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A study of mother daughter relationships, Family Service Society of Quincy, Massachusetts

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A STUDY OF MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS FAMILY SERVICE SOCIETY OF QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS

A Thesis

Submitted by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

A STUDY OF MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This is a study of mother-daughter relationships in an attempt to find out (a) what are some of the attitudes toward their daughters of mothers who come to a family agency for help; and if they also have sons, how these attitudes differ from their attitudes toward their sons; (b) how these attitudes are expressed in their relationship with their children; (c) how much the situation seems to be affected by the adjustment or non-adjustment of the mothers to their feminine role, including their relationship with their husbands; and (d) ways in which the mothers' attitudes are affected by the help received at the agency.

SCOPE

The study, which was made at the Family Service Society of Quincy, Massachusetts,[1] comprises nine cases of women clients each of whom has one or more daughters under eleven years of age. This was the total number of mothers with little girls of latency age or younger in the writer's caseload between October, 1950, and May, 1951. It was not considered feasible, however, despite the small size of the sample, to augment it with supplementary cases since little information on mother-daughter relationships is available in them.

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1 Quincy is a small, industrial city in New England. According to the Chamber of Commerce, the population was 81,000 in 1951. The Family Service Society was established in 1911.

Three of the nine women studied have young sons as well as daughters. One has a grown daughter, married and living away from home, who in no way affects the study.

METHOD

The method used for obtaining information for this study consisted of personal interviews with each of the nine mothers and with five of the young daughters. Four of the children were interviewed at the request of the mother. A fifth would not be separated from her mother during the interviews, wherefore the material about her was derived from direct observation, as well as from information furnished by her mother. An examination of the recorded case histories provided additional information.

The method of analyzing the material was chronological; the present attitudes of the mothers toward their daughters were analyzed; the present attitudes were then related to factors in the mother's past which seemed to be important in the development of these attitudes; and the reciprocal mother-daughter attitudes were studied for evidence of any bearing they might have upon the social adjustment of the children.

LIMITATIONS

The sample used for this study is small. No conclusive evidence can be based on an examination of only nine cases. Yet a study like this one, however small the sample, has value in that each case in it demonstrates the influence of parent-child relationships on the social adjustment of the child and indicates a need for further study in this field.

Another limitation is the variance in the amount of material

available concerning the cases. Two mothers were seen only once, each in a long, single interview. Four mothers were interviewed between four and six times. Intensive casework was done with the remaining three mothers, and, as a result, their case records yield more complete information than the records on the other six women.

CHAPTER II.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

THE FEMININE ROLE

We live in a patriarchal society.

This is a tenet of our culture. With animals it is different. Animals attach no special prestige to the male. Among them, the family consists primarily of mother and offspring and is a matriarchy, for[1]

> The male, instead of being the head and supporter of the group, is not an essential member of it, and more often than not is altogether absent from it ... Paternity does not exist. The family among animals is not, as the human family is supposed to be, the result of the association of male and female, but the mother is the sole center and bond of it.

Many primitive societies, too, are matriarchies, with the girls or women as the important members. It is civilization which has placed a premium upon the boy.

And although the pattern is changing, although women as well as men now fight for their country, vote, invade all the professions except that of the Presidency, and in a changing economy are often forced, despite marriage and motherhood, to go to work to supplement their husbands' wages, we continue, in the twentieth century, to live in a patriarchal society; or at least, according to Margaret Mead, a "patrinominal, patrilineal, patrilocal and legally, for the most part, a patriarchal society."[2] Nominally the father is still the head of the family and sits

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1 Robert Briffault, The Mothers, p. 22.

2 Margaret Mead, Male and Female, p. 302.

at the head of the table. It is the man who does the courting and gives the child his name; and there are louder cries of joy when a little boy is born.

Civilization has assigned to woman a role which is quieter and more domestic than the role of the male. Traditionally, in our culture, he is the dominant or active, and she the submissive or passive one. He is more independent, she more dependent. Adler, who saw the male as the symbol of power in our society, has defined the difference in terms of a striving for power:[3]

> Woman was in an inferior position; thus the term feminine could be used as a symbol of inferiority. So there is a tendency on the part of all to acquire a more masculine ideal and strive for that.

Physically, the facts of menstruation (still popularly referred to as "the curse") and pregnancy, both generally accompanied by some physical discomfort, are partly responsible for the traditional feminine role, since in woman[4]

> the long period of pregnancy and lactation, and the prolonged helplessness of her child, render her for a considerable period of time economically dependent.

Her economic dependence was an important factor in the traditional division of labor between man and woman, with man as the breadwinner for the family, and woman as the homemaker, including the rearing and the informal education of the children. The feelings and attitudes which the children, consciously and unconsciously, absorb from the mother are an

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3 Clara Thompson, Psychoanalysis, Evolution and Development, p. 132.

4 Havelock Ellis, The Task of Social Hygiene, p. 64.

important part of this education.

Socially, the differentiation between the sexes begins very early, with, in the words of Margaret Mead,[5] the pink and blue ribbons, "blue for a boy and pink for a girl", on the baby's birth announcement; and the traditional feminine pattern is still being followed in preparing the little girl for her part in modern society. Girl-children in the twentieth century still play with dolls in rehearsing for their future maternal role, learn very early to take an interest in their appearance, in order ultimately to attract a suitor, and, on the whole, expect to be married some day. Very rarely does a little girl daydream of growing up to be a spinster, or barren.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN

According to Freud, the character of the women in our culture is deeply influenced by their envy of men because they, the women, have no penis. The astonished little girl finds out the truth one day. She "has seen it and knows she is without it and wants to have it."[6] Because of her lack, she not only solves the Oedipus situation differently from the way boys do, but develops several character traits---narcissism, jealousy and envy, inferiority feelings, vanity and modesty---more strongly than they;[7] and she follows one of three lines of sexual development. She either accepts her sex with equanimity and grace, becomes reconciled to

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5 Margaret Mead, Male and Female, p. 268.

6 Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers, Volume V, p. 191.

7 Viola Klein, The Feminine Character, p. 71.

playing a feminine and passive role and longs for children; or she becomes inhibited and neurotic, with a limited capacity to enjoy or to achieve; or she continues to compete with men and to display various degrees of masculinity. In other words, she becomes (a) a feminine, (b) a neurotic or (c) a masculine woman.

It follows that a woman's acceptance or rejection of her sex is of the greatest importance in determining not only the pattern she sets for her own little girls, but in deciding her attitude toward these little girls.

As for the Oedipus situation, according to Freudian psychology, this is what happens: both boys and girls first love the mother best---naturally, since she takes care of them and satisfies their early needs.

> It is natural that, in the gradual transition from auto-erotism to object-love, the first object of the child's affection should be chosen from amongst those who administer to its bodily needs and comfort. Thus it is probable that in the conditions of normal family life, the mother or the nurse is, in nearly all cases, the first person selected. [8]

During his Oedipal period, when he is between three and six years old, the boy's love for his mother becomes impassioned. It assumes the quality of "a minor love affair".[9] At the age of five or six, however, the little boy gives up his passionate love for his mother, known as the Oedipus complex, and identifies with his father, out of fear, for he is afraid that if he does not stop wanting to marry his mother, father will cut off his penis.

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8 J. C. Flugel, The Psycho-Analytic Study of the Family, p. 15.

9 O. Spurgeon English and Gerald H. J. Pearson, Emotional Problems of Living, p. 77.

The little girl finds no solution. She, too, loves mother best, but when, at three or four or five, she discovers how shockingly she has been cheated in her anatomy, she blames her mother for it and turns to her father, instead. He disappoints her, also. He cannot help her---there is nothing he can do. Compromising, the little girl decides to accept a baby in place of a penis. "Her Oedipus complex culminates in the desire, which is long cherished, to be given a child by her father as a present, to bear him a child."[10] She is disappointed again. She cannot have what she wants until she grows up and bears a son of her own, And even then she may never be satisfied---she may have a daughter!

(In the meantime she has obtained her desire vicariously, by finding a husband.)

IDENTIFICATION

Identification is the process, "chiefly emotional and largely unconscious, by which a person assumes the feelings, thoughts and acts of another person or object."[11]

The child identifies first of all with one of his parents, for they are the first people in his environment, and he has to have models. With which parent he finally identifies is determined toward the end of the Oedipal period, around the fifth or sixth year of his life. It is desirable in our culture for the boy to identify with his father and the girl with her mother; that is, to accept his or her own sex.

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10 Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers, Volume II, p. 275..

11 Richard Hutchings, Psychiatric Word Book, p. 118.

Identification is based on the small child's trusting belief in the omnipotence of his parents, whom he both loves and fears. The father, especially, seems to the child all-powerful, and so he is, for he is big and strong and the child is small and helpless. During the Oedipal stage, the little boy cannot _be_ his father, so he becomes the next best thing, he becomes _like_ father. The little girl cannot _be_ father's wife, so she becomes as much like his wife as possible, she becomes _like_ mother. And in the simplest terms, what is "to identify" but "to be the same as" --- literally, _idem_? What the boy, consciously and unconsciously, is saying to his father, and the girl to her mother, is, "I have decided to love you. Let me be like you." This primary identification with the father or mother seems to take place through introjection, a taking-into-the-self of these model figures and their wishes and commands. But it is also true that no child is simply an identification. He has his own individuality. "He is the new wine of two personalities, his mother's and his father's",[12] but he is even more. "Underlying our approach to casework with children today is the concept ... that the child is a person in his own right and not simply a reflection of his parents."[13]

Later in life the child identifies one person with another through a sort of projection, a way of finding a resemblance, which may be quite unreal, between a new-found friend and father or mother or someone important in the past who, in his turn, resembled father or mother.

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12 W. Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, _Father of the Man_, p.29.

13 Lucille N. Austin, _Child Therapy, A Casework Symposium_, p. 3.

> Consequently the kind of individual whom the adult will love or hate, embrace or avoid, is determined largely by the kind of people he learned to love or hate as a child. 14

This is the basis of friendship and love. In friendship, the process is coloured by conscious and critical elements which temper the identification. In love, the critical faculty is swept aside and the identification is full of unconscious elements and as passionate as the identifications of the Oedipal period. So, willy-nilly, the husband, and later on the child become the recipients---often even the victims---of the mother's identifications.[15] Freud says:

> A husband is, so to speak, never anything but a proxy, never the right man; the first claim upon the feeling of love in a woman belongs to someone else, in typical cases to her father; the husband is at best a second. Now whether the husband is rejected as unsatisfactory depends upon the strength of this fixation and the tenacity with which it is upheld.

Strauss, in his study, has obtained statistical evidence that this view is correct, for he found that the resemblance between parent and mate in regard to personality traits were higher than would be expected on the basis of chance alone.

The child is also enmeshed in his or her mother's identifications:

> Most faulty parent-child relationships are not due to stupidity, ignorance, or a puckish perverseness, but are related to the person's own personality structure, emotional conflicts, biases and prejudices and past experiences, 16

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14 Anselm Strauss, "The Influence of Parent-Images upon Marital Choice," American Sociological Review, October, 1946, pp. 554-559.

15 Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers, Volume IV, p. 229

16 William S. Langford and Katherine M. Wickman, "The Clinical Aspects of Parent-Child Relationships", Mental Hygiene, January, 1948, p.82.

and since the mother may unwittingly be confusing him with someone in her own early life, the child may be assigned "a definite role that has nothing to do with his own wishes and aspirations."[17]

Because of the identifications she projects upon him, the mother treats all her boys and all her girls, as well as each individual boy or girl, in a very different way.

MATERNAL ATTITUDES

In numerous studies of maternal attitudes,[18] the mothers, according to their attitudes toward their children, are described by many adjectives and grouped into many categories. These categories may be reduced to four, namely, accepting (that is, fully maternal, "good" mothers, those actively wanting the child); ambivalent (that is, merely tolerating the child, or combining the attitudes of wanting and yet not wanting him); rejecting (including mothers who are dominating, overauthoritarian, overstrict, negligent or resentful of the child); overprotecting (including indulgent, overindulgent, oversolicitous, overaffectionate mothers, and those who "spoil" the child).

Acceptance, or being a "good" or "normal" parent involves the ability

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17 Helene Deutsch, The Psychology of Women, Volume II, p. 319.

18 The following references are among the most interesting: Anneliese Korner, Some Aspects of Hostility in Young Children, p. 154; O. Spurgeon English and Gerald H. J. Pearson, Emotional Problems of Living, p. 108; Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, Modern Woman --- the Lost Sex, p. 298; Percival M. Symonds, The Dynamics of Parent-Child Relationships; W. Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, Father of the Man; David M. Levy, Maternal Overprotection; Helen T. Cederquist, "The 'Good Mother' and Her Children", Smith College Studies in Social Work, October, 1948.

to love and enjoy the child. Helene Deutsch calls it a relationship both positive and tender.[19] "Instinctively the normal parent experiences extreme pleasure in pouring out affection on his offspring, whereas the child finds pleasure in receiving it."[20] Cederquist, in her study of "good" mothers, found that "one of the first feelings the mothers expressed in their interviews was their joy in the children".

> They very much liked having children and enjoyed taking care of them and loving them. They were fascinated by their developing personalities and took pleasure in every little advance the children made. 21

Ambivalence, simply defined, means both wanting and not wanting. The ambivalent mother is therefore inconsistent in her feelings toward her child.

