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Comparison of two groups of adoptive parents in successful and unsuccessful legal adoptions

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Thesis

COMPARISON OF TWO GROUPS OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS
IN SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL LEGAL ADOPTIONS

Submitted by

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In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science in Social Service

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The object or focus of this study, which is primarily a descriptive one, is to compare like and unlike factors and qualities existing in two groups of legal adoptions, successful ones from Child Welfare Services and unsuccessful Bradley group, with a summarizing analysis.

The group of successful adoptions studied are from Child Welfare Services, Providence, R. I. This is a group of ten adopted children, and their nine adopting parents, who were placed for adoption in 1951 by the sole adoptive worker for the agency at that time. The agency now has five adoption workers and hopes to have more. This group comprises all of the children placed for adoption in 1951, with the exception of three children replaced with a parent who had remarried and was adopted by the step-parent. None of these children were adopted by any member of the natural family. Girl twins were adopted by one family so that there are ten children and nine adoptive couples considered.

The group of unsuccessful adoptions studied are nine children, adopted by nine adoptive couples from various parts of the U. S., who became so emotionally disturbed that they required residential treatment at the Emma Pendleton Bradley

Home in Riverside, R. I.

The R. I. public child care program, Child Welfare Services, was established by law in 1884 to provide care for those children who were found to be dependent or neglected. A child is committed to the custody of the state through a hearing in Juvenile Court. The present functions of this agency include: (1) supervising and licensing foster homes; (2) consultation services and the coordination of the public and private services to meet the total needs of all children of the state, which are commonly vested in a state child welfare agency; (3) direct care for children in custody of CWS.

Direct care includes: (1) foster care in foster homes for children who are unable to be cared for by their own families for varying lengths of time; (2) institutional group care at the Children's Center itself, which is primarily a reception, study, and training institution where the child is evaluated as to the most suitable plan for him; (3) adoptive placement, when there is no place in the natural family for the child, then his family works with the agency for a permanent plan for "a home of his own". The philosophy of the agency now is that long-term foster boarding care has proven that it is no substitute for a permanent family for a child, and it is continued only when neither return of the child to his family nor adoption placement is possible.

The Emma Pendleton Bradley Home, dedicated April 8, 1931, and, so far as was known, the first institution of its kind in the country, is devoted to the care and treatment of emotionally disturbed children on a residential basis. As there were no precedents to follow from similar treatment centers, the care at Bradley was very individualized from the beginning, and the number of children there has never exceeded fifty.

Mr. and Mrs. George Lothrop Bradley had an only daughter, who all her short life suffered from an obscure nervous disorder and there was no facility anywhere to give her the treatment she needed. Despite the extensive home care her parents were able to provide, Emma Bradley died at an early age. Her parents decided to devote their estate upon their death to the establishment of the Emma Pendleton Bradley Home to be dedicated to the care and study of children suffering from nervous disorders. Their will stated: " Out of this misfortune of our only child has grown the purpose and the hope that from the affliction of this one life may come comfort and blessing to many suffering in like manner."

Originally, as now, the Bradley Home did not want to duplicate any services already existing in the community. Initially, the four types of nervous disabilities considered were: (1) children with convulsive disorders; (2) with birth injuries of the nervous system; (3) with nervous systems of

the type resulting from sleeping sickness; (4) children presenting behavior problems. Even then, in 1932, the Bradley Annual Report noted that many patients were able to improve so that they could return to the home and community where "the home environment has been studied and readjusted to fit the needs of the individual children."

Currently, the Bradley Home takes only children whom they feel they will be able to help. Children with organic brain damage so extensive that the prognosis is limited are not treated. However, if the damage appears minimum, and emotional factors are predominantly the reason for the difficulty, then the child is considered for treatment. The child must be of normal intelligence and the parents must be cooperative regarding casework interviews on a weekly basis themselves. If they come from such a distance that weekly interviews at Bradley itself are not possible, then an agency in the parent's own community sees them regularly.

In 1954, fifteen of the admissions to Bradley were diagnosed as passive-aggressive personality type, three had schizophrenic reaction, one a chronic brain syndrome, one had anxiety reaction, one was emotionally unstable personality, and one a special symptom reaction (one patient had a double diagnosis) making a total of twenty-four admissions. The daily cost of treatment per child was \$15.65 in 1954. All sources of income, aside from the Bradley Home Endowment

Trust, provided only 35 per cent of the total operating cost. The rates are geared for R. I. residents according to the income of the family, if they are unable to meet the full cost of care. Many agencies from out of state also provide treatment for children in their care at Bradley.

The anticipated findings of this comparison of the two groups of adoptive parents may be that the adoptive parents of the emotionally disturbed group of children had serious emotional problems themselves which interfered with their functioning as people, and as parents; that the group of successful adoptive parents were emotionally healthy personalities and could therefore function better as people, and as parents. The guide used for evaluation all of the case records from both agencies is in the appendix.

1. Method and Sample Selection

The only method of securing data was from the case records of both agencies. By analysis of the contents, and by the use of the outline as a schedule and framework within which to compile the results, the writer hopes to substantiate the anticipated findings.

The sample selection for the first, or successful group at Child Welfare Services was to take all of the children placed for adoption by the sole adoption worker for the agency, in the year 1951, except three children who were replaced with a mother and adopted by the stepfather. This would

introduce elements in the adoption within the natural family which are not being considered in this study of adoptive parents who were not related in any way to the child adopted.

For the group of unsuccessful adoptions selected from the Bradley Home, the writer is using the records of all of the adopted children admitted for treatment from January 1, 1950, through January 1, 1956.

2. Explanation of Crucial Concepts

A definition of adoption, as given in the Child Welfare course at Boston University is: "Adoption establishes the legal relationship between parent and child between people not so related." Another from the same source is:

"Adoption is a method provided by law of assuring to children, who for some reason can not be cared for by their natural parents, the security of a home in which they may be brought under the same natural rights and obligations as those existing between children and natural parents."

The term successful adoption, as used in this study, is one mutually satisfying to the parent and child. The term unsuccessful, as used in this study, means an adopted child with such unsatisfactory parent-child relationships that he has required resident psychiatric help at Bradley Home because of severe emotional disturbance.

The terms measuring the economic status of the parents in both groups, as used in this study, are low, average and above average. Information was based on parent's statements

in the records. Low means that the minimum essentials of life were not available, such as adequate shelter, food, or subsistence, or that they were barely achieved on a meager basis. Average means that the essentials of food, clothing, shelter, and subsistence were available without undue deprivation or hardship. Above average means that the essentials of food, clothing, shelter, and subsistence were easily available with a minimum of struggle, and that educational advantages were also available, along with a surplus of resources for these things. The records show that these topics were discussed by the parents in detail in their application process, with further discussion provoked by the questions raised during the home finder's interview with them, or during detailed psychotherapy treatment interviews.

3. Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study is that it will not be possible to interview parents for any of the data on the schedule which is not included in the records because it was not considered important at the time. Because of the nature and scope of the records, however, the missing data is at a minimum.

Another limitation is the matter of time elapsing from the actual adoption. Children and parents did not have the benefit of intensive casework around adoption at Child Welfare Services until about five or six years ago. Some of the

children in the Bradley group were adopted earlier than this time. However, a successful adoption from Child Welfare Services appears to have been mutually satisfying to both child and parents, and which this agency has not had any contra-indications to date. Some of the adoptions of the children at Bradley were not agency adoptions in the sense that casework was available for the parents at the time of adoption, although all of the adoptions had to be approved in some way or another, by the state in which they lived. There will be some cases of Bradley children who were independent adoptions in R. I. This means that the unit servicing independent adoptions, which is different from the Child Welfare Services unit placing children in state custody for adoption, had to evaluate these situations.

In the summary and conclusions, the findings of this study will be briefly related to facts revealed by Jean Paton's research book, "The Adopted Break Silence", and also to "A Follow Up Study of Adoptive Families" by the Child Adoption Research Committee, Inc., published in March 1951.

CHAPTER II
SOME BACKGROUND IN ADOPTIONS AND RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT
FOR EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED CHILDREN

As a student placed at Bradley Home, the writer had access to the complete available knowledge of children who were adopted and became so emotionally upset that they required resident psychiatric treatment.

This did not undermine the writer's faith in the value of adoption as the best permanent plan for a child who will never be able to have the security of care with his own people, due to their inability to provide this for him. In many cases even knowledge of a child's own personal heritage is lacking in long time foster boarding care. Rather, the children at Bradley challenged the writer to wonder what went wrong in these adoptions that the outcome should be so tragic for both the child and parents.

At the Children's Center the writer was an adoption worker, and had also seen children emotionally disturbed because of long-time foster care, often with many different placements.^{1/} The writer had seen children emotionally upset

1/A. W. Damon, A Study of Two Generations in Placement, Unpublished Thesis, Boston University, 1955, pp. 23-25.

because of poor realationships with parents who could never become an integral part of the child's life, alternately deserting them and then wanting to make everything up to them with unrealistic plans which never materialized. These parents never released their children for adoption. Both groups of children lacked the security of a stable home with consistent parent figures. Yet the adopted children at Bradley had supposedly gained this security by adoption. What was operating within these situations to make their problems even more acute than the maladjusted group of state wards who could at least function in the community?

The writer had also worked in Public Welfare and seen many cases of mothers keeping children with them under the ADC program. There were successful cases also, but often a certain pattern of behavior within the mother, much the same as with many mothers whose children are in the care of Child Welfare Services in R. I., was consistent with the ultimate failure of this plan as far as the child's welfare was concerned. These are the mothers whom Child Welfare workers would help to make a permanent plan for the adoption of the child, as the outcome could almost be predicted to result in failure for both.

Therefore, it seemed that the plan of adoption itself is not unsatisfactory, but that the qualities within the parent figures predict the success or failure of the plan.

This same principle of the related factors in the home environment contributing to emotional disturbances of the child applies to both natural and adoptive parents. Legal security does not bring emotional security to the child.

In 1941, doctors, psychiatrists, and social workers were just beginning to look into the environmental factors causing emotional disturbances in children. Prior to that time, much of the curative work done with children did not integrate the environment and the personality of the child. It is only within the last decade that Bradley Home itself, an esteemed leader in this field, has worked so intensively with the parents in treating the child. It is now a requirement for the admission of a child to Bradley that his parents not only be cooperative in their own treatment in relation to him, but that their prognosis for movement in casework is also of some promise. Otherwise, it is futile to treat a child who will have to return to exactly the same environment which originally caused his disturbance, although he may be somewhat better able to handle the problems presented, if these environmental factors have no possibility of change or modification.

In 1941, Dr. Charles Bradley wrote, "Schizophrenia in Childhood," a book considered a classic of its kind. At that time, as stated, the relationship between the child and his environment was just beginning to be stressed. It was still dubious and Bradley quotes Maier^{1/} who had questioned the

^{1/}Dr. Charles Bradley, Schizophrenia in Childhood, Maier, p.119. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941.

possibility of sterilization in families with a schizophrenic taint as a control of the disorder. In Bradley's book, the reader does not get much over-all impression that the environment of a child is recognized openly as the prime factor in his disturbance. However, Bradley does quote from monthly publications which are beginning to relate this parent-child relationship in this manner. Despert^{1/} claims maternal domination as the cause for schizophrenia in children. Kasanin^{2/} claims parental overprotection as a causative factor in this illness. Childers,^{3/} speaking of schizoid personalities in children says, "Younger children respond to improvement in the environment of their homes and schools. Older children have a harder time...."

Melanie Klein^{4/} says, "The child shuts himself off from his surroundings because they are a source of conflict to him." Levin^{5/} suggests that treatment consists of "helping the child to meet life rather than turn away from it." This was in his article on the role of Child Guidance in the prevention of schizophrenia. It must also be remembered that schizophrenia in childhood was thought to be a degenerative, progressive, almost malignant type of thing, with permanent impairment and

1/Dr. Charles Bradley, op. cit., p. 62.

2/Ibid., p. 62.

3/Ibid., p. 118.

4/Ibid., p. 74.

5/Ibid., p. 118.

residual effects of intelligence, as with adults. Through the years, the delineation of diagnosis, especially with children's emotional disturbances, has become more specialized, often with a multiple diagnosis, or a tentative one, depending on further study of the patient. Years ago, labels themselves impeded the complete objective appraisal of a patient's illness.

