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**REACTIONS TO PARENTHOOD**

by

Geraldine Rosine Brinley

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of  
**MASTER OF SCIENCE**

in  
**Child Development**

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Geraldine Rosine Brinley

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## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the problem

Parenthood is a common experience, in the sense that it is almost universal among married couples, but it is a unique experience in the sense that there are great individual variations in its meaning and its impact upon the life of each parent.

In spite of the many variations in reactions and responses to parenthood, a stereotype reaction seems to prevail. The stereotyped conception of behavior following the conception of a child is for the wife to be filled with some inner joy which causes her to behave mysteriously for a time until she reveals the unsuspected truth to her naive husband. He, when informed of this totally unsuspected event, is expected to respond with surprise and exaggerated concern for his wife's health and well-being. Later, when the baby is born, each is expected to respond with pride, joy, pleasure, and to behave in ways indicating that the arrival of their child has indeed brought the ultimate fulfillment into their personal lives.

The stereotyped picture matches the feelings of some couples, and it matches the behavior of a large number, whose real feelings remain hidden as they act out the expectations of their society.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the variations in responses which occur as a reaction to parenthood. "What does parenthood mean?" "What does it mean to me as an individual with my own goals, values, life experiences, and life expectations?" "What does it mean

to have an infant to care for--to nurture, teach, feed, clothe, worry over, with whom one can laugh and play?" And, perhaps more challenging, "What does being a parent do to one's role as a wife or husband--what happens to the marriage?"

It is quite probable that every person has his own feelings about such questions. There will be many similarities in the attitudes held by people who have been reared in a common cultural background. There will, however, likely be individual variations as well. Many of the attitudes taken for granted and passed off as "human nature" are not necessarily the nature of humans, but symptoms of acculturation or adaptation to society. Each individual from infancy is taught by experience and example how best to get along in the society to which he belongs. The prejudices of those who have gone before are impressed upon his mind and, with individual variations, they become his own. From the beginning he is surrounded with evidences of what is valued by those with whom he lives. These values are communicated to him in the process of his development. They are found in the voice of the mother and in the very way she nourishes her newborn. They are found in the shape of the nursery, the colors with which it is decorated, the type of clothes the child is made to wear and the place and time he wears them. We claim that boys look better in blue and girls in pink. This is as traditional as the crib itself and we even use it as a means of identifying the sex. Do boys really look better in blue, or have we just accustomed ourselves to thinking so? Evidences of cultural values are found in the manner and context of the child's education, the type of songs he is taught, the stories his mother reads to him, and



the toys he is given with which to play. As he grows older and more and more of the outside world begins to creep into his life, he is exposed to these values through other media such as television, newspapers, magazines, neighbors, teachers and his friends. Maccoby (35) says,

. . . the child acquires a set of adult-like behavior tendencies during early childhood, through covert practice of his parents' actions and . . . these tendencies find their way into overt expression during interaction with peers at a later time when peers provide the necessary stimulating conditions. (35, p. 503)

Let's consider the parenthood problem from the beginning. Why do people marry? Isn't it possible to have a rich, full life, even experience sex and have children and still remain single? Of course, we know that this is possible, but our society frowns upon it. Sirjamaki (46) sums up our attitude.

It is felt that married life is the normal, desired condition for all adults, that it brings the greatest personal happiness and fulfillment, and that it permits the proper exercise of sex for the procreation of children and for individual satisfaction. The single adult life by contrast, according to this attitude, is empty and barren. Most Americans marry in their twenties, and, for a considerable share of them, marriage at that age means a happy union of individual volition and social pressure. (46, p. 3)

Each of us has some preconceived notion concerning parenthood that is not entirely our own. If we happen to belong to society which enjoys children and honors parenthood, we too, shall expect to enjoy children and relish our own parenthood. If we happen to belong to a society which merely tolerates its offspring until they reach adulthood, we would most likely accept this attitude as a most natural one. Dykstra (19) presents an examination of "some of the elements of United States

culture that would seem to be combining to produce a relatively high birth rate under apparently unfavorable conditions." The following cultural factors are seen as contributing to the maintenance of the unexpectedly high birth rate:

The persistence of values and thought-ways that are a heritage of an earlier era . . . the feeling that it is socially commendable to produce a substantial number of children remains a part of our social heritage. . . . The customary stereotyping of the large family as the "happy" one. . . . Feelings of guilt regarding the use of contraceptive techniques even among non-Catholics. . . . The permissibility of the combined student-husband (and/or wife) role in the post-WWII period (which) has contributed toward the lowering of the age of marriage (among the upper socio-economic groups and thus the larger number of children). . . . The tendency to regard the birth rate of a nation as a reflection of the land's "virility". . . . The favorable attitude of the business world toward a high national birth rate. . . . The fact that in the face of a lessening impact of such religious doctrines as the immortality of the soul, children provide a lingering evidence of a personal kind that one has passed this way, and, . . . the youth worshipping feature of our culture which makes children desirable in that they enable the aging one to vicariously recapture all the zest and glamour of the youthful period. (19, p. 80-83)

However, even this analysis is far too simplified to explain adequately the reasons for the individual's feelings concerning marriage and parenthood. It must be recognized that within each culture are various subcultures, social groups, and religious affiliations with their own particular codes and creeds. Every individual born into a culture is also born into one of each of these. Religion, for instance, has a powerful effect on many people's lives and greatly influences their way of thinking. Landis says (29) a person's religious or nonreligious orientation is a fundamental part of his personality.

When Malinowski speaks of motherhood and cultural influences he says,

We can . . . say that motherhood is always individual. It is never allowed to remain a mere biological fact. Social and cultural influences always endorse and emphasize the original individuality of the biological fact. These influences are so strong that in the case of adoption they may override the biological tie and substitute a cultural one for it. But statistically speaking, the biological ties are almost invariably merely reinforced, redetermined, and remolded by the cultural ones. This remolding makes motherhood in each culture a relationship specific to that culture, different from all other motherhoods, and correlated to the whole social structure of the community. (37, p. 23)

What about fatherhood? Malinowski points out that biologically the father "might as well be treated as a drone," and describes his job as impregnating the female and then disappearing. However, he adds, "in all human societies the father is regarded by tradition as indispensable. The woman has to be married before she is allowed legitimately to conceive." We have, then, in our communities moral, social, and legal laws concerning parenthood and childrearing.

If we accept all this, then it must be agreed that in our culture, at least, it is the "normal and natural" thing to grow up expecting some day to join the parental ranks. The prestige that parenthood offers, and the smile of approval from society, tend to make this anticipation a pleasant one in most cases. If the person is an extremely religious one, the experience of parenthood might even seem to be almost "glorifying."

In the Mormon culture, for instance, from which the sample for this study was taken, there is great emphasis placed on the importance of the family. To be a parent is one of the most significant purposes of life. The young people in this church are taught almost from infancy that one of their most worthwhile goals is to live a good and wholesome life so that some day they will be worthy to become parents and to

become co-partners with God in caring for and teaching His children.

In addition to this cultural picture of parenthood as the way of life for all adults, we have also before us a culturally accepted image of the infant itself which enhances the whole prospect. We refer to the newborn as a "bundle of joy" come to bless the home with its presence. We see its picture everywhere, lest the couple not recognize it, should one come to them. The baby cereal boxes and jars, television commercials, magazine ads, billboards, movies, books, songs, and poems all describe the same small child. He is soft, lovable, cuddly, and sweet smelling. He has blue eyes, blond curly hair, rosy cheeks, and a wide smile. He does nothing but coo and gurgle, suck happily on a bottle, and sleep. Fathers love to bounce their youngsters on their knee, mothers sing them to sleep, and grandparents are so overjoyed at the too infrequent visits they rush to spoil them with cookies and toys. If the young couple seem to be having trouble adjusting to one another and the marriage begins slipping downhill, the ideal solution is to have a baby. This works miracles. The couple then becomes so involved in raising this joint creation their previous marital difficulties disappear. All becomes sweetness and bliss.

The entire picture is a beautiful one, but unfortunately it is not entirely accurate. What if this infant doesn't stick to the rules? What would happen to this young couple if their newborn fails to meet the romantic expectations they have so rosily stored up? For instance, the baby might become slightly deformed because of the rigors of the birth process, and though the deformity be only a temporary one, the shock is nonetheless real. What if the baby does not sleep as much as the

parents have been led to expect and they find themselves spending much of their previous "free" time trying to rock, coax, lure, or lull it into sleep, all the time worrying that something must be wrong with their baby? Or, what happens to the blissful picture when the mother finds herself with a child who keeps her up all night then falls asleep during the feedings, only to awake hungry when put back to bed? Suppose a young couple is having marital trouble because they have not yet learned how to communicate with each other. Then, with the arrival of the baby who takes so much of their time they find themselves communicating calmly with one another even less than before. Both are so tired from the nightly feedings they find themselves snapping at one another or bursting into tears at the slightest provocation. Does this sound like the solution to their pre-baby difficulties? Or perhaps the problem has not stemmed from lack of communication at all but is only the outgrowth of a deep-seated worry over finances, grades (if one or the other happens to still be in school), loss of social contact, or lack of understanding concerning role expectations? Does having a baby solve any of these problems or even ease them? Hardly! And again, the couple may be having troubles because one or both are too immature to accept the responsibilities of marriage. They simply were not yet ready to settle down. Does having a baby to care for and worry over increase or decrease the responsibility? Landis and Landis (29) claim:

. . . some people are emotionally and temperamentally unsuited to be parents for the same reasons that they cannot adjust happily in the married state. An emotionally unstable spouse can wreck a marriage whether children are present or not. If there are children, the complications are greater. (29, p. 442)

Sometimes husbands and wives who have lived together for two or three years and have worked out satisfactory relationships in all areas are baffled to find, after the first baby arrives, that new and unexpected differences arise, requiring readjustments in their relationships. The arrival of the first baby is one of the first major occasions calling for readjustments. (29, p. 448)

Koos and Fulcomer, editors of the publication written under the auspices of the National Conference on Family Life, quote Burgess: "Anything which disrupts the usual patterns of interaction, which creates a sharpened insecurity or which blocks the usual patterns of action and calls for new ones--is important." They conclude that a crisis may be caused externally by society, or even internally.

The above discussion has attempted to point out a few of the experiences originating from society and from the individual which may cause a "sharpened insecurity," a "block of usual patterns of action," and a "demand for new ones," or at least a re-evaluation of what is to be expected and then the formulation of patterns suitable to the situation.

### Hypothesis

The main hypothesis for this study is that the birth of the first child initiates a crisis reaction in the marriage. Specific hypotheses dealing with different aspects of this situation include:

1. The crisis reaction is intensified by the emphasis placed on the importance of the family in the Mormon culture resulting in a tendency to romanticize parenthood.
2. The crisis reaction is greater for women than for men.
3. Education of the mother will intensify her crisis reaction.

4. Education of the father will diminish his crisis reaction.
5. Parental age will diminish the crisis reaction.
6. Deferred arrival of the first child will diminish the crisis reaction.
7. Participation in some fields of study will diminish the crisis reaction.
8. Prior experience caring for babies will diminish the crisis reaction.
9. Degree of occupational interest, for mothers, will intensify the crisis reaction.
10. Stability of the marriage will diminish the crisis reaction.
11. Non-family oriented aspirations, prior to marriage, will intensify the crisis reaction.
12. Strong religious commitment will intensify the crisis reaction.
13. Discrepancy between expectations and reality regarding meaning of parenthood will intensify the crisis.
14. Negative attitude toward children in general will intensify the crisis reaction.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study of the literature for information dealing with the impact of a baby on the marriage of the parents has indicated that a variety of studies has dealt with the couple's adjustment to one another in early married life, as well as the parental influence on the infant's life and personality, but only a few have concerned themselves with the problems and adjustments of the new parents. Bossard (8) refers to the problem when he says,

Parenthood is underestimated as a force in marriage. Less than five per cent of the space in current literature on family relations refers to the matter. Yet married people do have children--six out of every seven couples, in fact, and most of the others wish they could. Our whole culture is guilty of this detour around the subject of parenthood . . . American business, which has engulfed a liberal proportion of married women, considers parenthood an accident. Housing developments and rental offices ignore children completely. (8, p. 373)

This review of the literature, then, is composed mainly of topics related to the actual problem. The subgroups, listed below are directly related to some of the independent variables used in the questionnaire and it has been through this review that most of the ideas for the questionnaire came. Since there are so many independent variables involved in a problem of this kind, it was necessary to group the related ones together. The subtitles are:

1. Parenthood
2. Pregnancy
3. Sex adjustment in marriage after pregnancy



4. Studies of the family
5. Marriage adjustment
6. Early marriages
7. Romanticism in marriage
8. Roles in marriage
9. Family relations

#### Parenthood

There are many aspects of parenthood discussed here--parentood as a crisis, how the father feels about his role, how the mother feels about hers, and how they each feel about each other's. Even so, the amount of material concerned especially with initiate parents and their feelings is very limited. The first two studies are perhaps the most pertinent of the whole review. Although there are many differences both in method and results the present study was originally intended to be a replica of these two.

According to LeMasters:

In all studies of how modern families react to crisis, shock is related to the fact that the crisis event forces a reorganization of the family as a social system. Roles have to be reassigned, status positions shifted, values reoriented, and needs met through new channels. (32, p. 352)

Crisis originates from within or outside the family and the total impact will depend upon a number of variables such as: the nature of the crisis event; the state of oorganization or disorganization of the family at the point of impact; resources of the family; and previous experience with crisis. LeMasters' hypothesis is stated in two parts:

1. If the family is conceptualized as a small social system, would it not follow that the adding of a new member to the system could force

a reorganization of the system as drastic (or nearly so) as does the removal of a member?