Rejection, the third attitude, may, as Lundberg and Farnham point out,[22] range from extreme and open spurning of the child --- "the mother may abandon it on a doorstep" --- to subtler forms of rejection concealed by overt oversolicitousness and kindness, as described in the fourth attitude, overprotection.

Overprotection, according to Levy, who has done exhaustive research on this subject, is an attitude of "excessive maternal care".[23] Often it

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19 Helene Deutsch, The Psychology of Women, Volume II, p. 19.

20 Morris D. Riemer, "Loving versus Spoiling Children", Mental Hygiene, January, 1940, p. 79.

21 Helen T. Cederquist, "The 'Good Mother' and Her Children, Smith College Studies in Social Work, October, 1948, p. 6.

22 Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, Modern Woman --- the Lost Sex, p. 298.

23 David M. Levy, Maternal Overprotection, p. 37.

springs from unconscious hostility toward the child and is then an aspect of rejection. Recognition of her hostility would arouse unendurable feelings of guilt and unworthiness in the mother, who showers attention upon the child in order to assuage her own feelings of guilt.

Yet elements of acceptance and rejection toward the same child are often intermingled, since no emotion, whether love or hate is "pure". Some irritation is inevitable in every parent-child relationship, "just", as Korner points out, "because they are parents, and not because of any particular attitude or condition."[24] Cederquist found that even the most accepting mothers, "no matter how secure, had difficulties /with their children/ which annoyed, irritated, perplexed or worried them, and they showed this as they talked".[25]

SUMMARY

Four themes important in the understanding of mother-daughter relationships have been reviewed in this chapter: (1) the traditional feminine role in society; (2) penis-envy, or woman's emotional acceptance or rejection of her role; (3) the subject of identification, including the influence of past identifications on present relationships; and (4) maternal attitudes as described in many studies. These themes will be considered in connection with each of the nine case studies which follow.

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24 Anneliese Korner, Some Aspects of Hostility in Young Children, p. 153.

25 Helen T. Cederquist, "The 'Good Mother' and Her Children", Smith College Studies in Social Work, October, 1948, p. 12.

CHAPTER III.

THE MOTHERS

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASES

The nine mothers in this study are called Mrs. Kirk, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Milly, Mrs. Sully, Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Gloucester and Mrs. O'Hara. These are pseudonyms. The children, also, are described by names which differ from their own.

The mothers are divided into three groups of (a) feminine, (b) masculine and (c) neurotic, depending upon (a) their acceptance of womanhood, (b) their rejection of it, with the ensuing wish to be masculine, or (c) their indecision or ambivalence about their feminine role as women, wives and mothers.

Each mother has one or more daughters under eleven years old. Six of the nine have daughters only; the other three, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Green and Mrs. Gloucester, also have young sons.

Three mothers, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Milly and Mrs. Gloucester, live with their husbands; the other six are estranged from theirs. With the exception of Mrs. Foster, who has recently taken her children home to her parents, all the mothers live alone with their children, or with husbands and children, in family constellations uncomplicated by the presence of a grandparent or any other relative.[1]

None of the women work except Mrs. O'Hara, who is a part-time waitress in a cafe, and Mrs. Sully, who is a stitcher in a garment factory in

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1 See Table I, p. 15, infra.

TABLE I.

A TABLE SHOWING THE FAMILY CONSTELLATION OF THE NINE CASES

Name of Mother	Age	Marital Status	Name of Child	Age
Case 1 - Mrs. Kirk	32	Separated (legally)	Kathy Moira Nora	6 4 2
Case 2 - Mrs. Brown	24	Deserted	Anna Lana Jane	4 2 Infant
Case 3 - Mrs. O'Hara	50	Separated (not legally)	Griselda	10
Case 4 - Mrs. Foster[a]	24	Separated (not legally)	Flora	2
Case 5 - Mrs. Sully	36	Separated (not legally)	Ada Maida	9 4
Case 6 - Mrs. Green	22	Married	Gertrude George	Infant 15 months
Case 7 - Mrs. Gloucester	35	Married (second marriage)	Patricia Dick Rick John Don	4 14 7 5 2
Case 8 - Mrs. Queen	35	Married	Mary May James John Joseph	4 3 11 10 9
Case 9 - Mrs. Milly	34	Married (second marriage	Rose[b] Marilyn Carolyn	Adult 10 13 months

a Mrs. Foster's parents are living in the home.

b Rose is married and living away from home.

Boston. Three of the others are supported by their husbands, and the rest by the community.[2]

None of the nine have been educated beyond high school, from which Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Green and Mrs. Foster were graduated. Mrs. Kirk nearly completed her senior year, leaving before graduation because of a nervous collapse. Mrs. Gloucester, too, left in her senior year, after being suspended for playing football. Mrs. O'Hara was sent to work in a factory on finishing grammar school. Mrs. Milly and Mrs. Queen went as far as the sixth grade. No information appears in the history concerning the extent of Mrs. Sully's formal education.

PRESENTING PROBLEMS

In no case was the reason for coming to the agency --- the "presenting problem" --- given as an emotional one, but all nine women had practical, logical, fair-seeming reasons for coming to see the caseworker. Mrs. Queen wanted a temporary housekeeper to help her during her convalescence, and information about dental clinics for children; Mrs. Gloucester, emergency money-relief; Mrs. Green, an emergency food-order; Mrs. Sully and Mrs. Milly, help with finding new apartments; Mrs. Foster, help in hastening an allotment from Mr. Foster, who was in the Marines. Mrs. Kirk, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. O'Hara all wanted information about legal separations from their husbands in order to be subsequently eligible for grants under Aid to Dependent Children.

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2 See Table II, p. 17, infra.

TABLE II.

A TABLE SHOWING THE SOURCE OF INCOME OF THE NINE CASES

Name	Source of Income	Husband's Occupation	Income from Husband
Case 1 - Mrs. Kirk	Aid to Dependent Children	Taxi driver and pin-boy	Four or Five Dollars weekly
Case 2 - Mrs. Brown	Aid to Dependent Children	Salesman	None
Case 3 - Mrs. O'Hara	Public Welfare plus part-time earnings as waitress	None	None
Case 4 - Mrs. Foster	Dependency Allotment	Marine	Allotment
Case 5 - Mrs. Sully	Own Earnings	Unemployed Shipworker	None
Case 6 - Mrs. Green	Dependency Allotment	Marine	Allotment
Case 7 - Mrs. Gloucester	Husband's Wages	Truck Driver	Fifty Dollars Weekly
Case 8 - Mrs. Queen	Husband's Wages	Truck Driver	Fifty Dollars Weekly
Case 9 - Mrs. Milly	Husband's Wages	Chef in Navy	Sixty-five Dollars weekly

THE MOTHERS' ATTITUDES

But in the interviews in which these requests were made, as well as in later interviews, something else emerged --- the feelings and attitudes of these women toward themselves and their environment, including the "significant others" in the environment upon whom the feelings and attitudes --- appropriately or inappropriately --- had been projected; foremost among the "others" were the children; and in each case, among the children, there were young daughters.

The maternal attitudes, defined as (a) accepting, (b) ambivalent, (c) rejecting and (d) overprotecting, were studied (a) in relation to the daughters; (b) in relation to the sons of those mothers who also had sons; and (c) in relation to the adjustment or non-adjustment of the mothers toward their sex. The attitudes of the nine mothers toward their own parents as revealed in the histories were also considered.

ABSTRACTS OF THE NINE CASES

The nine case studies are presented below.

SIX FEMININE MOTHERS

The first feminine mother, Mrs. Kirk, lives alone in an apartment with her three little daughters, Kathy, Moira and Nora. She came to the agency to find out how to get a legal separation from Mr. Kirk in order to fulfill the eligibility requirements for Aid to Dependent Children.

Mrs. Kirk

> Mrs. Kirk is a housewife, aged thirty-two, and the mother of three little girls. She has been married for eleven years. Before her marriage, she was a waitress. She met Mr. Kirk in the restaurant---a handsome man ten years her senior and one of

the most gentlemanly of her customers. "An angel outside and a devil at home," she says sadly.

During the first five years of her marriage she continued to work, and he was able to spend his own wages on himself, so all went well. To her disappointment, he did not want children. After five years, however, she was determined to have a family.

The trouble began with the birth of Kathy, the eldest child, now nearly seven. Mr. Kirk was jealous of the baby. When the other babies came, he transferred his jealousy to them and made a pet of Kathy. Gradually he stopped working, began to bully the younger children, asking Moira to wait on him constantly or sending her out to play in the rain so he might take his daily nap in peace. He seemed to concentrate his wrath on Moira.

In March he began to abuse his wife physically, applied lighted cigarettes to Moira's arms, shouted so loudly that the neighbors complained, and finally gathered up all the food in the house and took it to bed with him. Mrs. Kirk went to the probation officer. Mr. Kirk was ordered to find work and found a small job as pin-boy in a bowling alley. In September, after he had again assaulted her and the children and accused her of having "affairs", he was ordered out of the house by the police.

In October, Mrs. Kirk applied for a legal separation which was granted at the end of December. (She remarked that the trip to the Legal Aid Society regarding the separation was her first trip to Boston, only ten miles away, in the eleven years of her marriage.) She and the children have been on ADC since February. The grant is inadequate because the weekly sum which Mr. Kirk is supposed to be giving them, but does not, has been deducted from the ADC allowance. The neighbors are very kind and almost daily bring her gifts of food.

She expresses relief at her husband's absence. She says, "All I feel is relief. Now I can sew when I want to, and iron when I please, and not have him make fun of me." She has gained five pounds, and everyone says that she has "bloomed" since he left her.

When she dreams about Mr. Kirk, as she does sometimes, they are anxiety dreams, and she wakes in a panic and rushes to see if the door is locked, for she dreams he has "got in"; and she wouldn't want that to happen, says Mrs. Kirk earnestly, when everything is going along "too good to be true".

The history indicates that Mrs. Kirk is very accepting of her

feminine role in life, for which she prepared quite deliberately by taking the homemaking course in school. She is also accepting of her children. It was she, not her husband, who wanted them; and although she lives with them in a one-room apartment with very little privacy, she says regretfully that she wishes they didn't have to go to bed so early, because she finds them so interesting.

According to the worker's description:

> She is shabbily dressed herself, but the children have dozens of little dresses which are continually being starched and ironed and hung on hangers on the door and chandelier of the tiny apartment. Sewing has always been her hobby, and she makes their things herself. (In high school, which she attended until the Spring of her senior year, she took the domestic science course.) Mrs. Kirk says she wears herself out sewing and ironing. When the worker asked her why, she said, wrinkling her nose, "I suppose they could wear overalls, but I don't like little girls in pants." She said she was glad they were girls because "it is more fun to dress them". When the worker asked, "Is that the only reason?" she added, "And because they are prettier", and then, after a moment, "And because they stay with you."
>
> She apologized for the clutter in the corner with, "Those are Kathy's. Kathy is selfish and will not share her toys. That's because Pat made so much of her --- his Kathy."

While she rejects none of her daughters, she comes closer at times to rejecting the eldest one, Kathy, the father's favorite. At least it is only toward Kathy that she expresses open irritation. Her attitude toward Kathy is related to factors in her own past, for Mrs. Kirk herself has always longed to be the favorite.

The history continues:

> Her mother died when she was born, a catastrophe for which her father has always held her responsible.
>
> Of all her sisters, she is her present mother's only stepchild. The stepmother, of whom she is very fond, and whose

> picture she brought to show to the caseworker, had six children of her own when she married Mrs. Kirk's father, and later three more children were born. Thus Mrs. Kirk, who was two years old at the time of her father's second marriage, was rejected by the father in infancy and was never her stepmother's favorite child. (She says she never had her stepmother all to herself until she suffered the nervous collapse which made her leave school in her eighteenth year. Her stepmother took her to the country and there looked after her, and she feels it was mothering alone which made her well.)
>
> She expresses much envy of her female siblings, and in discussing them mentioned that sometimes she weeps in secret because "everyone else seems so happy"; but when pressed for information concerning these happy ones, she could name only her stepsisters. "Are they really so happy?" asked the worker. No, they all, it seemed, had troubles of their own; but still she envies them.

She retains, then, the feelings of envy toward stepsisters and half sisters which began in her childhood, and she is also jealous of another group of little sisters, her daughters, with whom, except for Nora, she cannot cheerfully share her worker or her interviewing time. She says that Nora, the baby, is her own father's favorite grandchild. "She looks so much like me --- I know that's why." There is reality in this narcissistic identification, for Nora sits beside her mother during the interviews like a tiny, solemn statuette of Mrs. Kirk, so closely does she resemble her.

So Mrs. Kirk has at last pleased her father --- she has produced that one of his grandchildren who is his favorite; and the record shows that since her husband's departure she herself has for the first time in her life drawn closer to her father.

> She visits him every Sunday with the children and they all go to church together. On Easter Sunday, when she wore her new dress with the ruffle, he said, "You look like a million." Since she has all her life been trying to win her father's love, this gives her great satisfaction. "He has been

> so nice to me since Pat went away. He always hated Pat and said he was no good." She cannot define Pat's attraction for her beyond saying, "All the other women found him attractive, and when he chose me, I married him. I thought he would be different because he was so much older than I was."

Apparently Mrs. Kirk was once more, as in her childhood, competing with other women for the love of an older man --- a "father-figure".