Schizophrenia in childhood has now pre-schizoid tendencies, as a diagnosis, as well as borderline schizophrenia. This implies that the many related factors involved are more individually evaluated, with less tendency to label conditions, impairing objectivity of analysis. As doctors, psychiatrists, teachers, and social workers integrate this growing body of knowledge into practical usage, there will tend to be less isolation of sole causative theories and a finer, more detailed consideration of individual factors. Thus, all involved can more easily assume responsibility for change. Parents will feel a diminishing sense of stigma over the failures as everyone involved sees problems in relation to growing knowledge of human behavior and its motivations.

Anna Freud^{1/} says in her book, The Psycho-Analytical Treatment of Children, in the section about their upbringing, "If in the outer world, the level of good relations with the parent rises, so does the prestige of the superego and the energy with which it enforces its claims. If the former level

1/Anna Freud, The Psycho-Analytical Treatment of Children, Associated Publishers, New York, 1946, p. 23.

is lowered, the superego is diminished as well." In this section she develops how important parent-child relationships are in the formation of the ego and ego-ideals.

In the section on heredity versus environment in Lockridge's ^{1/} Adopting A Child the author cites studies made at many universities of adopted children with own children. A study made at the University of Minnesota in 1932 by Alice M. Leahy compared 194 adopted children with an equal number of own children. A similar study was made at the University of Chicago. "All of these studies are reassuring to families who are interested in adopting children," the author says. "They seem to prove the fundamental soundness of human nature and its capacity to blossom when given the right soil to grow."

The cultivation of this transplanting of a human life by adoption is fully outlined in The Adopted Family ^{2/} by the authors, Rondell and Michaels. They say:

"Every human being needs to feel that he was born of essentially good people who wanted him to be happy. This knowledge contributes to a person's sense of basic worth and self-confidence. The adopted child, too, needs this assurance from his adoptive parents."

They continue:

"In discussing why he was surrendered for adoption the parents must stress their belief that the biological father and mother could not be parents to him for reasons beyond their control, and that these reasons have nothing

^{1/}Frances Lockridge, Adopting A Child, Greenberg Publishers, New York, 1947, p. 23.

^{2/}Florence Rondell and Ruth Michaels, The Adopted Family, Crown Publishers, New York, 1951, p. 30.

to do with the child himself. Everyone wants to feel that he has always been, from birth, an acceptable and loving human being."

These authors state,^{1/} "For every parent, biological or adoptive, it is the daily loving care of the child that builds the parental feeling. For every child, it is being loved and cared for that produces family closeness."

Meyer^{2/} in Studies of Children writes, after a survey of successful adoptions and how the parents handled this with the children:

"After the careful selection of adoptive parents we, as caseworkers, can help them to clarify their own thinking in relation to what explanation of adoption they will give to their child. We cannot hope to change them as people, work miracles after placement of a child or tell them how to handle adoption if they cannot accept it.

The qualities that make for good understanding of their adopted children are there long before they come to an agency. If they are people with the capacity to be helped with this explanation, they can grow further through contact with the caseworker."

This thesis, then, is the study of the two soils into which the two groups of adopted children were placed, and the climates, either fertile or blighting, of their growth.

^{1/}Florence Rondell and Ruth Michaels, op.cit., p. 25.

^{2/}Gladys Meyer, Studies of Children, Columbia University Press, 1938., p. 46.

CHAPTER III
COMPARISONS OF THE TWO GROUPS
OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS

This chapter will compare the data of the successful group of adoptive parents from Child Welfare Services and the unsuccessful group from Bradley Home. There are 18 parents in each group, as nine couples adopting children were studied from both the successful and unsuccessful groups. There are ten children in the Child Welfare Services group, one couple having adopted two sisters. There are nine children in the group studied from Bradley Home.

The same schedule for collecting data was used for all cases. The areas discussed for all parents are the ages of the parents at marriage and at placement, religion, nationality, education, family and personal history, number of marriages, occupation and income, type and length of residence, relationship to each other and to family and friends, motives for adoption, casework with parents and with children around adoption, symptomatic behavior and psychological appraisal of parents, age, I.Q., and past history of child, other siblings of child before and after adoption, parents' feelings regarding other people's children, initial reactions of parents and children to each other, subsequent adjustment of child in

home, school, and community, parents' attitudes toward initial disturbance in child, parents' attitudes for child's future at admission to Bradley Home, age and diagnosis of child at admission to Bradley Home, attitudes of well-adjusted parents' to child's development, what adoption meant to children and to parents and how parents handled adoption.

1. Religion

Some states, including Rhode Island, have laws prohibiting the adoption of children within the state by couples of mixed religion. Therefore, agencies always establish the reason for a change of religion in adoptive applicants to guard against anyone changing their religion to circumvent the law. Such motivation would not be sound and conflict for the child could easily develop later. In Rhode Island, residents may apply to another state which does not have these laws, such as New Hampshire or Vermont, to adopt a child. In such a case, the laws of the state where the child resides govern the adoption.

Successful group.-- Of the nine couples studied, all are Catholic. One man and one woman in this group were Protestant but changed their religion during the courtship period.

Unsuccessful group.-- Two of this group were Catholic, four were Protestant, one was Jewish, one of the Mormon faith, and one couple of mixed religion, Protestant and Catholic. The children in this group come from all over the United States.

Two were Rhode Island residents and two were Navy families living in Newport, Rhode Island.

2. Education of Nine Successful and
Nine Unsuccessful Pairs of Adoptive Parents

The completed level of academic work is higher for the unsuccessful group of adoptive parents, as shown by the following table.

Successful group.-- Four men and four women went beyond grammar school academically to further study. One man and two women had college training.

Unsuccessful group.-- Six men and six women went beyond grammar school. Two out of three college men had graduate school training, while one woman out of two college students had graduate school experience.

Table 1. Education of Nine Pairs of Successful and Unsuccessful Adoptive Parents

Completed Schooling	Men		Women	
	<u>a/</u> S	<u>b/</u> U	<u>a/</u> S	<u>b/</u> U
Grammar.....	3	2	5	2
High.....	1	3	1	3
Trade.....	2	0	0	0
Business.....	2	0	1	1
College.....	1	1	2	1
Graduate School.....	0	2	0	1
Unknown.....	-	1	-	1
Totals	9	9	9	9
<u>a/</u> Successful adoptions.			<u>b/</u> Unsuccessful adoptions	

3. Nationality

Successful group.-- Of the nine couples studied, two of the men were foreign born and none of the women. Five couples were of the same nationality: (1) three were Italian; (2) one was Irish; (3) one was Portugese. The remaining were of varied nationalities. Four of the nine men were Italian. The high proportion of Italian people in the total population of the state may account for this fact.

Unsuccessful group.-- The nationalities of these couples were not known specifically, except that they varied widely.

A special study might be made to determine possible patterns of culture in adoptive families relating to different national groups and this effect on child development.

4. Siblings of Adoptive Parents

The successful group came from families approximately twice as large as those in the unsuccessful group. This is illustrated by the following table.

Thirteen out of eighteen of the parents in the successful group had four or more siblings, while seven out of eighteen parents in the unsuccessful group had four or more siblings.

Table 2. Number of Siblings of Nine Pairs of Adoptive Parents
in Successful and Unsuccessful Adoptions

Number of Siblings	Successful		Unsuccessful	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
None	1	0	1	2
1-2	-	3	4	4
2-3	1	-	-	-
4-5	5	4	-	1
6-7	-	-	3	-
7-8	-	2	-	-
10	-	-	-	1
17	1	-	-	-
23	1	-	-	-
Unknown	-	-	1	1
Totals	9	9	9	9
Average	7	4.2	3.5	2.6

5. Health

In the adoptive evaluation at Child Welfare Services, the health of the adoptive applicants is exhaustively studied to make as reasonably certain as possible, that poor health or chronic illness will not become a problem to themselves or the child. Chest X-rays are required, as is a general physical exam, and a specific statement as to sterility.

Successful group.-- None of the men had any serious physical handicap. The known ailments included being color blind, a surgically corrected rupture, a slight limp, and earlier shrapnel leg wound, and a case of sterility from mumps. The women were all in good health. Their known ailments included varicose veins, a slight limp, an appendectomy, an ovary operation, a hysterectomy, and a cured cancer of the cervix. The woman with the cured cancer had the most serious health problem to handle. She did this very intelligently, with courage and poise according to the medical records by the physicians treating her. After extensive medical evaluation her condition was thoroughly studied and finally cleared by the agency when it was medically established that she was cured.

The man with the slight limp married the woman with the slight limp. Neither one felt that this was any handicap problem to them, socially or emotionally.

Unsuccessful group.-- Four of the men in this group had good health, with no known limitations. One man was obese, with a defective sperm count but otherwise in good health. One had insomnia and nerves, another had an army discharge for nerves and a slight heart condition. One was an alcoholic, without known health problems. The health of the ninth man was not known.

Four of the women in this group had good health. One had endometriosis. Another had colitis and psychosomatic complaints of various kinds. One had high blood pressure and was very obese. Loss of weight from chain smoking, nerves, and some hysteria was the complaint of another woman. The health of the last woman was not known in particular, except that it was without serious complications.

It would appear that the health of those in the successful group was good on the whole, except for minor organic problems, while the difficulties in the unsuccessful group were more of nervous origins and psychosomatic.

6. Economic Status Before Marriage

Economic status of low, average, and above average, as defined in Chapter One, is used as a measure to evaluating status.

All of the women in the successful group married men of equal or superior status. Three women in the unsuccessful group married men of a lower status than their own.

Table 3. Economic Status of Adoptive Couples Before Marriage

(1)	Successful		Unsuccessful	
	Men (2)	Women (3)	Men (4)	Women (5)
a/ Low b/	-	4	2	1
Average c/	7	3	3	5
Above average	2	2	3	2
Unknown	-	-	1	1
Totals	9	9	9	9

a/Low - the minimum essentials of life were not available, such as adequate shelter, food, or subsistence, or that they were barely achieved on a meager basis.

b/Average - the essentials of food, clothing, shelter and subsistence were available without undue deprivation or hardship.

c/Above average - the essentials of food, clothing, shelter and subsistence were easily available with a minimum of struggle, and that educational advantages were also available, along with a surplus of resources for these things.

In the successful group, seven men of average status married four women of low status and three women of average

status. Two men of above average status married two women of above average status.

In the unsuccessful group, three men of average status married two women of average status and one woman of low status. Two men of above average status married a woman of average status and a woman of above average status.

In general, both groups tend to marry people of equal status, except the three women in the unsuccessful group, who married men of a lower status than their own.

7. Age at Marriage

There was only .4 age disparity between the husbands and wives in the successful group while the unsuccessful group had an age disparity of 4.66 between the husbands and wives.

The average age at marriage for the successful group was three years younger for the men than for those in the unsuccessful group. This may indicate a feeling of maturity earlier and readiness to assume the responsibilities of a marriage and family despite youth and less financial security, as well as the ability to become involved in a permanent relationship. On the other hand, some of the men in the unsuccessful group were involved in higher education in their early twenties, which would have tended to postpone marriage.

Table 4. Age of the Nine Pairs of Successful and Unsuccessful Adoptive Parents at Marriage

Successful			Unsuccessful			
Years	Men	Women	Years	Men	Years	Women
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
15-21 yrs.	4	4	21-25 yrs.	6	16-19 yrs.	3
21-27	5	5	28-33	2	21-22	3
Unknown	-	-	Unknown	1	Unknown	1
					24-27	2
Totals	9	9		9		9
Average age	22.5	22.1		25.5		20.7
Age difference between husband and wife						
	Successful group .4			Unsuccessful group 4.66		

8. Number of Marriages

Successful group.-- This was the first and only marriage for all individuals in this group.

Unsuccessful group.-- Eight of the eighteen individuals in this group of nine couples had second marriages, either prior to or subsequent to the adoption of the child. One woman had three marriages, terminating one and starting another within two years of the adoption. Four men and three women had two marriages.

In all but one case, in subsequent marriages, the child was rejected by the new parent. Two men, both financially prosperous, married again, and the second mother was even more rejecting of the adopted child than the first one had been, making the men chose between the new spouse and the adopted child. Both men chose the spouse and made placements away from home for the child after discharge from the Bradley Home.

In the case of the woman who married three times, having three children of her own by her first marriage, her second and third husbands, as well as herself, have continued to reject the adopted child. He has gone to live with her relatives.

In the case where the second marriage appears to be turning out well for a ten-year-old boy and his adoptive mother, many elements indicate that even this marriage is not too secure, and the parent's tentative plans for the child are a foster home as he is under State Custody on a neglect charge.