2. If the above were correct, would it not follow that the arrival of the first child could be construed as a "crisis" or "critical event"?

To test this hypothesis a group of young parents were interviewed, using a relatively unstructured interview technique. To control socioeconomic variables, the couples had to possess the following characteristics:

1. unbroken marriage
2. urban or suburban residence
3. between 25 and 35 years of age at time of study
4. husband a college graduate
5. husband's occupation middle class
6. wife not employed after birth of first child
7. must have had child within last five years

Race and religion were not controlled.

By asking various persons in the community for names, 48 couples were located. As a precaution the exact nature of the study was not stated in soliciting these names; the project was described as a study of "modern young parents." The couples, then, were not volunteers, and no refusals were encountered. The interviewers defined crisis as "any sharp or decisive change for which old patterns are inadequate" and helped the husband and wife come to a decision about the degree of their crisis. The interview data was coded on a five point scale: no crisis; slight crisis; moderate crisis; extensive crisis; severe crisis.

In the LeMasters' study, 83 percent reported "extensive" or "severe" crisis in adjusting to the first child. Strong evidence was found that this crisis reaction was not the result of not wanting children since 35 of 38 couples planned or desired pregnancy. The crisis pattern seemed to occur whether the marriage was "good" or "poor," this rating being given by the parents during the interview and confirmed by close friends. Judging from past history, the marriage rating, and the rating of friends, it seemed that the vast bulk in the crisis group was average or above in personality adjustment, ruling out any psychiatric disability on the part of the parents. LeMasters did find, however, that the 38 couples in the crisis group did have one thing in common--they appeared to have almost completely romanticized parenthood. They were not prepared! Also, the 8 mothers in the group who had professional training and work experience suffered severe crisis in every case.

Just what were the problems involved for which these parents were not prepared? The mother reported that their feelings while adjusting to the first child were related to loss of sleep, chronic tiredness or exhaustion, extensive confinement to the home, and curtailment of social contacts, having to give up the satisfactions and income of the outside employment they once enjoyed, additional washing and ironing, guilt at not being a "better" mother, long hours and seven day and night a week care necessary, and worry over appearance.

The fathers echoed most of the above and added some of their own such as the decline in sexual responses of the wife, economic pressures, interference with social life, worry about a second pregnancy in the near future, and the general disenchantment with the parental role.

Assuming that the above findings are reliable and valid, LeMasters suggests the following:

1. Parenthood, not marriage, is the real "romantic complex" in our culture.
2. Couples are not trained for parenthood.
3. Married couples find the transition to parenthood painful because the arrival of the first child destroys the two-person or pair pattern of group interaction and forces a rapid reorganization of their life into a three-person or triangle group system.
4. Parenthood, not marriage, marks the final transition to adulthood and maturity.

5. The event itself is only one factor determining the extent and severity of the crisis on any given family. Their resources, previous experience with crisis, the pattern of role organization before the crisis--these are equally important in determining the total reaction.

Dyer (17) in "Parenthood as Crisis: A Re-Study," used much the same method and sample qualifications as LeMasters. He did not limit the age to 25 to 35 but stipulated that the parents must at least be 35 or under. He lowered the age of the child from 5 years old to only 2 years old, thus making it easier, perhaps, for the parents to have truer recall about their experience with the infant. He used the same definition of crisis and added ". . . a crisis situation in which the usual behavior patterns are found to be unrewarding and new ones are called for immediately." Again, the crisis rating was either worked out with each couple or objectively placed on a consistent rating scale by the interviewer.

Dyer listed the independent variables as "likely disruptive effects."

They were:

1. division of labor
2. division of authority
3. income and finances
4. home-making and housework patterns
5. husband-wife companionship patterns
6. social life and recreational patterns
7. mobility and freedom of action
8. the extent to which child care and rearing caused anxieties and created a burden
9. health of all three family members
10. extra-family interests and activities

In the final analysis there seemed to be a direct correlation between the degree of crisis and the couple's stability and organization of marriage score. This score was derived from a series of questions concerning the marital adjustment up to the birth, the degree of confidence expressed by each in their own abilities as husband and wife, and their evaluation of economic adequacy. Dyer found that this crisis manifested itself in the same way with his sample as with LeMasters'. He also found that the degree of crisis suffered was related to the duration of the crisis problems and the family's success in solving problems thus far. His final conclusions were:

1. American parents feel an incompatibility between parental roles and certain other roles.
2. Lack of training and preparation intensifies the crisis.

