited in Stone & Dolbin-MacNab, 2017). Thus, I decided to focus on the experience of Black mothers of bi-racial children, as they are more likely to be part of a multi-racial family. However, once this research has been conducted, it would then be wise to investigate other racial mixes and how mothers of different cultures experiences raising their bi-racial children.

Mothers who had been absent from their children's lives for any more than three years during their childhood early developmental years. This is a part of exclusion criteria as disrupted attachment could hinder mothers in development of an attachment with their children and may have prevented them from going through the longitudinal experience of raising their bi-racial children.

Mothers who live outside of the UK or unable to attend face to face interviews. I am excluding mothers who live outside of the UK, as I will be unable to meet them

for face to face interviews due to my inability to travel outside of the UK. I also do not feel the need to recruit participants from outside of the UK, as the UK is multi-cultural and I feel as though I can recruit a diverse enough sample, in order to produce empirically sound research. In addition, much of the research conducted on the experience of mothers raising their bi-racial children is based in the US and very little research is based in the UK or provides an insight into the unique experiences of mothers raising their bi-racial child in the UK, which arguably, would differ to the experience of a mother raising her child in the US. Thus, this piece of research seeks to recruit participants who reside in the UK and have been for at least eight years.

Mothers below the age of 18. Although it is unlikely that there will be any harm or risk, these individuals will be excluded from the study firstly because this is a more vulnerable age group and secondly because they are unlikely to have raised a child for eight years. In which case, they are less likely to have had as long of an experience in raising their children, and my wish is to conduct research regarding the longitudinal experience of these mothers.

Foster mothers and mothers with a bi-racial child who is under eight years old. These mothers are part of exclusion criteria, because as mentioned above, I wish to study the longitudinal experience of the Black mother raising a bi-racial child and arguably, foster mothers and mothers of children below eight years will not have had as long of an experience in raising their child in comparison to mothers who have raised children above eight years old.

Mothers currently suffering from mental health issue(s). This is part of the exclusion criteria, as ill mental health could influence their experience of raising their bi-racial child and topics discussed within the interview could potentially give rise to difficult emotions. Thus, it would be unethical to include this population.

Individuals unavailable for face to face interviews will not be included within research, as I would argue that it is important to meet with participants so that there is a physical face to face exchange and I would say that body language, facial expression and tone all contribute to the research and will aid me in developing a better rapport with the participant which will encourage richer material.

#### **9. How will participants be selected and recruited? Who will select and recruit participants?**

Purposive sampling (through use of inclusion criteria) will be utilised in order to recruit participants. To take part in the study, potential participants need to be over the age of 18, need to self-identify as a monoracial Black (of African and/or Caribbean descent) mother of a bi-racial person of eight years or above. All participants will be residing in the UK and will be available to attend face to face interviews. Exclusion criteria will then be utilised to ensure participants are able to participate and exclusion criteria will be assessed during telephone screening.

Participants will be recruited via flyers that will be posted in a variety of locations such as in local Caribbean takeaways, in a local nail shops and in local hair dressers, as well as on social media- Facebook, Instagram and snapchat and through word of mouth in order to reach a wide variety of people. Participants who contact me will

receive an information sheet via email or post. After a sufficient amount of time during which the participant can familiarise themselves with the information (at least 24 hours), I will arrange a screening phone call to determine their eligibility to take part in the study and to ensure they meet the inclusion criteria. It will also give potential participants the space to ask questions. If they meet the criteria as determined in the screening, a face to face interview will be arranged and agreed. Via this process, I will select and recruit all participants.

**10. Will participants receive any incentives for taking part?** (Please provide details of these and justify their type and amount.)

Participants will not receive any incentives or for taking part in this research and travel expenses will not be reimbursed.

**11. Will informed consent be obtained from all participants? If not, please provide a justification.** (Note that a copy of your consent form should be included with your application, see question 19.)

Informed consent will be obtained from all participants prior to face to face interviews taking place. Participants will have the opportunity to ask any questions that they have and check their understanding of the study and what the research entails before signing consent forms.

**12. How will you brief and debrief participants?** (Note that copies of your information sheet and debrief should be included with your application, see question 19.)

Once the potential participant has made contact with me they will be sent the information sheet via email or post (depending on the individuals preference), they will then be given at least 24 hours to familiarise themselves with the information and then if they are still interested in taking part in the study, a screening phone call will be arranged, during which time I can assess the potential participants suitability for taking part in the study and they can ask any questions that they may have.

Once the interview has been completed, the participant will be given debrief forms, with external links and resources that they can utilise, as well as the Samaritan number and emergency NHS 111 and 999 numbers, as well as references in the case that they wish to embark on extra reading on the topic area.

**13. Location of data collection.** (Please describe exactly where data collection will take place.)

Data collection will take place in an accessible room on City, university London campus and will have fire exits, will be wheel chair accessible and will be well lit and ventilated. Other places where data collection will take place are at the participant's workplace, library rooms or quiet coffee shops. Depending on the location of the participant and where they feel most comfortable in conducting the interview. All locations will be public and I will not be meeting people in their homes.

<b>13a. Is any part of your research taking place outside England/Wales?</b>		
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	If 'yes', please describe how you have identified and complied with all local requirements concerning ethical approval and research governance.

<b>13b. Is any part of your research taking place <u>outside</u> the University buildings?</b>		
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If 'yes', please submit a risk assessment with your application or explain how you have addressed risks.

<b>13c. Is any part of your research taking place <u>within</u> the University buildings?</b>		
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If 'yes', please ensure you have familiarised yourself with relevant risk assessments available on Moodle.

**14. What potential risks to the participants do you foresee, and how do you propose to deal with these risks? These should include both ethical and health and safety risks.**

**Participant Risk assessment**

Although the interviews could potentially give rise to difficult emotions, I do not foresee a high level of risk to myself or participants. However, in order to ensure that risk is managed, I will provide them with a list of resources in relation to research after the interview is complete and will be given enough details of the research prior to the interview starting. The participant will also be made aware that if they want to stop the interview at any point or would like to withdraw their data at any point during the research process, but **before the thesis has been submitted**, that they can do so at any time, without repercussions and will be provided with a debrief form in the case that they need extra support. The debrief form will include Samaritans details, NHS numbers such as 111 and 999, reminder that the participant can attend their GP or A&E if they feel overwhelmed or suicidal, ethnic minority charities, single mother support charities, forums for women, therapy signposting and a short list of reading material, in the case that they wish to do further reading on the topic.

Prior to the interview taking place, the participant will have provided informed consent and will be reminded about the ethical principle of confidentiality, unless they disclose that they are suicidal or wish to harm themselves or others, in which case their GP will be contacted. Lastly, I will try to be attuned with the participant by consistently checking in with them, so that I know if she is feeling overly upset or emotional. If the participant does appear to be emotional or overwhelmed, I will again check in with her and provide the space for her to talk about her emotions and what might be going on for her. I will give the participant enough time and will provide a safe and confidential space for her to speak about what might be coming up for her, I will then ask her if she is happy to continue the interview and if she is not happy to do so then the interview will be stopped. If in the unlikely event, the participant presents as suicidal I will contact emergency services and/or the participant's GP. In addition, I

will be adhering to the BPS code of research ethics (2010) throughout the entire research process.	
<b>15. What potential risks to the researchers do you foresee, and how do you propose to deal with these risks? These should include both ethical and health and safety risks.</b>	
<p><b>Researchers risk assessment</b></p> <p>Although I do not foresee any risks for myself when researching, I understand that there are always risks that could potentially arise. In order to keep myself safe I will meet all participants in public but quiet venues. I will make my supervisor and a fellow colleague on the doctorate at City university London, aware of my location and foreseeable start and finish times of interviews. I will report my concerns to my supervisor and/or the appropriate persons if the participant expresses that they are feeling suicidal or wish to harm another person and will provide debrief forms and if need be, I will call an ambulance. If I feel threatened in any way, I will terminate the interview and I will always sit in a room nearest to the exit door. I will refrain from meeting participants in their homes or secluded areas and will conduct all interviews between the daylight hours of 9am and 6pm. I will also ensure that once interviews with participants are concluded I will text my supervisor from a research only mobile phone informing her that the interview is complete, that I have left and that I am safe, I will also do the same for my colleague, but will always keep the participants details confidential when informing my colleague that the interview is complete. Any concerns that I have in regards to a participant I will report to my supervisor.</p>	
<b>16. What methods will you use to ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity?</b> (Please note that consent forms should always be kept in a separate folder to data and should NOT include participant numbers.)	
<i>Please place an 'X' in all appropriate spaces</i>	
<b>Complete anonymity of participants</b> (i.e. researchers will not meet, or know the identity of participants, as participants are a part of a random sample and are required to return responses with no form of personal identification.)	
<b>Anonymised sample or data</b> (i.e. an <i>irreversible</i> process whereby identifiers are removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers. It is then impossible to identify the individual to whom the sample of information relates.)	
<b>De-identified samples or data</b> (i.e. a <i>reversible</i> process whereby identifiers are replaced by a code, to which the researcher retains the key, in a secure location.)	<b>X</b>
<b>Participants being referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from the research</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Any other method of protecting the privacy of participants</b> (e.g. use of direct quotes with specific permission only; use of real name with specific, written permission only.) <b>Please provide further details below.</b>	<b>x</b>
I will make use of direct quotes within my thesis write up and I will ensure that permission and consent has been attained from the appropriate participant through the consent form.	
<b>17. Which of the following methods of data storage will you employ?</b>	
<i>Please place an 'X' in all appropriate spaces</i>	

Data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet	X	
Data and identifiers will be kept in separate, locked filing cabinets	X	
Access to computer files will be available by password only	X	
Hard data storage at City University London		
Hard data storage at another site. <i>Please provide further details below.</i>		
<b>18. Who will have access to the data?</b>		
<i>Please place an 'X' in the appropriate space</i>		
Only researchers named in this application form	X	
People other than those named in this application form. <i>Please provide further details below of who will have access and for what purpose.</i>		
<b>19. Attachments checklist.</b> *Please ensure you have referred to the Psychology Department templates when producing these items. These can be found in the Research Ethics page on Moodle.		
<i>Please place an 'X' in all appropriate spaces</i>		
	Attached	Not applicable
*Text for study advertisement	X	
*Participant information sheet	X	
*Participant consent form	X	
Questionnaires to be employed		X
Debrief	X	
Copy of DBS	X	
Risk assessment	X	
Time table for research		(added within proposal)

<b>20. Information for insurance purposes.</b>
(a) Please provide a <u>brief</u> abstract describing the project
<p>There is a wealth of literature exploring the experience of White mothers raising bi-racial children and findings suggest that these women experience a lot of racism, prejudice, discrimination, less social support and negative stereotypes among other hardships. However, the process and experience of raising a bi-racial child is argued to be more complicated for Black mothers, which is made even more difficult if these mothers are on a low income (Halgunseth, Ispa, Csizmadia &amp; Thornburg, 2005), however, there appears to be a race-related bias in regards to research exploring the experience of Black mothers raising their bi-racial children, as research in this topic area is sparse. Thus, we know very little about the bi-racial family dynamic from the perspective of the Black mother who is raising a bi-racial child.</p>

It is imperative however, that we do learn about the experience of the Black mother raising her bi-racial child, as this will provide better understanding of the formation of racial identity and deeper insight into the potential difficulties faced by these mothers as well as the multi-racial family, which could aid health professionals to effectively tailor services to the needs of these individuals and provide services in order to serve these families and better understand whether or not the problems presented are connected to the dynamic of the multi-racial family (Stone & Dolbin-MacNab, 2017).

Thus, this study aims to recruit eight to ten self-identified Black mothers with bi-racial children above the age of eight and living in the UK via purposive sampling. Methodology employed will be semi-structured interviews in regards to these women's experience in raising their bi-racial children. IPA will then be utilised in order to analyse data.

Please place an 'X' in all appropriate spaces

<b>(b) Does the research involve any of the following:</b>	Yes	No
Children under the age of 5 years?		X
Clinical trials / intervention testing?		X
Over 500 participants?		X
<b>(c) Are you specifically recruiting pregnant women?</b>		X
<b>(d) Excluding information collected via questionnaires (either paper based or online), is any part of the research taking place outside the UK?</b>		X

If you have answered 'no' to all the above questions, please go to section 21.

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above questions you will need to check that the university's insurance will cover your research. You should do this by submitting this application to [insurance@city.ac.uk](mailto:insurance@city.ac.uk), before applying for ethics approval. Please initial below to confirm that you have done this.

I have received confirmation that this research will be covered by the university's insurance.


Name ...Dayna Wilson..... Date.....11.07.17.....

## 21. Information for reporting purposes.



Please place an 'X' in all appropriate spaces

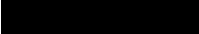
<b>(a) Does the research involve any of the following:</b>	Yes	No
Persons under the age of 18 years?		x
Vulnerable adults?		X
Participant recruitment outside England and Wales?		x
<b>(b) Has the research received external funding?</b>		x



<b>23. Declarations by applicant(s)</b>		
<i>Please confirm each of the statements below by placing an 'X' in the appropriate space</i>		
I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information given above, together with accompanying information, is complete and correct.		<b>x</b>
I accept the responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application.		<b>x</b>
I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting the project.		<b>x</b>
I understand that <b>no</b> research work involving human participants or data can commence until ethical approval has been given.		<b>x</b>
	<b>Signature</b> (Please type name)	<b>Date</b>
<b>Student(s)</b>	<b>Dayna Angel Wilson</b>	<b>08.12.2017</b>
<b>Supervisor</b>		<b>08.12.2017</b>
<b>22. Final checks.</b> Before submitting your application, please confirm the following, noting that <b>your application may be returned to you without review</b> if the committee feels these requirements have not been met.		
<i>Please confirm each of the statements below by placing an 'X' in the appropriate space</i>		
There are no discrepancies in the information contained in the different sections of the application form and in the materials for participants.		<b>x</b>
There is sufficient information regarding study procedures and materials to enable proper ethical review.		<b>x</b>
The application form and materials for participants have been checked for grammatical errors and clarity of expression.		<b>x</b>
The materials for participants have been checked for typos.		<b>x</b>

## Reviewer Feedback Form

<b>Name of reviewer(s).</b>

<b>Email(s).</b>


<b>Does this application require any revisions or further information?</b>		
<i>Please place an 'X' the appropriate space</i>		
<b>No</b> Reviewer(s) should sign the application and return to <a href="mailto:psychology.ethics@city.ac.uk">psychology.ethics@city.ac.uk</a> , ccing to the supervisor.		<b>Yes</b> Reviewer(s) should provide further details below and email directly to the student and supervisor.
<b>x</b>		
<b>Revisions / further information required</b>		
To be completed by the reviewer(s). PLEASE DO NOT DELETE ANY PREVIOUS COMMENTS.		
Date: 18 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2017		
Comments: Please see tracked comments throughout.		
<b>Applicant response to reviewer comments</b>		
To be completed by the applicant. Please address the points raised above and explain how you have done this in the space below. You should then email the entire application (including attachments), <b>with changes highlighted</b> directly back to the reviewer(s), ccing to your supervisor.		
Date: <b>10.01.2018</b>		
Response: <b>Thank you so much for all the suggestions. I have responded to all suggestions which can be seen within the highlighted text.</b>		
<b>Reviewer signature(s)</b>		
To be completed upon FINAL approval of all materials.		
	<b>Signature</b> (Please type name)	<b>Date</b>
<b>Supervisor</b>		
<b>Second reviewer</b>		<b>12<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>



Psychology Research Ethics Committee  
School of Arts and Social Sciences  
City University London  
London EC1R 0JD

31<sup>st</sup> January 2018  
Dear Dayna and Ohemaa

**Reference:** PSYETH (P/L) 17/18 83

**Project title:** Raising a bi-racial child in contemporary UK: An exploration of the experiences of Black British mothers.

I am writing to confirm that the research proposal detailed above has been granted approval by the City University London Psychology Department Research Ethics Committee.

Period of approval

Approval is valid for a period of three years from the date of this letter. If data collection runs beyond this period you will need to apply for an extension using the Amendments Form.

Project amendments

You will also need to submit an Amendments Form if you want to make any of the following changes to your research:

- (a) Recruit a new category of participants
- (b) Change, or add to, the research method employed
- (c) Collect additional types of data
- (d) Change the researchers involved in the project

Adverse events

You will need to submit an Adverse Events Form, copied to the Secretary of the Senate Research Ethics Committee [REDACTED] in the event of any of the following:

- (a) Adverse events
- (b) Breaches of confidentiality
- (c) Safeguarding issues relating to children and vulnerable adults
- (d) Incidents that affect the personal safety of a participant or researcher

Issues (a) and (b) should be reported as soon as possible and no later than 5 days after the event. Issues (c) and (d) should be reported immediately. Where appropriate the researcher should also report adverse events to other relevant institutions such as the police or social services.