While the first marriages of these eight individuals were beset with problems for the adopted child, the subsequent ones have proven even more disastrous, with the single exception cited.

9. Occupation and Income

Successful group.-- Five of the men in this group did manual work including contracting business, electrician, plasterer, boilerman, and turbine operator. One was an accountant, one a salesman, one a stock control clerk, and one was an office manager. The manual group had incomes from \$3900 to \$4316. The business and sales group had an income range from \$2860 to \$6396. The average annual income was \$4,050.22 for this group.

Unsuccessful group.-- None of the men in this group did manual work with the exception of the alcoholic doing odd jobs whenever necessary in emergencies for his own individual needs. His wife worked irregularly to provide the family a minimum of food and shelter. The professional group had an income range from \$3804 to \$5300. The business group had incomes ranging from \$5000 to \$12000 annually.

None of the wives in either group worked after marriage, with the exception of the wife of the alcoholic.

The unsuccessful group had an income annually higher by \$3,038.00 than that of the successful group.

10. Type and Length of Residence

Successful group.-- All but two of the couples owned their own homes. The two who rented were the college graduate and the technical school graduate. They planned to buy in the future but felt that they were later in life getting established financially than if they had not had additional education.

The social workers evaluating these homes for the agency all noted in the records many common characteristics. Aside from the fact that all the homes evaluated have to be inspected for minimum legal compliance with fire and health laws of the state, all of the homes studied were clean and cheerful. They had to be adequate for sleeping arrangements according to agency standards. The workers making the studies found a common element of permissiveness to pets and visiting children prevailed in these homes. They also had a common lived-in quality and the women were not meticulous housekeepers to the point where it interfered with a comfortable atmosphere in the homes.

Unsuccessful group.-- Four were home owners and four rented their residences. Of the four home owners, three had moved around a lot before they settled down and bought a home.

However, when this group moved, they moved from state to state, rather than from neighborhood to neighborhood, so that it was a major upheaval in their way of life whenever they

did move. None seemed to feel permanently settled, despite owning the home. The one exception to this was the druggist.

None of the homes were visited, but from the interview material, none of the women seemed to stress homemaking as prominent in their perspective outlook on life. There did not appear to be the warm atmosphere of hospitality about the home environment. One woman, whose husband was at sea a great deal, had a nine room flat which she rented so that she could have two boarders. The boarders were men, and one administered discipline to her seven children. She felt her husband justified in the complaint that she was a poor homemaker and housekeeper but was often upset and nervous.

11. Relationship to Each Other

Successful group.-- Of the nine couples studied, there were seven factors which consistently appeared in all of the home studies. The workers evaluating the couples found that, in every case, there was: (1) an easy, relaxed atmosphere of give and take, a freedom of self-expression between the parents; (2) they had a comfortable, easy-going philosophy of life, handling problems so that they did not lose their perspective on them; (3) they shared decisions and felt what the other spouse felt, or thought, or said was important and due consideration; (4) they were companionable, sharing certain activities and goals together; (5) they could all stand present frustrations and sacrifices for future rewards with reasonable

patience; (6) either one spouse, or both, had an obvious sense of humor; (7) all of the women enjoyed their role as *homemaker* as a completely satisfying one. Because of their attitude about their role as women, the men therefore had an undisputed role as the provider in the household, with the family dependent on him as such. None of the women found the dependency of wifhood difficult to adjust to. They all geared their own domestic activity around the man's schedule when home, so that the family as a unit could enjoy joint activities.

Unsuccessful group.-- Of the nine cases studied, none of the couples seemed to have a good relationship with each other. Three found it so poor, they were divorced. All nine argued freely and heatedly in front of the children, and about the children. Three were alcoholic, and one mother regretted that she could not afford to drink.

Six men were out of the home a lot, and one woman spent little time at home, preferring social engagements.

Six of the women tended to be very controlling and domineering. Four of the men were passive. One was indirectly controlled by the situations his wife created with the adopted child, so that he gradually came to feel the child was too upsetting for his wife and had no place in the home.

Therefore, it appears that the individual emotional problems of all the couples were so great that they could not make a successful adjustment in marriage and continued to suffer, at

their spouse's expense, from all of their unresolved conflicts. The adopted child intensified these conflicts to the point that harmonious relationships seemed impossible to attain in these households.

12. Relations with Family and Friends

Successful group.-- Of the nine couples studied in this group, seven were very close to their relatives. All seven had cordial and frequent contacts with their families. No in-law problems were apparent. These couples seemed to enjoy their relatives by marriage, often doing a great deal for their neices and nephews because they had no children of their own. Two of the men worked in family businesses. Most of these couples lived near their relatives and a great deal of visiting back and forth was an integral part of their life, with family outings.

Two of the couples had relatives in distant parts of the country. The man in one case, and the woman in the other, both of whom had the greatest educational backgrounds in the group, had moved away from home when they married. They were accepted by, and fully accepted, their spouse's relatives in this part of the country. They had cordial but infrequent contacts with their own relatives because of the distance between them.

All of the nine couples had a warm circle of close friends, who shared the coming of the adopted child with them. This

acceptance by the friends and relatives of the couples was a vital element in the satisfactory and complete adjustment of the child in a new and strange environment, making his acceptance complete.

Unsuccessful group.-- Four of the individual parents in this group of nine couples lost their parents in early childhood. Three of them had step-parents who were not kind to them. Four of these parents had serious problems in their own parent-child relationships, with their own parents having marital trouble. One man had a good relationship with his father, but was separated by a continent, and therefore could not be physically close.

In all of the cases, there seemed to be some frustration or emotional blocking, or outright bitterness, in family relations.

None of the couples mentioned, or seemed to have, a warm circle of congenial friends. It seemed that their ability to form relationships with other people was shallow and fleeting.

13. Motives for Adoption

Successful group.-- In this group, only one man who knew before marriage that he was sterile from the mumps was unable to have children. At marriage, he was twenty years old and his wife twenty-one. They did not feel that this was any emotional handicap to the marriage. He was an aggressive,

ambitious fellow with an unusually likeable personality, according to the home study made, and his wife was a warm and sensitive person.

Of the eight women studied, none seemed to feel that this inability to have children affected their close and successful relationships with their husbands. One woman out of nine had a twelve year old son, after whose birth she had to have a hysterectomy. This was the only natural mother in the group.

None of the women became morbid, moody or morose to the point where it was an emotional problem to them. Naturally, it was a problem which was difficult in many psychological aspects for them. However, they handled it by keeping busy with domestic duties, friends, relatives, other people's children, clubs or social activities, and volunteer groups. Once they were approved as applicants, they all stood the waiting period in a reasonably mature way. Naturally, they were anxious to have the placement but as they had successfully lived and been happy without children up to that time, they were able to wait without undue anxiety manifesting itself. All were agency placements from Child Welfare Services.

Unsuccessful group.-- Of the five private placements, two of the couples had been rejected by agencies. In the private placements, the adoptive parents either knew the natural parents, or knew a lot about them. When the adoptive parents became angry or upset they retaliated by using this information

to devalue the child, with such phrases as, "What else could be expected with your mother the way she was."

Of the private placements, one child was abandoned with a couple who felt sorry for him. Of the two couples who were afraid they would never have their own children and thus were anxious to get a child through private placement, one had six children after the adoption, and the other had two of their own. Another couple feared having a defective child because of the man's defective sperm count. In the last case, the husband was presumably sterile and the wife felt she could save a marriage which was going very badly if she could get a baby.

Of the agency adoptions, three women took the child to please their husbands who insisted on adoption. In the last case, the wife wanted the child but the husband would have preferred to have his own, although the wife had several miscarriages. The fact that one parent, in these cases, was openly resentful or ambivalent should have been picked up by the agency workers. In all four cases, the surface aspects of the household appeared to be very good.

14. Casework with Parents at Placement

Successful group.-- All nine families had casework services around the adoptive placement for a year or more. In initial contacts most couples were guarded, wanting to make a good impression, and threatened that the child might be removed.

However, they all came to trust the worker and work through problems with her.

Unsuccessful group.-- Seven of the nine parents had no casework around the adoptive placement at all. In two of the agency placements a bare minimum of practical help around the specific situation of a new child in the home with physical needs was given, but no casework regarding the philosophy and attitudes of adoption. The worker failed to pick up the real feelings of the parents, or sense that the other partner was not a willing one. In the other two agency placements, the couples moved away shortly after taking the child, so that there was no follow-up or casework help around the adoption available to them.

15. Symptomatic Behavior in Parents

Successful group.-- There is an overall pattern of consistency in that certain attitudes and behavior do reappear in varying degrees in each case record. These common elements are: (1) all felt religion was an important factor in helping them to face life's problems; (2) all had a sense of humor in varying degrees; (3) they all managed money well, using it for acquiring and enjoying whatever was important to them individually; (4) human values were predominant over material ones; (5) all of the women actively did much to make the home appealing to their particular family interests; (6) all enjoyed company and entertaining friends and relatives on an informal but genuinely hospitable basis.

The parents in the successful group shared plans and goals and attitudes together. They were well adjusted at home, at work and in the community. The men were close to their families, and planned for group activities in the family rather than making plans for their own sole amusement.

Unsuccessful group.-- Of the women in this group, three were overprotective, and six were very domineering and controlling. One said that she knew that she was stubborn and jealous. One woman was interested in the home as a "conscientious mother" rather than as a spontaneous homemaker who enjoyed it. One woman was openly rejecting of wifehood and motherhood, was promiscuous and had an illegitimate child, after having had two children by her husband after she adopted a child. None of the women expressed fondness for her role as a wife and mother.

Four of the men were overtly passive, letting their wives manage things. Four of the men married twice and none were close to their families. Six of the men spent a lot of time out of the home, either on business or community organization activities. One openly stated he was glad when the weekends were over and he could go back to work, escaping from the turmoil of fighting in the home. Parents in this group sided against each other in the frequent family arguments, with the children siding with one parent against the other in frequent family arguments.

These parents had so many unresolved conflicts as individuals that they appeared unable to successfully adjust to marriage and family responsibilities in a sharing way. Their interpersonal relationships seemed so impaired that they lived a "fringe" existence, somewhat withdrawn from real involvement with others. This was reflected in their attitudes in talking about their problems, almost in a detached, impersonal way, especially around the adopted children. The adopted children always remained "someone else's child" with them.

16. Age of Child at Adoption

Successful group.-- The Child Welfare Services agency policy in 1951 was not promoting adoptive placements as early as possible, as it is today, so this may explain why this group is considerably older at placement than the unsuccessful group. Increased knowledge and skill and more complete evaluation of a baby at birth has given increased confidence to the soundness of early placement, avoiding the trauma of repeated replacements of a child. More intensive work with the mothers before the birth of a baby now enables the mother to make a plan for the child earlier. The agency is now able to determine earlier that the child is adoptable.

Unsuccessful group.-- All of the private placements were made when the child was four months of age or under. The agency placements were all made by the time the child was 3.5 years of age or under. The older age of the child in

agency placements may be accounted for by the fact that evaluation of a child took longer in the past or that the mother was unable to decide on a permanent plan for the child earlier.

Table 5. Age of Child at Adoption

Age placed	Agency	Age placed	Agency	Private
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
6 mos. to 4 yrs.	5	birth to 4 mos.		5
5.5 to 6.5 yrs.	3	2 mos. to 3.5 yrs.	4	
7.5 yrs.	<u>2</u>			
Total	9			9
Average age placed	4.1 yrs.		13.6 mos.	3.8 mos.

17. Age of Parents At Time of Placement

Successful group.-- Four of the couples were in the range of ages from 26 to 34 years and the ages of the children placed with them ranged from 1.5 years to 6 years.

The other five couples ranged in age from 40 to 46 years and the ages of the children placed with them ranged from six months to 7.5 years. The six months old baby was placed with a couple who were both 42 years old at the time. The average age of the men at placement was 37 years and of the women 36.4 years.

There was then, no parallel between the ages of the parents and the children placed.

Unsuccessful group.-- Five babies, from two weeks to four months of age, were placed with the women from 20 to 30 years of age. Three children from 2.5 to 3.5 years of age were placed with women from 29 to 35 years of age. One woman 43 years old had a four month old baby placed with her privately. In this group, with the exception of the 43 year old woman with the four months old baby, it appears that there was a pairing up between the ages of the younger babies and younger women, and the older children and the older women. However, there was no apparent planning of this association as far as could be determined. The average age of the men at placement of the child was 35.3 years and 31.1 years for the women.