3. The husband-wife relationship is changed and the husbands feel more neglected than the wives.

4. Although the arrival of a child demands a change, it is a rewarding event--life is different, but fuller. Parenthood marks the final transition from pre-adult to mature adulthood.

Duvall and Hill (16) also discuss the advent of the first child and family crises in general. Their definition of crisis is "when a family meets a situation for which there is no ready solution from past experience and no immediate answer forthcoming from the family members, then the family is said to face a crisis." The qualifications mentioned are what differentiate crisis from trouble. As they use it, the problem is not how to avoid trouble, but how to cope with it (and perhaps how to keep it from being a crisis in the first place). The type of crises specifically mentioned were: dismemberment such as the loss of a child or spouse; demoralization such as nonsupport, infidelity, dissension; accession which might come through an unwanted child, a return deserter, etc.; and, demoralization plus accession or dismemberment such as illegitimacy, desertion, or imprisonment.

To combat such occasions, married couples need good physical health, flexibility, adequate mental resources, pride in their family membership, adequate income, and support of friends, church, and school. Duvall and Hill suggest the steps most commonly taken toward the adjustment or non-adjustment of the crisis are:

1. Get news of the event.
2. Either recognize the facts or refuse to face them.
3. Either act promptly and realistically or find an escape mechanism.

4. Either go through a period of rationalization or fix the blame to protect the ego.

5. Attain a livable balance by one of the following: escape, submission or defense (resignation, religion), or compensatory efforts such as more work, substitution, and appeal for help.

6. Allow a new life organization to emerge.

Koos and Fulcomer (26) refer to Duvall when discussing families in crises. Duvall states that there is no one inadequacy. There is an initial cause which tends to create tensions in other areas of family life, which in turn become conflicts in themselves. She diagrams it in the following manner:

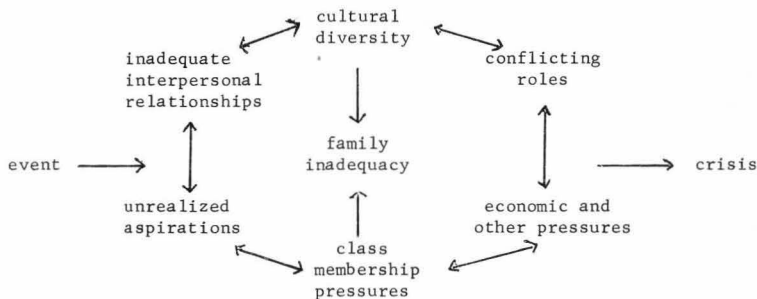


Figure 1. Causes of family conflict (26, p. VIII-11)

Blood (7) agrees with LeMasters and Dyer when he says there is a greater adjustment to be made from marriage to parenthood than from courtship to marriage. The major adjustments, according to Blood and in agreement with Dyer are:

1. Revised power structure--the wife's dependence on her husband increases as as she is forced to withdraw from the labor force to stay at home with the child, giving up her hold on community functions and share of the family income.

2. Revised personal relationship--an added distraction or attraction in the form of a baby can be hard on the husband-wife relationship. Husbands are often neglected and very immature sometimes making it doubly hard by acting as a sibling rival rather than a father. Mothers have less time to devote solely to the husband. They are unable to participate in as many mutual activities as before.

The wife in particular has the following adjustments to make:

1. Loss of mobility--she can't leave the home at will as she used to. "I can't come, he'll be asleep then . . . I'm sorry, but that's when he's liable to be hungry . . . I'll see if we can get a baby sitter." Most couples this early in life can't afford baby sitters too often. Only a willing grandma can ease the burden. Women need adult companionship and this, too, is lessened as she becomes involved with caring for the baby.

2. Disruption of routines--because the child must now begin his adjustment to the outside world, he is irregular and unpredictable. The average mother finds her sleep disrupted, her meals disturbed just at a time when she hasn't fully recovered from the labors of childbirth. She may be chronically tired, exhausted, unable to keep up, and mentally discouraged.

3. Expansion of housework--housework is doubled. Feeding seems to be one of the most important aspects of child care, both to the mother



in terms of the time it takes, and to the infant in terms of how it is handled.

4. Anxiety about the child's welfare--the heaviest responsibility is not time or money, but the skill needed to handle and help the child. No amount of experience with other people's children can prepare one for this responsibility, which is the ultimate development of the child. Later children benefit from the mother's growing self-confidence, but the first child suffers. The child feels this anxiety and often responds with a physical ailment such as colic.