Should you have any further queries then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards

TBC

Ethics committee Secretary  
Email: psychology.ethics@city.ac.uk

[REDACTED]  
Chair  
[REDACTED]

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**AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF  
BLACK WOMEN RAISING BIRACIAL CHILDREN IN  
THE UK.**

**(ARTICLE)**

DAYNA ANGEL WILSON

DAYNA.WILSON@CITY.AC.UK

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN COUNSELLING

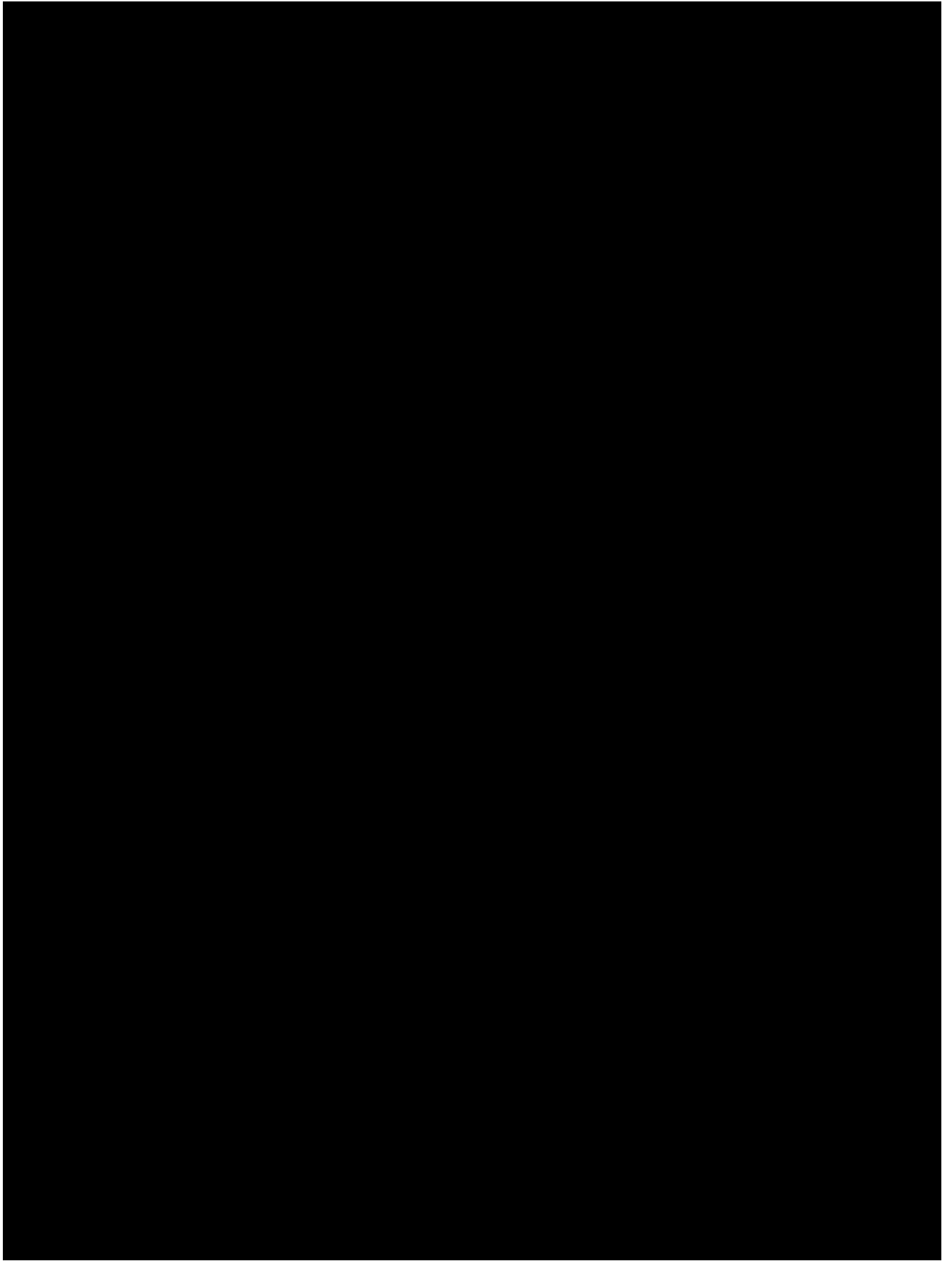
PSYCHOLOGY

CITY UNIVERSITY, LONDON

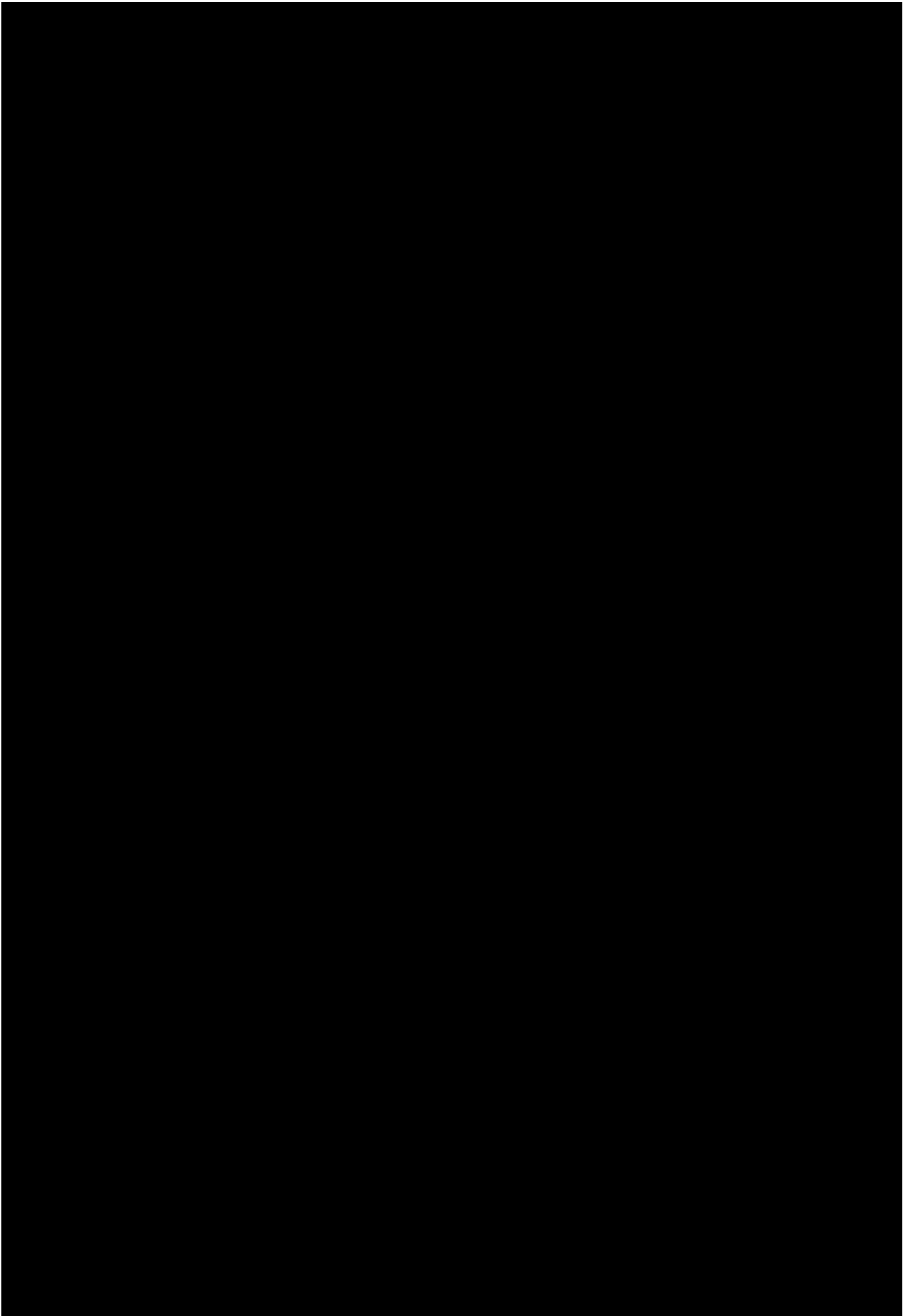
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

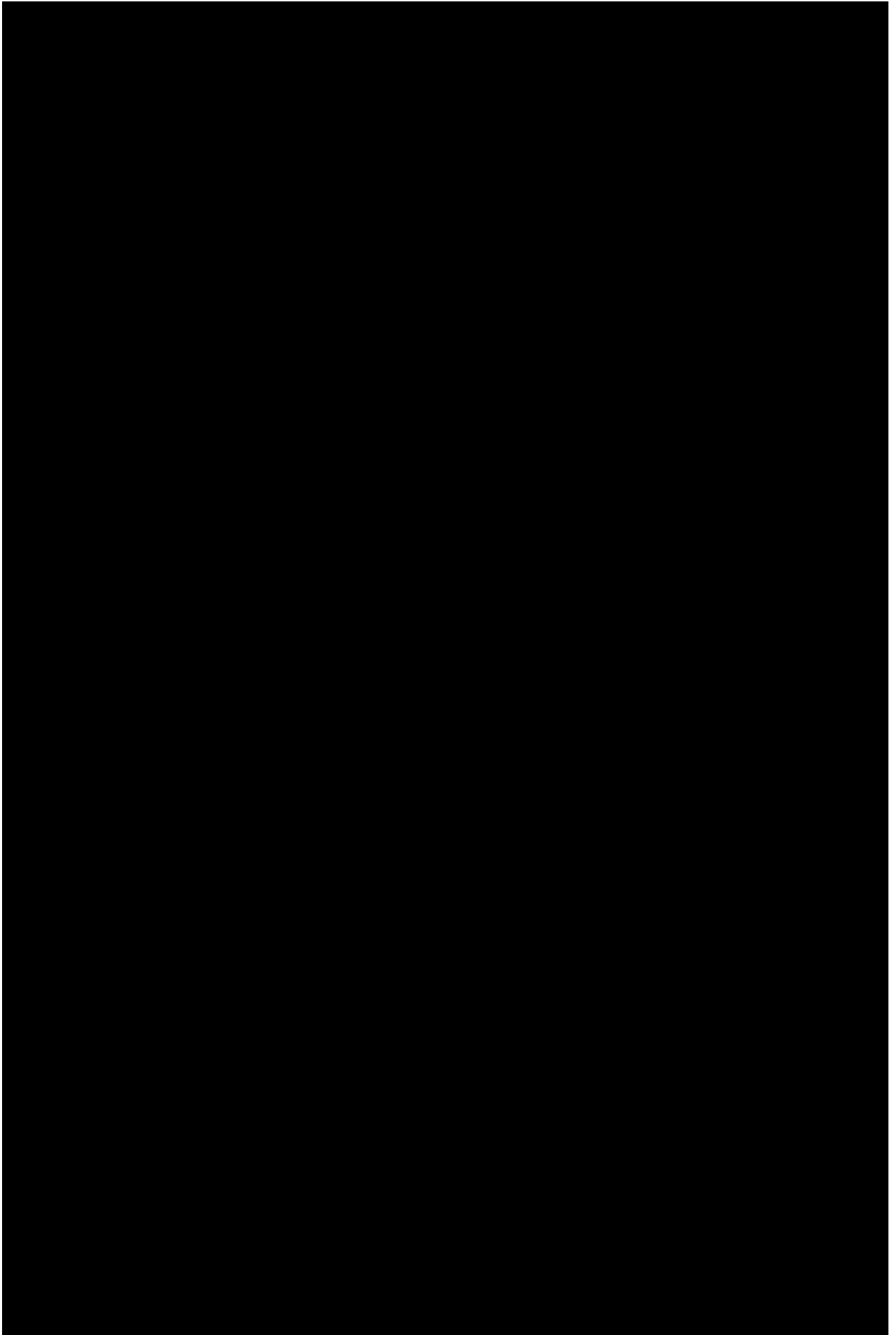
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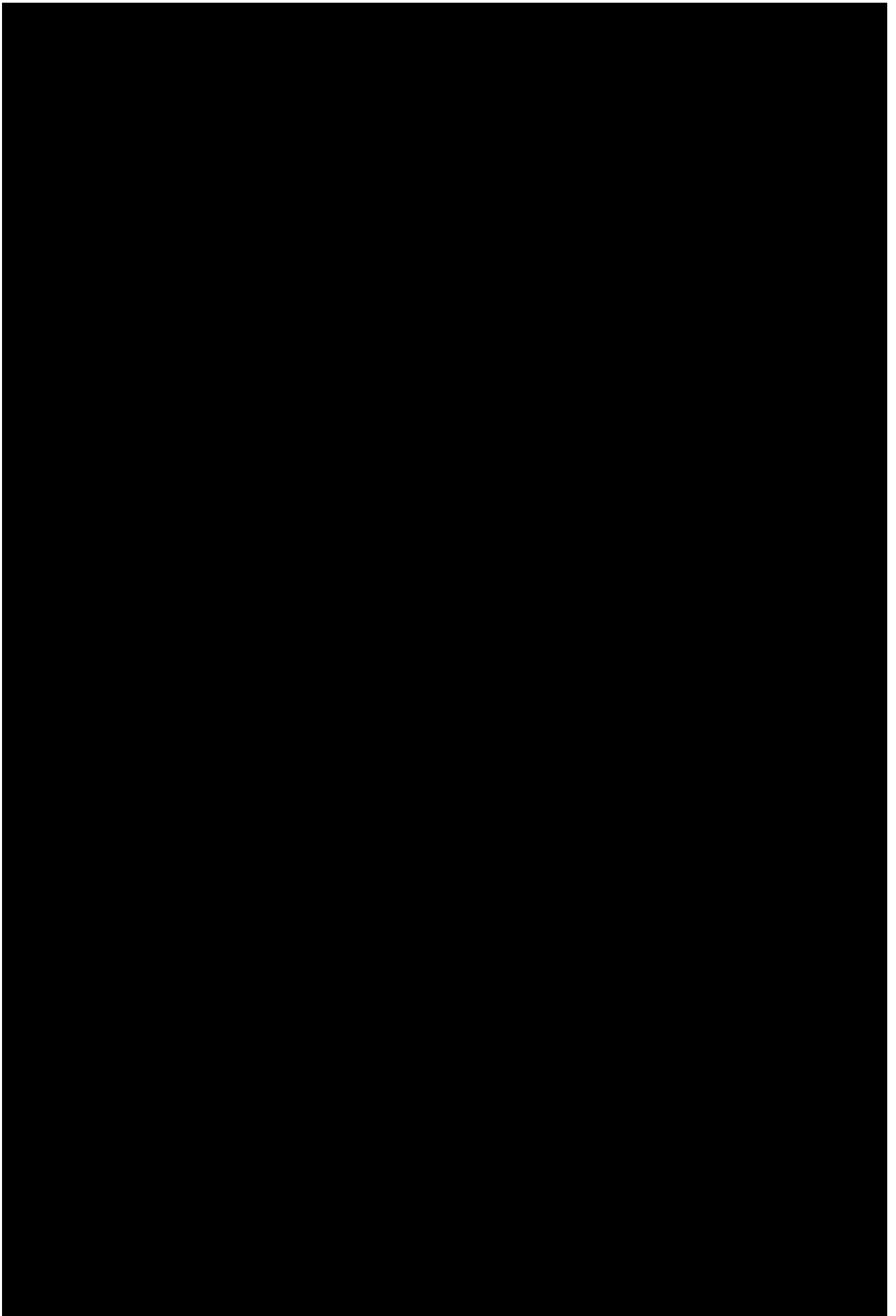