18. Number of Years Married When Child Placed

Successful group.-- There were four couples in this group who had been married from 6 to 9.5 years at placement. There were five couples who had been married from 16 to 23 years at placement. The average length of time married at placement was 13.6 years.

The older group had been married seven to fourteen years longer than the younger group, and were approximately fourteen years older in age, having married at about the same age as the younger group.

Unsuccessful group.-- There were two couples married three years or less, four couples married between eight and nine years, and two couples married between ten and eleven

years in the group at the time of placement. The average length of time married at placement was 7.3 years.

The parents in the successful group were married 6.3 years longer on an average than those in the unsuccessful group, or almost twice as long.

19. I.Q. of Children in Both Groups of Adoptions

Successful group.-- Most of the children in this group had experienced social and emotional deprivations which would have a constricting effect on their development.

Unsuccessful group.-- These scores were achieved when the children were severely disturbed, and some had emotional blocking which prevented them from functioning nearer to their potential.

Both groups seem about equal on their scores achieved on the I.Q. tests, with the unsuccessful group having only one point higher rating than the successful group for an average I.Q. score.

Table 6. I.Q. of Children in Both Groups of Adoptions

I.Q. Range (1)	Successful No. of Children (2)	Unsuccessful No. of Children (3)
I.Q. Range 85 to 97	4	4
101 to 106	3	1
107 to 121	3	4
Total	10	9
Average I.Q.	102.2	103.3

20. Number of Placements Prior to Adoption of Children

Successful group.-- This group had more than twice as many placements prior to adoption as the unsuccessful group. This variety of placements represent problems the new parents had to handle with the child in orienting him to a new sense of who he was and where he belonged. It is in this area that casework, with both the children and parents, is so necessary for a complete working through and acceptance of adoption for all individuals concerned.

Two of the children having had nine placements plus the adoptive one were seven and a half years old. Yet, the child who had eight placements plus the adoptive home was only three and a half years old when the final placement was made. The six months old baby also had two placements plus the adoptive one. Such replacement of the children would make necessary much understanding on the part of the new parents in making the child feel secure.

Unsuccessful group.-- While the number of placements is less for this group, there was so little security in the environment for the child emotionally from the adults in his life that he became emotionally so upset he was unable to function in the community.

Table 7. Number of Placements Prior to Adoption
of Children

No. of Placements	Successful group	Unsuccessful group
(1)	(2)	(3)
1 plus adoptive.....	0	3
2 plus adoptive.....	3	3
3-5 plus adoptive.....	4	0
6 plus adoptive.....	0	1
8-9 plus adoptive.....	3	0
Adoptive only.....	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	10	9
Average number	4.7	1.9

21. Casework with the Child Regarding Adoption

Successful group.-- Casework was directly with the child from the time of commitment to Child Welfare Services. This was with home visits, visits to the natural parents, to the adoptive parents, or visits out of the placement alone with the child, such as a ride, a day trip, or going out for dinner. The objective was to work through with the child his feelings about his natural parents, his need for a permanent home, and an integrated sense of who he was, where he came from, and why he could not be with his own people. In cases, where the child was too young to fully absorb this completely, the parents were worked with to help him with this conception of himself as he developed. Casework regarding a change in placement can be done with very young children successfully, in helping them to accept a new environment. The average length of casework service for the children in this group was 4.2 years.

Unsuccessful group.-- None of the children in this group had casework help. Three could have had casework, as they were old enough, but this was not available.

In the course of treatment in Bradley Home, much casework help was given in aiding the children to clarify their sense of identity, often confused by having been adopted and bewildered by their parent's attitude about adoption. However, this later corrective casework is not the casework around adoption at the time of placement being evaluated in this study.

22. Siblings Before and After Adoption

Successful group.-- Three of the children went into homes with other children already there. One was a natural child of the parents, and the other two cases were adopted children previously placed. Six of the ten children in this group were the first children in the homes. None of the parents in the successful group had their own children after adopting. Two children had adopted siblings placed three years after their own placement. The agency and parents carefully considered all factors of sibling rivalry in these later placements, including difference in the age and sex of the second child placed. Sibling rivalry did not develop to the point of becoming an emotional problem in these cases, perhaps because so much thought had been given both by the parents in handling the child, and by the agency.

Unsuccessful group.-- Three of the children went into homes where another child already was. Two of these cases were natural children, and one was an adopted girl close to the boy's own age. One family had three of their own children when they took the adopted child.

Six of the children had siblings after adoption. Only one of these cases was a natural sister of the boy, placed privately three years after his own placement. The five other couples had natural children. One couple had six of their own children after adoption, one had three, and one two.

In seven of the nine cases, sibling rivalry and intense feelings of "being different", either on the part of the parents or the child, were felt. The coming of siblings had created emotionally disturbing reactions of a severe nature in the adopted child.

Table 8. Siblings Before and After Adoption

	Successful group		Unsuccessful group	
	Natural Child	Adopted Child	Natural Child	Adopted Child
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Before	1	2	2	1
After	0	2	5	1

23. Psychological Appraisal of Parents

Successful group.-- There was no formal psychological appraisal of the adoptive parents in their application period other than the regular evaluation by the social workers. Child Welfare Services do have the adoptive applicants see a psychiatrist if there appears to be doubt about one phase of the couple's personality and their ability to "adopt" other people's children. However, in general these attitudes regarding their feelings about each other, life in general, their attitude towards children, their ability to take stress and handle problems is covered thoroughly in the home evaluation.

If a child has special problems and is being considered for a couple, the agency might also feel the psychiatrist should explore this with them prior to placement, or if a couple were adopting several or more children, the psychiatric evaluation would be made. None of the couples in this study were seen by the staff psychiatrist because the agency felt they had satisfactorily demonstrated their readiness and ability to adopt a child.

Unsuccessful group.-- When children are admitted to Bradley Home, their parents are appraised for their psychological components in the course of application and history taking, in order to find out what factors contributed to the child's disturbance, especially in the area of parent-child relationships. The mothers are now given psychological tests. Such tests were not available on all of the mothers in this group, although they all had been interviewed extensively, and the background material was quite complete.

Of the women, the two college graduates were cold, impersonal and afraid of interpersonal relationships, being quite rigid in their thinking and defenses against emotion. Another mother was stubborn, jealous, and seemed vicariously to enjoy people around her indulging in acting-out behavior. Two women were promiscuous and one of them was alcoholic. Another woman, whose haphazard housekeeping irritated her husband, regretted that she could not afford to drink but was

a nervous chain smoker. Most of the mothers had difficulty in their personal relationships since youth. They tended to be controlling and rejecting of themselves as women, of their husbands, and of their children, both adopted and natural.

Seven of the men acted inconsistently in handling family relationships, being erratic and harsh or else passive and lenient. A main difficulty seemed to be the passivity of the men in the household in seven of the nine cases.

24. Feelings Expressed by Couples Regarding Adopting Other People's Children

Successful group.-- The main characteristic found by the workers in all nine cases was the ability of the parents to give of themselves to others. They accepted the child as an individual with his own set of personality needs and abilities, and did not want to, or need to, try and mold him into a preconceived idea of what they thought he should be. They were flexible as to what was suitable behavior and attitudes for the child and themselves to have. The children "belonged" to them, and they to the children.

Unsuccessful group.-- Five of these couples openly and obviously preferred their own children, constantly making unfavorable comparisons of the adopted child with them. Three of the couples felt a child was something every home should have, with little personal involvement with the child as an individual. In general, these parents admitted that

they felt an injustice had been done to them by getting such a child, who disappointed them. They explained how they had an idea of what a child should be and the adopted child did not measure up to this fantasy image, being instead an individual with troublesome problems. Their motivations and approach to adoption were immature and unrealistic.

Table 9. Feelings Expressed by Couples Regarding Adopting Other People's Children

Successful group	Unsuccessful group
1. "wanted average child".. 7	1. Preferred own child..... 5
2. "had average expectations"..... 7	2. Felt "poor heredity in adopted child"..... 6
3. Experienced with children--felt they knew child's needs..... 6	3. A child part of home furnishings, little affect..... 3
4. accept child as individual..... 2	4. "loved child" but always worked so never cared for him..... 1
5. felt lucky to have a child..... 2	

25. Initial Reaction of Parents to Children

Successful group.-- Casework had prepared all of these parents for the realistic problems involved. The worker had discussed frankly all of the negative feelings and reactions which could be expected when they actually saw the child. As a result, the parents were encouraged to feel free with the worker if they felt that this particular child was not meant for them.

However, in all nine cases, the initial reaction of the parents to the children was good. None of the parents questioned that this was the right child for them. Depending on their own personalities, some were overtly enthused and others more quietly happy about the child, but the workers felt all couples showed complete acceptance of the child. They all related easily to the children in the initial contact.

Unsuccessful group.-- In four cases, only one parent wanted the child. In three of these cases, the initial reactions appeared to be fairly spontaneous and good. The fourth woman wanted to consult her pediatrician, but as her husband was eager to have the little girl right away, she did not, and the child was placed.

The age of the other five children in this group was so young that the child appeared to be absorbed into the home at the time, although none of the motivations for adoption were sound.

26. Initial Reaction of Children to Parents

Successful group.-- Regardless of the preparation by the caseworker, the idea of having a new mother and father is a crucial emotional experience for a child. As much as they want it, there is the fear of the unknown, and the tendency to cling to the present situation. None of the children were told that this initial meeting was to be with their new parents. The worker made the contact as casual as possible, introducing

the child to "some friends" whom she dropped by to visit or happened to meet in the park. In this way, everyone was left free. The parents did not feel that they would be letting a child down if they did not feel he was suited to them. The child was free to gain his own impressions of the home and the couple, and to tell the worker about them. He did not feel that he "was being shown" and thus either accepted or rejected as a result.

However, despite this "setting" of the situation on a casual basis, children seem to sense that maybe this is the new mother and father the worker has promised to get them. Often they reach out to the parents and make their own placement, and solidify their places in the hearts and homes of the new parents.

All of the ten children reacted favorably to the first contact with the parents. Some were slower than other, depending on their natures and the type of past experiences of rejection, to become free to accept the new parents as such. All, except the young baby, said they wanted to see the parents again. The baby indicated her approval, however. All the children said they had enjoyed their first visit with the parents. One little girl asked on the first visit, "Can't I belong to you and be your little girl, seeing you don't have one?"

Unsuccessful group.-- As there was no casework in these placements, the accounts of the child's reaction are from the parents or from meager information in agency records later sent to Bradley Home. Three of the children were extremely fearful, and this attitude persisted for some time after placement. Five apparently related well from the beginning, as they were under four months of age. One little girl related well to the new father who wanted her, but not to the mother who did not want to adopt her. This increasing conflict with the mother was the cause of severe emotional disturbance later.

27. Child's Subsequent Adjustment in Home,
School and Community

Successful group.-- All of the ten children made a good adjustment in the homes into which they went. The parents felt there was no problem without a solution, although two had special problems which they worked through.

The adoptive parents were very gentle, warm and understanding with a six year old boy who would not talk, seemed fearful of other children, and had to have any toy which got broken replaced immediately or he would become very insecure. Gradually they helped him to share his toys with other children, to feel secure that they loved and wanted him and that he would never leave them, so that he gradually evolved into an outgoing sociable child.

Another seven year old boy was very retiring and was in the ungraded room in school when placed. His new parents encouraged his every little success, geared their own attitudes to his needs, and were pleased when he went into the first grade as a regular pupil. They felt the fact that he was so well liked by the other children and the teachers was more important than his increasing scholastic ability.

The two common forces operating in this group of nine homes were: (1) that the children wanted to belong very much, and that belonging represented many intangibles for them that they had been seeking up to the present; (2) the parents wanted them and having accepted them as individuals with their own special set of problems to work out, all nine parents stated that they geared their own attitudes to the needs of the child.

The adjustment thus having been worked out at home, none of the children had any serious school problems. This attitude of the parents also carried over into the community, with all of the children being warmly accepted by friends, relatives and neighbors, and the children of these people in their social circle. The concept of the child's being adopted was accepted along with the acceptance of the child, and was treated easily and naturally. None of the ten children had any community adjustment problems.