In a report for the National Conference on Family Life, Rowland (44) described an ideal couple about to have their first child and invites us into their home and their lives. We follow this family from the birth of this first child to the next 30 months of life, stopping for more children on the way. In this biographical sketch he points out many of the areas of adjustment that a young couple must make as they begin parenthood, and shows, through Jim and Mary, how they might best be handled. He has also included some of the Scott's neighbors who are having adjustments of their own to make, and through them the reader is able to see what might happen, what serious problems can and do arise if the couple is not able to adapt to one another and their growing family.

Listed below are some of the problems that Rowland suggests would confront just such a couple.

1. Agreement on discipline--how, what kind, and when.
2. Reconciling conflicting conceptions of the mother role held by the mother herself, by her husband, their parental families, and their associates.

3. Mother must assume responsibility of caring for the children.
4. Mother must find a balance in meeting the demands of the children, the expectations of her husband, and her commitments as a person.
5. Being flexible enough to reorganize the family routines to meet the changing needs of the family as the children grow and change.
6. Reconciling the conflicting conceptions of the father role.
7. Father must assume the responsibility for providing for the family.
8. Father must reorganize his work and recreation routines in terms of the needs of his wife, his children, and the family unit.
9. Sharing in the physical and emotional care of the children so that each gets some time off.
10. Both recognizing and meeting their own growth needs as persons using resources within and outside the family (but giving up those which are not compatible with parenthood).
11. Both learning to enjoy the rich satisfactions of parenthood and using them for the enhancement of the marriage.
12. Maintaining the companionable, creative partnership through confiding, reassuring, and mutually supporting one another.
13. Facing problems and developing problem-solving processes through democratic interaction.
14. Must participate in community life by identifying with such organizations as church, social citizenship interest, school groups, etc.
15. Be aware of some of the dangers such as health, housing,

finances, imbalance of work and play, emotional fireworks, outside interference and pressure, etc., and still be optimistic.

Discussing the baby crisis from a new angle, Mace (36) asks us to re-examine our reasons for postponing it. He feels that the fact of the crisis itself strengthens, rather than weakens the case for early parenthood because all the possible dangers of this time grow in intensity, he says, as parenthood is delayed and the couple settles down to a marriage which includes no bassinet. The crisis arises largely because the coming of the baby breaks up the established pattern of married living and compels the couple to shape a new regime which includes the child's needs. On this point all of our authors so far have agreed. However, Mace goes on to add that later parenthood substantially adds to the number of changes that must be made.

The next group of authors is included for their discussion of parenthood from the individual's role-concept point of view. Previously we have been concerned with parenthood as a crisis to the family unit, or in other words, the couple and their marriage. This section now will treat the fact of fatherhood and motherhood as the father and mother see themselves, as they see each other, and as society sees them.

Malinowski (37) points out some of the cultural and biological aspects of each as they are viewed by their societies. Some tribes regard the mother as the only parent related to the child by virtue of the bond of body and blood. Maternal kinship is exclusive, since the mother's brother is head of the family, and the father is disconnected from any kinship with the child. Again, in another community the kinship is traced in the paternal line, the mother having very little

influence over the legal affairs of the household and no influence in the determination of descent. In still other cultures the mother is regarded merely as the soil that receives the seed, while the father is considered as the only real procreative agent. In spite of these various sociological views, maternity is throughout the world the most dramatic and spectacular as well as the most obvious fact in the propagation of the species. Nowhere do we find an exception to the rule that

. . . it is the women who have to undergo a period of hardship and discomfort; she alone has to pass through a crisis of pain and danger and in fact risk her own life in order to give life to another human being. Her connection with the child, who remains for a long time part of her own body, is intimate and integral. It is associated with physiological effects and strong emotions, it culminates in the crisis of birth, and it extends naturally into lactation. (37, pp. 24-25)

What about the father? Biologically his role is similar to that of a drone. His task is to impregnate the female and then to disappear. Yet our society has given him a far more important role than that. In fact, the father is regarded by tradition as indispensable. No child should be brought into the world without a man to assume the role of sociological father, that is, guardian and protector, the male link between the child and the rest of the community.

We see thus that individual paternity, as well as individual maternity, is established by a whole series of customs and rites; that, although maternity is the more important biological fact, both parents are connected with the child through a culturally determined relationship. This cultural relationship, however, is not artificial, in the sense that it should be independent of natural inclination. The traditional usages, the taboos, the magical rites, which in an anticipatory manner secure the welfare of the child, express the natural emotions of both parents. Wherever observations on the subjective side of the question have been made, it has anticipated that they are interested in it from the moment of its birth, that they bestow on it the tenderest cares and most lavish affection during infancy. (37, p. 26)

In direct opposition to Malinowski, Brody (10) has this to say about the female's "natural inclinations" . . .