Her relationship with Mr. Kirk has noticeably affected her relationship with her daughters. Moira, taking her mother at her word, accepts Mrs. Kirk's verbalized terror of her husband, and herself expresses fear of men and boys. (Mrs. Kirk's terror is not quite authentic, for she manages to take the children walking in all the places where they are certain to encounter her husband.) Kathy, who likes her father and who senses that perhaps Mrs. Kirk has goaded him into some of his misbehavior, is angry at her mother for sending him away. She never stops wheedling that he be allowed to return.

Mrs. Kirk has been coming for weekly casework interviews for nearly eight months. It was first felt that if she could express some of her feeling about her husband to the caseworker, she would have less need to disparage him to the children. This has turned out to be so, and will benefit the children; for, as Helene Deutsch remarks, if a mother

> devaluates him /the husband/ and reduces him to insignificance, she will certainly create profound psychologic conflicts for her children, and she herself will be unhappy and unfulfilled as a woman. 3

Gradually the main focus of the interviews has shifted from her disappointment in her husband to her relationship with the children. She

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3 Helene Deutsch, The Psychology of Women, Volume II, p. 4.

has always been intensely interested in her little girls anyway, and through putting her feelings about them and their conduct into words, has gained enormously in understanding each of the three children. An excerpt from the latest interview with Mrs. Kirk shows how she is learning to analyze Kathy's behavior and to respond to it thoughtfully rather than with retaliative anger:

> Kathy has been terrible. She acts so much like him that sometimes I feel as if I had him home again. She is worse on the days he meets her near school. Last week he met her and flashed a roll of bills at her and said that if she came to live with him they'd eat steak every day. So Kathy came home and began to criticize the lunch because there was no steak. The neighbors tell me to take a stick to her, but I know now it isn't really Kathy's fault --- it is her father. I keep reminding myself how hard this is for her. The worker agreed that it was very difficult for a little girl of six to be torn between two people she loves.
>
> Mrs. Kirk went on: Do you know what I did? Instead of fighting with her, I got her interested in the doll carriage parade they were having at school and made bonnets to match for Kathy and her doll. Kathy won the first prize. She hung around me all that evening. Mrs. Kirk continued somewhat nervously, "But later --- what if she holds it all against me later?"

This interview shows that Mrs. Kirk has not only begun to assume some of the responsibility for these events, but that she has begun to think about the future. She understands now that her present relationship with Kathy concerns the future, too. One of the reasons she gave for preferring little girls, that "they stay with you" also has implications for the future and warrants discussion. The case is still active.

The second feminine mother is Mrs. Brown. Like Mrs. Kirk, she lives alone with her three little daughters, Anna, Lana (called Sandy) and Jane.

Mrs. Brown

Mrs. Brown, who is twenty-four years old, came to the agency for information about getting relief, as her young husband, Perry, a salesman, disappeared in September. She went through the formality of getting a legal separation, and in December was granted ADC. She has had no word from Perry, but expresses no resentment, only disappointment. Perry had red hair like her father, and she supposed he would resemble him in other ways. She says in wonder that he hasn't even written to his mother. "Isn't that unkind?"

She is a quiet, ineffective girl, thin and plain with few interests outside her home. On Fridays her mother baby-sits for her and she goes to the market and dentist, but this is her only outing. She attends an occasional penny-sale at church.

She was pregnant when she first came to the agency. The baby, Jane, was born in December. Mrs. Brown expressed pleasure at having another daughter. "It is nice to have three little girls." Her mother has seven. When the worker asked why she preferred girls, she said, "Well, if they were boys I couldn't handle them." When asked if she felt no anger at all at Perry's never coming near the hospital when baby Jane was born, she said rather sadly that well, yes, it was sad when all the other husbands came at visiting-time and no one came to her, but on the other hand she was pleased with her pretty baby. She has decided that "everything happens for the best." In discussing marriage, she said with resignation but without rancor, "That part of my life is over."

Her mother and sisters have been a source of strength to her since her desertion. Her mother, too, was separated and had the responsibility of many girls to care for.

She thinks that baby Jane will look like Anna. She is a good baby. They are such good children. Anna is fair, like her, but Sandy, the two-year-old, has light red hair, like her father. What she cannot understand is how their father can keep away from them, especially from Anna.

Mrs. Brown lives rather cozily in a housing-project apartment with her three little daughters --- "and we are happy now". As the record shows, she is most accepting of her children and thankful that they are girls. Her chief regret is that they have been deprived of a father, but she speaks no ill of her husband before them, and they will not learn a

pattern of hating men from her. She has expressed awareness of her own inability to cope with men or boys, and at the present time does not intend to be a wife again. "That part of my life is over."

Otherwise, the traditional feminine role suits Mrs. Brown very well. One of a family of girls, she married young, enjoys staying at home and devoting herself to the children; and although a quiet, passive and dependent person, is able to assume the responsibility of the physical care of home and children, and both are clean and shining. Like Mrs. Kirk, she lives a very circumscribed life and is uninterested in working outside the home. It is especially interesting that both women married men whom they mistakenly identified with their fathers.

Mrs. Brown has drawn closer to her mother, with whom she now identifies more than ever, since her mother, too, was left with many daughters. She is also friendly with her husband's mother and feels that one of the "saddest" things about his running away is that it saddens his mother.

Anna, who resembles Mrs. Brown closely, is her favorite child. Anna is kept fastidiously dressed.

Casework with Mrs. Brown was undertaken on a semi-monthly basis, and she began to come to the agency every other Friday, with two interruptions --- a break of two months after baby Jane was born, and another of six weeks in the Spring when the three children had mumps in succession.

Mrs. Brown has grown less apathetic, has become much more interested in her own personal appearance, and has even had a bridge made for the front teeth which were missing.

Her relationship with Anna has changed from a vaguely loving to an

intelligently loving attitude. Until she saw Anna playing with the father-doll at the agency she had not understood how much the child missed her father. But then she understood at once. She exchanged an astonished glance with the worker and said, "Wouldn't it break your heart?" She was also surprised to see that Anna drew upside down[4] --- "I never noticed that" --- or that Anna drew people without bodies. Gradually she has become more and more interested in observing the child's way of doing things and in her motivations. She has discovered that one must point things out to children in order to help them learn, and that even little girls of four need more than food and pretty clothes. Recently she has asked the worker for (a) help in enrolling Anna in a Sunday School and (b) the possibilities of nursery school for Anna in the Fall. Both indicate her admission that there are things which Anna should be learning. Thus her attitude toward Anna has grown to be one richer in understanding of her eldest daughter's needs.

The third feminine mother, Mrs. O'Hara, is the oldest woman in the study. She is fifty, but she has a ten-year-old daughter. Griselda was never seen at the office, although the worker had a glimpse of her one day during a home visit, when she came home from school, rushed in and kissed her mother, and then rushed out to play. Her mother remarked, "She is my shadow and breathes when I breathe."

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4 Fully discussed on page 65, Chapter IV, the chapter on the children.

Mrs. O'Hara

At intervals, Mrs. O'Hara comes to the agency to discuss the possibility of getting a legal separation from Mr. O'Hara, a chronic alcoholic, in order to be eligible for a grant under Aid to Dependent Children. At present she is ineligible because the separation is not a formal, or legal, one. She and Griselda are supported by public relief, supplemented by Mrs. O'Hara's meagre earnings as a part-time waitress. She does not feel very well (she is undergoing the menopause) and prefers not to work full-time, both because of her health and because she wants to be with the child.

The O'Hara's parted nearly ten years ago, shortly after the birth of Griselda, because of Mr. O'Hara's drinking. Since then he has "gone from bad to worse" --- she saw him "panhandling" on the street the other day. She has attached Griselda to herself very closely, and says, "Griselda knows her father is a clown."

Mrs. O'Hara says she has had a hard life. Her own father, a fisherman, was also alcoholic and irresponsible, and her mother, a hardworking woman, had to board the children out and go to work to support them. Her parents are no longer living.

When Mrs. O'Hara finished grammar school they were very poor and she had to go to work at once. She worked in a factory for several years. She looks upon her marriage to O'Hara, who is of a different faith, as a "sin" and cannot bring herself to commit another "sin", that of divorce. Therefore she never quite decides to get the legal separation, which to her is the equivalent of a divorce; but she says frankly, "I am glad to be rid of him."

Mrs. O'Hara accepts her feminine role in life in that she is a good mother and homemaker and would prefer to stay at home if her religious scruples did not prevent her taking legal steps to terminate the marriage. She works only because she is forced to, and then only part of the time, in order to have more time for her child. However, she is allowing her dread of a legal separation to take precedence over her interest in the child's wellbeing; for she could take better care of Griselda on the higher ADC allowance than on her present public welfare grant.

Her feeling for her daughter is one of attachment, for there was great satisfaction in her tone when she said that the little girl "breathes when I breathe". Also Griselda may have difficulty in her future relationships with men, for she has been brought up without a father and is carefully being taught that "men are clowns"; and the history shows that in Mrs. O'Hara's life they have been. She married an irresponsible alcoholic, like her mother before her, with whom she has closely identified; and like her mother, she has parted from her husband and helps support the child.

Four casework interviews with Mrs. O'Hara have not altered her attitudes. She wants to talk about her husband, but when Griselda is mentioned, changes the subject, as if there were nothing to discuss. In short, there are to be no intrusions in this mother-child monopoly which began when Griselda was born. She does not want to be separated from Griselda at all, and has not availed herself of the opportunity the agency offers to send the child to camp.

The fourth feminine mother, Mrs. Foster, is an only child. After her graduation from high school, she worked briefly as a salesgirl in a department store, and then married young Arthur Foster. They began to quarrel after Flora was born. Arthur was not dependable, and when he learned his wife was pregnant again, joined the Marines. Mrs. Foster has gone back home to be with mother and "dad". She says it is only the allotment which prevents her from getting a legal separation from Arthur. She wishes to be eligible for the allotment.

Mrs. Foster

Dimpled and small and smiling, Mrs. Foster at twenty-four looks like a little girl. She came to the agency for help in speeding up an allotment from her estranged husband, Arthur, who is in the U. S. Marines. He joined up a few days after their fairly recent separation. Mrs. Foster thinks he was jealous of Flora, aged two, and of the coming baby. She does not want a legal separation because of the allotment, for which she is at present eligible. "But that's the only reason," she says, "because I don't want him back again." An only child, she has been welcomed back by her parents, and Flora is now "grandpa's girl". Mrs. Foster's father works. Her mother, who stays at home, looks after Flora.

The worker discussed the allotment with the Veterans' Services, but when she relayed what she learned to Mrs. Foster, the client said that what really bothered her was Arthur's threat to come and take Flora away when he came home on leave. Worker checked with the Legal Aid Society and was told that the baby's custody would certainly not be given to a man in the armed forces, for "what would he do with a baby?" Mrs. Foster seemed somewhat reassured. A month later she telephoned to say that all was going fine, and that the baby was momentarily expected, but that she was still pretty worried about Arthur's getting a leave and coming to kidnap Flora.

The record reveals that Mrs. Foster has tried to accept her feminine role by marrying and becoming a mother. However, she is a very dependent, immature person and has reverted to her childhood behavior pattern by going home to be cared for by father and mother. She is feminine in that she is dependent and passive, but unlike Mrs. Kirk, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. O'Hara, not accepting enough of her traditional role to undertake the physical care of her child --- her mother does that.

She is ambivalent about Flora; sometimes she wants her, and sometimes not. Flora is a pretty child, and it is fun to dress her and take her to the Square. On the other hand, it is not quite so much fun to have to do the more irksome tasks connected with caring for a child, and these she has relegated to her mother. Also, she is not too happy about

Flora's taking her own coveted place as "grandpa's girl" and there may be future rivalry between them. Mrs. Foster says anxiously that she wants Flora's custody, but continually talks of the very improbable kidnapping. Perhaps secretly she hopes that Arthur will kidnap the child. Psychiatric consultation would be needed for an understanding of what is fully implied therein.

Her only comment about the new baby was that it would be born by Caesarean section, as Flora was. Since the baby was expected daily, it was felt inadvisable to go into anxiety-arousing areas with Mrs. Foster, and the interviews centered around reassurance concerning the kidnapping. It was felt that deeper casework could wait until after the baby was born, but she did not return. She was seen four times.

In reviewing the cases of these four women, all of whom are feminine in appearance and in their acceptance of motherhood and domesticity, and all of whom are quite accepting of their small daughters, it becomes apparent that they differ from the conventional feminine pattern in that they are living without husbands. It is almost as if the four husbands had performed their biological service --- had given the client her little girl --- and then had been discarded. Each has expressed relief at his absence.[5] "All I feel is relief," says Mrs. Kirk. "Everything

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5 Despite her freely expressed relief at her husband's absence, the worker and other staff members at the agency have noticed how constantly Mrs. Kirk seems to fondle the children, as if she were using them to satisfy needs of her own. Flugel remarks that "the parent whose sexual emotions and tendencies have but little opportunity for discharge will be apt to lavish a greater amount of affection on his children than one who is leading a more active sexual life." J. C. Flugel, The Psycho-Analytic Study of the Family, p. 158.

happens for the best," says Mrs. Brown. "I don't want him back again," says Mrs. Foster firmly; and Mrs. O'Hara, "I am glad to be rid of him." Thus they have disrupted what LaBarre calls "the human trinity of mother-child-and-father".[6] But each of the four remains a dependent person, and in each case her economic dependence has been transferred to the community.

The first four feminine mothers seem capable of fulfilling their feminine role as mothers, if not as wives.