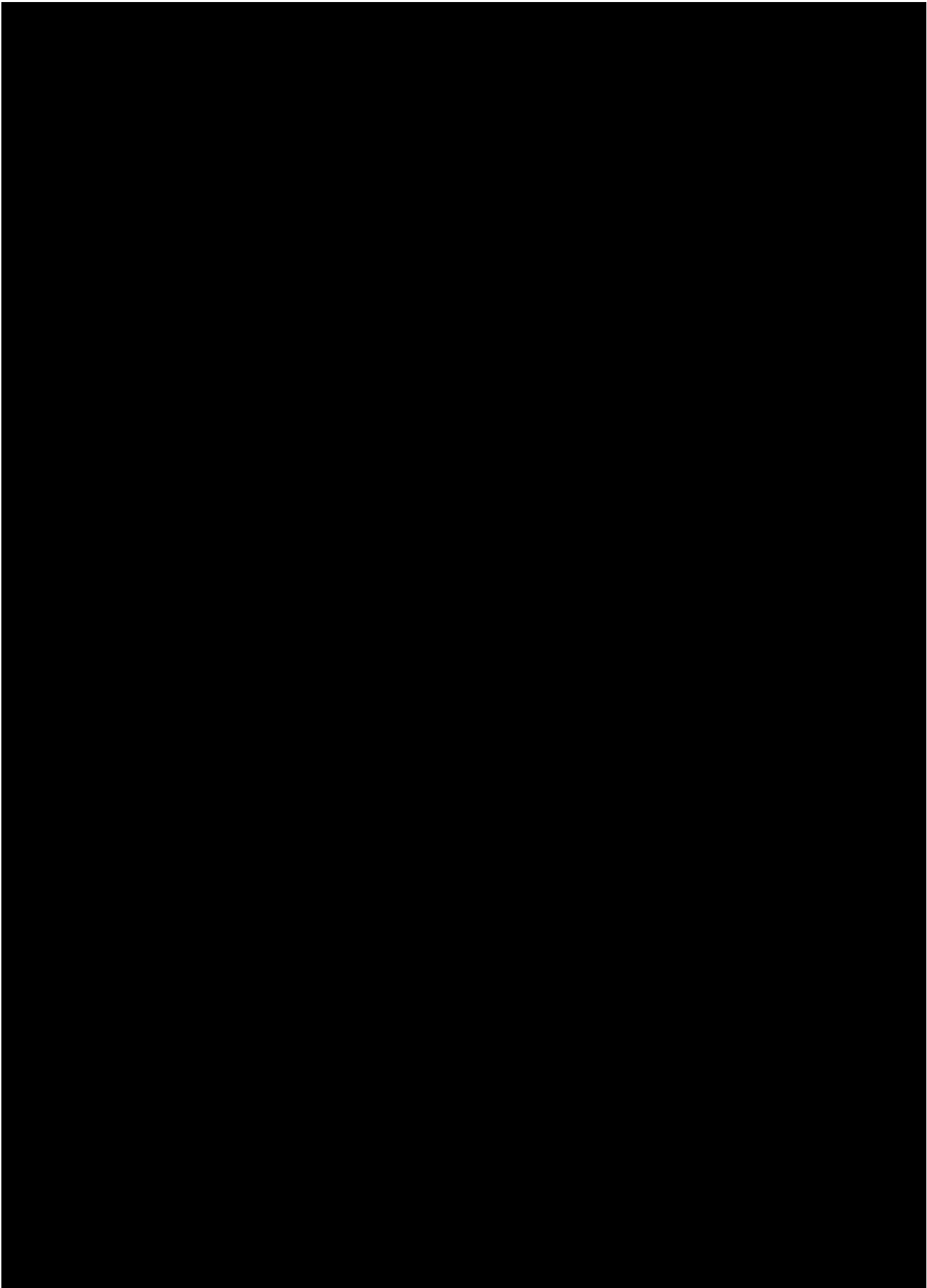


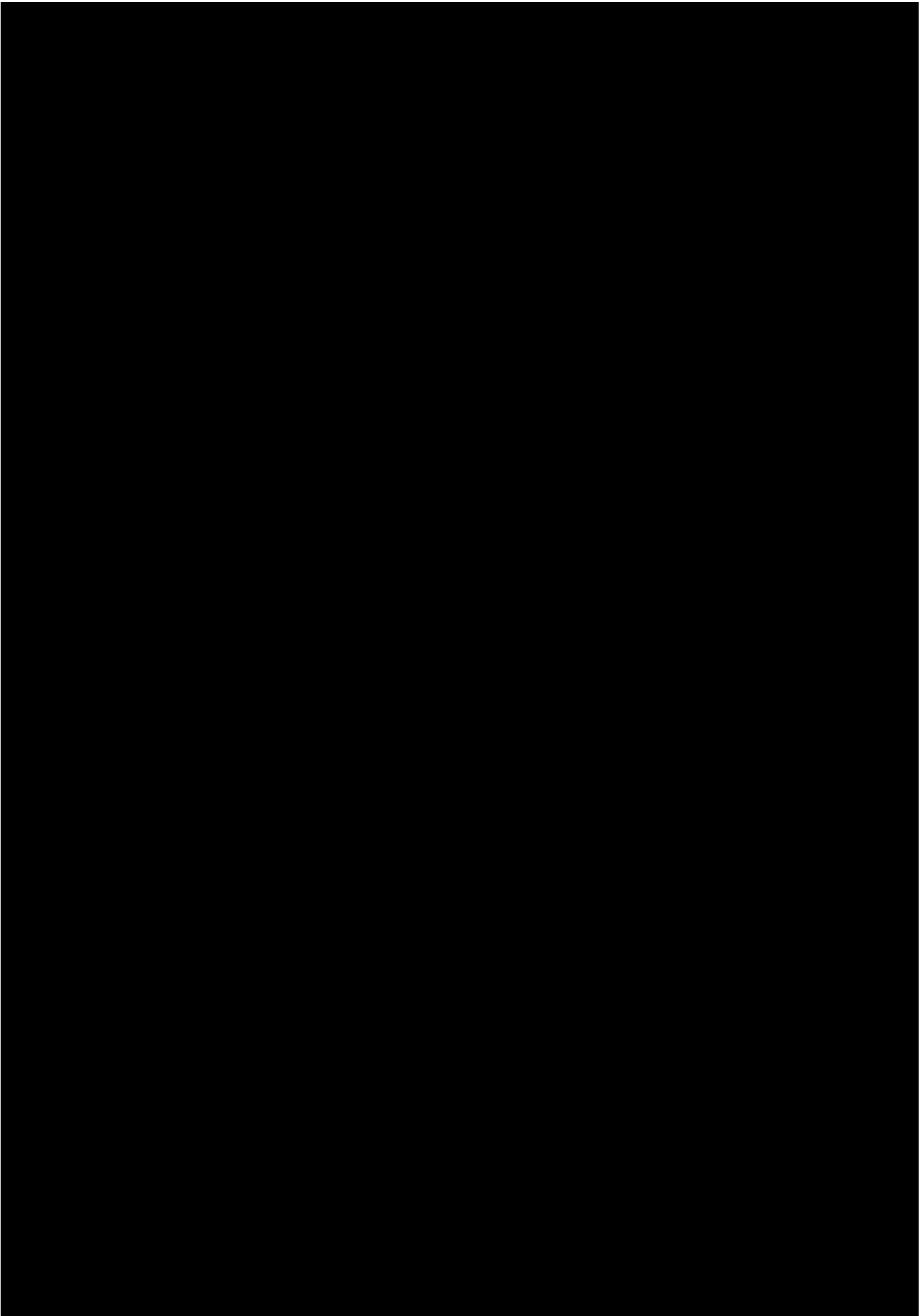


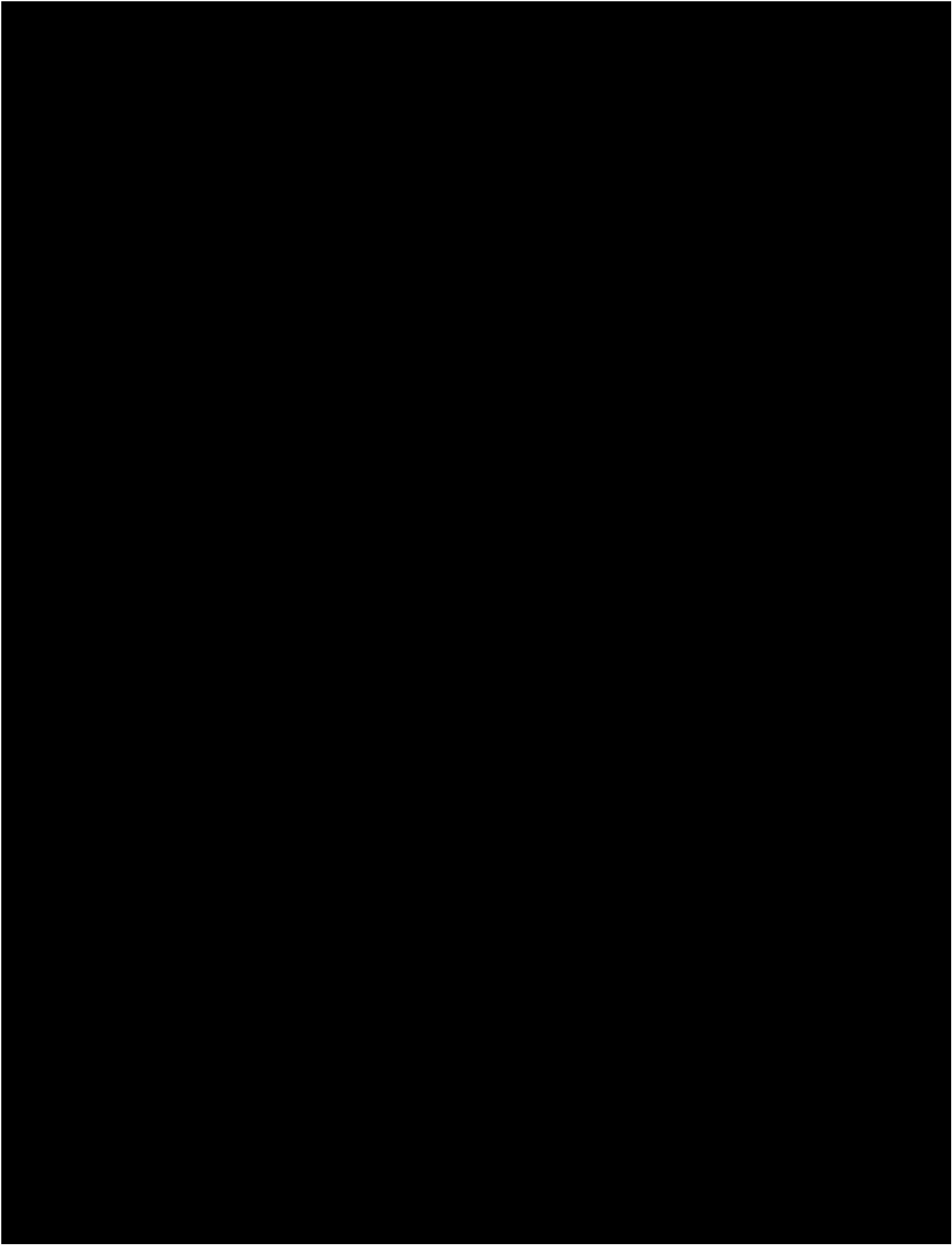


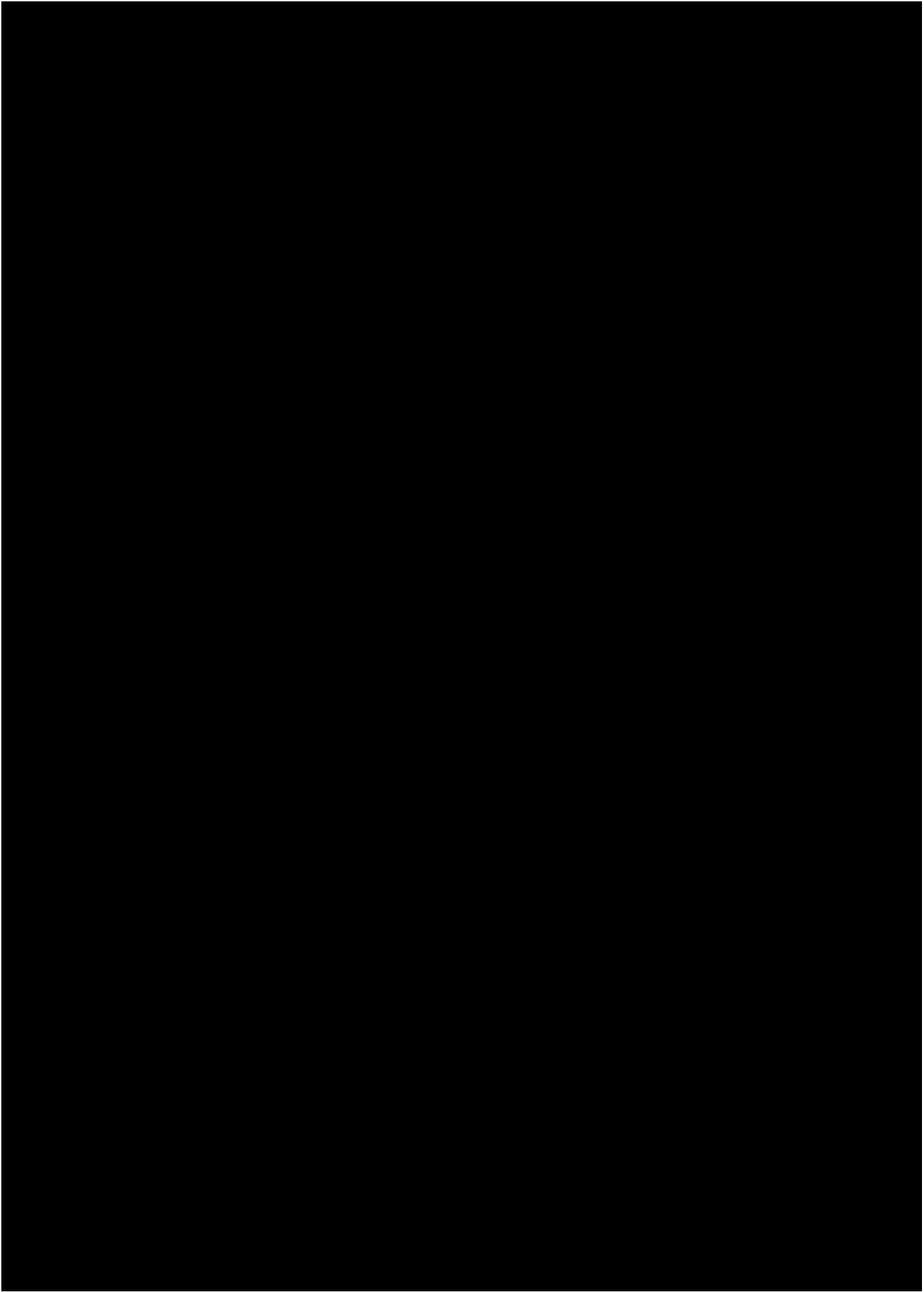




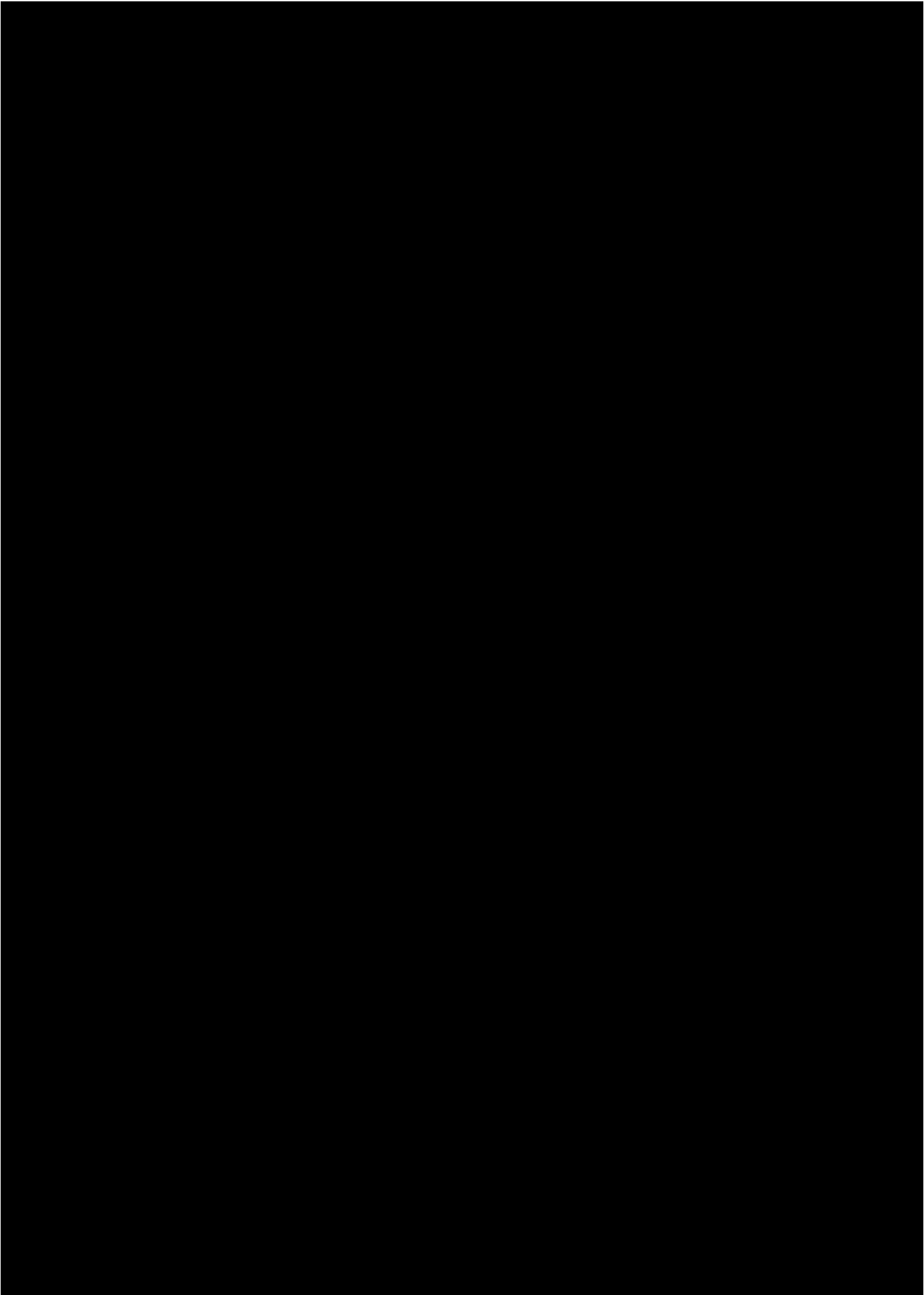


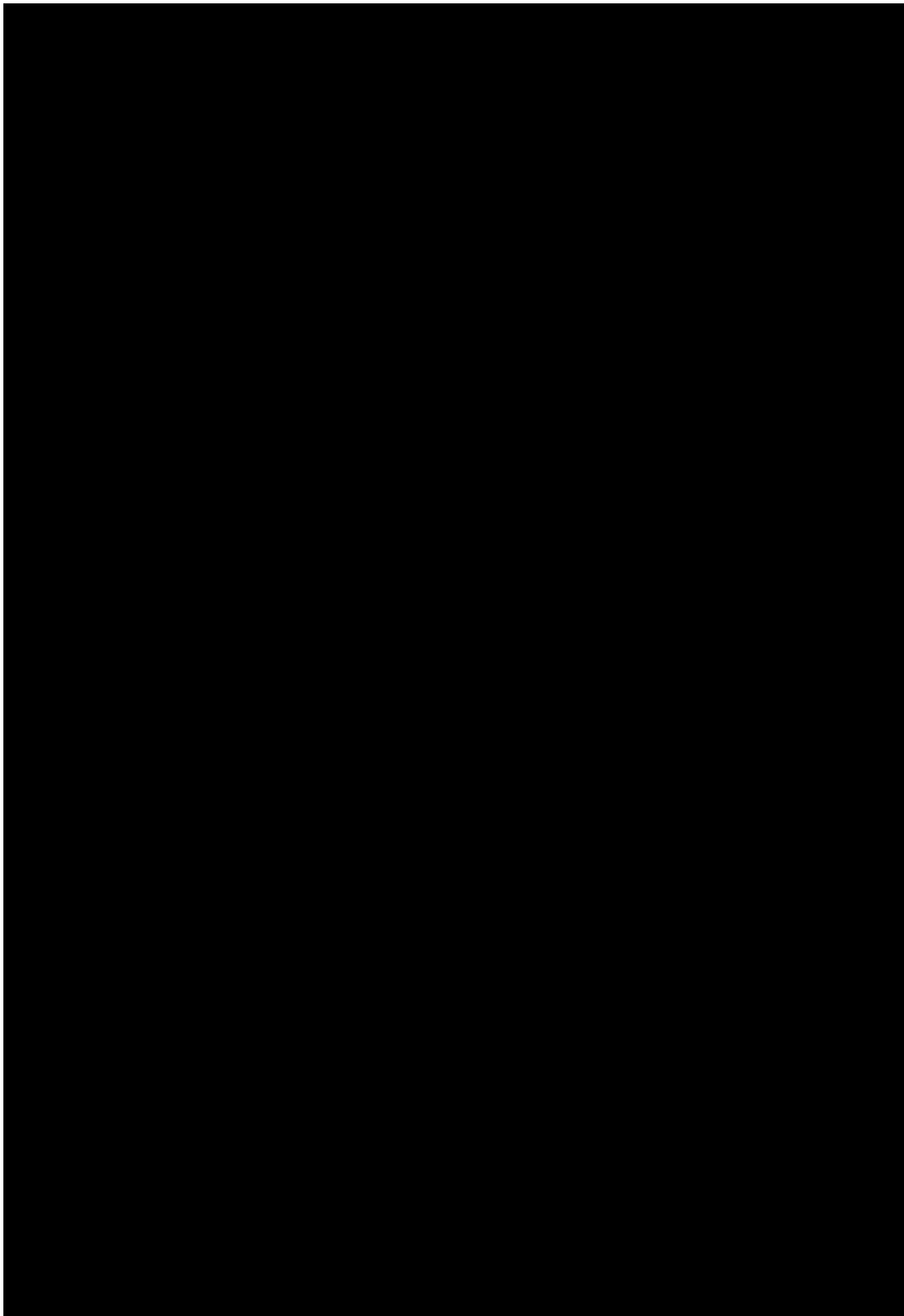


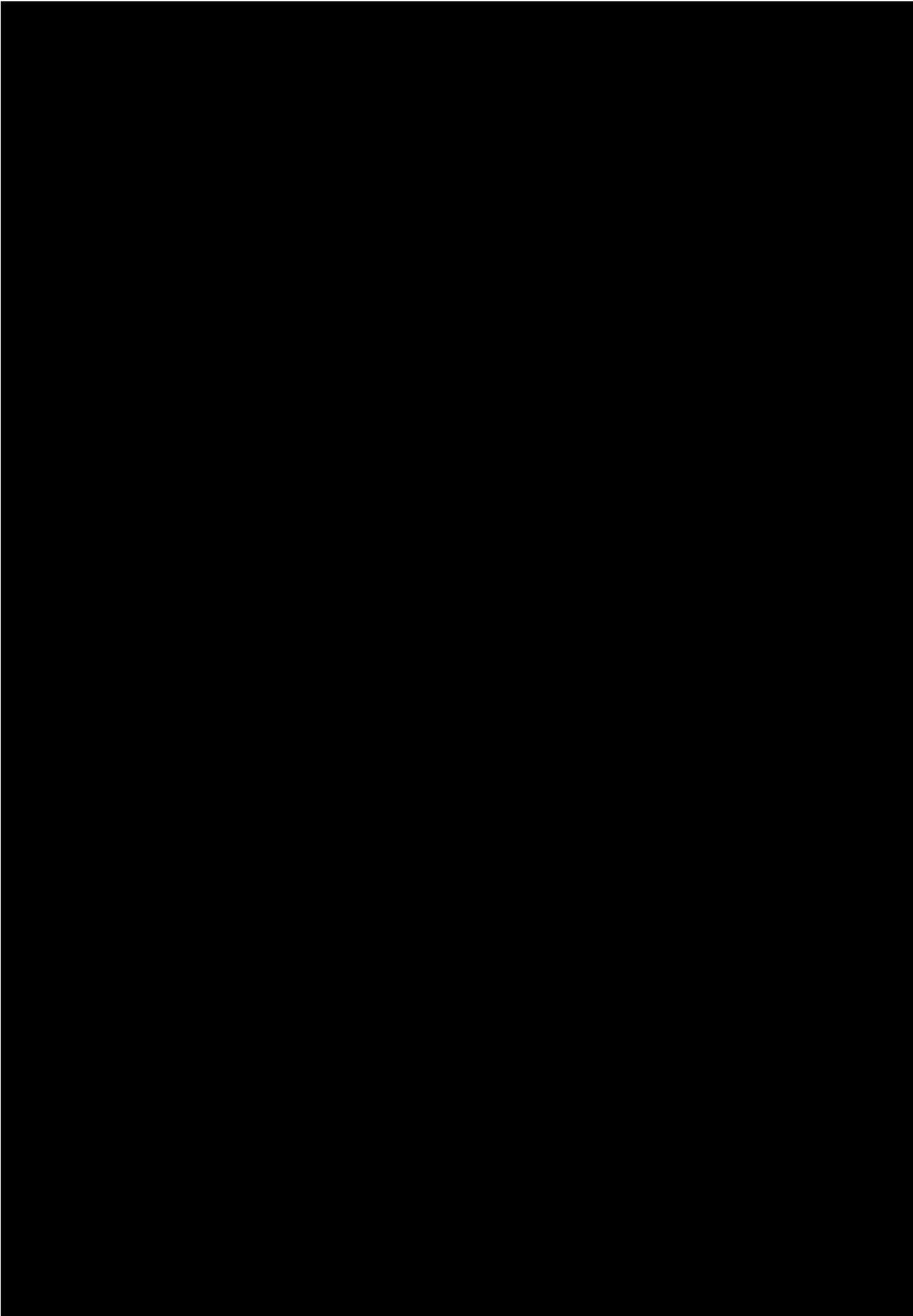