Unsuccessful group.-- The child's maladjustment in the home, with such symptoms as fire-setting, lying, destructiveness,

assaultiveness, and hostile behavior to the family carried through, in all but one case into the school and community. All of the children in this group became maladjusted in the home by age five. Five became upset between 1.5 and 2.5 years, three by age three, and one by age five. However, parents did not seek help until a much later age. One boy adjusted well at boarding school and in the community but not at home. All of the other children became so upset that the school was unable to keep them and the community constantly complained about their activities.

Table 10. Child's Subsequent Adjustment in Home, School and Community

	Successful group				Unsuccessful group			
	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Home	10			10	4	5		9
School	8	2		10	2	7		9
Community	10			10		9		9

28. Parent's Attitude Toward Initial

Disturbance in the Child

Successful group.-- Eight of the nine couples said problems arising early in the adoption were a matter of course, to be expected, to be handled and understood and worked out, as with any child and his own natural parents. This attitude

in itself would minimize difficulties of an inter-personal relationship.

One couple, who had a seven and a half year old boy placed with them, after nine previous foster home placements for him, had initial problems with him. He seemed to vent on his new parents all the many years of frustration he had suffered in the past. Once he struck them. Gradually, they lost their fear that he would be removed if they told the worker, and there was a free exchange of feelings and ideas between the child, the worker, and the new parents. Finally, the warm, loving attitude of these parents made the boy feel that he was such an integral part of their life that he would proudly say, "our property" to friends when speaking of his parents' land.

Unsuccessful group.-- All nine parents in this group tried discipline in varying degrees, to manage the child. When this failed, eight took the children to Guidance Clinics or Hospitals having a similar psychological evaluation service. One family put the child in boarding school. This group seemed to feel that "poor heredity" was responsible for the child's difficulties and could not seem to realize their own part in the child's problems. One of the most difficult aspects of case-work with parents at Bradley is helping them to see how their behavior is related to that of the child's, and helping them to involve themselves in a wholesome way in helping the child, by behaving differently themselves.

29. Attitude of Successful Group to Child's
Development and Growth

Six of the nine couples again stressed in this area that each child should be treated as an individual, with special needs, and encouraged to develop his own natural abilities, but not to have other people's aims for him superimposed on him. Two stated that by sharing the child's past with him through conversation, accepting him and his past naturally, and disciplining with love, that he would develop best as an individual. The ninth couple felt accepting whatever degree of success the child made himself, it left him freer to develop as an individual. This couple spent a lot of time in joint activity with the child. As a result, they felt they had renewed their own interest in life, by trying to understand his world. They joined the PTA and became friendly with the parents of his friends.

30. Parent's Attitude Towards Child's
Future Upon Admission to Bradley

Six of the nine couples did not have plans to take the child home when he should be discharged after treatment. Three of the nine couples did plan to take the child home after treatment. Possibly after casework with the parents, some of those wanting placements away from home for the child after treatment is completed may find that they will be able to work out their relationships with the child so that he could return home.

31. Diagnosis and Age at Admission to Bradley

Eight of the children had a diagnosis of passive-aggressive type, primary behavior disorder. One had childhood schizophrenia. In the eight cases of primary behavior disorder, it is found in practice that the causes are pre-oedipal and of a faulty developmental origin. In practice, it is usually felt that an unsatisfactory relationship with the mother during the child's first year of life is a contributing factor to childhood schizophrenia.

The average age at admission to Bradley for this group of nine children was 9.6 years. Two were between six and eight years of age, one was nine, three were ten, and three were eleven.

The average length of stay at Bradley Home for children is currently estimated at about two years, although many stay longer and some do not stay as long.

32. What Adoption Meant to Parents

Parents in both groups expressed the following feelings as to what adoption meant to them.

Table 11. What Adoption Meant to Parents of Both Groups

Successful group		Unsuccessful group	
1. "Very fortunate and happy to be parents".....	5	1. Tolerated child with long-suffering attitude..	2
2. "Our greatest joy is to see him grow day by day....	1	2. Felt the agency "stuck" them with an inferior child.....	4
3. "We're lucky and proud to have a lovable and wonderful, superior child".....	1	3. Rejecting parent of child made other parent chose between partner and the child; all chose the partner, making outside placement for child.....	3
4. "It's so wonderful, it's hard to believe.....	2		
	9		9
Total	9	Total	9

33. What Adoption Meant to Children

Successful group.-- Nine of the ten children indicated that adoption meant security for them and at last belonging to parents. The six month old baby blossomed so well in her new home that it was obvious that she was enjoying security and belonging.

One child said he "found wonderful parents" and another said he "would never have to move again." According to their natures, some children were bubbly and enthusiastic overtly,

and others, more sensitive and reserved, but equally feeling as much when they said it "meant to really belong."

This worker in the study had placed two of these children in adoptive homes previously which had not been the right ones for them. Therefore, only the child and worker involved could ever really appreciate the perseverance needed to work out the final adjustment in the right home. For these two children, especially, the ultimate successful adjustment in the adoptive home meant the difference between a happy life and a miserable one. Had they not worked through the failure of a previous home, it would have always remained a negative experience with them which had not been overcome.

Unsuccessful group.-- Three of the children had a feeling for one parent but still felt unwanted due to the dissension in the home over the rejecting parent. Four felt that they were bad and expressed desires, sometimes through projective tests, to be loved by warm parents and to belong. Two had confused identities to the point that their ego-integration was severely affected.

34. How Parents Handled Adoption

Successful group.-- All nine couples found no trouble in the handling of adoption as part of the child's life with relatives, friends, neighbors, and the community. They had such a complete integration of the idea themselves that it "seemed like second nature" to them when they handled it with the children.

Seven of the nine couples handled it easily, naturally, and matter-of-factly. One couple with an older child made the court process and legal adoption seem like the most wonderful thing that ever happened to any of them. Another couple always tried to integrate the past and present naturally for the child, because it "was supposed to turn out this way for us all."

Throughout, the adoption worker integrated all of these feelings and facts for the individuals concerned into positive experiences of emotional satisfaction and growth of the parents as well as the children.

Unsuccessful group.-- Two never told the child that he was adopted, one ignored the subject after a playmate had told the child that he was adopted, six preferred their own children to the adopted child, and four of these couples openly rejected the child, feeling that "poor heredity" was the cause of his troubles.

CHAPTER IV
CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF BOTH
SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL ADOPTIONS

The following four cases, two from the group of successful adoptions from Child Welfare Services of Providence, R. I., and two from the group of unsuccessful adoptions of children requiring residential treatment at the Emma Pendleton Bradley Home, Riverside, R. I., because of severe emotional disturbance, are cited to give a more complete picture of the type of situations studied.

The same schedule for collecting data was used for all cases. The information secured about the parents in each case was the age, religion, nationality, education, health, family history, economic status before marriage, date of marriage, age at marriage and number of marriages, occupation and income, type and length of residence, relationship to each other and to family and friends, motives for adoption, casework with parents and with children around adoption, symptomatic behavior of parents, age and length of time married at placement, age, IQ., and past history of child at adoption, other siblings of child before and after adoption, psychological appraisal of parents, parent's feelings regarding other people's children, initial reactions of children and parents to each other, subsequent adjustment of child in home, school, and community,

parents' attitudes toward initial disturbance in child, parents' attitudes for child's future at admission to Bradley Home, age and diagnosis of child at admission to Bradley Home, attitudes of well-adjusted parents to child's development, what adoption meant to children and to parents and how parents handled adoption.

The following four case illustrations attempt to give a composite picture of how all of the above elements enter into the total situations, contributing to the success or failure of the adoptions.

1. Cases from Successful Group

The "A" Case.-- Mr. A. was born in 1907, of Italian Catholic background. He completed the eighth grade, followed by one year of carpentry training at trade school. He was self-supporting since the eighth grade, being one of four siblings in a low income family. He was 21 years of age when he married in 1928.

About this time he went into the grocery business himself, and averaged up to \$75.00 weekly from this for many years. Upon marriage, he bought a three family house, occupying the second floor, five room flat where he lived at the time of adoption of Alice, aged four at her placement in 1951.

For six years in the 1930's, Mr. A. had been on parole. First, he unwittingly had been involved in the receipt of stolen merchandise. According to the parole records, at about

the same time, he stopped at a gas station one day and a young woman hitchhiker got in the car. After driving a short time, she became emotionally upset and he attempted to "unload" her at another gas station. She remonstrated and a struggle ensued, with the result that she filed an assault charge. The parole records show that these incidents were apparently not malicious on Mr. A's part, although parole was continued. They found him a "very cooperative person," and parole was without further incident until termination.

Mr. A. was close to his family and had many friends, apparently earning the respect of the entire community through his genial personality and fair dealing in his grocery store. In 1945, Mr. A. gave up the grocery store after the trials of merchandise during the war, and went into the contracting business. He continued to earn about \$75.00 weekly from this business. He always "enjoyed good health."

The references sent to the agency at the time of the home evaluation gave a composite picture of Mr. A. as a loud, but genial, easy-going person, who was known as an honest, reliable gentleman with a very likeable, easy to approach manner. They felt that this couple had all of the essentials to make a "splendid home life" and give "honest, intelligent care and kindness to any child."

These references gave a picture of Mrs. A. as a very warm and motherly person. Mrs. A. was born in 1905 of Italian

Catholic background and was one of six children in a low income family. She completed the seventh grade and had managed her household since she was fourteen, when her mother became ill. She worked for nine years in an iron base works, doing a routine job until she married at the age of 23 years, being two years older than Mr. A., at the time of the ceremony. She always liked to excel in knitting, sewing, and cooking, and had genuine pleasure in her domestic role. Mrs. A. had a hysterectomy and was unable to have children, but was anxious to give of love and her efforts to a child, as well as enjoy the companionship of one.

In 1941, the A's adopted a boy about two and a half years old from the agency, named Al. Al's adjustment seemed ideal and he participated fully in plans and placement of Alice in 1951. Mrs. A. was then 46 years old and Mr. A. was 44 years old when Alice, then four, was placed with them from the agency which had placed Al.

The A's frankly told the agency that they wanted an average child, not a sick or difficult one, fearing such problems were beyond their abilities. They were very aware of sibling rivalry and felt that it was necessary to meet the emotional needs of the individual child as well as the physical ones. Casework service for one year had been given at the time of Al's placement in 1941 and the agency felt that the family was most sincere and understanding in their motivation to give to children.

Alice, the second child placed with the A's, was born in 1947, and had eight months at home with a rejecting mother, followed by four months in a private foster home, arranged by her mother. In 1948, she was committed to the custody of CWS. At first, the agency hesitated about adoptive placement for Alice, fearing that she had serious mental and physical limitations. This soon appeared to be merely the crippling effect from a rejecting, inconsistent early environment, and in December, 1949, she was placed in an adoptive home. This first adoptive couple reacted strongly to her physical difficulty of upset stomach and nervousness and were unable to handle it easily. The agency felt that this couple could not accept Alice as she was, as their own ideas about the child they desired to adopt were too inflexible. In March, 1950, Alice was removed from this adoptive home and placed in a foster home. This was a warmer environment but the foster mother became ill so that Alice was finally placed for adoption in the A home in May, 1951, after having had five previous placements in her four years of life.

The initial reaction of the A's to Alice, and of her to them, was warm and spontaneous. Alice, the A's, and Al all had had casework help around the placement, and this continued for one year. The A's felt that common sense and love would, in time, overcome any difficulties that arose. As with Al, who adjusted very well to Alice, due to the A's skill in

handling the placement of Alice with him, Alice came into a knowledge of her past and her adoption very easily and naturally. She was well adjusted and completely accepted by all of the A's friends and relatives, and fitted well into community life with them. The A's geared things to Alice's abilities, and felt that they were unusually lucky to have a daughter as well as a son. They did things as a family and at the last interview in 1952, upon the legal adoption, seemed to be functioning as a happy, well-integrated family with a mutual sense of belonging to each other.

The "B" Case.-- Mr. B. was born in 1925, a Protestant of Norwegian descent. His mother died when he was young and he grew up with his maternal grandmother and two siblings on a Midwestern farm. Despite his mother's death, his father and relatives maintained close family ties. He feels that his childhood and early years were as happy as they could be, considering the loss of his mother. When World War II came he was in high school; he decided not to go on to college even though he had the opportunity. Instead, he went into the navy. While in Service he met his wife and settled in R. I. upon discharge. He was married when he was twenty years old.