In the experiments related to maternal behavior of sub-human species there appears at this time to be no evidence of any instinctive maternal capacity in females; that is, of any mechanism that serves to effect complex acts of mothering without prior experience or training and without knowledge of the purposes of the acts. On the contrary, maternal behavior of lower organisms as well as of mammals appears to depend closely upon cumulative sensory and social experiences. The indications are that care of the young develops out of mutual excitations of mother and infant; that there is much individual variation in all aspects of mothering, and not infrequently protective behavior is strikingly absent; that primiparas are generally more awkward or frightened than multiparas . . . (10, p. 31)

Brody theorized that the "maternalness" of a mother could be determined by the manner in which she attended to her infant's feeding needs. With this as a basis for observation and evaluation, 128 mothers and infants were observed for four-hour periods. She commented on the gross lack of investigators who have concerned themselves with the mothers themselves as persons who have particular tasks and particular conflicts. Brody compares several cultures and their standards of childrearing. We might conclude that methods of feeding and weaning are indicative of the attitude and the culture determines this attitude, not instinct. What we call instinct, then, could be simply a matter of role definition. There are those who would rely on the concept of physiological capacity to explain maternal adaptive behavior and those who are more apt to place emphasis on the role of experimental learning.

The earliest systematic study of maternal rejection was done by Newell (1934) who for his purposes defined it in terms of the mother's statement that the birth of her child was unwelcome. This expressed rejection occurred more frequently for male than for female infants; the main specific cause of it was fear of bad inheritance, and the most important single cause was the mother's unhappy adjustment to her marriage. (10, p. 58).

It was noted that mothers are strikingly unprepared emotionally for pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care.

Smart (47) describes the mother's feelings after giving birth to her first child as awed, proud, happy, annoyed, overwhelming responsibility, and a weeping jag on the third or fourth day probably due to the return of enough physical strength to contemplate the future but not enough to cope with it. She likewise describes the fathers as feeling lonesome, relieved, pushed aside, helpless, and loaded with responsibility.

Wolf (54) claims a father usually must wait a few years before he gets real pleasure from his children. He may have wanted children in theory, but he has probably never realized what it would be like when this strange, demanding creature actually arrived and took over the house. For him, home seems to be suddenly transformed into a woman's world where he counts for little. She cautions that although a man needs a home, part of him at least rebels if he suspects that this intense domesticity is to be all there is to marriage and to living. She challenges that men and women make a deliberate effort to keep their interest in one another and in the outside world more actively alive than ever.

Anxiety brought about by the conflicts between a woman's conscious needs on the one hand, and the various roles expected of her by society on the other is the basic problem of the "trapped housewife" according to Gray (24). In dealing with this problem, the author used mothers of run-arounds between the ages of 3 and 8 years. Supposing that their children would be well taken care of by someone else for a few hours

each day, they were asked how many hours per week day and per week end they would like to spend just with their children. For the rest of their leisure time they could choose between homemaking, cooking, sewing, outside job, reading, writing, painting, and other creative pursuits. The 203 mothers yielded a mean of six hours per day. These were not women who had a career to conflict with their motherly duties. The conflict here is between the fulfillment of the role of devoted mother versus the need for self-development. The latter, though a human right, is considered selfish if desired by mothers, and is attended by feelings of guilt.

In agreement with the above findings is Bettelheim (6) who has found that mothers are discovering that to be a mother is not a snap. "One always has the idea that children are so nice to have and no trouble at all, but it's just a nice theory. The reality is much different." Bettelheim discusses mother-child problems with mothers and sometimes offers solutions. Other times, however, he simply commends them for their courage in recognizing their problem, and in discussing it, even though there seems to be no solution. The real value of his class where groups of women meet together and discuss their problems is perhaps the sharing of feelings and airing of emotions that otherwise would have caused guilt feelings and other damaging effects.

It would seem, from the above, that the role of mother does not always come naturally to all women as we might have supposed. After interviewing 69 fathers, 31 before the birth of their first child and 15 after the birth, Bernstein and Cyr (5) raise the same question about the role of father. Their question was, How do young men, some out of

college but not well established occupationally, some still in debt for furniture and the like, usually anticipating an unplanned baby, face their first experience of fatherhood? The sample consisted of fathers who were above average in education but still in the low income bracket and some still studying. Most of the pregnancies were unplanned. The discussions during interviews included such topics as: general information about pregnancy; environmental subjects such as finances, housing, study and work schedules, etc.; feelings related to parenthood; stability of marriage, self concepts; past personal history.