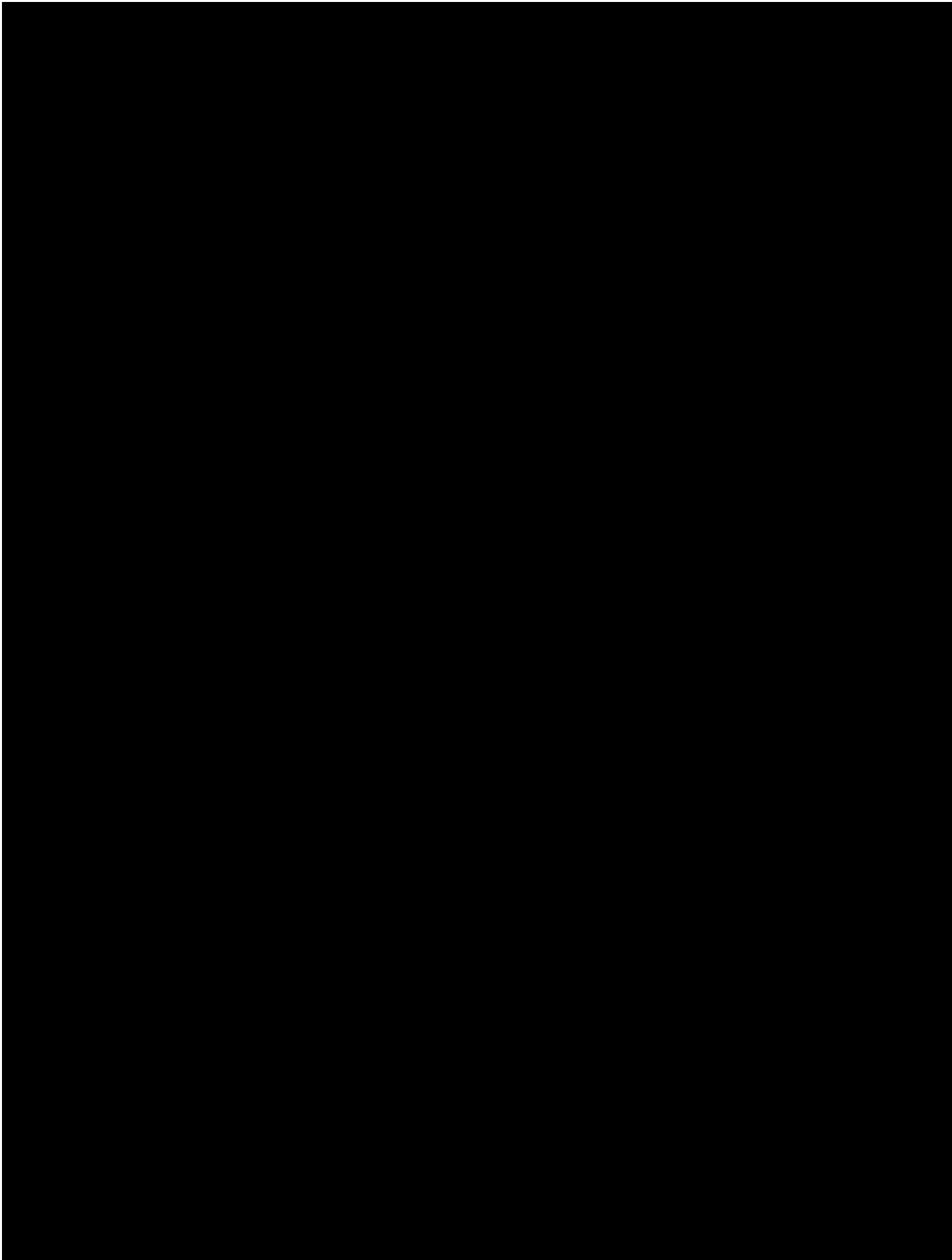


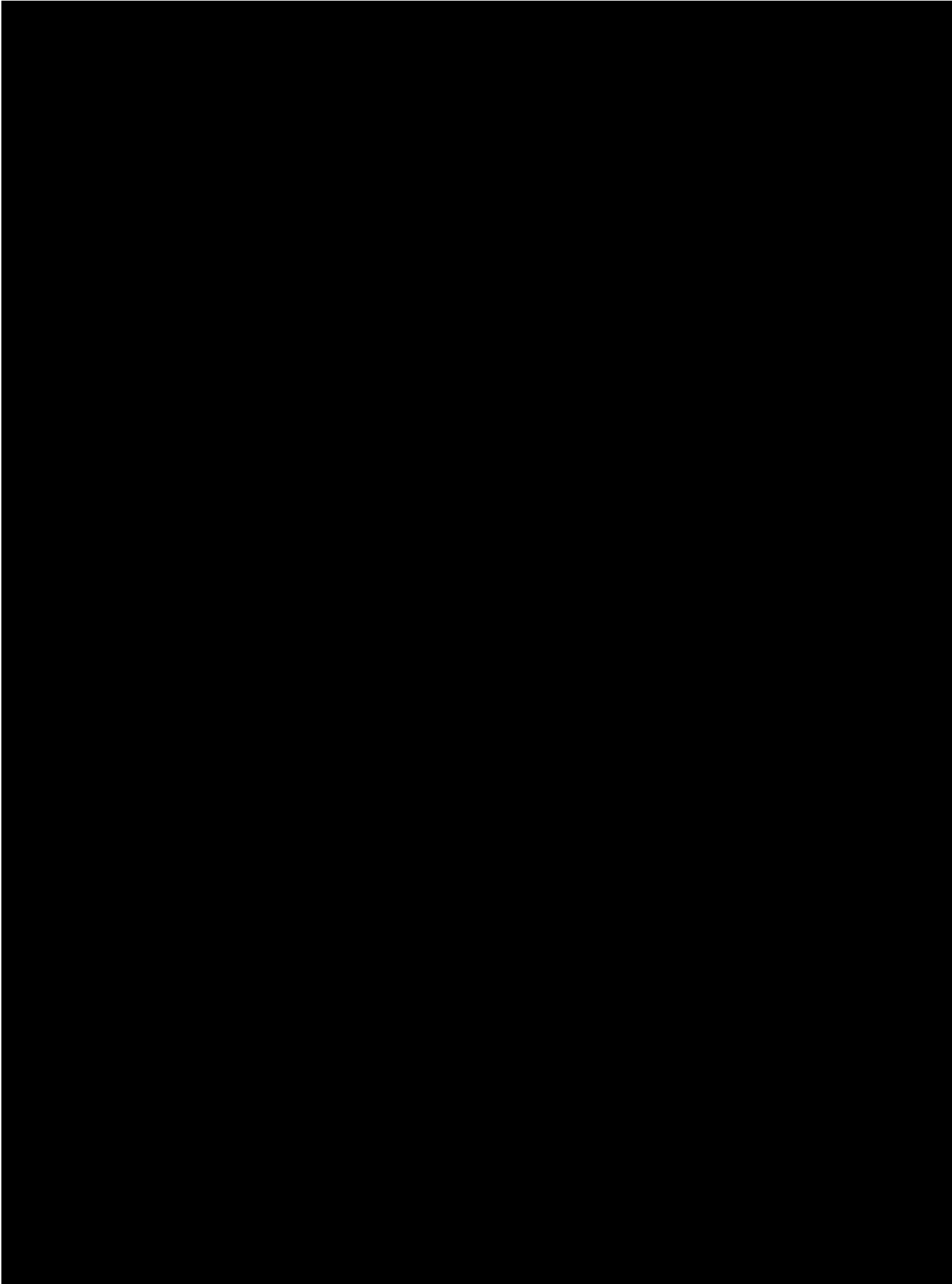


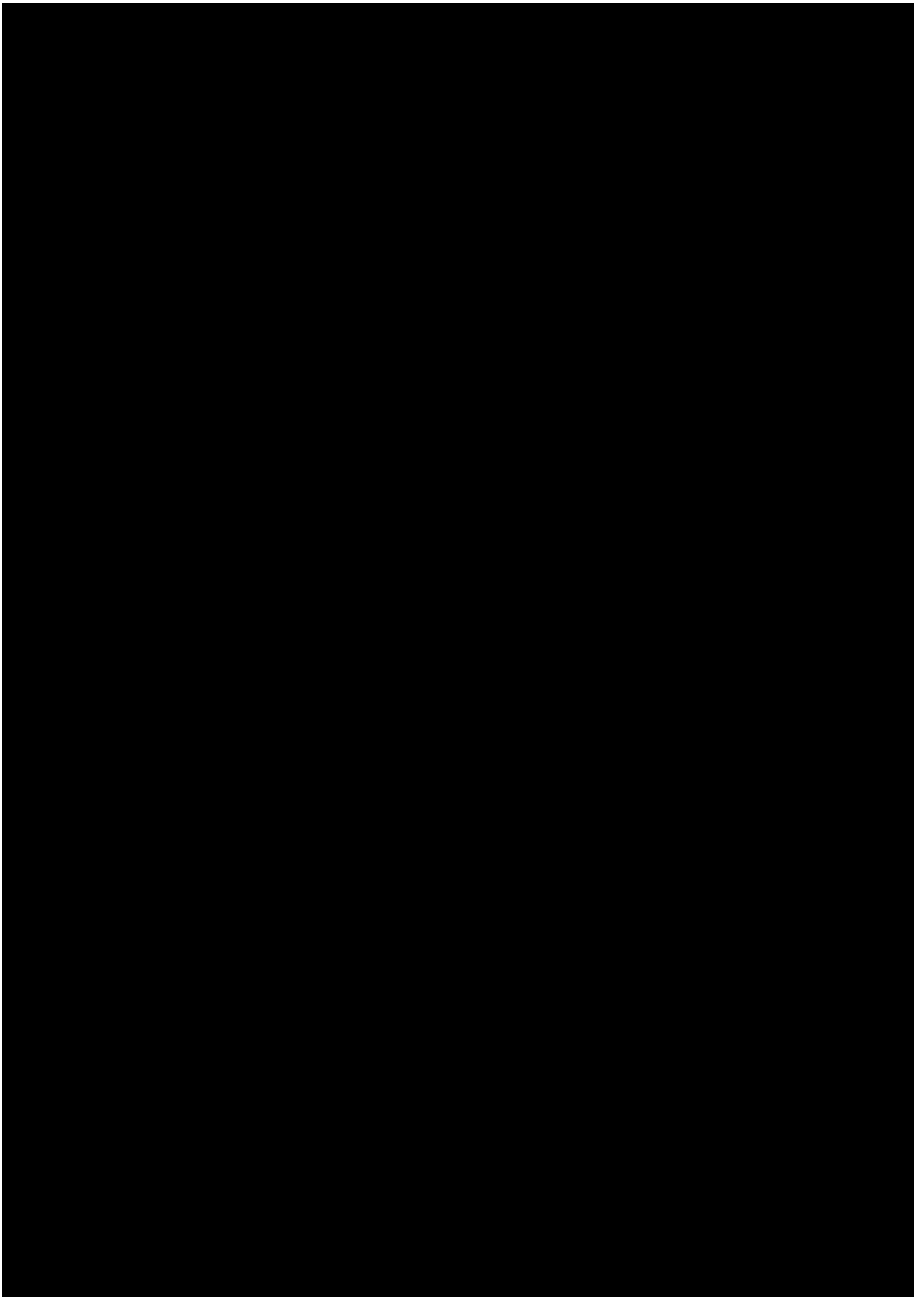




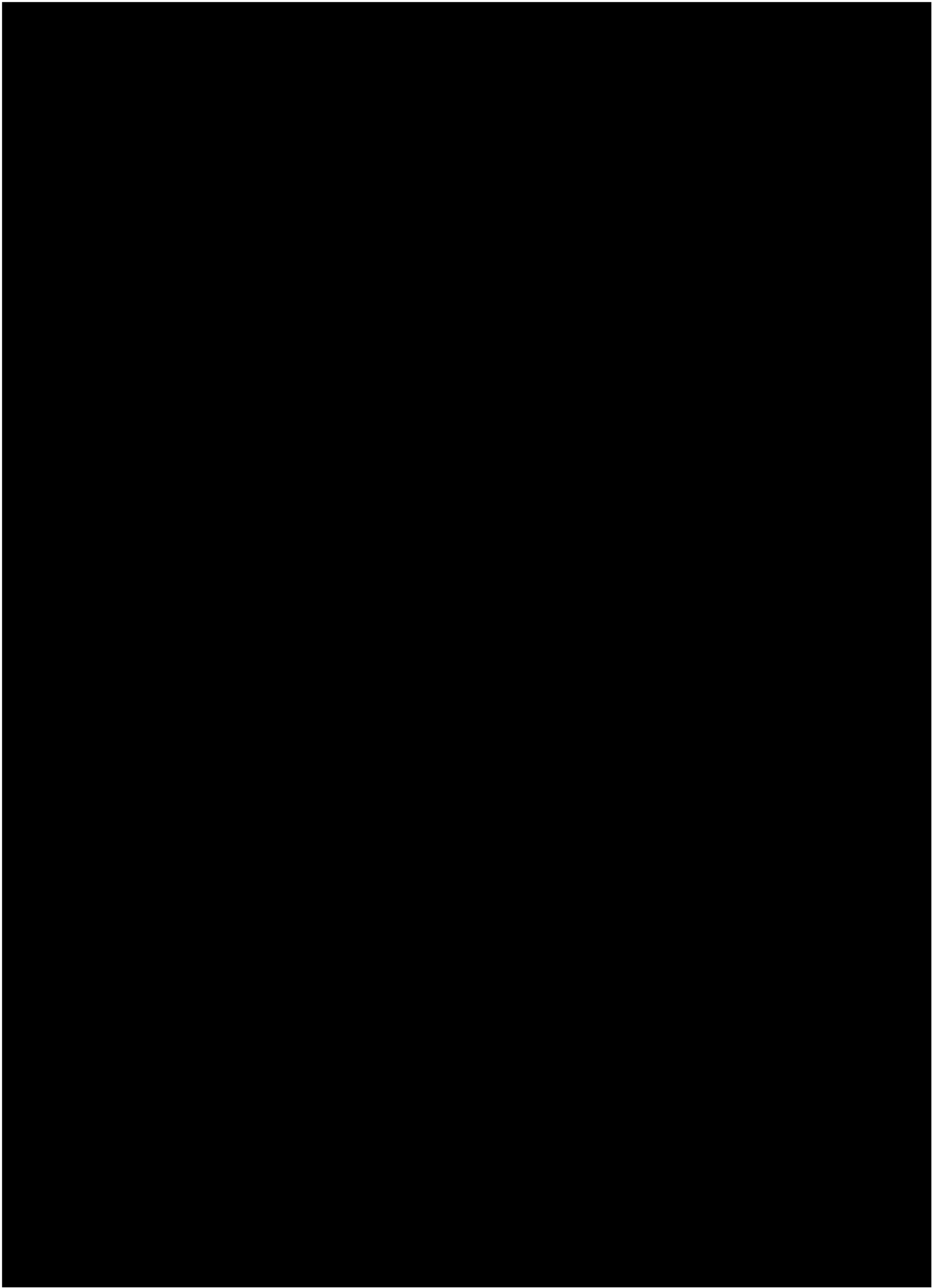




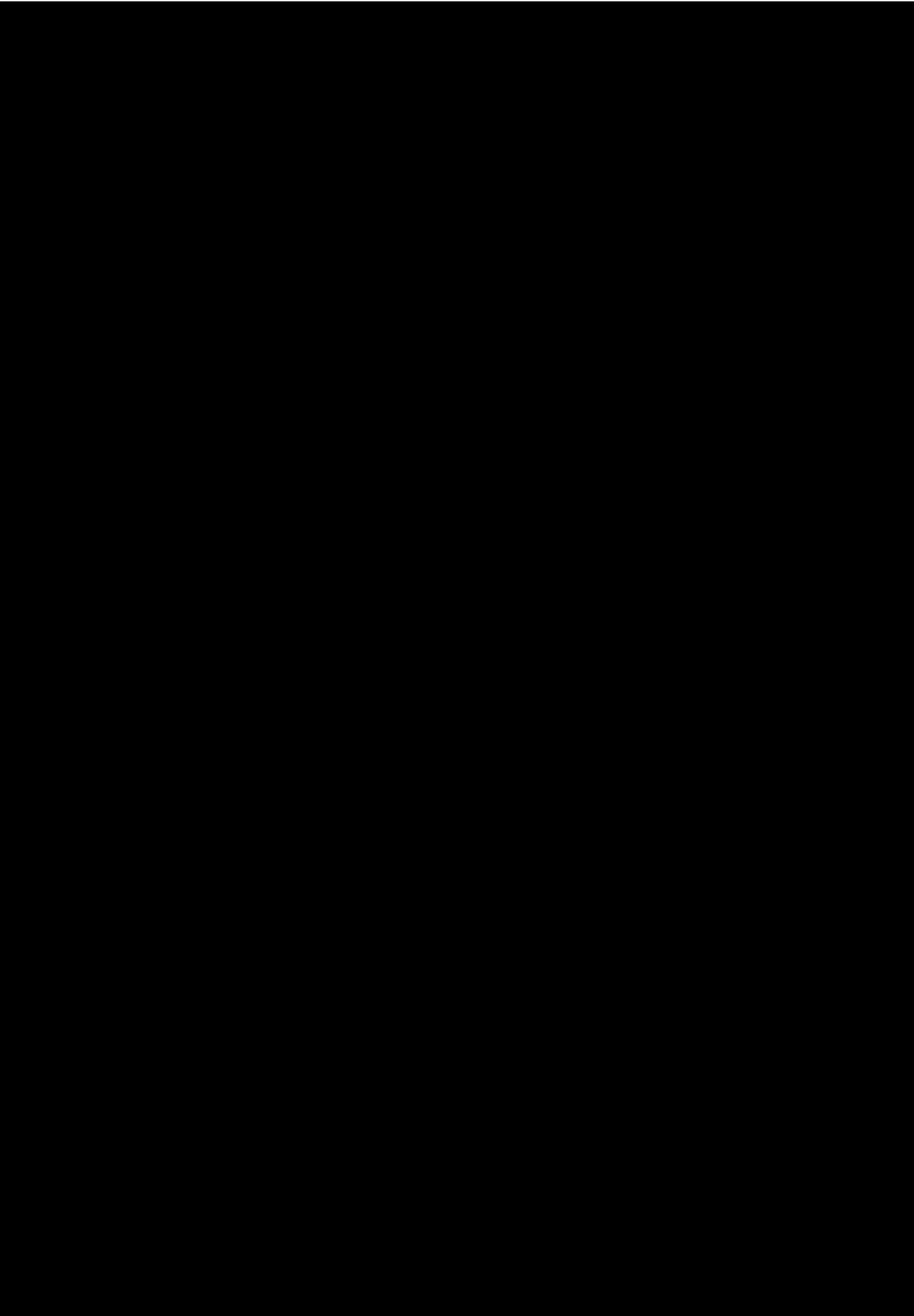


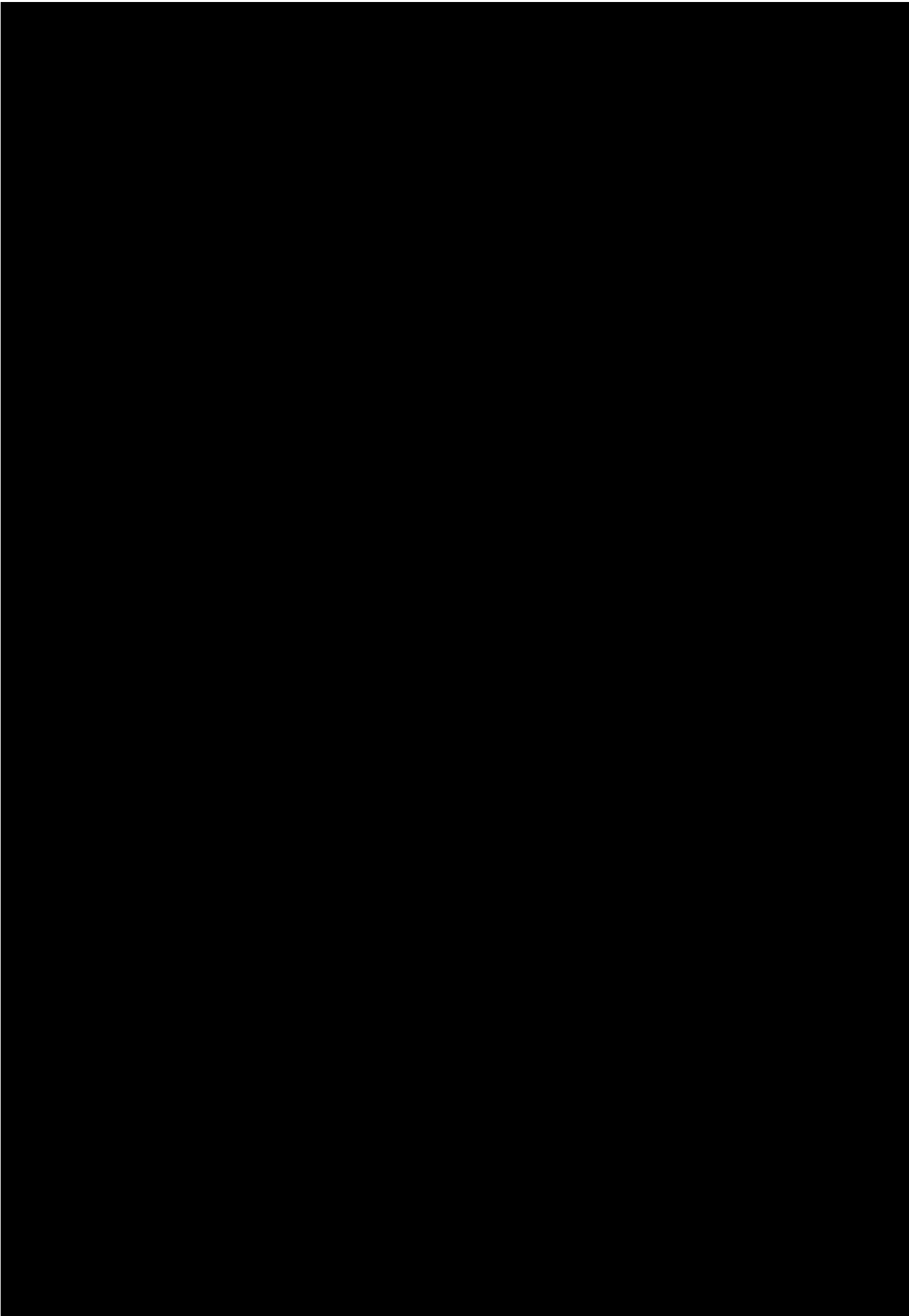


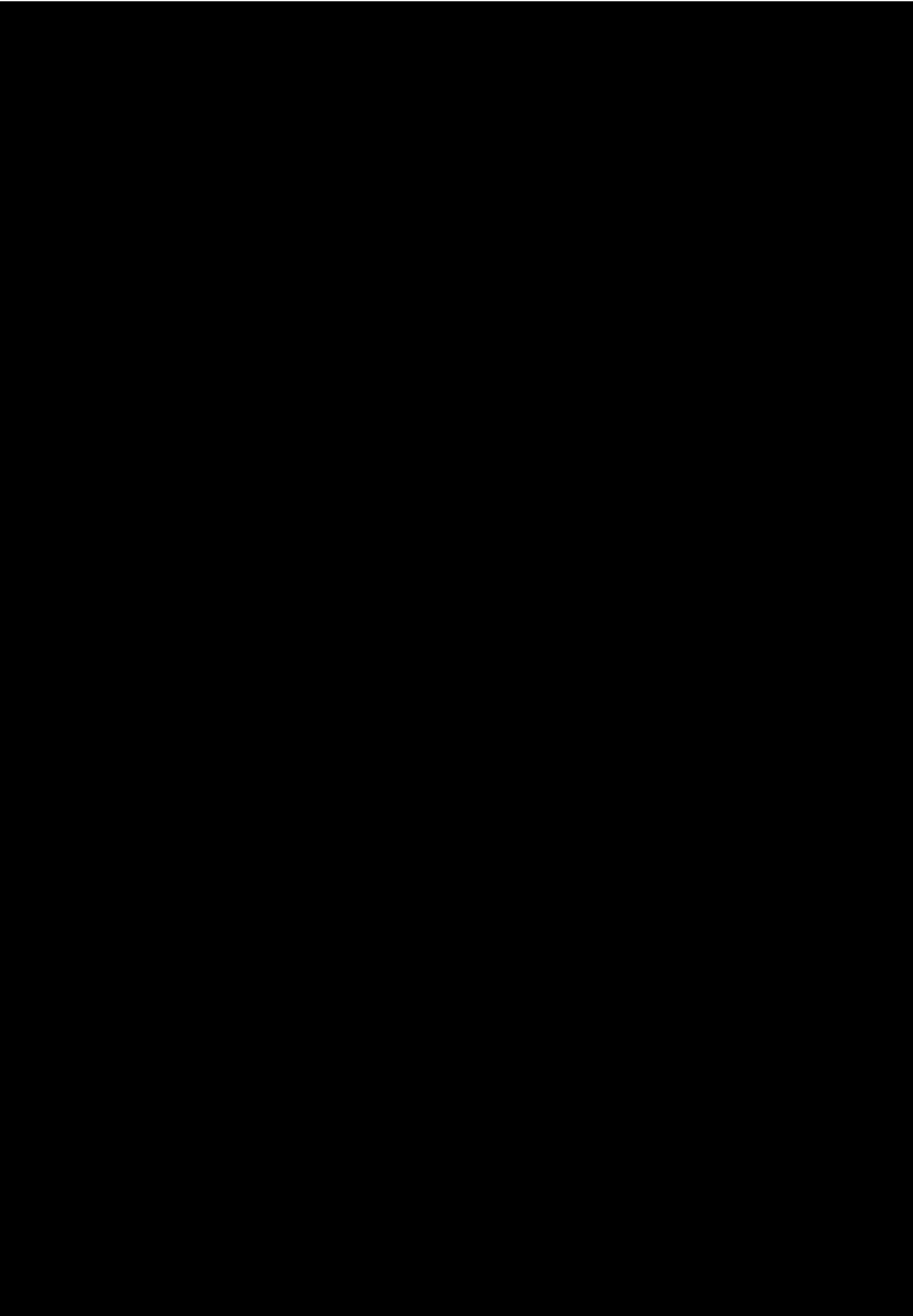