A fifth mother, Mrs. Sully, is a feminine woman who shows less hostility toward men. She misses her husband, from whom she is separated, and weeps when she mentions him. She even contrives to see him each day at his mother's. Mrs. Sully wants to have a husband.

Mrs. Sully

> She is thirty-six years old. She and her husband, Antonio, were separated six months ago because he refused to work. He lives alone in a room and spends most of the day at his mother's. His brothers gave him a job in the family business, but he wouldn't work and they had to discharge him. Mrs. Sully went to work in a garment factory in Boston to support Ada, nine, and Maida, five. She earns thirty dollars a week. They live in a furnished room. Each morning she takes the children to Tony's mother's home to stay until she gets back from work. There is nobody else to look after them. It makes her very unhappy to go there, because her mother-in-law is turning the children against her.
>
> She saw an ad for a seventy-dollar-a-month apartment and wanted help in hiring it at once, because if she waited it would be gone. She also wanted a maid to stay with the children. Worker said this seemed a somewhat improbable plan and asked what was really the matter.
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> Mrs. Sully began to cry very hard and said, "I don't really know." She could not mention her husband without

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6 Weston LaBarre, "Appraising Today's Pressures on Family Living," Social Casework, February, 1951, p. 54.

bursting into tears. Finally she blamed his mother. "His mother told him to leave me. His mother's word is God." Then, conscience-stricken, she added, "I suppose that's an awful thing to say." Her own father is dead, her mother unable to help her. Ada is under treatment for asthma. She is allergic to milk in any form.

The history shows that Mrs. Sully longs for a home and longs to be in it. She dislikes working outside the home. She wants to be with her children. Like the other feminine mothers, she has been toying with the idea of applying for ADC so that she may stop working, and at the very end of the interview, asked,"Don't you think my ankles look swollen? I don't think I should be working." For her, the difficulty lies in the fact that she does not want to be legally separated from Tony, as she would have to be in order to be eligible for this type of aid.

She spoke with great interest and concern of the health of her two small daughters[7] and regretted her inability to spend more time with them. (And yet is not rejection suggested by Mrs. Sully's abandoning her daughters to the daily care of the hostile mother-in-law who is "turning them against me"? She may be paving the way for her own future rejection by these young daughters if what she claims is true.) The Sully children were never seen at the agency, but Ada, who is asthmatic, sounds like a disturbed little girl.[8] Her mother says she is allergic to milk.

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7 It was learned later that Mrs. Sully had fallen ill with an incipient paranoid psychosis in which she thought women whistled at her in the street and could read her innermost thoughts. Yet the children were in no way involved in her delusional system and when she spoke of them it was still with love and concern.

8 One wonders if she is angry with mother, the giver-of-milk. Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures, p. 166, equates milk with love and says that "the complaint against the mother that harkens back furthest is that she has given the child too little milk, which is taken as indicating a lack of love."

Mrs. Sully did not return. Her present attitudes toward her sex and her children cannot be related to her own past for lack of information in the record.

The sixth mother, Mrs. Green, who is the youngest mother in the study, hovers in the borderland between being a "feminine" mother, who accepts her feminine role in life, and a neurotic one, who is ambivalent about marriage and motherhood. She has two infants, a boy of fifteen months, and a three-months-old daughter.

Mrs. Green

> Mrs. Green came to the agency for an emergency food order because someone had stolen her last twenty dollars from her purse, and it would be several days before she received her next allotment check. She lives in a rooming-house with her babies. She is twenty-two years old. At nineteen she married Bobby, aged eighteen, whose mother opposed the marriage and refuses to see the children. Mrs. Green is not very friendly with her own mother, either. Her mother is only forty. She is living in Maine. Mrs. Green writes regularly to her father, stationed in Guam. She and her father used to be boon companions. She is an only child.
>
> A few days later, during a heavy thunderstorm, Mrs. Green came to the agency again to show us the baby. She did not think the rain would hurt the baby because, "being out in the fresh air makes them sleep better". She exhibited Gertrude as if she were an acrobatic doll, standing her on the palm of her hand, swinging her by the hands only, and trying to get her to sit up without support.
>
> Mrs. Green has had several brief jobs since Gertrude's birth, but has not felt physically strong enough to keep them. When working, she cheerfully left the babies with anyone at all, even with transient roomers at the boarding-house. Yet at times she is very careful of their physical care, even wearing a mask when she tends them so that they will not catch cold.
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> Mrs. Green talked chiefly of her dates before marriage, of how both she and her mother liked to go dancing every night, and how she had tried going out recently but could not enjoy herself without her husband. She came in again to report that

Bobby was home on a furlough. A girl she knew had telephoned to say she had a date for Mrs. Green at the Waldorf, and when she got there, who was it but Bobby, her husband! He had wanted to surprise her. "Wasn't it lucky," she said, "that I had a ribbon in my hair!" His mother had supposed he would spend the whole furlough in Boston with her, but he had wanted to see his new daughter, whom he had never seen, and so he came home.

She is thinking of asking for her husband's release from the service on a "hardship clause" but is not sure that she wants him at home, because then his mother might try to destroy the marriage.

Mrs. Green is indecisive. She cannot decide whether to remain married or not, whether to work or not, or whether or not to try to get her husband out of the service. She is very immature. She likes being "Mrs. Green" and having the status of a married woman, but cannot quite comprehend that marriage is an adult and serious matter.

She has repeatedly tried to work outside the home. Within three weeks of Gertrude's birth she had worked briefly as a waitress, a saleswoman, and an assembler of tubes in a radio plant. She is a mixture of wanting and not wanting to be dependent, of wanting and not wanting to be a wife and mother, of wanting and not wanting to be a little girl.

Her attitude toward her daughter is more accepting than toward her boy. Already she has begun to identify Gertrude, "whose little hands are just like mine" with herself. When the worker wondered what her little boy was like, she shrugged and said, "He looks like a tomato." The worker asked in what way he resembled a tomato, and Mrs. Green said, "Oh, you know ---"fat and red." She did not offer to bring the little boy in for the staff to see, although that was why she had brought her daughter.

For one thing, Gertrude is dear to her because her birth brought Bobby, the husband, home again. He came home to see his daughter.

Mrs. Green implied she had been doubtful of his ever returning. She did not know about his furlough until she met him at the Waldorf in the Square.

Mrs. Green's attitude toward girls and women seems to be related to her past experiences. Mrs. Green tends to see women as the strong people in our society. The women command the men, even to the extent of telling them whether or not to marry (as did her mother-in-law), whether or not to remain married, and whether or not to stay in the Marines. Her mother, mother-in-law and she herself all do these things, and now her daughter, at three months old, is already, by means of gymnastics, being trained to be strong, virile and hardy, for these, to Mrs. Green, seem to be feminine qualities.

Mrs. Green wants to remain married to her husband (she cannot enjoy herself without him), but some of her desire is apparently based on rivalry with her mother-in-law. Bobby is thus not Bobby, an individual; he is Bobby, a prize for which she and his mother are competing. The rival mother-in-law has to some extent been identified by Mrs. Green with her own mother, with whom she has always competed for her father's attention. She told the caseworker she was her father's boon companion and that this used to annoy her young mother who wanted to go dancing with him herself. Nevertheless, despite her preference for her father, she has identified with her domineering mother.

Mrs. Green came to the agency half a dozen times, generally without appointments. She talked chiefly about the baby, how well and strong she was, how easy her birth had been, and so forth; and about her courtship by Bobby despite the obstacles his mother put in their way. Several

times the worker tried to focus her interest on her little boy, with such questions as, "I wonder what your little boy is like?" but each time the response was brief --- "He's short and fat" or "He's too active". When the worker was unable, because of agency policy, to give Mrs. Green a letter to Bobby's commanding officer requesting his release from the service, she did not return.

Some weeks later the worker met her in the street. She was wheeling the baby, with the boy perched on the carriage. The worker commented with interest, "So this is your little boy." "But look at the baby," said Mrs. Green quickly, "Hasn't she grown? See how brown she is! I keep her in the sun", and said she was thinking of sending the boy to her mother to keep for the summer.

There was no perceptible change in her attitude toward her son, and the best that could be hoped for was that she had begun to be a trifle more thoughtful about him; but she was seen only six times.

SUMMARY --- SIX FEMININE MOTHERS

Six mothers were considered to be "feminine", that is, for the most part satisfied to be women. While information was lacking about the past experiences of Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Sully, the other four had preferred and identified with their own mothers as against their fathers; this seemed to be a factor in their acceptance of their feminine role and of their female children, for the majority of the feminine mothers were extremely accepting of their small daughters. None of the five who had daughters but no sons expressed the wish to have had sons instead. The sixth one, Mrs. Green, gave evidence of liking her infant daughter better

than her son.

All six of these women were living apart from their husbands. Four were glad of it. One, Mrs. Sully, was sorry, and one, Mrs. Green, ambivalent. The first four had communicated their feelings to their children, whose own feelings and behavior were being affected thereby.[9] (The Sully children were never seen, and the Green children were too young to verbalize attitudes.)

Mrs. Sully did not return to the agency after her first interview. Since Mrs. Foster was in the last stages of pregnancy, casework with her was chiefly supportive and reassuring. Mrs. O'Hara, seen four times, each time deflected the discussion from her child to her husband. Mrs. Green, in six interviews, became slightly more aware of her small son as an individual. Intensive casework over a period of months was undertaken with Mrs. Kirk and Mrs. Brown, and it was found that both women made appreciable gains in understanding their little girls.

A MASCULINE MOTHER

In his lecture on The Psychology of Women, Freud remarks that when, during treatment, any comparison between men and women is made which seems detrimental to women, the gallant analyst has only to say to his female patient, "This does not apply to you. You are an exception, in this respect you are more masculine than feminine",[10] and at once she is content. The women clients at the Family Service Society do not, for the

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9 See Chapter IV., infra.

10 Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures, p. 159.

most part, seem to feel this way. Only one of the nine women presented here has failed to accept her sex --- Mrs. Gloucester --- and in her case her attitude toward her sex seems to stem from her feelings of revenge toward her father. Regrettably, she is vindictive enough to try to turn her only daughter into a masculine child, calls her "a mistake" and has named her "Pat", a name frequently used as a masculine nickname.

Mrs. Gloucester

> Mrs. Gloucester, a robust and mannish young woman of thirty-five, came to the agency for temporary financial help to tide her over the Christmas holidays, because John, her husband, had just changed jobs and would not be paid for a week. A few days later the worker was asked to call on her to see how she was getting along.
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> Mrs. Gloucester was very angry. She said that the help given her had been inadequate; and that in order to buy toys for the children she had had to take out a loan. She said she would never again contribute to the Community Chest because, "I am always giving and never getting in return". When worker explained that the agency helped people primarily with emotional problems, she said gruffly that she had no such problems --- and plunged into a recital of her many troubles.
>
> She blamed her father for everything. She is so mad at him that she usually tells people, "My father is deceased." She said scornfully, "He is a minister."
>
> He has always preferred ladylike girls and has had no use for her since her suspension from high school for playing football with the boys. She married to spite her father, and then was divorced and married again. "Gloucester", as she calls him, in a rather offhand way, is of a different faith. Her father was so angry that he disinherited her. She and her husband were living upstairs in her father's house, but when the last baby was born, there was a quarrel over the baby's religion, and her father had them all evicted. He sent the children a box of toys for Christmas, but she sent it back again and then came to the agency for money with which to buy toys.
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> She explained the children's extreme quietness and extraordinarily good behavior by saying, "We have a little ruler here." Her own parents were very strict people and she and her siblings were brought up by the old rule that children should

be seen and not heard. She said that her boys were "O. K." (they are very handsome children) but that Pat, being a girl, is "a mistake". Little Pat was sitting quietly beside her mother when she said this. Mrs. Gloucester remarked she is glad that Pat prefers trucks and wagons to dolls.

Despite her cocky, boastful manner, she grew rather friendly before the worker left, and brought out her hobby -- a series of pictures she is embroidering of old-fashioned ladies with lacy parasols, and said that she likes to work on these after the children are in bed. However, by the time worker returned to the office, Mrs. Gloucester had already telephoned the agency supervisor and had belligerently told her that we need not be so worried about the "damned loan", she would repay it as soon as she could. (It was not a loan, nor had it been mentioned except by the client herself during the interview.)

The record shows that even the most masculine of the clients is not entirely without feminine pursuits. Mrs. Gloucester hides hers --- she embroiders at night, and in secret. When the worker asked her what she did with the pictures, she said she gave them to her church to sell at their church sales. (Her father, it will be recalled is a minister!) Her father likes ladylike pursuits. Mrs. Gloucester's ladylike achievements are given to the church, although not to her father's church. Her other ladylike achievements --- her children --- have also been entrusted to a different church than her father's.

Mrs. Gloucester has accepted her feminine role in society to the extent of marrying, keeping house and bearing many children. That is, she has accepted her physical feminine role; she even wears long hair.

Psychologically, however, she seems to display evidence of penis-envy, of wanting to be a man. She is very proud of her sons and plied the worker with their photographs. Her attitude toward her sons is one of acceptance, but she rejects her daughter as a daughter and is in every way

trying to turn her into another little son. Instead of complying with the wishes of her father, who wanted her to be a ladylike girl, she is doing exactly the opposite and is turning Pat, too, into an unladylike girl. Thus Pat's fondness for trucks instead of for dolls becomes a way of winning her mother's praise. Should Pat continue to identify with her mother, she, too, some day, will resent being a girl and will very likely grow up to be another masculine woman.