Mr. B. took additional courses in business and was a stock control clerk earning \$64.48 weekly. He took an extra job as a gasoline station attendant nights. Mrs. B. worked early in the marriage, and they bought a five room ranch house which the worker evaluating the home felt, was very attractively

furnished, and gave the impression of cheerfulness and a warm, relaxed atmosphere.

Mrs. B. was of French-English descent, a Catholic, and born in 1924. She had two siblings and a warm, happy youth. Her mother was a foster mother for the State, and the household was felt to be one of the agency's best homes for warmth and emotional security for foster children. Mrs. B. had always been in good health, and had two years of junior college after high school. She was 21 years of age when married. She worked six years, and saved with her husband to buy a house and get established financially.

Mr. B. was sterile from having had the mumps. Mrs. B. knew this, as did Mr. B., before marriage. They had a wholesome attitude towards this and did not feel it was any emotional handicap to their marriage, or a problem of any consequence psychologically in their relationship with each other. They still tried to see if they could have children, had medical consultations, and accepted the fact they could not without neurotic reactions.

Mrs. B. said that she had enjoyed working, but that she enjoyed staying home, and felt her role was that of a wife and mother primarily. The wide circle of congenial friends and the warm family relationships the B's had with Mrs. B's family, who lived near them, all indicated they were interested in people and enjoyed life. They were congenial with Mr. B's

people but because of the distance between them could not be as intimate on a daily basis, as they were with Mrs. B's people.

Since marriage, Mr. B. had become a Catholic. The agency determined that this change of religion was in no way connected with applying for a child, as R. I. law does not allow couples of mixed religion to adopt children from Child Welfare Services. This was a sincere conviction of Mr. B's that the change in religion answered his own needs, and that it was a mutual sharing of views with Mrs. B.

During the first six years of marriage, the B's worked together, had joined community groups such as amateur dramatic societies, enjoyed entertaining, and were friendly and helpful with their relatives. They both had a sense of humor and were felt to have good judgement and common sense, in the agency evaluation.

Mrs. B's mother became ill, and she had to give up boarding foster children. The B's had become especially fond of one of the children Mrs. B's mother cared for. He was a little boy about two and a half years old. The B's applied to adopt a child anyway, but said that they would like to adopt Bobby, this little boy, if it were possible.

Bobby was born in 1948, and committed a year later to the custody of Child Welfare Services. He had spent the first four and a half months with his mother, and the next eight and a half months with a foster mother, which his mother had

arranged for herself. At 13 months, on commitment to CWS he went to another foster home. At 15 months he was moved to another, and then a third, Mrs. B's mother's. Four months later he went back to live with his natural mother. She was unable to care for him, and three months later he returned to Mrs. B's mother. Unfortunately, Mrs. B's mother became ill, so that after three months he was again moved to another foster home. The B's had meantime applied for adoption some time ago, so that their request to adopt Bobby was evaluated and he was placed with them in November, 1951.

He was three and a half years old, having had eight placements since his birth before the adoptive one, which made nine. Mrs. B. was 27 years old at the time of placement, and Mr. B. was 26 years old. Bobby had a marked Oriental appearance, which the B's accepted completely, feeling he was a wonderful child. The doctors felt this appearance would diminish and it did as he grew older. Bobby's I.Q. was 97 at age two, despite his deprivations.

The B's felt that by gearing things to Bobby's abilities and needs, accepting him as he was, and recognizing his individual strengths he would develop normally. They kept any problems in the right perspective, feeling Bobby's presence in the home was a wonderful event, and something to cherish and value greatly. He became a happy and outgoing child, and sensitive and loving. His adjustment in the home and family was excellent, and he was devoted to the B's.

In the course of foster boarding with Mrs. B's mother, Bobby's natural mother was known to the family and the B's. The B's handled this very easily, accepted her as part of Bobby's past, and helped him to integrate the past with the present and future. It is unusual in a placement from Child Welfare Services that the adoptive parents know the natural parents. However, in this case, the strengths of the B's indicated they could handle the situation for Bobby's benefit. This proved well founded confidence.

So marked was the success of Bobby's adjustment with the B's after all of his traumatic experiences, that when the B's applied for a little girl two years later, the agency confidently placed a six month old girl with them. Bobby was secure with the B's and participated in the placement plans for his baby sister without any known abnormal reactions.

2. Cases from the Unsuccessful Group

The following two cases are summarized from the group of unsuccessful adoptions, who were children adopted through various agencies, or privately, from all parts of the country, who became so emotionally disturbed that they required resident treatment at the Emma Pendleton Bradley Home in Riverside R. I.

The "C" Case.-- Mr. C. was born in 1915 into the Protestant faith, one of seven siblings. Mr. C's mother died when he was about 11 years old. His father remarried a woman who had five

children of her own, and who rejected Mr. C. to the point that he went to live with a married brother. He completed grammar school, worked, and went into the Navy at 17 years of age. His youth had been very poor financially, and he worked as soon as he was able for the necessities of life, even though he lived with his married brother. He first married in 1936, when he was 21 years of age. He had decided that the Navy was his career, and he took additional schooling in Service.

The first Mrs. C. was 20 years old at marriage. She had been married before to a man many years her senior and had adopted a boy during this marriage. The boy was scalded to death and the marriage terminated in divorce. The C's were married eight years, moving around a lot because of Mr. C's Navy duty. When they had been married eight years, they adopted a boy three and a half years old from an agency, moving away shortly afterwards. Mr. C. was then 30 years old and Mrs. C. was 29 years old. When Charles, the boy, was seven years old, Mrs. C. was in an auto accident. She was very obese and had hypertension, and was alcoholic. As a result of the accident both of her legs had to be amputated. They did not heal satisfactorily and in the next two years she was in and out of the hospital, with subsequent operations. The father was at sea during portions of this period and various people had to look after Charles. However, his emotional disturbance was not apparent up to this point,

although he had normal anxiety about Mrs. C's illness and felt her loss greatly when she died two years after her accident, when he was nine years old. She is supposed to have been inconsistent, punishing, rejecting and loving to the boy, depending on her moods.

Four months after her death, Mr. C. married the nurse who cared for his first wife. He was 36 years old, his second wife was 38 years old, and Charles was nine years old. The second Mrs. C. had never been married before, and had done a variety of types of public nursing and allied work. She was ambitious herself, and took courses towards a college degree, often commenting on her husband's lack of education as well as being totally disparaging about his first wife.

After a while, Mr. C. went to sea, leaving Mrs. C. with Charles. It was at this point that his emotional disturbance became pronounced. Mrs. C. could not like him, and became terrified of him, locking him in his room at night because she feared he would harm her. Once he cut up a doll, painting it red, and she was sure that he meant that he would like to do this with her.

The chief complaints, when Mrs. C. took Charles to a psychiatrist, eleven months after her marriage to Mr. C., were aggressiveness with other children, disobedience, stealing, lying, hyperactivity, short attention span, and school failure, with problems of social adjustment in school.

Mrs. C. then told her husband that Charles would have to be placed elsewhere, or she would leave. Seven months later Charles was admitted to Bradley Home with a diagnosis of passive-aggressive type, aggressive type disorder. The C's seldom visited. Once, when after three years at Bradley, it was felt that Charles could be discharged to another placement, Mrs. C. and her husband took him to have him tested to try and have him placed in a state school for the feeble-minded. This was after she had been told repeatedly that his I.Q. of 87, with a higher potential, was within the normal range.

As Charles was then thirteen, and the age limit at Bradley is twelve, and it was felt that he could benefit from another type of placement, the C's were asked to make an appropriate plan for him. Mrs. C. thwarted this, refusing to cooperate, or encouraging her husband to cooperate. Finally, Charles was committed to the custody of CWS as a homeless child. There seemed to be impediments to many of the possible placements for him suggested by Bradley to the C's, and Mrs. C's attitude was very rejecting in any contacts these other agencies had in evaluating Charles' application for placement.

Meantime, Mrs. C. had a baby. Mr. C. was quite passive, although he apparently had some regard for Charles and always paid for his care. Mr. C. was naturally pleased to become a father, and Mrs. C. was still threatening to take the baby and leave him if he ever thought of taking Charles home.

Charles will continue under state custody, with the parents paying the full rate for his care. Fortunately, he does identify with Mr. C. in that he admires him as a Navy officer very much and wants to join the Navy at an early age. Placements away from home until maturity will be the only possible plan, it seems at this point, for Charles.

The "D" Case.-- Mr. D. was born in South America, of Spanish-Catholic background. His family was very wealthy and his brothers and relatives had interests in the United States as well as in South America. Therefore, he traveled between the two countries all of his life. He received a B.S. degree from a college in this country, took graduate work and special training, and went into Foreign Service. He apparently had a sound family life early and enjoyed good relations with his relatives and two brothers. In 1936, when he was 33 years of age, he married a girl 17 years old.

This first Mrs. D. was born in 1919, in South America, was also of Spanish-Catholic background, and was very frivolous. She enjoyed parties and was always flirting with other men. The D's came to this country and the marriage did not improve. Mr. D. thought that by adopting a child it would help his wife to settle down. She did not want to do this, but he insisted, and after eight years of marriage they adopted a child from an agency. The boy was two months old at placement. Mrs. D. was 25 years old and Mr. D. was 41 years old.

The D's went back to South America shortly afterwards. There were many hectic verbal and physical battles between the D's in the presence of David, the boy. David always sided with the father in arguments. Mrs. D. had two children after the adoption.

When David was seven years old, Mrs. D. had an illegitimate child, which resulted in a divorce between the D's. Mr. D. gained custody of David. All of David's care had been left for the servants by Mrs. D. so that this was no personal loss to him as a mother figure. He was, however, fond of the paternal grandfather who was a mild, kindly man. Mr. D. traveled and left David at home, living with this grandfather.

In April 1952, Mr. D. remarried in the U. S. His second wife was a college graduate with post graduate study and had had a varied career in colorful jobs in large cities, working on magazines and as personnel advisor to large companies. She was 27 years old and Mr. D. was 49 years old at the time of the marriage.

For a brief period, after coming to this country from South America in August, 1952, David was with the D's. This did not prove harmonious, and after a month, David went to a camp and then to boarding school. Mrs. D. told Mr. D. he could not have David with them, or else she could not continue the marriage. As intellectual as she tried to be concerning David's emotional problems, she could not adjust to him and

was quite rejecting. Mrs. D. felt that her husband was kind, gentle, and considerate, but she had no emotional understanding of David's problems and felt placement away from home was necessary. Mr. D. felt that he was too lenient, and not stubborn enough in upholding what was right, but was unable to be more forceful in the home.

Mr. D's income of about \$1,000 a month, was adequate to provide boarding school placement for David. David did well at boarding school but the school felt him to be a lonely, lost child, yearning for affection. The D's decided not to continue boarding school, and David went home again. Mr. D. claimed that his wife was threatening to leave him if some other plan for David could not be made. The chief complaints at admission to Bradley in January, 1955, were destructive of toys and clothing, deceptive, lying, stealing money and candy from home and stores, aggressive with children and siblings of the second marriage, temper tantrums, cruelty to animals, playing with fire and matches, interested and preoccupied with death and cemeteries, possible hallucinations and mood swings. His diagnosis was personality trait disturbance, passive-aggressive type.

After six months at Bradley, it was felt that David had received the maximum benefit of service which could be offered to him and he was at the age of twelve, when another plan would have to be made for him, as Bradley does not treat

adolescents. After casework, David was discharged to his parents, who planned to send him either to a boarding school or back to the paternal grandparents in South America, where he seemed to have been happier and enjoyed more security. The D's were expecting another baby, and Mrs. D. had not been able to work through her feelings about David so that placement away from home until maturity does seem, at this time, to be the only plan for David's future that his parents can make for him.

In the D case, it is interesting to note that Mr. D. stated that all of the correspondence, and history-taking for his original application to adopt a child had been by mail. This midwestern agency has a policy allowing this practice, and the financial success of applicants is important to approval. He said there was only one brief office interview with the agency, and the baby was next presented to them. The D's moved to South America shortly after placement.

In the C case, there was a little more perfunctory but apparently superficial evaluation of the application by the southern agency. A child was placed, and the C's shortly afterwards moved to another part of the country.