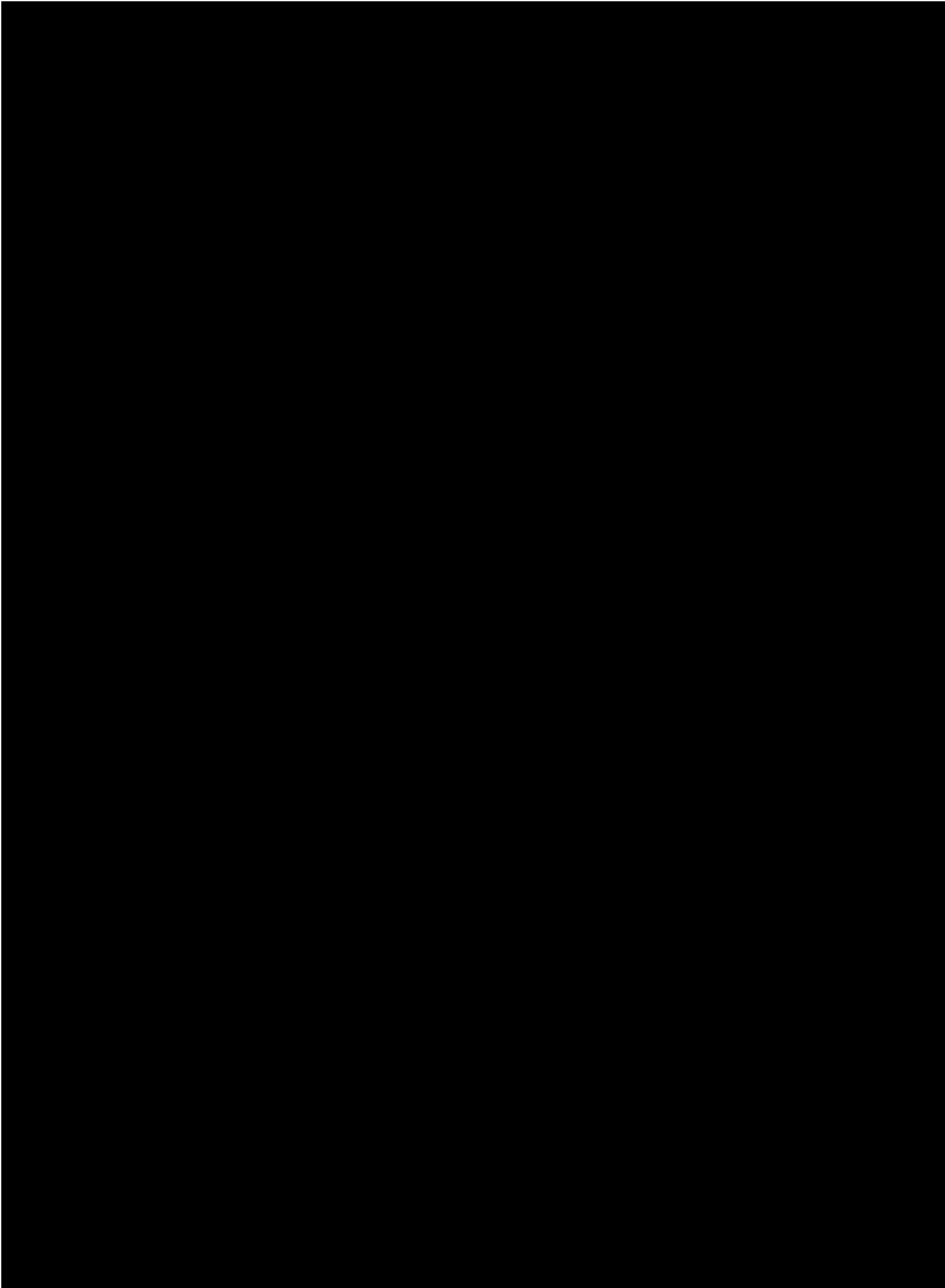




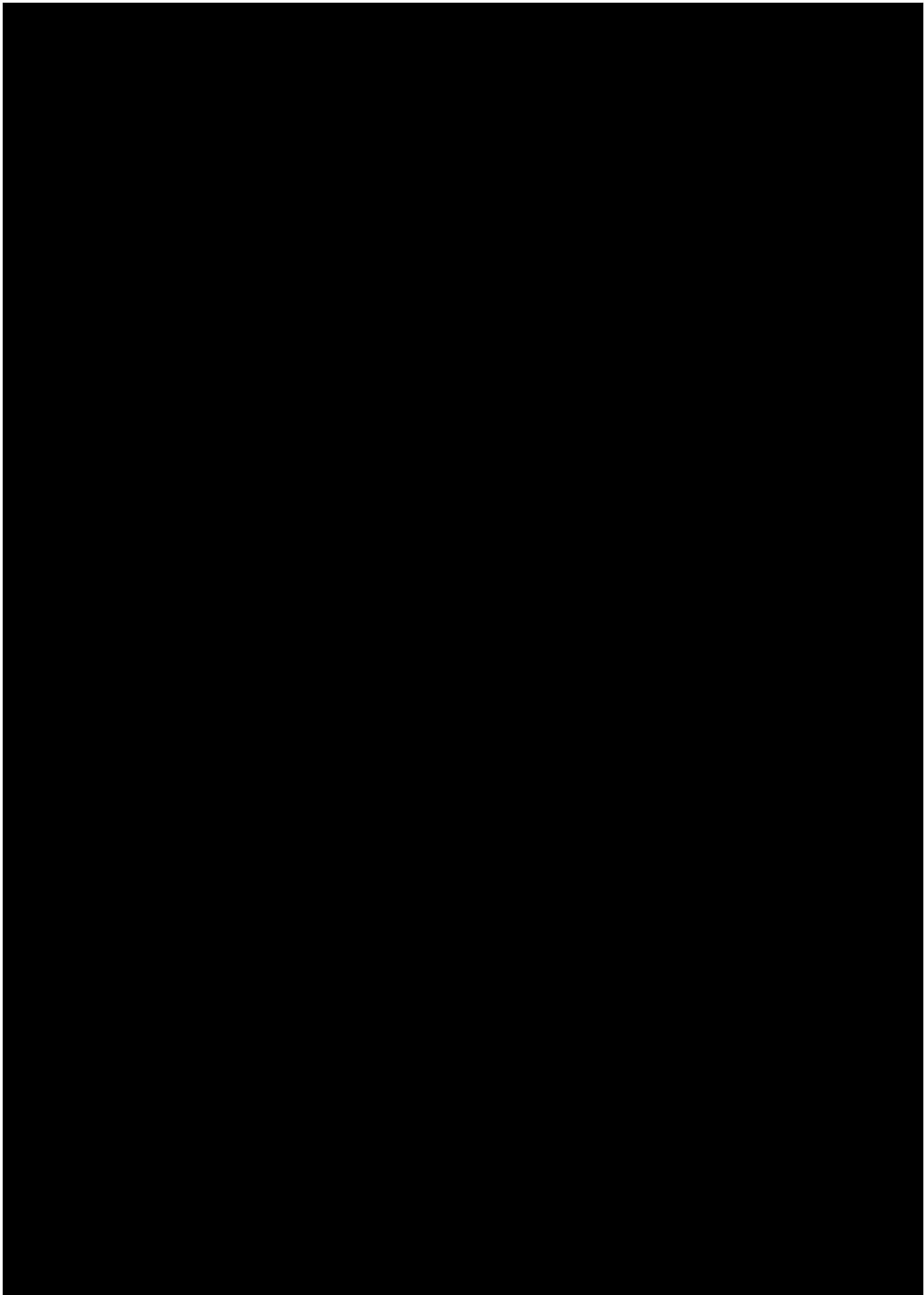


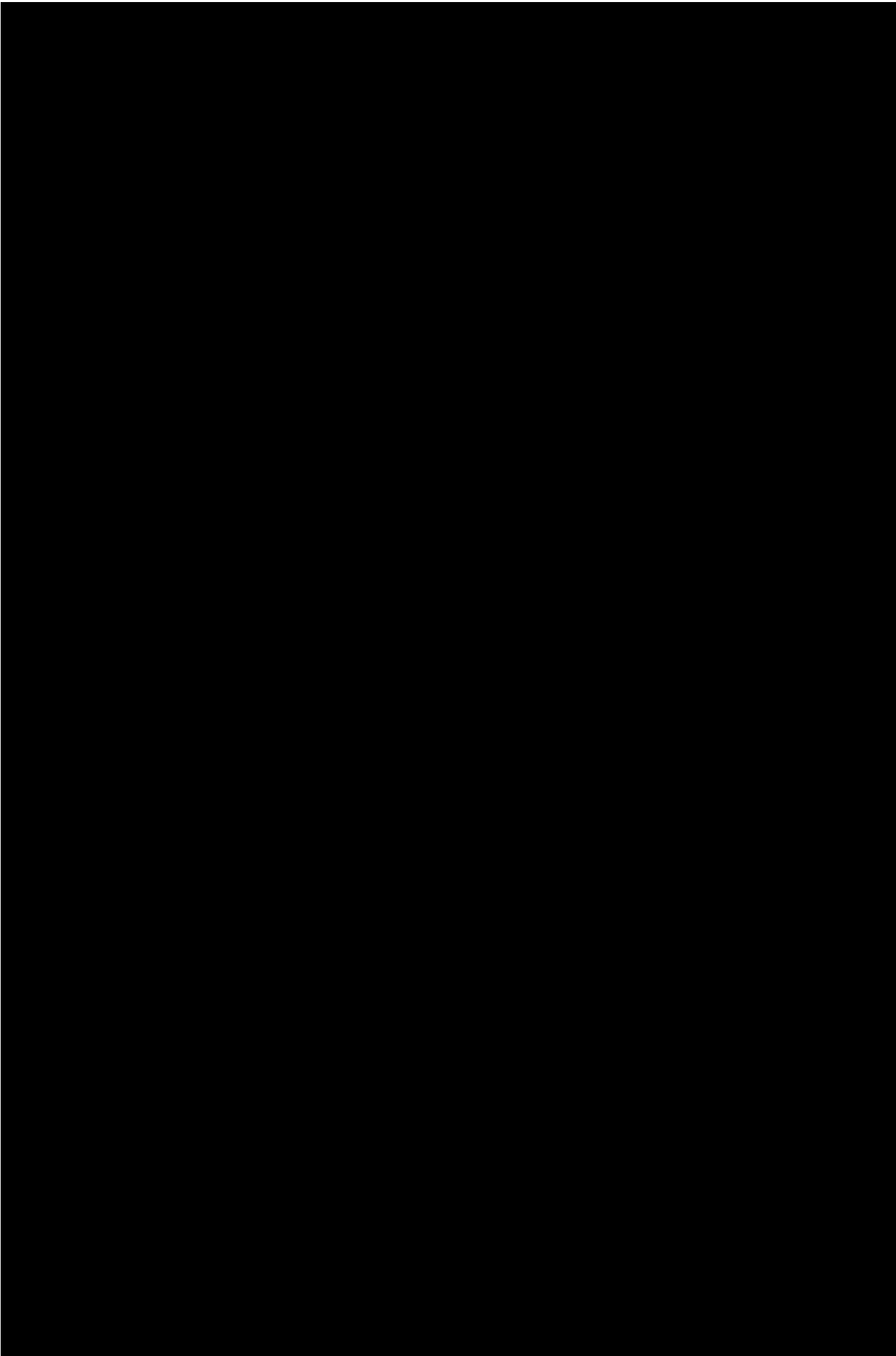


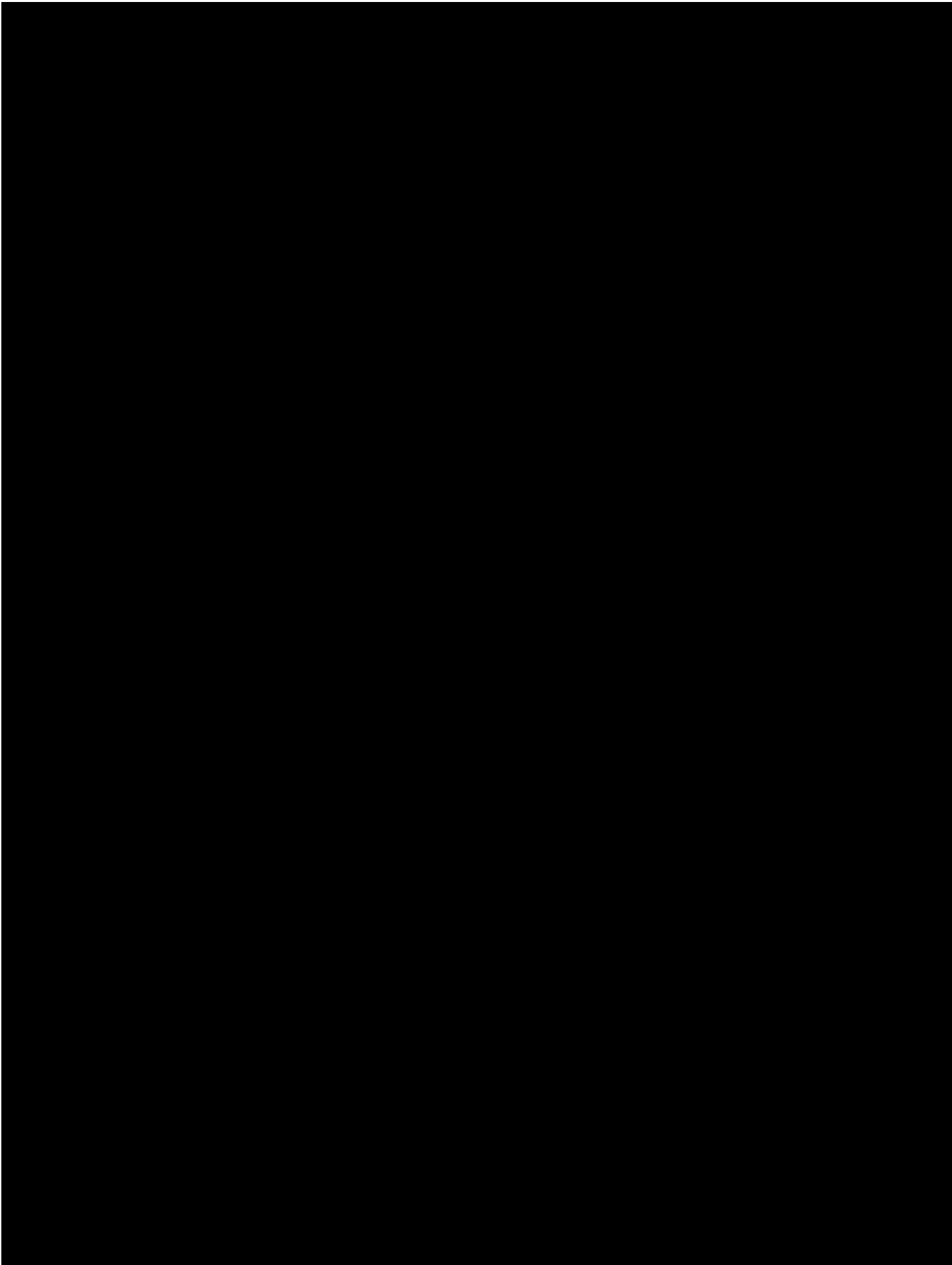




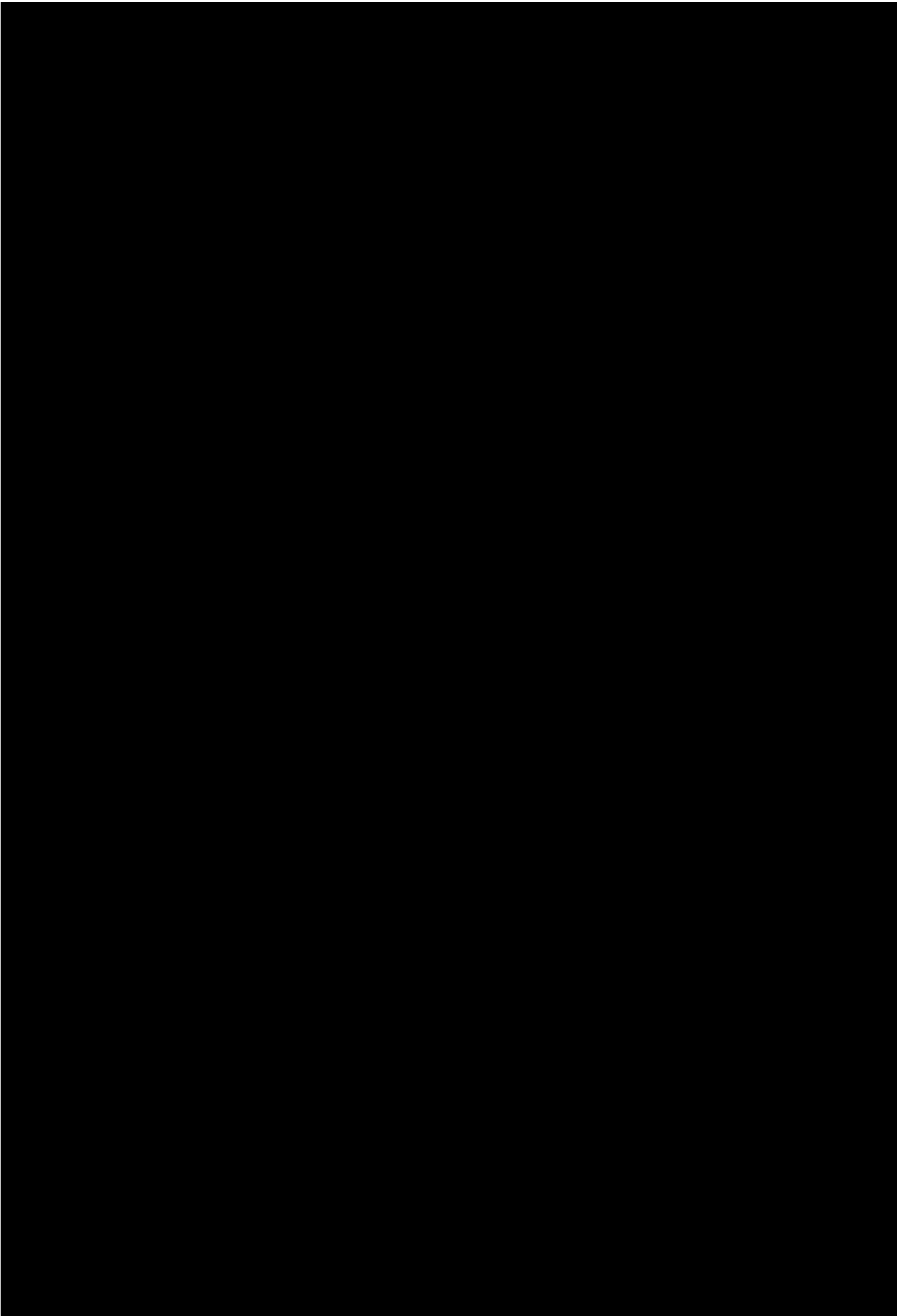


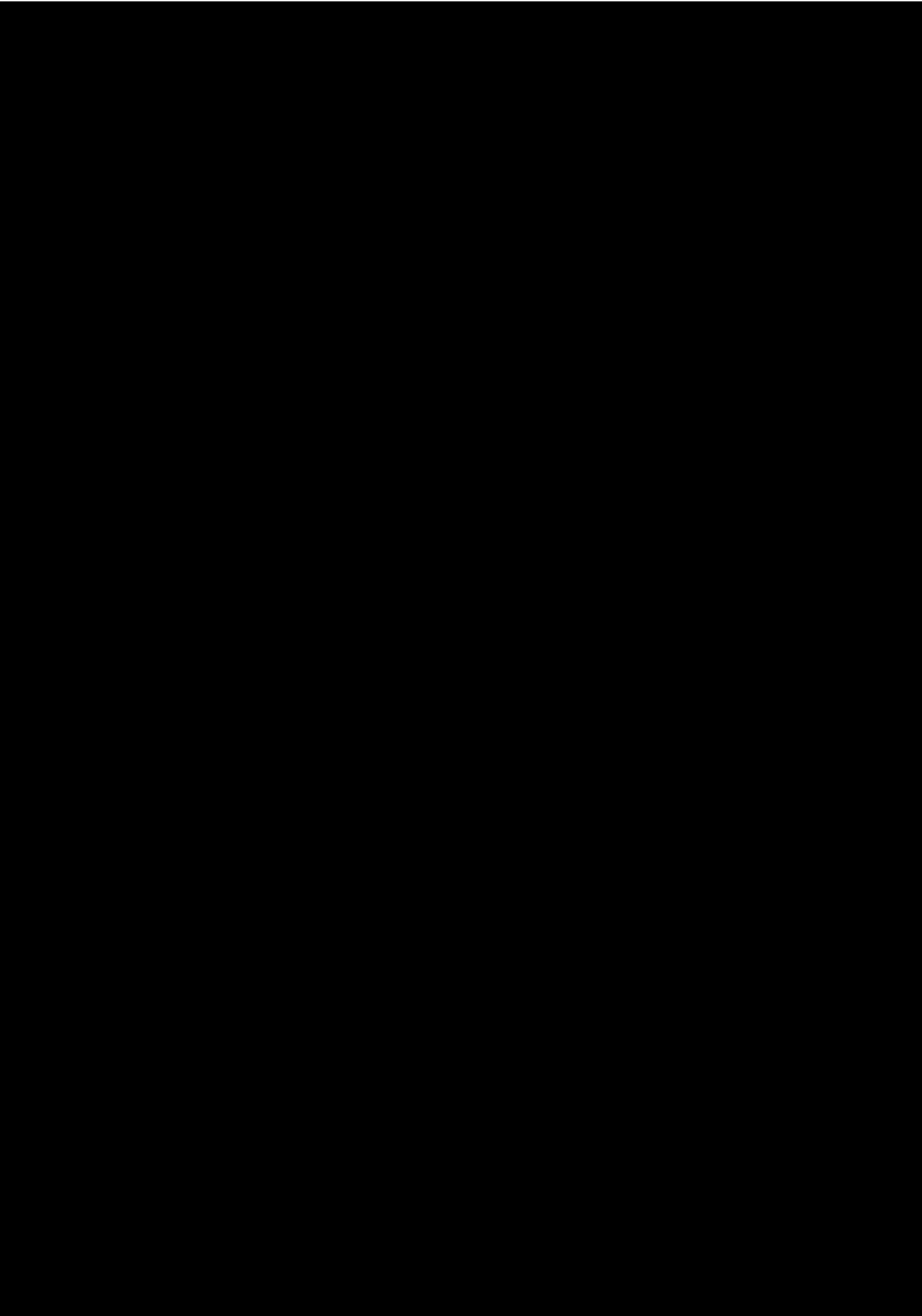


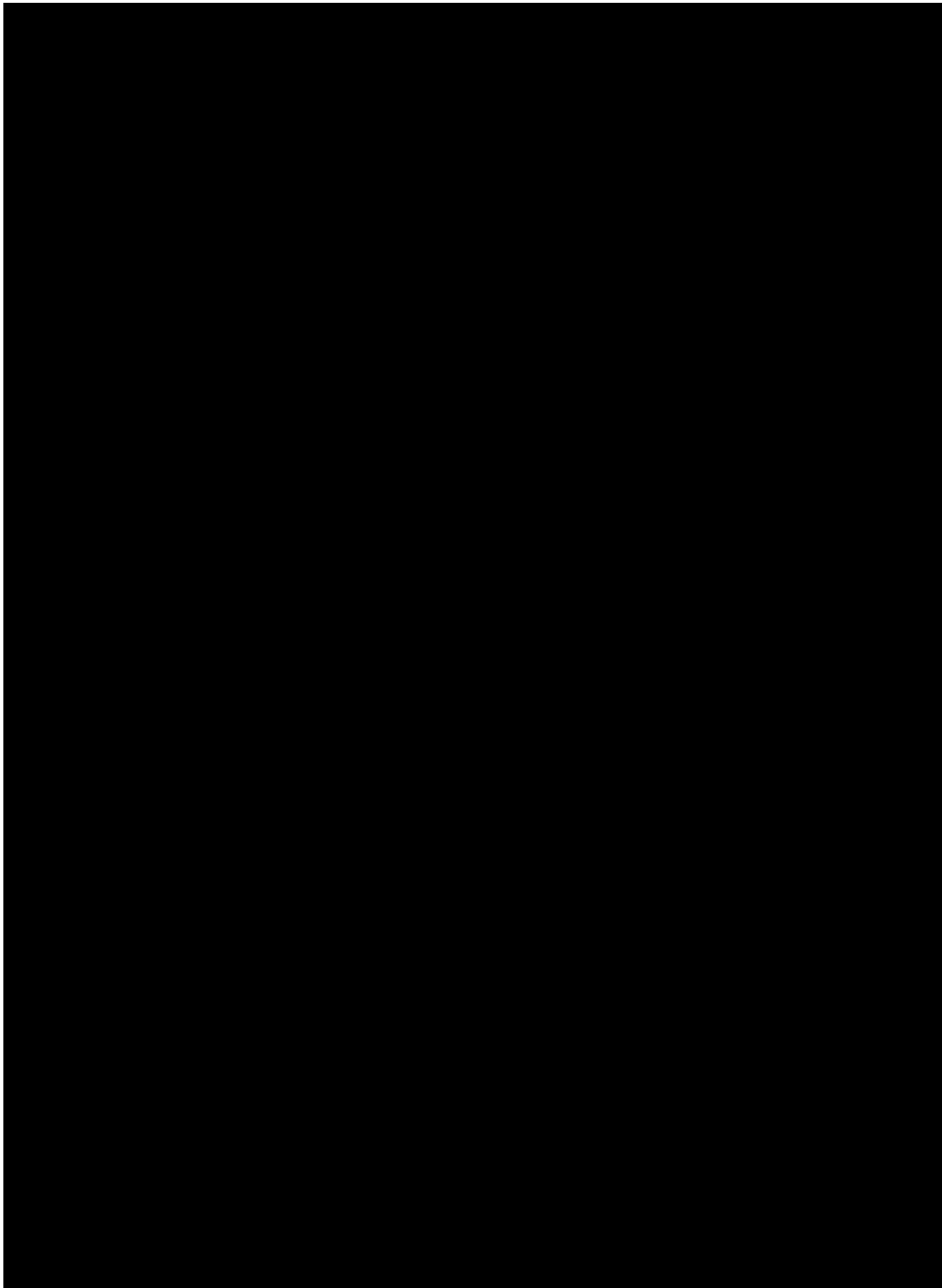