While Mrs. Gloucester did not mention her mother at all, except to say she is still living, she displays evidence of identifying with her strict father (despite her hostility toward him) in that she, too, is a strict parent who has "a little ruler", and in that her children, like herself in her own childhood, are being taught to be "seen but not heard". Mrs. Gloucester is the controlling parent in her home. She tells the children what to do and metes out discipline if they disobey. However, she spoke no word of criticism of her husband, the less forceful "Gloucester", and unlike the other mothers in this study was not scornful of his poor earning powers, although there was not enough money with which to buy the children's Christmas toys.

Though Mrs. Gloucester understood that the money for toys was not intended as a loan, she angrily insisted that she would repay it. Thus she is vindictive with the agency --- and with other agencies, like the Community Fund, that is, with society --- as well as with her father. She feels defrauded. She says she is always giving and never getting what she wants in return. According to Freudian theory,[11] these feelings

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11 See Chapter II, p. 8, supra.

of disappointment began in childhood when Mrs. Gloucester learned she was no boy; and her father is held responsible that she was born a female.

Mrs. Gloucester did not accept casework. She was seen but once. She was well aware of her preference for her sons and connected her attempt to make a boyish child of Patricia with her own continuing efforts to "get even" with her father. She was very defensive and said she had no problems.

SUMMARY --- A MASCULINE MOTHER

Only one mother of the nine was found to be a "masculine" woman --- that is, one who wanted to be a boy herself --- and she, though proud and accepting of all her sons and of her economically unsuccessful husband, rejected her female child.

This woman was very angry at her father and most vindictive toward him.

She was unready to face her problems, denied their existence, and did not accept casework.

TWO NEUROTIC MOTHERS

Mrs. Queen and Mrs. Milly belong to the third classification, that of inhibited, neurotic mothers who are ambivalent about their womanhood. Both are unhappy and unable, at the present time, to enjoy life. Both have been diagnosed as psychoneurotic, Mrs. Milly at a naval hospital where group psychotherapy was recommended but not accepted; and Mrs. Queen at a general hospital where a diagnosis of neurasthenia was made. (She was being treated for a menstrual disturbance, and for scabies.)

As will be seen in an examination of the following material, Mrs. Queen seems to be avenging herself on her eight younger brothers whose birth in quick succession deprived her of what she dearly wanted --- her mother's love and attention. While she was still angry at her mother for having all these greedy, attention-taking little boys, the beloved mother died.

Mrs. Queen

At thirty-five, Mrs. Queen is a housewife and the mother of five --- three boys and two small girls. She has been married for fourteen years. Before her marriage she did a little housework in a sheltered environment. "My mother called them up and asked them to keep me at home nights. I was so mad at her!"

Mr. Queen, also thirty-five, is a truck-driver. He doesn't earn much. She knows he loves her, but he is boring. With him she feels like "a stick of wood" or "a piece of furniture". Mrs. Queen has not worked since her marriage, except for a short time last summer.

Mrs. Queen's nervousness manifested itself with the death of her mother when she was twenty-four. She never got over it. Now, more than ten years later, she still suffers from grief reactions and cannot mention her mother without weeping bitterly. Her mother's deathbed recurs in the interviews. "She lay like a little brown bird." Her father is still alive, but they have not been speaking since last summer, when he accused her of incestuous relations with one of her brothers. "We are two of those he picked out to hate." She doesn't believe he is her father, anyway, only she knows she looks just like him. She has eight brothers younger than herself, and one older. She had to leave school in the sixth grade to help take care of them. She likes girls better than boys, and even has a woman doctor. Her boys are jealous of their sisters, because they think their mother likes the girls the best.

Last summer she found a job in a restaurant to augment her husband's wages, since he earns so little. She had lived a most circumscribed life, and the experience of working made her feel "like a human being at last". She fell in love with a customer and ran away with him and stayed two days. During those days she telephoned to inquire for the children. Her husband took her back, but she had no feelings at all when he

embraced her.

> She suffers from spells of depression and takes to her bed for days at a time when things get too much for her. When worker first saw her, in reply to a request for a housekeeper, she was in bed, quite weak and ill, and talked without opening her eyes. The house was in wildest disorder.
>
> Jimmy, eleven, is a delinquent child. He is on probation for stealing twenty dollars' worth of candy. He looks just like his father. Johnny, aged ten, a model boy, is held up to his brothers as a shining example. Although younger than Jim, he is a grade ahead of him in school. "You can talk to him," his mother says. "Johnny looks just like me. Johnny understands things better than his father." Joey, aged nine, is effeminate. His brothers call him Janey, said Mrs. Queen, laughing; then he gets temper spells and turns quite blue. It was while she was pregnant with Joey that Mrs. Queen's mother died, and she cried for hours every day during the entire pregnancy. Mary and May are three and four and "something to see", she said proudly.

Mrs. Queen's record shows that she is following a pattern in her acceptance of her daughters and rejection of her sons. She says she prefers a woman doctor, that she likes girls better than boys, that she was fonder of her mother than of her father. When a motherly housekeeper was sent to look after her, she was able, in one day, to recover somewhat from nervous prostration. She disparages two of her boys, but her two little girls are "something to see". (Actually they are rather plain little girls, but she is charmed with them. She told the worker that she knew they would be girls from the "very loving way they lay curled up inside me".)

Mrs. Queen has accepted her feminine role in society to the extent of marrying, keeping house (after a fashion) and bearing many children. She is not wholly satisfied with this role, however, and has tried to go to work --- but not for long. She married a husband who bores her, but

tolerates him. She would probably not be satisfied in an entirely female environment, but apparently needs men near her in order to punish and to fail them. She has failed her husband by being promiscuous and her sons by giving them inadequate love and care.

This is plainly related to her early relationship with her brothers, for not only did her eight brothers deprive her of mothering too soon, but her parents favored the boys. The boys were allowed to go to school, but she was kept at home to help her mother. Nor did her mother trust her, but asked that she be kept in at night. (At last she has justified her mother's lack of faith in her by being promiscuous.) So she felt very hostile --- perhaps she even wished her mother dead. Because of her hostility, some of which is quite conscious, she has prolonged the normal mourning for her mother into a deep, neurotic mourning of many years' duration --- that is, into a depression, or what Freud calls "melancholia".[12] Such abnormal or prolonged mourning results from ambivalence toward the beloved person, who has somehow proved disappointing,[13] as Mrs. Queen's mother did when she had all those boys.

Mrs. Queen rejects her own boys because she identifies them with her brothers who usurped her mother's love. The rejection is quite severe and is reflected in the conduct of at least two of the boys, whose adjustment at school (Jim is retarded), at home (Joe is effeminate) and

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12 Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers, Volume IV, p. 153.

13 Sigmund Freud, Ibid., p. 161. Freud explains that "the conflict of ambivalence casts a pathological shade on the grief, forcing it to express itself in self-reproaches to the effect that the mourner himself is to blame for the loss of the loved one, i. e., desired it."

at play (Jim steals) leaves much to be desired. Grimacing, Mrs. Queen said in a very faint voice one day, "I wish I didn't have so many children." But even among the rejected boys one is a favorite --- "Johnny looks just like me." To her, he is the model boy among the brothers. Again this is based on identification, this time narcissistic identification, an extension of self-love. (It may well be that Jimmy's stealing is connected with jealousy of John, the model brother, who is preferred to Jim and who, though younger, has passed Jim by in school.)

The effect of Mrs. Queen's indifference toward her husband on her children's social adjustment could not be studied firsthand, because the boys were in school and the girls were glimpsed but briefly in the waiting-room; yet Jimmy's stealing suggests a lack of love in the household.[14]

Mrs. Queen's ambivalence shows up clearly in the incident of her running away. Within two days she returned to her "boring" husband, and during those two days, despite wishing she didn't have so many children, she telephoned to ask how they were getting along.

Mrs. Queen was seen four times. The first time, little could be done, for she remained in bed with her eyes closed. The second time she told the worker of her special love for her daughters, an attitude that required no changing, only understanding on a reality basis. She felt that little girls should not be treated as she was, and hers will not be. (She wanted them very much, even before they were born, and before she had a girl, tried to make a girl of her third son, Joe, who is still

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14 Mrs. Queen's continual harping on her husband's inadequate earnings may be another factor in Jimmy's stealing.

girlish.)

In her third and fourth interviews she discussed important material---her mother's death and Jimmy's thefts. What she seemed to fear was not that Jim would continue to steal, but that she and her husband would have to pay damages. But during the fourth interview she was able, with averted eyes, to say to the worker, "When a child steals it's supposed to mean somebody doesn't love him enough --- well, so they say." And had she not, during this interview, frightened herself away by confessing her promiscuity to the worker, who was caught unprepared, this would have been a promising starting-place for help with her relationship with her sons. She seemed a quick and sensitive person and one quite capable of insight. In the fourth casework interview she had at least begun to wonder why Jimmy had stolen the candy. During the month she was seen, some of her apathy disappeared; she grew cleaner, she became a more active mother and not only consulted the probation officer about Jim but took all five children to the dental clinic.

Mrs. Queen's acceptance of her daughters and rejection of her sons is in direct contrast to the attitudes displayed by Mrs. Gloucester, the masculine mother who wanted to be a boy herself and who accepts her sons, but rejects Patricia, her daughter, because she is a girl. Mrs. Queen's attitude is more like that of Mrs. Green, who accepts her infant daughter but seems somewhat indifferent to her small son, and who brought the girl, but not the boy, to display to the worker in the agency. These three women, Mrs. Queen, Mrs. Green and Mrs. Gloucester, were the only women in the study who had sons as well as daughters. All three seem to be accept-

ing or rejecting their girls or their boys for personal rather than for cultural reasons.

The final mother in the series, Mrs. Milly, is also a neurotic woman.

Mrs. Milly

Mrs. Milly's request to the agency was for help in finding a new apartment or else for help in evicting the landlady--- "that giantess" --- of whom she seemed very frightened. Mrs. Milly said she had to keep the doors locked, that she was afraid to go down to the cellar, and that she took baby Carolyn to bed with her as a protection. She said she cried a great deal and could not sleep because she was so scared. "She is going to kill me!" she cried in a panic. "You don't understand. Oh, if my mother were only alive, everything would be all right." The refrain, "If only my mother were alive," runs through her interviews.

Mrs. Milly's hardships began at the age of eight, when her mother gave her a cruel stepfather. She describes her own father, an Italian immigrant, as "a wonderful, educated man who spoke eight languages." Her stepfather, on the other hand, was bad. "He was a priest who sinned." He came to America and married Mrs. Milly's widowed mother. He used to beat her; he spat on her; he also beat Mrs. Milly and tried to rape her when she was twelve. For this reason she left home as soon as she could. She married at fifteen. When she was sixteen, and pregnant with Rose, her eldest daughter, the stepfather murdered her mother with a knife. "He slashed her again and again." Weeping, Mrs. Milly said, "The picture is in front of my eyes all the time." (She brought her mother's picture for the worker to see and wept when she displayed it.)

Her own first husband, "my idol", was "a cross between Robert Taylor and Errol Flynn, believe me." He was handsome and carefree and earned a good living. Women admired him, to his downfall, for he stole heavily from one and is still serving his prison sentence. "But I still love him," sobs Mrs. Milly. "He was kind." Soon after his arrest she obtained a divorce and married her present husband, Charles Milly. "I don't know why, believe me."

She bore her first husband two children, Rose, now married, and Marilyn, now ten. During this marriage she worked as a waitress in the barroom where she met Charles. The patrons there treated her with the greatest respect, especially the servicemen, many of whom called her "Mother" because she did

them little favors like sewing on their buttons. She used to mother them all.

Charles earns good wages but spends a great deal on liquor, and they quarrel about it. During her marriage to him she has had three miscarriages. Thirteen months ago Carolyn was born, and though Mr. Milly, who wanted a son, was angry at first, he likes the baby now. But he doesn't like Marilyn. "She's not his flesh and blood," says Mrs. Milly. "You know what I mean?"

Weeping helplessly, Mrs. Milly says that he is never kind to her, never caresses her or calls her "honey", calls intercourse a "chore" and can in no way compare with her first husband. Mr. Milly is not even educated, having finished only the eighth grade, while her first husband completed the first year of high school. Mrs. Milly literally cries for love in every interview. "If he would call me honey, I would slave on my knees for him. He doesn't respect me. He is never kind."

He has been calling Marilyn names. When Mrs. Milly remonstrated, he said, "Well, you do!" Mrs. Milly replied, "But I am her mother!" --- and to her this is evidently part of a mother's prerogative. But she added, "I have gone and given Marilyn the same kind of stepfather my mother gave me. I think of that a lot."

He beats Marilyn just as her own stepfather used to beat her. She has been having trouble with Marilyn lately. The child had a fist-fight with the landlady's daughter. She is not doing well in school, either, and will not do the tasks assigned to her at home. "Oh, if my mother were only alive," sighed Mrs. Milly, "everything would be all right."

When the worker asked why it seemed so, Mrs. Milly said that if her mother were alive she would never have married Charles Milly, but would have taken Marilyn home to her mother and gone to work to pay their board.

She was recently seen at a naval hospital (her husband is a cook in the Navy) where weekly group psychotherapy was recommended, but she has failed to keep appointments. She has been threatening suicide in her recent interviews at the agency.

From the preceding material, it is evident that in one breath Mrs. Milly dreams of a snug little female world (the world achieved by Mrs.