Therefore, although they were agency adoptions, casework service around adoption was not given. The home evaluation studies were barely minimum to be legal. These two agencies were not operating adequately in evaluating adoptive parents,

and therefore, were not serving the best interests of children in their care.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate and compare a group of nine couples who successfully adopted children from Child Welfare Services, Providence, R. I., with a group of nine adoptive couples whose children had become so emotionally disturbed that they required residential treatment at the Emma Pendleton Bradley Home in Riverside, R. I., in order to see what qualities in each group contributed to the success or failure of the adoption, and to relate these findings to other studies made about adoption. The nine cases from Child Welfare Services were all of the placements made by the sole adoption worker for the agency in 1951. This includes ten children, as one couple adopted two sisters. The cases from Bradley Home include all adopted children admitted for treatment from January 1, 1951, through January 1, 1956. The method for data collection was analysis of the case records of both groups by the use of a schedule for information secured, used for each record. This schedule covered the areas of the family and personal history of the adoptive couples and children; their attitudes, interests, feelings, and background about each child and their relationship with the adoptive parents, and the family relationships as a whole.

All of the couples in the successful group were practising Catholics. Those in the unsuccessful group were of varied religions, including two Catholics, but did not practise their respective faiths to any extent or use religion as a source of help in trouble as did the couples in the successful group.

A few individuals in the successful group went to college, while the majority went to college in the unsuccessful group. The level of academic accomplishment was higher on the whole for the entire unsuccessful group than for the successful group.

Seven of the eighteen individuals in the successful group were Italian. However, the findings on this point would be material for a special study, showing how the possible patterns of different cultural groups affect child development and adoption. The nationalities of those in the unsuccessful group were varied, as were those of the successful group who were not Italian, so that no specific conclusions may be drawn from this evidence.

The successful group came from families approximately twice as large as those in the unsuccessful group. Those in the successful group had a greater sense of family closeness, and assumed responsibility in family matters, not always financial alone, but a general sense of helpfulness to the other members of the family. They, in turn, expected and received similar attitudes of helpfulness from their relatives

in times of stress. Those in the unsuccessful group were not close to their relatives in many instances, due to earlier family friction and disunity.

The health of those in the successful group was good on the whole, except for minor organic problems, while the difficulties in the unsuccessful group were of a more nervous and psychosomatic nature.

All of the women in the successful group married men of equal or superior economic status, whereas in the unsuccessful group some women married men of lower economic status than their own. None of the men in the successful group had a low economic status, and none of these men inherited economic security from their families, but achieved their status by their own initiative. Some of the men in the unsuccessful group inherited financial security and were above average in economic status, some were average and a few were low.

The average age at marriage for the men in the successful group was 22.5 years, three years younger than for the men in the unsuccessful group. The average age at marriage for the women in the successful group was 22.1 years, 1.4 years older than for the women in the unsuccessful group. The average age difference between husband and wife was 0.4 years for the successful group and 4.7 years for the unsuccessful group.

The earlier age of marriage for the men in the successful group could reflect readiness to accept responsibility earlier

in life, despite the economic problems of earlier marriages.

This was the first and only marriage for all of the couples in the successful group, whereas nearly half of the unsuccessful group had two or more marriages. This would indicate that those in the successful group had more emotional stability to work out problems of interpersonal adjustments than those in the unsuccessful group, and that marriage was a happy partnership for the first group and an ordeal of maladjustments for the second group, according to their own statements in the records studied.

The adopted child was rejected by the new parents in the subsequent marriages in the unsuccessful group in all but one case.

The majority of the men in the successful group did manual work and the average income for the group was \$4,050 annually. None of the men in the unsuccessful group did manual work, except an alcoholic who did odd jobs, and the average annual income was \$7,088.

In the successful group, all but two of the couples owned their own homes. Aside from the adequacies outlined by agency standards, these homes reflected a relaxed atmosphere, "a comfortable, hospitable, lived-in quality," according to the workers evaluating the homes.

In the unsuccessful group, half were home owners and half rented. Three home owners had moved around before they

settled down and bought homes. When this group moved, they moved from state to state, rather than from neighborhood to neighborhood.

None of the women seemed to stress homemaking as being important in the unsuccessful group, in contrast to the enthusiasm of the women in the successful group for homemaking.

In the successful group, the following elements appeared in varying degrees in all of the couples studied: (1) easy, relaxed, freedom of expression between the parents; (2) comfortable, easy-going philosophy for life and its problems; (3) shared decisions and were considerate of each other; (4) could tolerate frustration for future rewards; (5) shared activities and goals together; (6) a sense of humor; (7) all of the women accepted their roles as wives and homemakers with a feeling of pleasurable accomplishment, gearing family life to the husband's schedule, including him in family plans and recreation as the head of the family.

In the unsuccessful group, none of the couples seemed to have a good relationship with each other. Three were divorced after adopting a child. None of the women enjoyed homemaking or found contentment in family life. Six of the men were out of the home a lot, engaged in personal or community activities, but not in family recreation. Six of the women were controlling and domineering, and five of the men had a passive attitude towards the home and family. It appears that the individual

problems of these parents were so great that they could not adjust to the interpersonal demands of a harmonious marital or family relationship.

All of the couples in the successful group were close to their families and had a warm circle of friends who were an integral part of accepting the adopted child socially.

In all of the unsuccessful cases there was considerable difficulty in the parents' relationships with their own parents and families and they did not form lasting friendships. To some degree, most of the couples were isolated from their relatives because of earlier family friction.

Only one man was sterile in the successful group, while the other eight couples were unable to have children because of some organic difficulty in the woman. All of the couples were reasonably happy before they adopted, making social adjustments to compensate for the lack of children without becoming neurotic.

Five of the men in the unsuccessful group presumably were sterile. One couple was afraid of having a defective child and three of the women and one man took the adopted child merely to please their spouse, and not because of their own desires to adopt. The motives in the unsuccessful group were not sound ones for adopting a child. Two tried to save a failing marriage.

All families in the successful group had casework around the adoption for a year or more. In the unsuccessful group only two families had anything resembling casework. It was not the agency policy at the time to offer casework service with the parents around adoption.

All the recorded behavior patterns of the parents in the successful group seemed socially desirable, with no indication of emotional instability.

In the unsuccessful group there were manifestations of personality problems and disturbances of the parents. Passivity of the man in the house was a problem in six cases, with the woman being very domineering. None of the women in this group expressed any fondness for her role as a wife and mother. There was much arguing in the home, with parents and children siding against each other in various alliances. These parents were detached in discussing personal relationships, and in talking about the adopted child, who always remained "somebody else's child" to them.

The average age of the children in the successful group at the time of adoption was four years, while those in the unsuccessful group averaged a little over one year for agency placements and almost four months for private placements. Child Welfare Services, the agency placing the successful group is now striving to make earlier placements to prevent the trauma to the child of repeated placements early in life.

The agency now works more intensively with the mothers before the birth of the child and during the first year. However, in these cases, the strength of the adoptive placement was sufficient to minimize the damage to the child of earlier placements. But this was still a negative factor that had to be compensated for by the adoptive parents.

In the unsuccessful group the children were placed earlier when private placements were made than when agency placements were made. However, these agency placements were made earlier for the children than those in the successful group. This was an advantage ordinarily, in adoptive procedure, but in these case the adoptive environment proved disturbing to the child emotionally.

The older age at placement in the successful group did not affect the couples' ability as parents. Perhaps because of greater maturity they were able to have a broader perspective of the problems involved and had a deeper appreciation of the value of children to a family, having wanted and waited so long. Ideally, younger parents are supposed to have greater patience and endurance for the physical strains involved, but this did not prove so with the unsuccessful group. This may be because they lacked the emotional stability to evaluate and handle the problems of adoptive parenthood and their own capacity for relationships with other people had been impaired or crippled by their earlier emotional experiences.

Parents in the successful group had been married twice as long as those in the unsuccessful group. They had a longer time to work out marital adjustments and had organized their goals in life, having sound motivations for adoption.

Both groups of children were about equal on the I.Q. scores and both groups had their own special problems which would have a crippling effect on their performing at their highest potential ability.

Children in the successful group had an average number of five placements, plus their adoptive one, while those in the unsuccessful group had an average of two placements, plus their adoptive one. Those in the unsuccessful group thus had an initial advantage by having had earlier and fewer placements before adoption. This advantage was offset by the disturbed environments in which the children were placed. The parents in the successful group, therefore, had to overcome the damaging effect of more, and later placements in the child's early years. However, helping them to do this was the agency caseworker, while those in the unsuccessful group did not have this aid.

The children in the successful group had an average of 4.5 years of casework help directly with them, from the time of their commitment to Child Welfare Services through the final legal adoption. This casework probably helped them to integrate their past, present, and future, their concept of

who they were, why they could not be with their own people, and helped them to accept a new environment and new parents.

The children in the unsuccessful group did not have any casework around adoption. In the course of treatment at Bradley Home, they had psychiatric casework around the concept of themselves as well as around their troubled parent-child relationships. However, this later casework is not the casework being evaluated in this study.

In the successful group, none of the adoptive parents had their own children after adoption, whereas six of the children in the unsuccessful group had siblings enter the home after placement. Five of the parents in the unsuccessful group had their own children after adoption, and one adopted a natural sister of an adopted boy. Two families in the successful group adopted second children three years after placement of the first adopted child.

In very few cases in either group did the family have natural or adopted children before or after adopting this child.

In nearly all cases in the unsuccessful group, sibling rivalry became a severe emotional problem to the child, while in the successful group no such problems arose. This may be because of the consideration both the parents and agency gave to the prevention of sibling rivalry situation when placing the children.

There was no formal psychological appraisal of the parents by psychiatrists or trained psychologists, in the successful group in the course of the adoptive evaluation by the agency. However, their abilities and capacities as adoptive parents were carefully appraised by the staff and found to be satisfactory to the agency's standards.

In the course of application, admission and treatment of the children in the unsuccessful group at Bradley Home, the qualities of the parents were evaluated in relation to their effect on the child's disturbance. The mothers were found to be having difficulty in interpersonal relationships, and tended to be controlling. They tended to be rejecting of themselves as women, of their husbands, and of their adopted children.

The fathers acted inconsistently in handling the family problems. In most cases the passivity of the man was a problem in the household. They also had crippled capacities for human relationships and, like the mothers, had difficulty in involving themselves with other members of the family.

In the successful group, the main characteristics found by the workers in every case was the ability of the parents to give of themselves to others, and to accept the child as another individual with his own rights and responsibilities.

A majority of the couples in the unsuccessful group openly preferred their own children to the adopted children, constantly making unfavorable comparisons to the adopted

child's disadvantage. A minority of the couples involved themselves very little with the child, as if he were a possession, not an individual. These parents, in general, felt that they had been unjustly given an inferior child who became a burden. They had preconceived fantasies of what a child should be like, and tried to make the child fit into this mould. When he could not, they rejected him.

All of the children in the successful group related well to the couples and wanted to see them again, after their initial contact with them.

As there was no casework with the child in the unsuccessful group, the accounts of the child's reaction are from the parents or from meagre information in this area in the case records from agencies who sent information about the placement to the Bradley Home after the child was admitted. A few of the children were extremely fearful, with the fear persisting after placement for some time. The five under four months of age apparently adjusted well. One little girl had an initially hostile reaction to the mother who did not want to adopt her, but related well to the father who thought she was very appealing. This hostility with the mother later became one of the main areas of difficulty in her emotional disturbance.

In the successful group, all children made good adjustments in the homes into which they went; school adjustments were worked out, and there were no social problems. Two of

these children had earlier unsuccessful adoptive placements, due to the inflexible idea held by both sets of adoptive parents in these earlier placements of what a child should be. Their good adjustment in the cases studied indicates that the child was able to adjust to adoption, but that the trouble in the previous placements was within the personalities of the adults involved.

In the unsuccessful group, the child's maladjustment carried over into the school and community. All became maladjusted in the home by five, but the parents did not seek help until much later. There was one boy who adjusted fairly well at school and in the community, but not at home. This was the only exception, and the rest of the children were so upset they could not attend school and the community constantly complained about their destructive activities.

In the successful group the parents took problems of adjustment in adoption as a matter of course, feeling they could be worked out. They had the advantage of casework service in this, but none of them ever questioned that they would work out or thought of any other plan for the child.

All parents in the unsuccessful group tried discipline in varying degrees to manage the child or cure his problems. When this failed, nearly all went to Child Guidance type of clinics or agencies, and one sent the child to boarding school. This group felt that "poor heredity" was the cause of the

child's difficulties and found it hard to see their part in the child's disturbed condition.

In the successful group the predominant attitude was that the child should be accepted, respected, and treated as an individual.