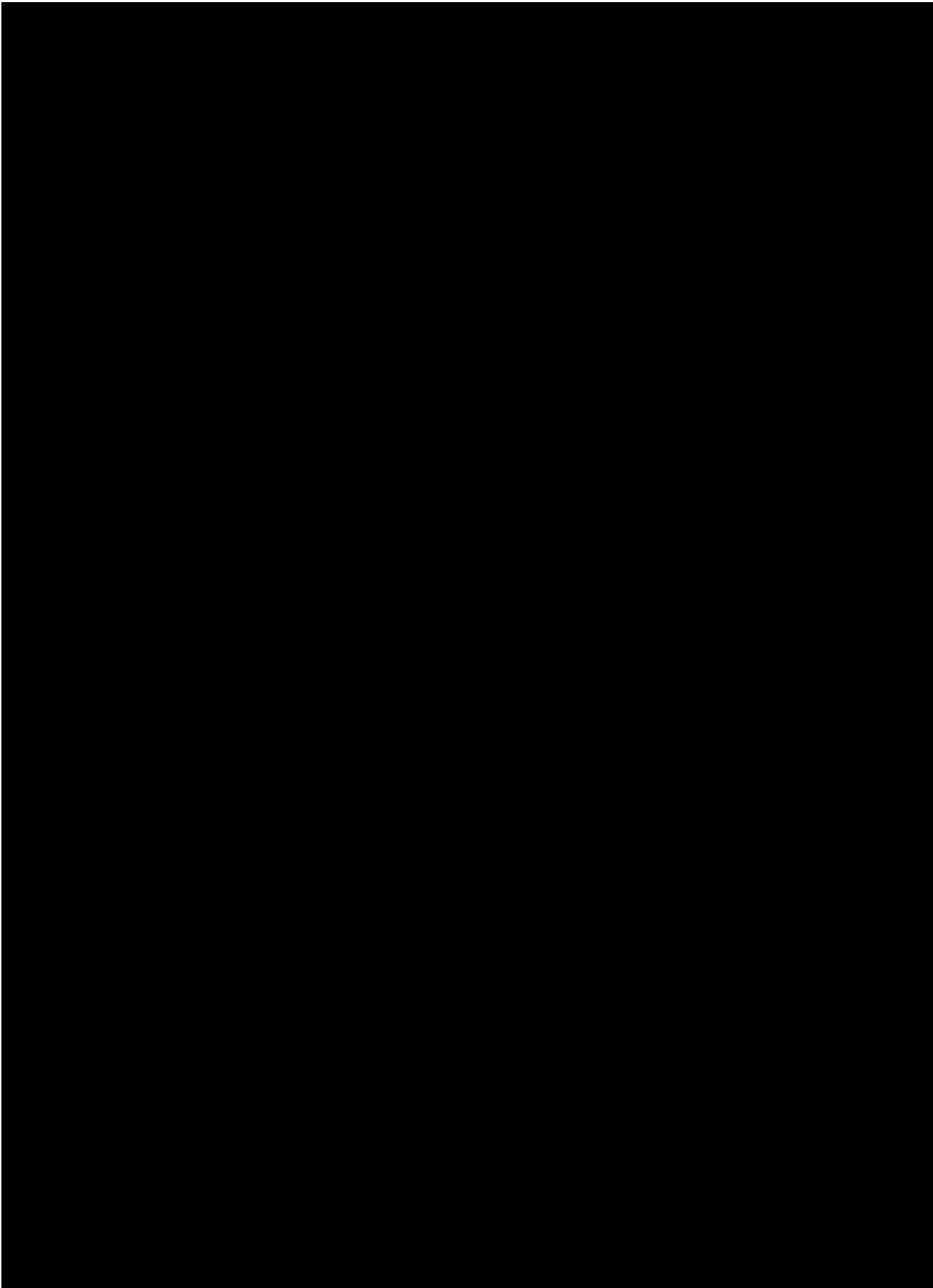




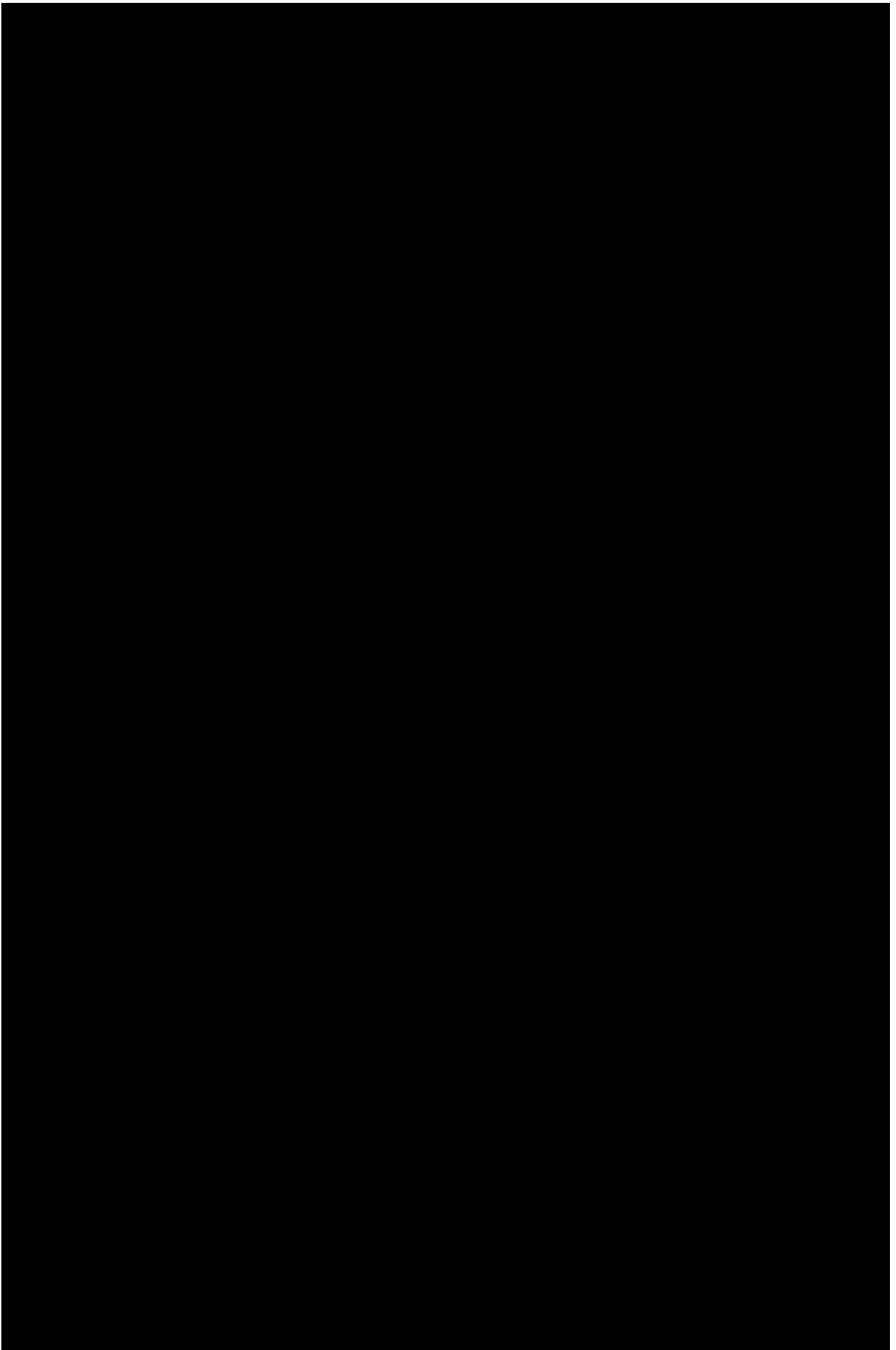


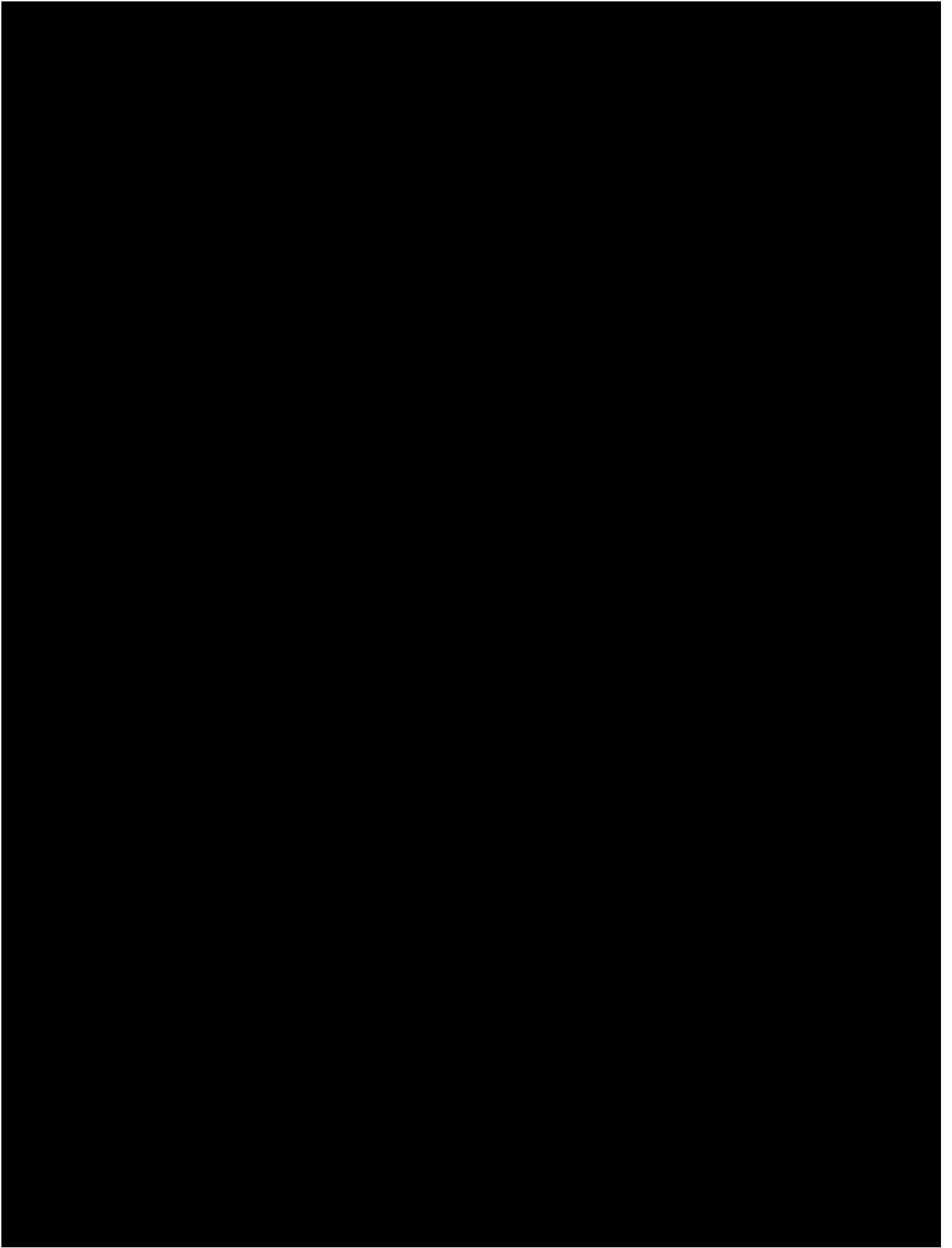






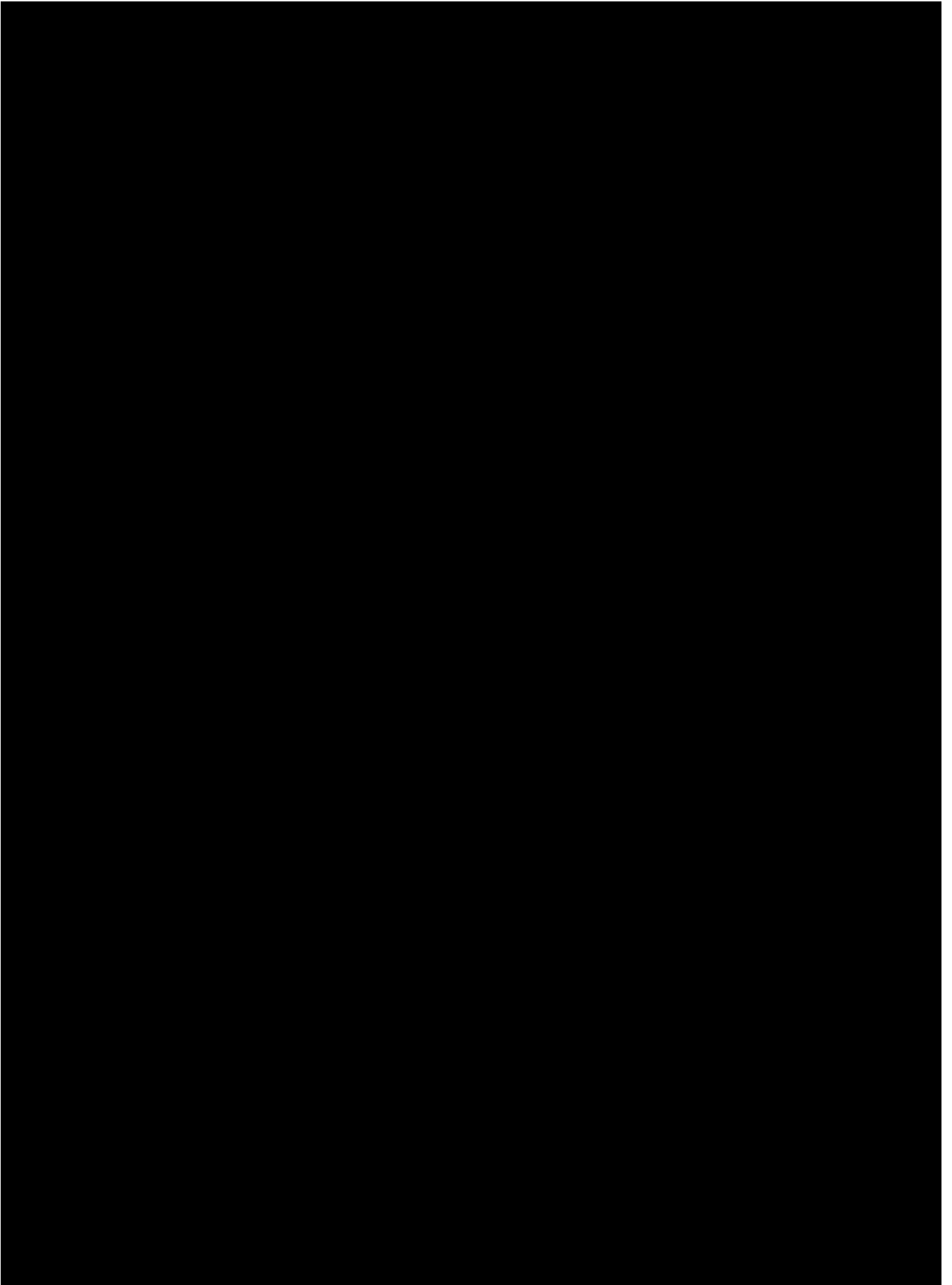


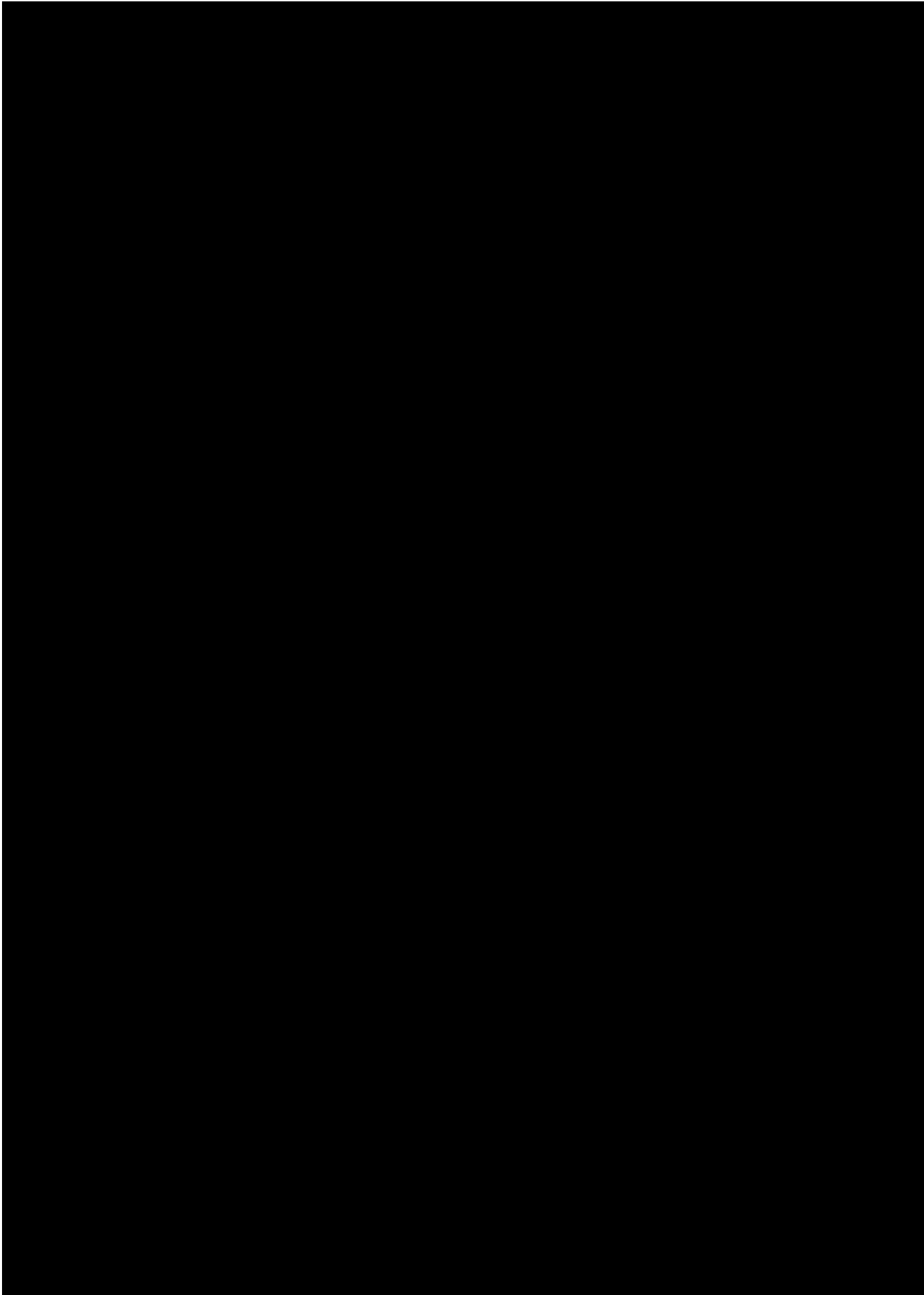


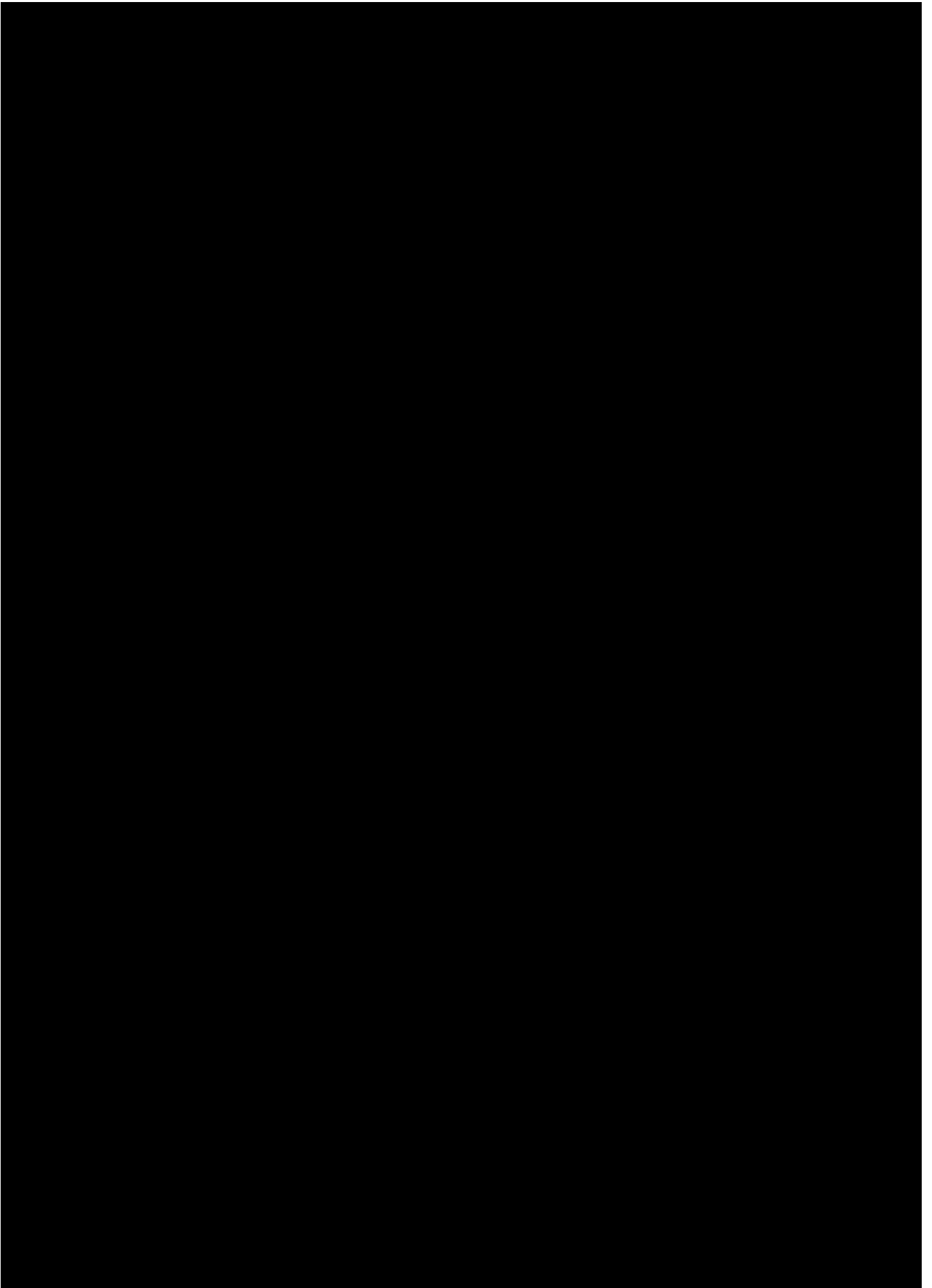