Kirk, Mrs. Brown, and Mrs. O'Hara) and in the next she wants her husband; but with the conditional yearning of the neurotic, her husband as he is not. "If" he were gentle, kind and good, all would be well. "If" her mother were alive, all would be well. She wants to be her mother's little girl but she also wants to be a well-loved wife. She is ambivalent. She is not sure what she wants, but whatever role she plays, she wants to be loved and respected. Whitehorn[15] believes that the need for and lack of love and respect are the crux of any neurosis, and that because he cannot get the love and respect he craves, the neurotic tries to get attention and pity instead. This certainly applies to Mrs. Milly's case. Her quarrels with Mr. Milly often begin when he fails to voice his appreciation of her. She is always striving for signs of it. This may be part of her reason for praising Carolyn so much and Marilyn so little, a technique of which Mr. Milly approves, since he prefers his own small girl, his "flesh and blood", in Mrs. Milly's phrase, and wants his wife to praise her.

Mrs. Milly is an ambivalent mother, and though she boasts of mothering servicemen in the cafe, derives small satisfaction from her own children. At present she is quite unable to enjoy them.

As she continues to talk, her identification with her own mother emerges. Repeating her mother's pattern, she has given Marilyn an equally unkind and dour stepfather. Like Mrs. Queen, she loved her mother, but hated her, too, for inflicting not brothers but a bad stepfather on her; but unlike Mrs. Queen, she is not making it up to her

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15 John C. Whitehorn, Guide to Interviewing, p. 14.

daughter by an attitude of affection and love, but is rejecting the little girl as her mother seems to her to have rejected her; for Marilyn represents a painful reminder of her own unhappy childhood.

Further investigation brings to light that the fight with the landlady's daughter, for which she blames Marilyn, was provoked by the client herself. According to the record:

> Mrs. Milly invited all the ten-year-olds in the neighborhood to Marilyn's birthday party with the exception of the landlady's daughter, who is Marilyn's classmate in school. The fight soon followed. The school attributes Marilyn's failure in arithmetic to emotional blocking, and she is on the waiting list for treatment at the overcrowded Child Guidance Clinic.
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> Mrs. Milly loudly praises Rose in Marilyn's presence and takes every opportunity to display Carolyn's latest achievements. "The baby is so smart. She has my eyes." Whenever she does this, Marilyn hugs and kisses the baby.
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> Mrs. Milly keeps as a souvenir a little bloodied coat worn by Marilyn some years ago when she was injured by a car.16

Mrs. Milly's quarrelsome relationship with her second husband is repeated in his frequent quarrels with Marilyn; but there is a further reason for the child's unhappiness because of her mother's second marriage. Her sister Rose was so much older that for many years Marilyn was practically an only child, and as such, her mother's close companion. Now all is changed. Now Carolyn takes up her mother's time and there is little left for Marilyn but scoldings. In Marilyn's presence, Mrs. Milly said to the worker, "I am afraid she is going to hurt the baby. I think the baby is afraid of her." But Marilyn reacts to the baby just as she

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16 What deep, unrecognized desires for Marilyn's death this symbolizes can be uncovered only by psychoanalysis. But it is suggestive, even to the untrained observer.

does to the rejecting mother [17] --- when somebody is watching, she shows no overt hatred but hugs and kisses the baby.

Mrs. Milly, whose case is still active, has been coming to see the worker weekly or semi-monthly for the past five months. Her understanding has increased noticeably, and she less often needs to say, "I don't know why, believe me," for very often now she does know why. But she is such a sick and childlike person that it is sometimes necessary to make direct suggestions in order to obtain movement from her. For example, the worker has pointed out that Marilyn is only a little girl and needs more time for play. She has also told Mrs. Milly to praise the child sometimes, actually saying that this week's assignment is "not to scold Marilyn until next Tuesday, even if she makes mistakes." She has told Mrs. Milly, "Now this week get Marilyn's eyes examined and then next time we'll talk about her physical exam". And Mrs. Milly has done all these things. In her most recent interview she was able to praise the child spontaneously for getting a better report card. The teacher had written on it, "And please help her with arithmetic this summer." Mrs. Milly said earnestly, "And I will help her, believe me."

Her suicide threats suggest that the woman whose violence this mother really fears is not the landlady at all, but herself; for the history indicates that Mrs. Milly feels she deserves to be punished for having given Marilyn a wicked stepfather.

But she is not alone in having provided inadequate fathers for her little girls. In this she may join hands with the majority of women in

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17 See p. 68, Chapter IV., infra.

this study; with Mrs. Kirk (Kirk is a psychopath, according to the Court records); with Mrs. Brown (Brown gambled on horses before running away); with Mrs. Green and Mrs. Foster (Foster was immature and joined the Marines as an escape from marriage, as did Green, also); with Mrs. O'Hara (O'Hara is alcoholic); with Mrs. Sully (Sully refuses to work); with Mrs. Queen (Queen is her whipping-boy and dull into the bargain.)

These eight women have married weak men and yet (with the exception of Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Foster) are loud in voicing their disdainful attitudes toward men. The children are watchful. As Marilyn Milly said, during a play-interview, when asked what the sister-doll was doing, "Oh, she just sits there and takes it all in." Kathy and Moira, Nora and Marilyn and all the rest are "taking it in". It is not unreasonable to suppose that the little girls, when grown, will reflect these attitudes toward men which they are learning in their formative years.

SUMMARY --- TWO NEUROTIC MOTHERS

Two mothers, because of their general dissatisfaction, and their ambivalence about their husbands, homes and children, and their own roles as wives and mothers, as well as because of a medical diagnosis each of psychoneurotic, were considered to be neurotic women.

The ambivalent feelings of each toward her own mother had produced in each exaggerated grief-reactions to the mother's death, reactions which were interfering with their efficiency as wives and mothers.

One of them, Mrs. Queen, was fully accepting of her two small girls and rejecting of her sons, for reasons, however, which seemed related to her own early life --- the identification of her boys with the many

younger brothers she disliked and envied as a girl. The other, Mrs. Milly, rejected that one of her three daughters who reminds her of herself in her own unhappy childhood.

Both of these women were disappointed in their husbands, yet ambivalent about leaving them. Both wanted more love and more money, attitudes which had affected at least one of Mrs. Queen's boys, who was stealing, and one of Mrs. Milly's girls, who also sought more love.

Although both women were more concerned with themselves than with their children, casework helped both in their parent-child relationships. Mrs. Queen, in four interviews, gained a modicum of insight; and Mrs. Milly, after several months of interviews, was able to take practical steps to improve the physical, if not the emotional, well-being of her rejected daughter.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER III.

Nine mothers who were studied for their relationship to their young daughters were divided into three groups, (a) feminine, (b) masculine and (c) neurotic, depending upon their feelings about their role as women, wives and mothers.

Six of them were found to be feminine, for the most part satisfied to be women. At least four of these had preferred their mothers to their fathers. All six were estranged from their husbands, but they were all very accepting of their daughters and capable of fulfilling their feminine role as mothers, if not as wives. Five of the six did not have sons, nor did they wish they had. The sixth preferred her daughter to her son, for reasons related to her own past experiences.

Only one mother was found to be masculine, or rejecting of her sex and longing to have been a boy instead. She was very vindictive toward her father, who had wanted a ladylike daughter. She accepted all her sons but rejected her little girl and wished she were a boy.

Two mothers were found to be neurotic women, unhappy, dissatisfied, and ambivalent about their husbands, their children and life in general. Both had felt very ambivalent toward their own mothers in childhood; and they, more than the other mothers, identified their children, whether boys or girls, with figures from the past, expressing toward them the feelings and attitudes they harbored toward these childhood figures.

The mothers in this study, two of whom even brought photographs of their mothers to the agency, showed an almost universal preference for their own mothers as against their fathers.[18] The preference for and identification with the mother of the majority of the clients seemed to bear a positive relationship to their acceptance of their sex and of their female children; moreover, their mother-attachments left them amenable to casework with a woman worker, generally used by clients as a mother-substitute; and those three women --- Mrs. Kirk, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Milly --- who accepted continuing casework used her in this fashion.

The two feminine mothers who accepted casework made appreciable gains in understanding their daughters. The three who were seen a few

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18 Meyer F. Nimkoff, "The Child's Preference for Father or Mother," American Sociological Review, August, 1942, pp. 517-524, who made a study of this subject, found that a large percentage of children of both sexes in the United States expressed a preference for the mother. This may be part of our cultural pattern.

times made very slight gains, while the attitudes of the one seen only once remained unchanged. The masculine mother was unready for casework, and her attitudes remained unchanged, also. That one of the two neurotic mothers who accepted casework began to improve in her relationship with her rejected child. The other, seen four times, began to question some of her own maternal feelings.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHILDREN

INTERVIEWS WITH FIVE SMALL DAUGHTERS

In the majority of cases in this study it was necessary for the caseworker to rely upon the mothers' description of their children, supplemented by an occasional glimpse of a child during a home visit; but while working with Mrs. Kirk, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Milly, the three mothers who accepted continuing casework, the writer had the opportunity to observe directly five of the little girls; that is, slightly over one-fifth of all the children.[1] Not only was much interesting corroborative material on mother-daughter relationships gleaned from these interviews, but the children's own attitudes toward their mothers emerged quite clearly.

Play interviews were undertaken with four of the little girls --- with Kathy Kirk, aged six, and Moira Kirk, aged four; with four-year-old Anna Brown and ten-year-old Marilyn Milly. Each of these children was seen at her mother's request, and in each case the worker felt that seeing the child would benefit the work with the mother. In no case was the child seen for purposes of treatment.

Young Nora Kirk, aged two, frequently accompanied her mother into the interviewing room, where she was observed at length during the interviews and so became the fifth child seen firsthand.

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1 The nine women combined had a total of twenty-four children, not counting Mrs. Milly's Rose, who was married, living outside the Commonwealth and not important in this study.

The materials used in the play were those suggested by Baruch[2] --- small dolls about six inches high representing the family constellation, and simple doll furniture, including a bed, a table, chairs, bathroom furniture and a small, soft square of flannel for a blanket. In each case the family of dolls given to the child to play with represented exactly the members of her family, for it was found in an experiment with Moira that the presence of extra dolls confused the issue and delayed the acting-out of emotionally significant material.

The interviews were conducted in a small, narrow office where the children could play "house" on the conveniently low typewriter desk, close beside the worker's chair. All four of the children accepted the play-interviews complacently, perhaps because they were accustomed to seeing and greeting the caseworker in the waiting-room, and because they had for some time been seeing their mothers enter the interview-room with the worker. All four were friendly children. Each of the four related well, almost at once drawing the worker into the play with such requests as, "You take her dress off", or "You make him stand up", or "Is this a father?"

The children were given their choice of drawing pictures or playing with the toys. It was found that the older children, Kathy and Marilyn, preferred drawing with crayons, while the pre-school children, Moira and Anna, preferred to play with the toys.

It was also found that very little prompting on the worker's part

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2 Dorothy W. Baruch, "Doll-Play in Pre-School Children as an Aid in Understanding the Child", Mental Hygiene, October, 1941, p. 566.

was required. If the child, after drawing a house, became blocked, the worker might say, "Who lives in the house? Can you draw them?"; or if the child picked up the baby-doll and held it for some time without speaking, the worker might ask, "What is the baby's name?"

THE FIRST CHILD---MOIRA

Moira was seen at her mother's request, for Mrs. Kirk was worried about the little girl's listlessness and refusal to play. Physically she had recently been examined and found well.

As recorded in the history:

> According to her mother, Moira often sits dreamily in her chair all morning, ignoring her sisters, Kathy and Nora, at play in the very same room. Mrs. Kirk says she has begun to time the child and finds that sometimes she sits quite still for as long as three hours. Worker asked if she seemed to be listening to anything. Mrs. Kirk said no, she gave the impression of being deep in thought. She does not play with the other children in the yard very much but stays by herself in the sandbox. She runs screaming from little boys or dogs and calls them "bad". She is all right if Mrs. Kirk or Kathy are with her.
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> Mrs. Kirk said, "Poor little thing, she has been through a lot", and explained that last summer, when Moira had just turned four, her father applied lighted cigarettes to her arm because she wouldn't sit still when he wanted to take his afternoon nap. Worker commented, "She sits still now". Mrs. Kirk said she hadn't thought of that. She said Moira was afraid of her father, and added, "You should have heard all three of them when he came near me." The worker said, "You mean when he hurt you?" Mrs. Kirk said, "Oh, no, when he made advances".

According to this information, Mrs. Kirk's fear of her husband has communicated itself to Moira and this fear was increased when the father actually hurt the child. Moira's fearfulness has extended itself to her social life, in her case the playmates in the yard, as she is not yet in school.

Mrs. Kirk said that although the father likes and fondles Kathy, who is his favorite child, he has never shown Moira any affection, though Moira has begged him to kiss her. Her behavior in the office showed her need for affection. She repeatedly tried to kiss everyone in the office, including the secretary, the workers, and the rest of the women clients in the waiting-room, and asked to be kissed in return. Mrs. Kirk frequently kissed Moira while in the office. She seems to be lavishing a great deal of physical affection on all her children, two of whom---Moira and Nora---have slept with her ever since Mr. Kirk's departure.