In the unsuccessful group the parents could not accept or treat the child as an individual, but tried to fit him into their fantasy picture. This was an immature approach to parenthood and a narcissistic one, in that the needs of the parents and not the child had to be met.

Two-thirds of the couples in the unsuccessful group did not plan to take the child home when treatment at the Bradley Home was completed, feeling that placement away from home until maturity was the only possible solution for them. The other third did plan for the child to return home after treatment.

Most of the Bradley children had a diagnosis of passive-aggressive type, and one child had childhood schizophrenia.

In the successful group all expressed pleasure at having a child complete the family unit. In the unsuccessful group the predominant feeling seemed to be that they had been "stuck" unjustly with an inferior child who had become a burden.

The children in the successful group indicated that adoption meant security for them and at last "belonging" to parents of their own.

In the unsuccessful group, some children felt unwanted because of the one rejecting parent in the marriage who had not wanted to adopt, some felt that they were bad and wanted to be loved by warm parents, and a few had confused identities of a severe degree, with distorted self-images.

All couples in the successful group found handling of the adoption an enjoyable, natural, easy process. The child was made to feel that something very desirable happened in his life. In the unsuccessful group, a few never told the child that he was adopted; one ignored the subject after a playmate told the child.

2. Conclusions and Interpretations

Some of these findings are somewhat similar to those in the study made by the Child Adoption Research Committee, Inc., published in March, 1951, entitled A Follow-Up Study of Adoptive Families.^{1/} This study was done on 51 cases from the Free Synagogue Child Adoption Committee Agency in New York. They divided the adoption cases into three groups: successful, fairly successful, and unsuccessful. The successful placement, for this study is described in the following manner:

"....is characterized by a good marriage as already defined, by realistic standards for the child's behavior and achievement, with no undue pressure put upon the child and by the following parental attitudes:

^{1/}Child Adoption Research Committee, Inc., A Follow-Up Study of Adoptive Families, New York, 1951, p. 13.

the parents are warm and affectionate; they are admiring, but not without judgement; they are easy and relaxed, for the most part, and enjoy their child; and have no undue anxiety about their parental responsibilities; they are mild in their discipline; and they allow a child freedom to experiment and take risks suitable to his age, while setting limits that will contribute to his growth and safety.

The difference between the fair and successful placement is the increased tension in the parent-child relationship, and usually one of the attitudes noted is extreme--either excessive, or less than it should be. The unsuccessful placement is primarily the situation where the parents reject the child, with too little affection, or excessively over-protect and infantilize him. (In addition, two of the other parental attitudes usually are extreme.)"

This study will be referred to as the CARC (Child Adoption Research Committee) study for the purposes of comparison here.

In both the CARC and the present study, there is less difference in age between the husband and wife in the successful group. The age difference between the husband and wife in both studies is almost identical, being 4.33 for the CARC group and 4.66 for the present study.

In the length of time married at placement the successful group was married longer, being 10.3 years for the CARC group and 13.6 for the present study. The unsuccessful group had been married seven years in both studies.

In the CARC study,^{1/} on page 28, is the statement:

"It is particularly striking that in the unsuccessful group, five out of six fathers has had college or professional education. This is true in only approximately

1/Op. cit., p. 28.

half of the fairly successful and successful families. In education of the mother, however, the three groups are very similar. Most of the women in this study, as a general population, have had high school or vocational training only."

In the present study, "the completed level of academic work is therefore higher for the unsuccessful group of adoptive parents."

In both studies, the successful group had a lower income than the unsuccessful group. In the CARC study the successful group had an income of \$3910, and this study showed \$4,050.22 as the average income. In the CARC study, the unsuccessful group had an income of \$4950 for an average and this study showed an average of \$7,088.

In both studies the data showed a higher percentage of sterility in men in the unsuccessful groups than in the successful groups. Sterility in men and women is the only portion of the data being compared, as the present study did not treat the other causes that the CARC study did, such as pregnancy experience, pregnancy contraindications, etc. The CARC study showed 20 per cent of the men in the successful group were sterile, and the present study showed 11 per cent. For the unsuccessful group, the CARC study showed 33 per cent of the men were sterile, and the present study showed 55 per cent of the men. The psychological implications of this may be that women are able to handle their inability to reproduce with less harmful effects to their psychic balance than men. It

may mean that men are better able to accept it in women, than women are able to accept it in men. Our culture has an association between sexuality and sterility in men but not in women. This is just conjecture on the basis of the higher proportion of sterility for men in the unsuccessful group. As sterility may have a psychological component, it may also mean that men in this group have more emotional difficulty to begin with and are therefore less equipped for adoption. It could also mean that adopting a child other than their own has more special significance for men who are sterile than for women who are unable to have a child.

In the book, The Adopted Break Silence^{1/} by Jean Paton, which is a study of forty adopted adults who are contacted for their life story and their feelings regarding adoption, there is a section about the unhappy adopted ones, whose adoption "did not work." The following are some quotations from those adopted:

"I didn't like my foster parents and it is my belief that they didn't like me. It seemed to me they took me as an obligation and only as a maid in the house."

"My foster parents separated when I was twelve years old after battling for many years. I have supported myself since age 15."

"My foster mother was emotionally unfitted to rear a child. Left me with a feeling of insecurity and an inferiority complex. Made for an unhappy adulthood."

^{1/}Jean Paton, The Adopted Break Silence, Life History Study Center, Philadelphia, 1954, p. 51.

"It didn't work in that the people who adopted me were emotionally immature."

"My foster mother was and is a psychopath with whom I had and have absolutely nothing in common. She is a brutal and domineering woman."

"I don't think a child can grow up normally unless he is lucky enough to have two emotionally balanced parents who are intelligent."

These comments by the children have many elements similar to the emotional instability and immaturity found in the group of adoptive parents of the children at Bradley Home in this study.

If these couples of the unsuccessful group in this study were so emotionally lacking in capacity for adopted parenthood, the question may be raised, "How did they ever get a child?" Only four of this unsuccessful group were agency placements, while five were private placements, arranged by the natural and adoptive parents, and sometimes an intermediate person. They still had to be approved by the state agency for the legal adoption to become final, although the study is much less intensive for such placements. This group does represent many states in the country.

It would seem the answer lies in the attitude of the agencies. Did they feel it was better than what this child would have otherwise? Did they feel that any home was better than an institution? Did they feel that any permanent home is better than a foster home which may sometime force the child's removal for reasons of the child or the foster family's

changed behavior or circumstances? Did they feel the pressure of too many cases and not enough skilled workers? Was it one more case to clear up and put in the closed files for the agency statistics? Did they realize the risks and figure it might work in spite of them?

Whatever may be the answer, the cases were closed with the final adoptions being granted, only to be reopened at the Bradley Home years later.

The successful group is a great contrast to the unsuccessful group. It seems like too great a contrast of black and white. Bradley Home is for severely disturbed children. Yet how can that many children in between these two extremes be measured, who do not reach agencies for the help they need?

In the book, The Adopted Break Silence^{1/} by Jean Paton, there is also a section dealing with the successfully adopted who speak of the experience. The following are quotations:

"I was loved and treated as their own child."

"It has always seemed natural, logical, and undoubtedly was beneficial."

"I do not feel I have been treated any differently than a natural son."

"I was never given any cause to feel that it shouldn't work. If anything, as an adult I realized that I had enjoyed a happier and more secure childhood than most of my neighbors, and was the recipient of all manner of treatment far beyond the call of duty."

^{1/}Op. cit., p. 49.

"I was always treated as my foster parents' 'own flesh and blood' and given every opportunity. I rarely even think of myself as adopted."

Another writes:^{1/}

"A good deal of (foster parents') success was, I think, due to a complete lack of formal education counselling, or psychological knowledge. No one had ever told them it was a particularly difficult situation, so they did not treat it as one."

Another writes:^{2/}

"First, I think should come what I think were my parent's feelings which brought about the adoption to begin with. Most important, perhaps, is that they did not think of adoption simply because they couldn't bear life without tiny arms wound around their necks, or similar sentimental reasons. Instead, they liked all children."

The writer then describes their experience with neices, nephews, friends, and young people to whom they were close and parental figures in their life. The writer adds:

"Their own characters had a lot to do with it. They were both deeply religious. Their religious feeling was not superficial, and in fact much that they enjoyed was in a 'wordly sense'."

The writer then adds further, when describing how his adoptive mother told him, on the first day of school, that as long as he and she knew the real facts about his adoption, nothing anyone ever could say could bother them, "I was given an armor I never used, but I was ready with it if the occasion arose."

^{1/}Jean Paton, op. cit., p. 143.

^{2/}Ibid., p. 145.

The subject continues, that whenever he presented a problem his parents thought of it as one all parents had with children, and not something special because he was adopted. When his adoptive father died, and someone said that the writer was lucky to have had him for a father, the adoptive mother replied, "Why would anyone think of that? He was just as fortunate to have you."

The subject goes on to say of his adopted relatives:

"The attitude of most of their relatives enriched the whole adoption....I have aunts and uncles and cousins in both families who have always accepted me as simply the child of my parents, and some of these relationships have been deeper than many of my friends who have blood-relationships...."

Paton has classified forty cases according to the adopted child's statements: (a) It worked in 22 cases; (b) It did and it did not work in 8 cases; (c) It did not work in 10 cases. Therefore, it was considered a success by the child in over fifty per cent of the cases, a failure in twenty-five per cent, and partially successful in twenty per cent.

Another portion of this book deals with the ease and naturalness of the successful parents in handling adoption, even letting the child keep his natural name as his middle name, and accepting him and his past so that the child did not have to fight to preserve or create a positive image of himself and his ancestors, with resulting resentment to the adoptive parents who would try and deprive him of this heritage. It deals with the distress experienced by children

whose adoptive parents did not treat the adoption easily.

In The Adopted Break Silence^{1/} the adopted adults mention most of these factors isolated in the present study as those being those most meaningful to them in a successful adoption.

In the book An Adopted Child Looks at Adoption^{2/} by Carol S. Prentice, the author says in her conclusion:

"Adoption is a continuing process. It is static neither in fact nor in technique. Therefore, the idea of a conclusion in any way connected with it is an anomaly. Except in so far as the legal procedure puts an end to the natural relationship, there is never anything finished about adoption. And even the law can not alter the bloodstream!

Since adoption is an excursion into the future ramifications unto the third and fourth generation, and beyond, it is a transaction of social importance and not the purely personal and private affair of other days. A social conscience has been awakened both as to its possibilities and also its implications."

The groups studied in the present study are limited in number, and therefore conclusions could not be drawn as broadly as if the study surveyed thousands of cases. However, the qualities found in both groups do resemble qualities found in the other studies cited for comparison.

Because adoption is just the beginning, and not the end of the child's problem, those in any way responsible for facilitating the legal and moral parenthood assumed by the adoptive parents have a growing obligation to serve and safe-

^{1/}Jean Paton, op. cit., p. 49.

^{2/}Carol S. Prentice, An Adopted Child Looks at Adoption, D. Appleton Century Company, 1940, p. 212.

guard to the utmost of their skill and knowledge the interests of the child, his natural parents, and his adoptive parents. In this way, the adopted ones in turn, can become parents able to give love and security to a new generation, yet to be conceived.

Accepted:
David Landy
Research Advisor

APPENDIX

SCHEDULE FOR DATA ON EACH CASE

Name

Birthdate

Religion

Education

Nationality

Number of Siblings

Health

Economic Status Before Marriage

Date of Marriage

Age at Marriage - Number of Marriages

Occupation and Income

Type and Length of Residence

Relationship to Each Other

Relations with Family and Friends

Motives for Adoption

Casework with Parents Around Adoption

Symptomatic Behavior in Parents

Age of Child at Adoption

Past History of Child

I.Q. of Child

Age of Parents at Placement

Number of Years Married When Child Placed

Casework with Child

SCHEDULE FOR DATA ON EACH CASE

Other Siblings; Before and After Adoption

Psychological Appraisal of Parents

Parents' Feelings Regarding Other People's Children

Initial Reaction of Parents to Child

Initial Reaction of Child to Parents

Subsequent Adjustment in Home, School, and Community

Parent's Attitude to Initial Disturbance in Child

Parent's Attitude for Child's Future at Admission to Bradley

Age and Diagnosis of Child on Admission to Bradley

Attitudes of Well-Adjusted Parents to Child's Development

What Adoption Meant to Parents

What Adoption Meant to Children

How Parents Handled Adoption

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