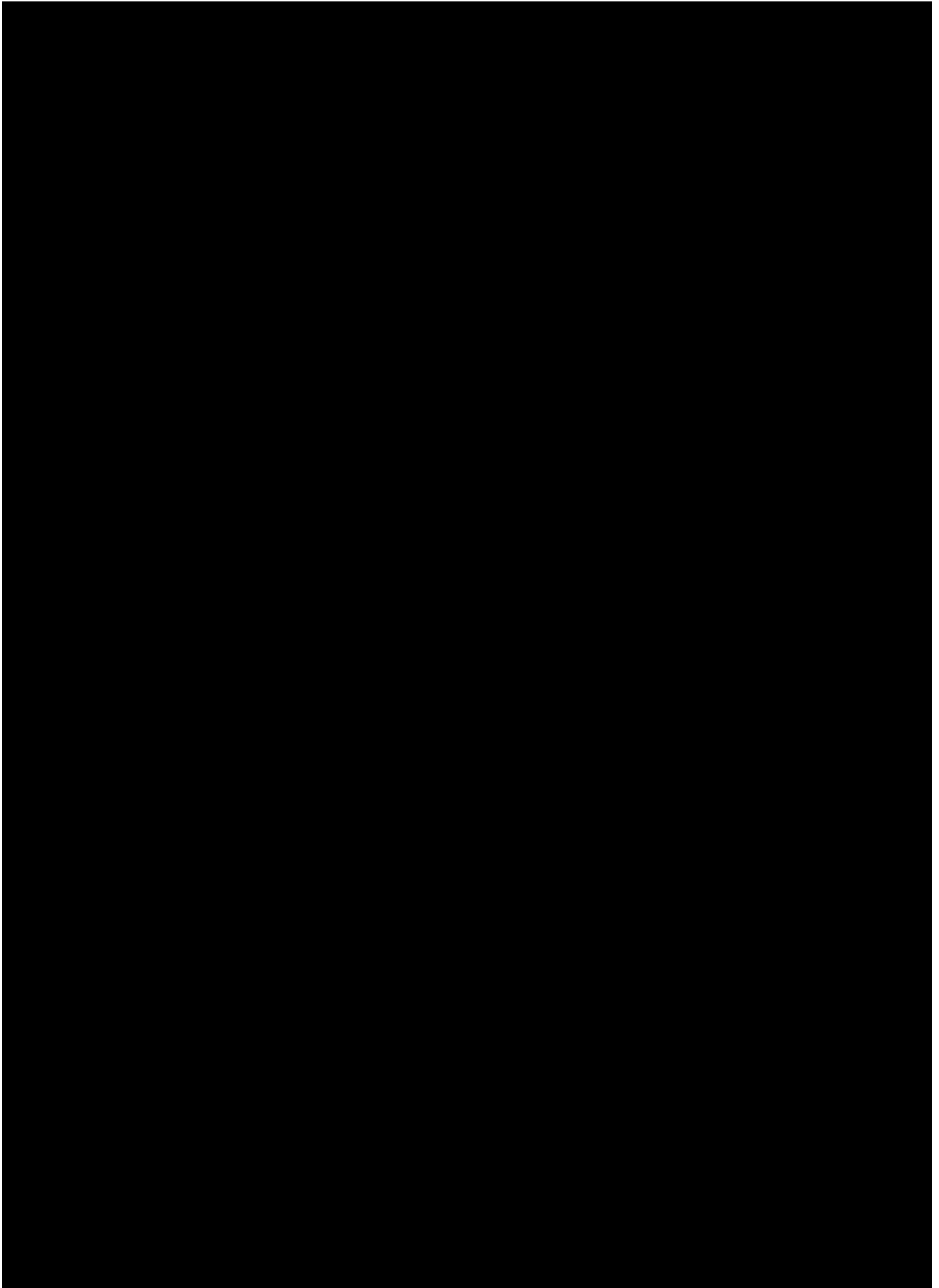


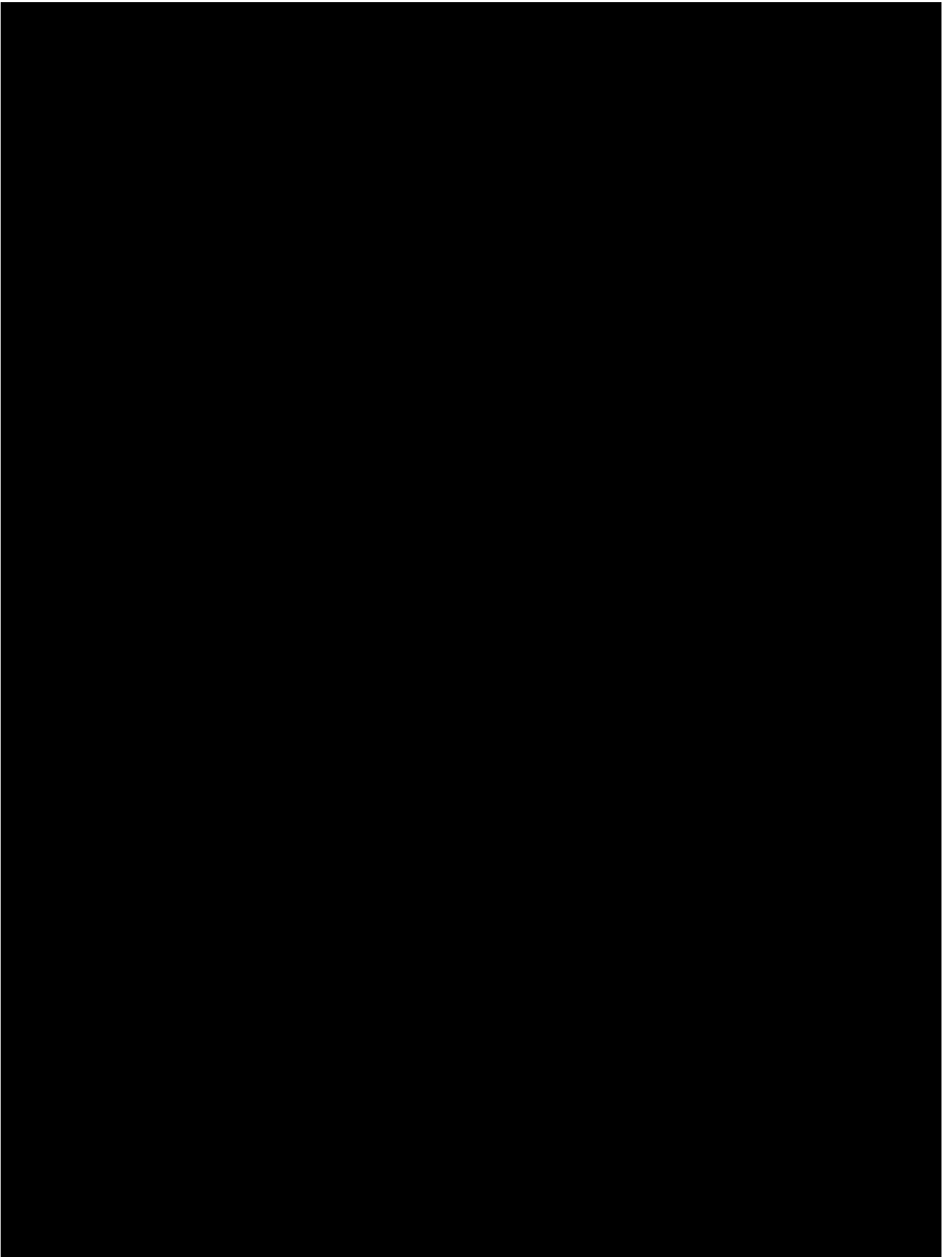


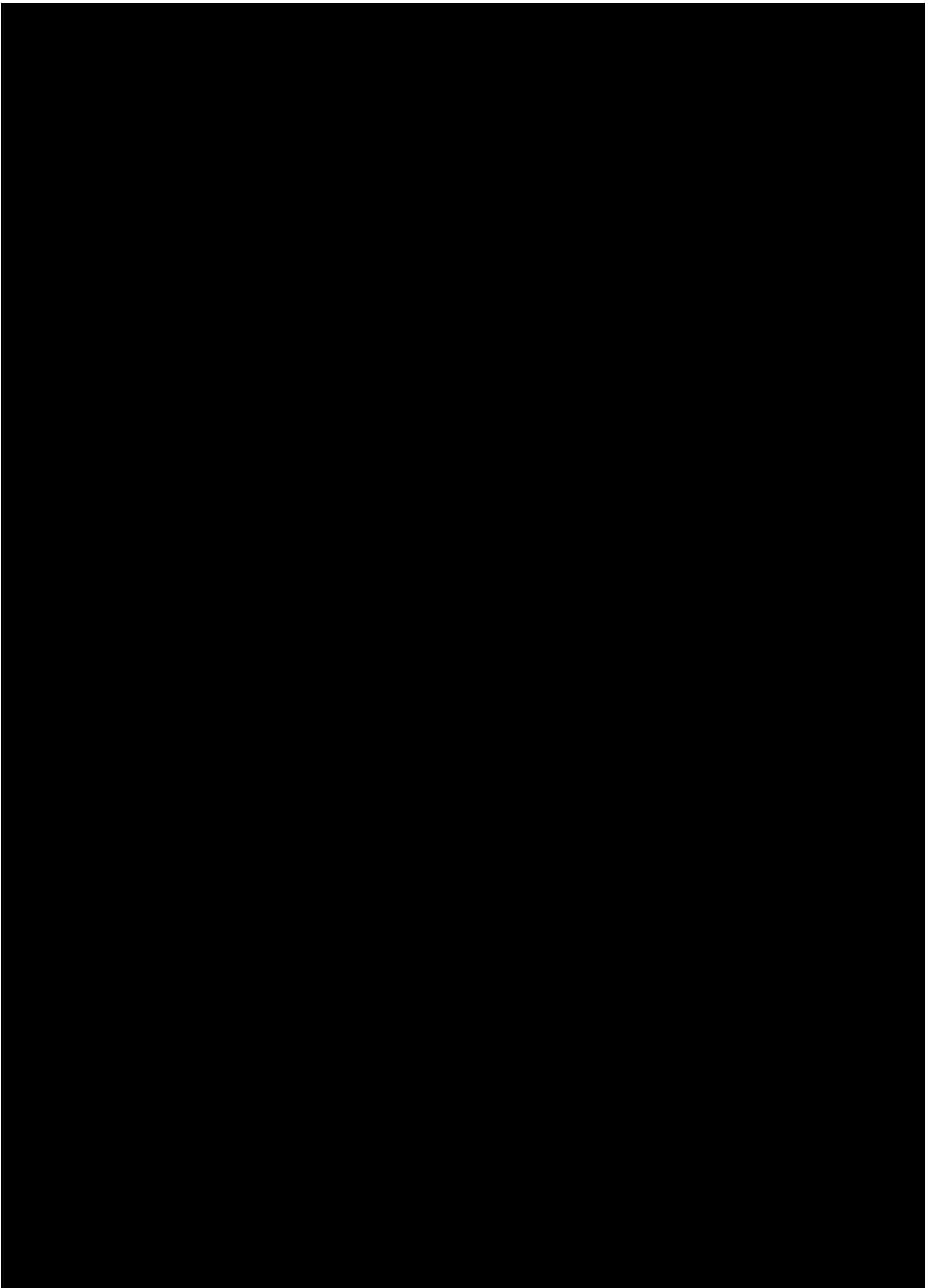


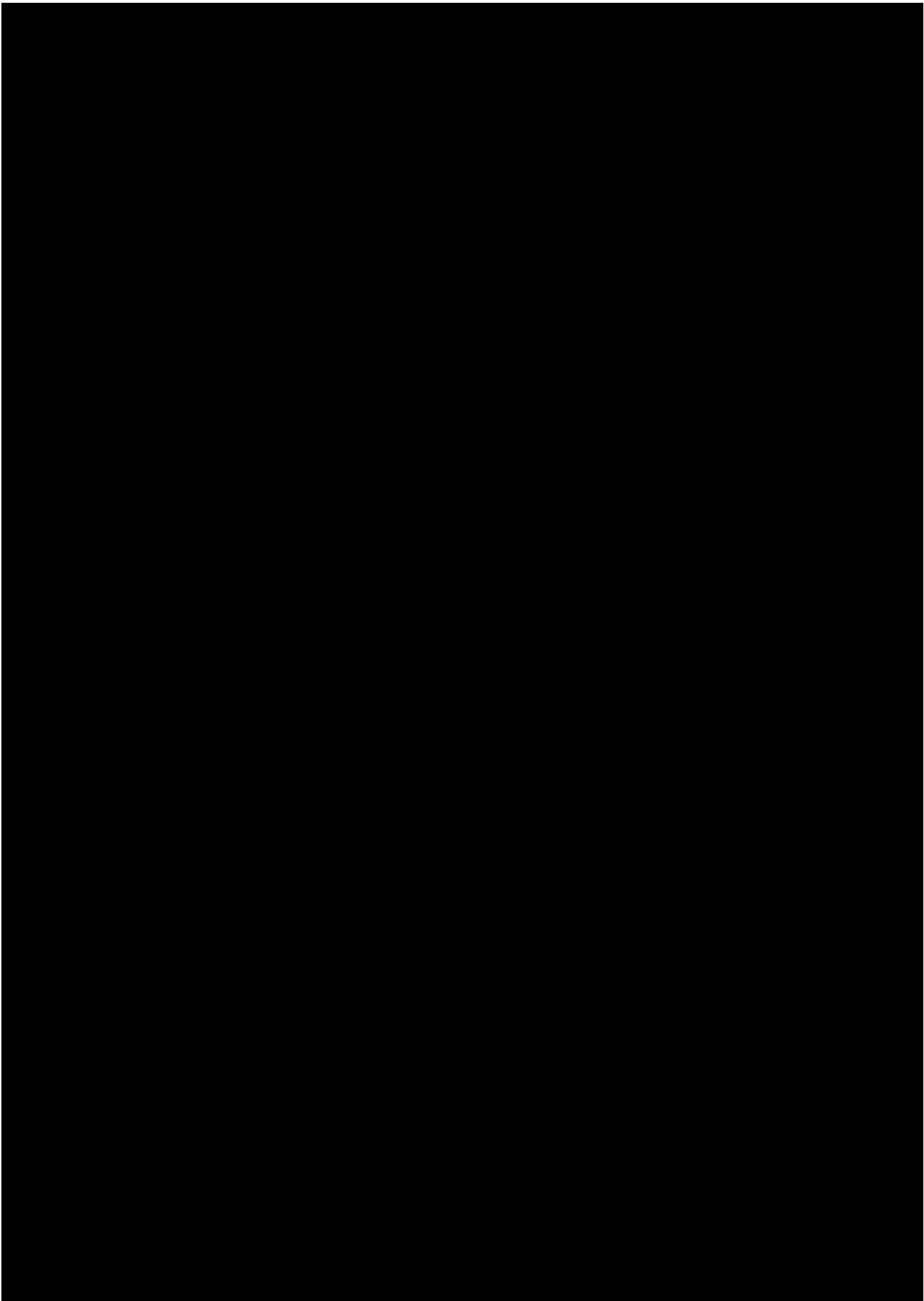




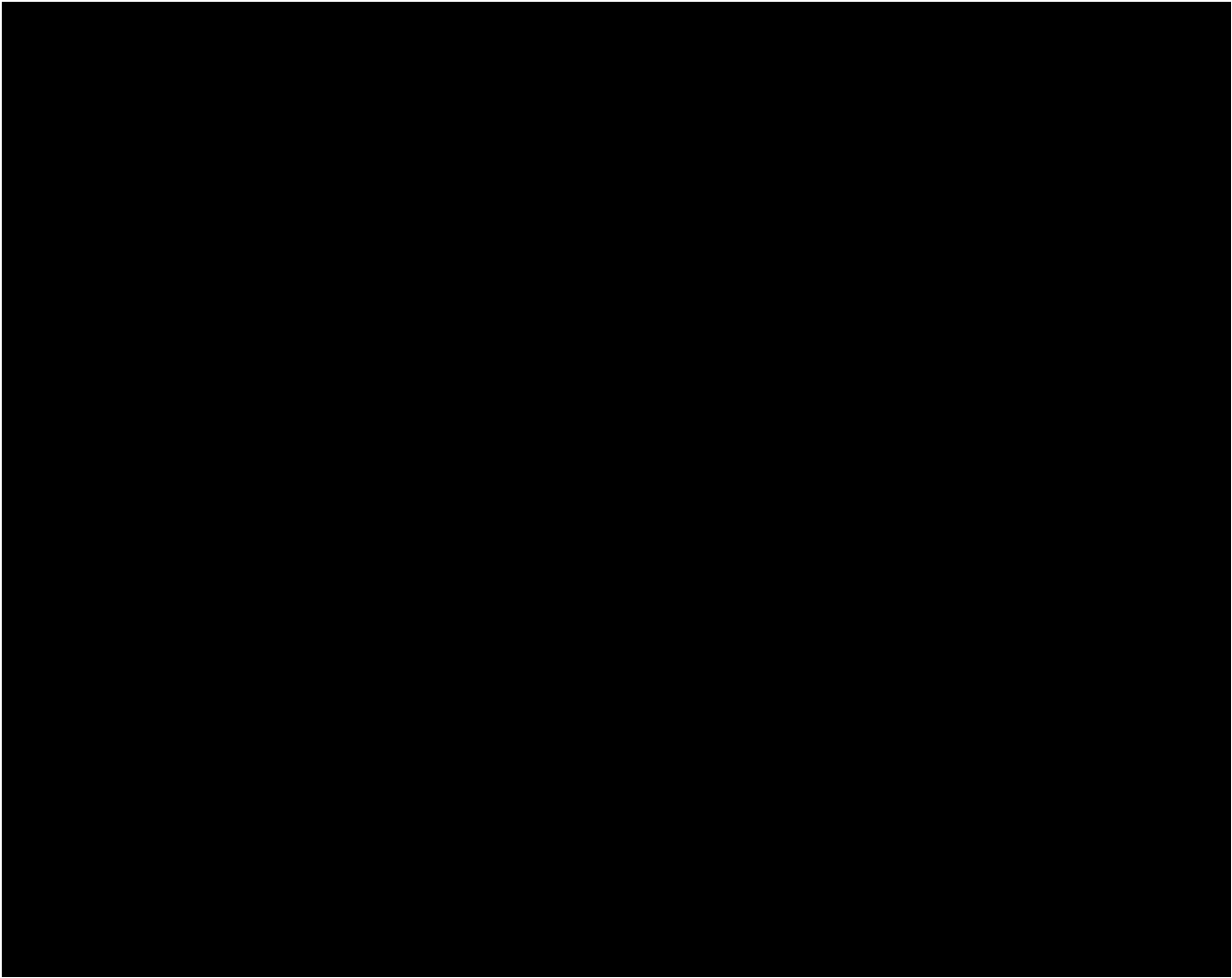












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protection reasons**

**THE CORE CONDITIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF  
SAMENESS  
(CLINICAL CASE STUDY)**

DAYNA ANGEL WILSON

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN COUNSELLING  
PSYCHOLOGY

CITY UNIVERSITY, LONDON

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

DECEMBER 2019