Interview with Moira

> Moira came into the interviewing-room, pounced on the father-doll with shrieks of, "A father, a naughty father!" and immediately spanked him soundly. She pulled his clothes off, paused to remark, "See his heinie?", put him to bed without any supper, and then hid him far away in a dark corner behind the wastebasket. She said she didn't care if he was cold or hungry, or if he cried. "He is a naughty father." Her whole play was concentrated on him. Every two or three minutes she ran and fetched him from his corner in order to give him another gleeful spanking, while her cries of "The naughty father!" resounded on the agency stairs. Once she opened the door and ran out into the other office to show "the father" to the student social workers. The play was obviously important to her. She seemed to need it. She has since asked her mother if she could come back to play with those toys some more, and when they pass an office building, often asks, "Is that the lady's office?" Her play with the mother-doll was brief. She said, as if to herself "Is she a bad mother? No, she is a good mother," gave her a gentle pat and put her to bed.

A few weeks later, the worker, once more at the mother's request took little Moira shopping for a birthday present for Mrs. Kirk. Although her mother had several times told the worker how eager Moira was to buy her, the mother, a gift, actually the child seemed quite uninterested in the whole expedition. She chose a wastebasket for Mrs. Kirk and did not

refer to it again.

Another excerpt from the record follows:

> At lunch she asked the worker, "Do you smoke?" She said that she does not like cigarettes. Then, pointing to some pipes on the wall, asked, "Are they hot?" She said if they were hot she was afraid of them. When someone in the restaurant played records on the jukebox, Moira covered her ears and closed her eyes and said she didn't like to hear men's voices singing. She has repeatedly said that men and boys are bad.

An examination of the history shows that Moira has been deeply affected by the traumatic experience to which she was subjected by her father and that to her all men and boys seem bad and fearsome because he was bad to her. However, she is more matter-of-fact toward her mother than the mother would have one suppose. She accepts mother in a rather casual way, asking herself, "Is she a bad mother?" and then deciding, "No, she is a good mother."

THE SECOND CHILD --- KATHY

The other little Kirk girl, Kathy, aged six, was seen because her mother said she often wept at suppertime and insisted that her father, who lives away from home, was not getting enough to eat in restaurants. Since Kathy had never been to a restaurant, the worker took her to lunch one noon, intending to show her that food abounds in restaurants, and besides, that her father could pick out all the things to eat he liked the best.

Interview with Kathy

> Kathy, the one who is six and pretty, is her father's favorite child. Sometimes he calls for her at school and brings her little gifts, though he ignores his other daughters. He uses her as a messenger child --- "Go home and tell your mother

I hate her." But Kathy's play showed that she wanted him home again. She put the father and mother-dolls to bed together, with the children's beds close by. The whole family was closely gathered together in her play, and also in her drawings, in which she had them all walking home together, "The daddy, too".

In the restaurant, Kathy turned out to be a self-possessed little girl who, at six, is already in some ways more mature than her mother. (It is interesting that in her drawing Kathy made herself bigger than her mother, and when worker commented, "Kathy has drawn Kathy bigger than her mother," she laughed merrily. Kathy wants to be more important than her mother.)

With a very superior air she told the waitress, "Don't take my plate away, I don't waste food"; chided the worker for not eating all her ice-cream; and when it was time to go home, reached up and buttoned the worker's coat. She said serenely that her father loved her the best, but that her mother loved them all the same. She said she liked her teacher very much but would like her better if she let father come inside the gate at school. She sighed, as she put her gloves on, "Egads, I wish my father would behave himself so that my mother would let him come home again." She also asked if we might buy her mother something --- a bottle of mercurochrome, which made the worker wonder if Kathy were bringing mother something to help to heal her wounds. Actually, father took the mercurochrome with him when he left home. Is Kathy at six already becoming the responsible man of the family who brings home the mercurochrome? So it would seem.

It was when the caseworker brought Kathy home from the restaurant that Mrs. Kirk's jealousy of her eldest child became apparent. Mrs. Kirk's dearest wish has always been to be the favorite child.

Kathy is in reality her father's favorite.

She is her teacher's favorite, also, according to Mrs. Kirk, and is doing exceptionally well in school. (Once, when she was angry at her mother, she threatened to run away and live with her teacher.) In her social milieu, which consists now of home, play and school, it is of interest to note that she is adjusting best away from home, at school.

Not until Kathy was taken to lunch did her extremely passive mother

display evidence of hostile fellings toward the worker. She behaved as though she could hardly endure the sight of the worker when the latter brought Kathy home. She said firmly, to Kathy, "Miss K has to go right back to the office." She seemed to be jealous, and although she had for some time been giving the worker the impression that she had quite effaced herself in favor of her girls, that day she complained that she did not feel well and that her illness had begun with malnutrition! "The doctor said it was the worst case of malnutrition he ever saw. I was denying myself food so the children could eat." In other words, she wanted to be treated to lunch at the tearoom, like Kathy. She wanted to be the favorite child.

(To a slighter degree there was also evidence of Mrs. Kirk's jealousy of Moira; for although Moira had asked to come back to play with the toys and to spank the father-doll some more, her mother continued to leave her at home despite appointments made for her, and brought little Nora instead. She said the weather was too cold for Moira. Actually, some of the Thursdays on which she had appointments were not at all cold.)

Her own favorite child is Nora, the baby, a tiny replica of herself. For it is often true that

> A mother who is very much in love with her own image or who is very sympathetic with her own weakness may love best that baby who, from birth, seems to be a new version of herself. 3

But even concerning her favorite child she displays a touch of jealousy, for in discussing Nora's brown curls she interrupted herself to say,

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3 W. Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, Father to the Man, p. 121.

"I had curls like that when I was small, but mine were longer."

So, although the Kirk girls are by no means rejected children, they are to some extent the object of their mother's envy, as were the other girls in her life, her many stepsisters; and toward Kathy, Mrs. Kirk, who, in her own phrase, "never gets mad", is at times openly punitive, as is evident from little comments in the record which indicate her feelings:

> "I had the flu last week, but when I asked Kathy to make me some toast and tea, she refused. She is perfectly able to--- she's almost seven now." ... "Kathy called me stupid. She calls me all the names that you-know-who called me. She even told Moira, 'You have to wait on me, it is your wifely duty.' Those were his exact words. I had to give her a beating." ... "On Mother's Day she began teasing me to let her father come home, and when I refused she said she would take my present back to the store. How do you like that? I said to go ahead and take it, and then she cried. She wants me to say she is my favorite child, too, but if I did it wouldn't be true." ... "Kathy is so bossy, she tells me what to do and what not to do. When she came home from school yesterday and found me washing the windows she scolded me ... put her hands on her hips and said, 'I told you not to wash those windows --- you might fall out.'" Mrs. Kirk added rather helplessly, "That was kind of cute, wasn't it?"

While Moira's behavior showed her on the whole to be quite accepting of her mother, imitating her closely in her fear of the father and giving her much affection in return for affection, Kathy is not imitating her at all. Kathy already seems to think that women are poor sorts of creatures who need looking after. Already she has begun to take care of her mother, warning her, for example, not to fall out the window; and of the social worker, whom she identified with mother, and whose coat she carefully buttoned in the restaurant, as if the worker were the child. Kathy's danger in the future may well be the denial of her own sex. Kathy responds to her mother's anger with anger, angrily blaming her for the

father's departure. Kathy told the worker, "My father could come home again, but my mother won't let him."

Thus Mrs. Kirk's attitudes toward her two older daughters are reflected in their attitudes toward her.

THE THIRD CHILD --- ANNA

Mrs. Brown asked if she might leave Anna in the agency to visit with the worker for half an hour while she herself went to the dentist. Anna knew the worker, who had been to her home.

When the worker first called at the home, Jane, who was born at Christmastime, was a few weeks old. Anna was composedly engaged in imitating her mother, who had Jane in her lap. She had drawn up her little rocker and, with her doll in her lap, sat beside her mother, copying her gesture for gesture and rocking in rhythm. When Sandy, the two-year-old, who had been poking at the baby, was reprimanded by Mrs. Brown and fled behind the icebox to hide there and cry, Anna said to the worker, "I'm so sick of that Sandy". The worker cheerfully accepted this statement, and a good relationship was begun.

Anna misses her father, who ran away in September.

Interview with Anna

> Anna was at once attracted to the father-doll, and picking him up, said to the worker, "I have a father, too, period. That's about all." She added she wished he'd come home again, but that he had taken a train and gone away to visit Laura. (Mrs. Brown later told the worker that Laura is his mother, and that the child has been told he is at his mother's. Actually, he has disappeared.) Although Anna speaks slowly and placidly in a sing-song voice like her mother's, she exhibited a great deal of unexpected anxiety when a train whistle blew in the distance. She paused in her play, looked at the worker and asked, "Is my

> mother down by those tracks?" Worker said no, her mother had gone to the dentist and would be back soon. Anna looked doubtful. "Are you sure she isn't near that train?" Anna expects to be deserted again.
>
> When her mother returned she was carefully bathing the father-doll. Her mother, who until then had said little about her husband's departure except that it was "for the best", looked at Anna and murmured, "Wouldn't it break your heart?"

Anna's drawings verify the uncertainty which she has indicated in her play. The history continues:

> They are very immature drawings, in which people have faces, arms and legs but no bodies, and all are drawn completely upside down. Anna seems to be living in a topsy-turvy world. She calls her sister "he" sometimes --- "this is my sister Sandy, these are his hands" --- and is in general unsure of her identifications; the squirrel outside the agency window, for example, is "that worm". She drew her mother with a brown crayon because "my mother has brown hair", and then said, "I am going to make her wear a father's hat." Later she showed the secretary her drawing: "This is my father, no it is my mother." Anna has a mother-father all in one. It is very confusing to Anna.
>
> Her father she drew with a red crayon. "I like red the best, I am going to make a red father." (He has red hair in reality.) Shortly after she played with the father-doll she began to cry. "Are you mad at your father?" "No, because my mother isn't mad at him."

Unlike the little Kirks, Anna Brown does not seem to blame her mother for her father's desertion. The record shows that she is much attached to Mrs. Brown and is doing her best in every way to identify with her, to be like her. Mrs. Brown rocks the baby and Anna rocks the doll. Mrs. Brown is not mad at father so Anna isn't either. But she is a doubtful and anxious little girl. ("That window ain't open, is it?" "That worm can't come in, can he?" "Are you sure my mother isn't down by those tracks?") Anxiety is already one of her problems and she may well be neurotic some day. She is unsure. Is father really with Laura?

Her mother has said so, but she has heard mother and grandmother and the aunts talking, and saying they do not know where he is. Is mother really at the dentist's, or has she, too, gone away. Anna may have a hard time trusting people of either sex.

When the Browns moved recently, Anna was reluctant to go out to play in the new neighborhood. She seemed apprehensive. Her anxiety has already disturbed her social life (her play) a little, for she, too, is a pre-school child.

Anna reciprocates her mother's rather gentle acceptance, but with a reservation of doubt because her mother has told her an untruth about the whereabouts of her father.

THE FOURTH CHILD --- MARILYN

Like Anna, Marilyn, who is ten, was anxious because of uncertainty about her father.[4] When Marilyn's father went to prison, her mother told her he was "in the Navy". When mother married Mr. Milly, who is really in the Navy, she told Marilyn her father had come home. The child was five when he left, and eight when --- in the shape of Charles Milly --- he "returned". She was troubled. Was this really her father? He seemed quite different. She could not quite express her doubts in words:

> When the worker asked her if she recognized her father when he came home from the sea, she said, "Yes, but he looked different because his hair was grey." Worker asked how that happened. "It got grey overnight when they torpedoed his boat. He turned grey overnight. That's why he looks different."

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4 In contrast to Anna and Marilyn, the Kirk children are at least spared uncertainty. They know where their father lives and meet him in the Square.

This is the way in which she seemed to be trying to convince herself that he is father --- father grown gruff and older. She was unable to play with the father-doll, although the other little girls in the study could not resist him.

Marilyn's mother brought her in for a scolding. "Marilyn needs a good, stiff talking-to." She had not hung up her clothes in the closet, or taken in the washing, or scoured the pans with care. All she cared about was playing. (Mrs. Milly herself at eight years old had to wash the stairways in a large tenement house and sees no harm in Marilyn's having to do similar tasks.)

Interview with Marilyn

> Marilyn, in her dirty dress, is a very different child in the interviewing-room from the pert, flip, almost insolent little creature we saw outside the office. She is very constricted. She cannot draw a line without asking permission. "Shall I draw the roof first?" "What color shall I make the door?" "Is it all right to draw the window this way?" "Is this the right way to draw the curtain?"
>
> She drew an apartment-house. "Who lives in it, Marilyn?" "My mother and me," she said quickly, and after a long pause added, "and my father and the baby." The father is her step-father and baby Carolyn, a little half-sister. She recently cut off the baby's nice hair. "Why did you do that, Marilyn?" "To make her look pretty." "And does it?" She grinned and shook her head. "No." She drew a picture of Marilyn without any face, and in a dress of patches.
>
> She touched the play therapy dolls, said they were beautiful, and placed them carefully in their box again, and then, although the box was in her hand, asked, "May I look at them again?"
>
> Marilyn loves her friends. Her parents, however, keep moving from town to town and she must make new friends over and over. Her mother takes no interest in Marilyn's appearance and sends her to school in dirty clothes at which the children jeer. Making new friends grows harder. Yet Marilyn

> talks incessantly of "my friends" and of "the Valentines my friends sent me" and says hopefully that when they move, her mother is going to "let me invite my friends every weekend." Marilyn did not react to the father doll beyond asking, "Is it a cowboy?" She might have been asking, "Is it a father? What is a father?"

And yet Marilyn, the most rejected of the children in this study, cleaves to her mother and speaks no ill of her. This is the same sort of behavior she exhibited in regard to the little sister of whom she is jealous and whom she kisses and hugs when the infant is praised in her presence. In no way does Marilyn reject her mother. The following comments appear in the record:

> "My mother is such a good cook. My father is a chef, but my mother is the one who can really cook. I can eat ten of her ravioli at once." ... "My mother takes good care of me. She curls my hair every night." ... "My mother is so good. She is too good to people."

She is hardly too good to Marilyn. She gives her heavy household tasks, continually scolds, sends her to school on icy days <u>sans</u> underwear (she wore none the day she came to the agency, for her bare chest was visible through the torn, unbuttoned cotton dress), and has even appropriated the pretty pink scarf the teacher gave Marilyn on her birthday and wears it herself. "My Marilyn must be jealous of Carolyn," the mother says in amusement. "She looks for excuses to kiss me goodnight twice these days. I know what she's up to."

Marilyn is so eager for affection, especially from her mother, that later on she may be unable to emancipate herself from this neurotic mother. She may be unable to leave her mother because she is vainly waiting to be loved; for the rejected child may "develop the illusion that by trying hard he may at some time capture his mother's love";

and often rejected girls "suffer by developing infantile persistence in hanging on to unreasonable and essentially untenable love relations."[5] Marilyn's drawing of herself with no face and in a Cinderella dress of patches indicates how rejected and inferior she feels.

Marilyn's longing for love extends, as the record shows, to a longing for close friendships with girls of her own age. Her stepfather forbids their coming to the house because they are noisy, and her mother follows the stepfather's orders; but in Marilyn's fantasies, mother invites the little girls to come and stay for the weekend.

Her social adjustment, then, has in many ways been affected by her rejection by mother. Away from home she grows very homesick, as she did in a temporary home last year when her mother was hospitalized. The Red Cross worker who knew her at that time feels that even camp might be traumatic for her. In school she has done poorly, partly because of emotional blocking and partly because of poor vision, for the mother neglected for many months to provide badly needed eyeglasses. And she has lost friends through championing her mother, as, for example, in the fight with the landlady's daughter.

THE FIFTH CHILD --- NORA

When Nora first came to the agency she would not part from her mother at all. She and Mrs. Kirk generally held hands during the interviews, and she was frequently observed to bend down and kiss her mother's fingers.

She had reason, however, to cling to her mother. Not only had father

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5 Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, Modern Woman --- the Lost Sex, p. 12.

ignored and deserted her, but some months previously mother had gone to the hospital for an operation, leaving an unprepared Nora at the home of an aunt, where she grieved and refused to eat for three days. Nora was determined not to let the door close behind her mother. She spurned the bribes offered her by the agency personnel and turned up her nose at the picture-books. She was going along! She may to some degree have been reflecting Mrs. Kirk's own attitude by this behavior.[6] Frederick Allen feels that the mother who, like Nora's mother, says, "The child never wants to leave me", is expressing her own attitude as well as the child"s. The worker, who had been watching Mrs. Kirk ask Nora's permission to separate from her, suggested telling the child, "I am going in to talk to Miss K for a little while," and this was successful. After the third week of interviews Nora was willing to stay in the outer office and play games with the secretary.

But some months later, according to the record,

> Nora again refuses to be parted from her mother. Whenever she sees the worker approaching, she pinches a fragment of her mother's black coat tightly between her fingers in an effort to hold on to her. Then she runs and finds the child's chair and mutely places it beside her mother's. She sits beside her throughout the interviews but keeps looking around as if searching for something.

At last, one day, after her sister Moira had been in for a play interview, young Nora ran back into the interviewing-room and grasped the father-doll with such a look of satisfaction that she might have been thinking, "Well, here he is, at last I've found him". It seemed to both

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6 Frederick H. Allen, Combined Psychotherapy with Parents and Children, pp. 257-264 (in Lewis and Pacella).

Mrs. Kirk and the caseworker that Nora's holding on to her mother had been a ruse for getting in to see those toys her sisters had been talking about.

Nora, too, has been affected by her father's departure. The record reports:

> Several times Mrs. Kirk has told the caseworker that Nora in a rather odd way shows that she misses her father --- "She makes overtures to men in the street". (Nora at two is very serious and very tiny.) The worker asked what she meant, and Mrs. Kirk said, "Well, smiles at them." Apparently it is true. Today she ran over to one of the male workers, and although she is always clamoring to be allowed to dress herself, to do everything herself, asked him to put on her leggings and to kiss her. Another day she repeatedly tried to catch the attention of the other male worker who was intent on reading a record and did not see her. She held up her crayons for him to see and called out again and again, "See the white one, see the white one?" until he noticed her at last.

Unlike her sister Kathy, who seems to blame Mrs. Kirk for Mr. Kirk's departure, and who has a tendency to think that women are "bad"; and unlike her sister Moira, who says that men are "bad", Nora is evidently going to take nobody's word for who is good or who is bad, but intends to find out for herself. She is a very independent little girl, and of the three sisters, therefore, will probably be capable of making the happiest adjustment to life situations. Perhaps less damage was done to Nora by the marital discord between her parents since she was still in the pre-Oedipal stage of development when her father left home; for it will be recalled that in the pre-Oedipal period the child loves the mother the best, while in the Oedipal stage --- the time of life which Moira, Kathy and Anna were experiencing when their fathers left them --- there is deep concern for the father.

But with the exception of Kathy Kirk, the children who were seen in

the office all exhibited a definite preference for the mother as against the father, and this seems to augur well for their acceptance of their feminine role. Nora Kirk alone showed signs of overattachment to her mother, but she is only two years old.

SUMMARY

Interviews with four of the small daughters and direct observation of a fifth provided supplementary material regarding the mother-daughter relationships. Each child, in her speech, play or drawings, presented evidence of having been affected by her mother's attitude toward her, and also by her mother's attitude toward the father.

Reciprocity of feeling was noted in the attitudes of three of the children and their mothers. Moira and Anna, fully accepted by Mrs. Kirk and Mrs. Brown, accepted their mothers in turn. Kathy, the object of Mrs. Kirk's verbalized envy, showed resentment toward Mrs. Kirk, the mother, which was increased by the mother's rejection of the father.

A fourth child, Marilyn, displayed an attitude toward her mother directly opposed to that of her mother toward her. A rejected child, she clung to the mother, Mrs. Milly, in what seemed a vain hope of being accepted.

The fifth, a very young child, Nora, by means of handholding, snuggling, kisses and smiles, repeatedly expressed contentment at being with the mother, whose favorite child she is.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSIONS

Nine mothers of young daughters who came to a family society for help were studied from the point of view of their relationship with their daughters. The attitudes which the mothers expressed toward their daughters were observed and analyzed, as were the attitudes toward their sons of the three mothers in the study who also had sons. The effect of casework upon these attitudes was also studied.

The mothers were divided into three groups, (a) feminine, (b) masculine and (c) neurotic, depending upon their acceptance or rejection of their role as women, wives and mothers. It was found that their own adjustment or non-adjustment to their feminine role in society had some bearing on their relationship with their daughters; for the degree to which they accepted their own femininity seemed to bear a positive relationship to their acceptance of their female children.

The majority of the mothers were found to express attitudes of acceptance of and affection for their young daughters; and while there were a few cases of ambivalence and rejection, no instance of overprotection appeared in the attitudes of these mothers who came to the family agency. This seems to suggest that mothers who overprotect their children may be seeking help from a different kind of agency or clinic than a family service.

In spite of the cultural emphasis on the value of boys, the majority of mothers gave no indication that they would prefer sons to daughters. Only one said frankly that to have a daughter was "a mistake", and she

herself was the only woman in the study who was classified as a "masculine" mother. From the nine cases studied, it would appear that preferring a son or a daughter is to a great extent a personal rather than a wholly cultural matter.

The importance of identification as a concept in casework was very evident in this study, suggesting the need for the caseworker to be alert to the question: With whom does this mother identify her child? It was also found that identification of the children with figures from the past played a greater role in the attitudes of the two mothers classified as "neurotic"; and that the less neurotic any of the nine mothers seemed to be, the more aware they were of their children as individuals in their own right.

Interviews with four of the children and direct observation of a fifth were found to be helpful in modifying and correcting the mother's description of the child; and indeed, it is recommended that in casework dealing with parent-child relationships, each child be seen at least once to help establish a more accurate clinical diagnosis of the situation.

The five children seen firsthand were found to be reflecting their mothers' attitudes toward them, either exactly, or, as in one case, by the opposite feeling. In each case the child's reaction to her mother's attitudes, including the mother's attitude to the father, was already affecting her adjustment to her role in society --- that is, in one or more of the following areas: at home, at play or in school.

It was also found that casework with the mother was beneficial in improving her understanding, and subsequently her relationship with her

child. Slight changes of attitude were noted in some of the mothers seen a few times. The greatest changes were observed in the three mothers who had intensive casework.

RECOMMENDATION

From evidence of anxiety in the play interviews and drawings of three of the little girls who as yet show no overt evidence of neurosis, it is recommended that a study be made of early signs of anxiety in children as a means of uncovering incipient neuroses in children.

Approved:
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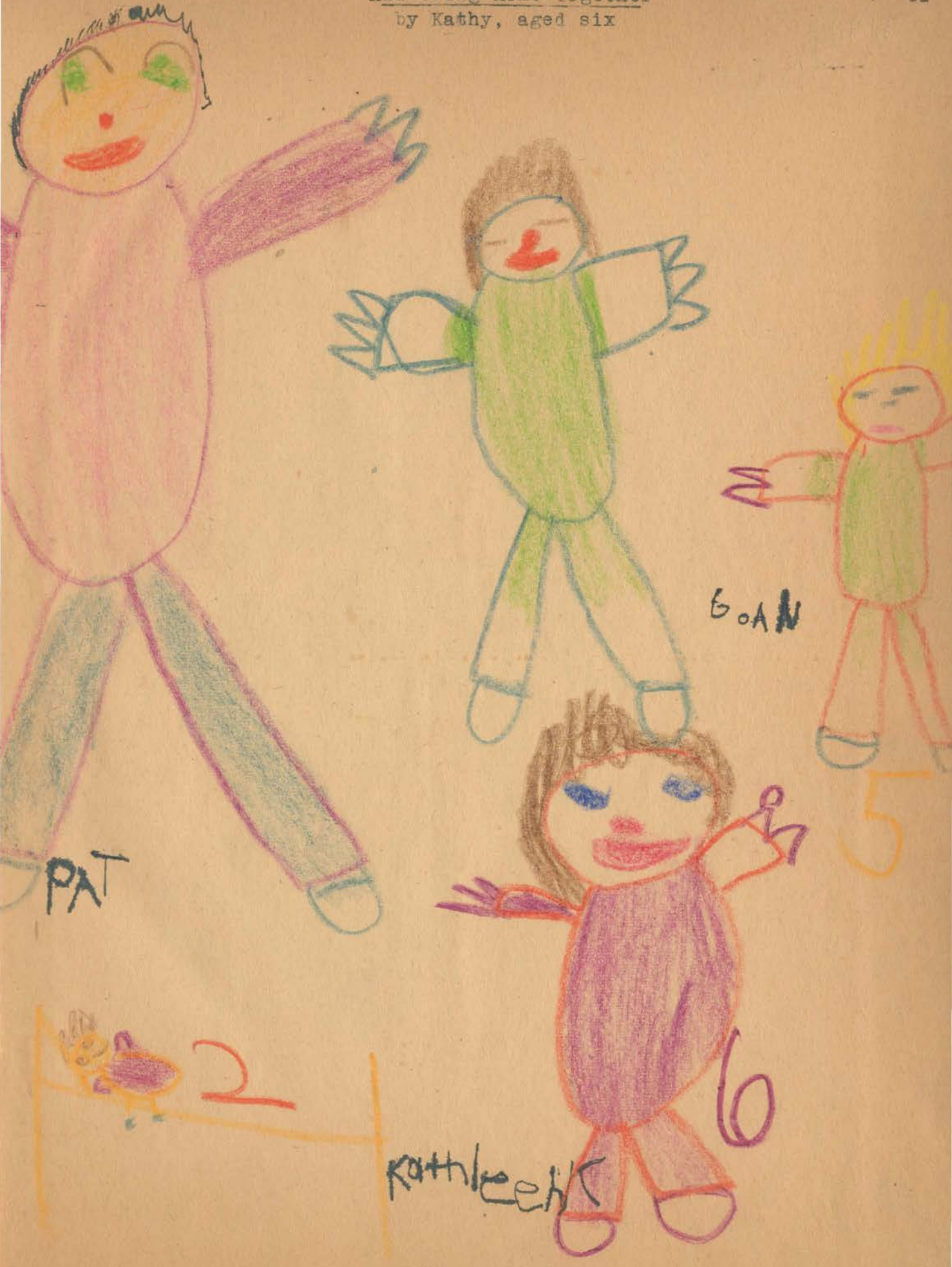
APPENDIX

FIGURE 1.

All Going Home Together

by Kathy, aged six



Anna Brown
Draws Upside Down

FIGURE 2.

Self Portrait
of Anna, aged 4

This is my mother wearing
a father's hat.

My baby sister. He has
red hair and his hands
are tiny.

A red father because I like
red the best.

FIGURE 3.

Self-Portrait
by Marilyn, aged ten