They found that most of the problems mentioned both before and after the baby were emotional rather than environmental. Age, education, race, and whether or not the pregnancy had been planned did not seem to have any bearing on whether they expressed concern about problems. Cultural differences showed up occasionally when it concerned who should care for the baby. Some of the most common problems mentioned during post-partum interviews were such things as housing, burden of heavy study and work schedules, financial worries, disturbed sleep, lack of quiet or privacy for study, growing irritability on the part of the mother at being left alone so much, and her concern about his seeing so little of the baby, insufficient recreation for the husband and wife together. The mothers reported a decline in the father's interest about two months after birth. In most cases the problems seemed less pressing after the actual birth than before the baby came. However, some of the fathers described the early weeks of the baby's life as a "nightmare" with the constant crying, the tension of the parents, and their fatigue and discouragement.



In summary Bernstein and Cyr have concluded that the early days of parenthood can present severe problems to the new father as well as to the mother. Even though these problems may be very normal and eventually self-adjusting, and are frequently accompanied by feelings of deep satisfaction in parenthood, the arrival of a baby can nevertheless set tensions in motion in the mother and the father both separately and in relation to each other which can have serious consequences for the new family.

The Encyclopedia of Educational Research (22) has a different report to make. Under the section headed "Family"(p. 512), Chance gives us his findings as he made comparisons of the interpersonal functioning of mother, father, and child in the course of treatment at the Child Study Center. He found that fathers tend to be more preoccupied with family relationships than mothers and that mothers were more rejecting of their children than were fathers. In the same vein, Tasch (48) reported that fathers participated actively in routing daily care and considered childrearing as part of their role. In this study, 544 mothers and 85 fathers were asked what they considered to be the satisfactions and problems of child rearing. The fathers thought of themselves as companions and child rearers while the mothers appeared to consider the fathers largely in the role of companions. Tasch's findings imply that role-typing may restrict the fullest potential of the parent.

Who is to say which is the true picture of the father in the family? Perhaps Elder (21) is right when she suggests that conceptions of fatherhood are changing from the traditional to the developmental types. She also suggests that larger samples be used when studying this problem and

that we take into consideration geographic location, religious differences, class, and education, intimating, as did Brody (10), that concepts of fatherhood and motherhood are cultural and not instinctive. On the basis of 32 interview she demonstrates the differences between the traditional and developmental fathers. Of the 32 fathers, 19 were classified as traditional, the other 13 developmental. She defined the terms in the following manner:

Traditional Mother

keeping house,  
taking care of children  
physically,  
training child to regularity,  
disciplining,  
making the child good

Traditional Father

same, with supporting  
family added.

Developmental Mother

For both, training the child for self-reliance and citizenship, seeing to emotional well-being, helping child develop socially, providing for child's mental growth, guiding with understanding and relating self lovingly to child, and being a calm, cheerful, growing person one's self. (21, pp. 16-17)

Developmental Father

While the developmental and traditional fathers were not significantly different in a number of the variables concerning attitudes toward their children, there were a few pronounced differences worth mentioning. The developmental fathers tended to answer and encourage questions more, they encouraged and looked forward to the child's maturation and adult fulfillment, there was a higher percentage who felt that the greatest satisfaction of fatherhood was enjoying the companionship of the children rather than the satisfaction of providing for them, and more developmental fathers felt that a father was important to his children at all ages rather than just during adolescence.

Summary. In summary it might be said that all of the authors above recognize that parenthood can, and often does, constitute a crisis. The definitions of a crisis have varied only slightly, and all seem to indicate instability of marriage, disorganization in the first few months of the infant's life, and unpreparedness on the part of the parents. All have intimated that there is a need for further study of the problem. It is obvious that parenthood may be a fulfilling, rewarding experience, but nevertheless a difficult one for most. On this, all are agreed. Whether the individual parent's attitude toward and method of child rearing is instinctive or a function of the society from which they come is not universally agreed. There is a third possibility. It may be that the way a parent feels about his child and having children, and about his role as a parent is such an individual thing there can be no single pattern. The formula may be as elusive as the personality itself, and just as complex.

### Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a unique experience for the young couple in and of itself and perhaps should be discussed apart from the parenthood section. Normal problems of everyday life suddenly become very acute to the couple anticipating a child and especially the pregnant woman. What might normally be classified as acute problems loom in front of them as disastrous and insurmountable. Some authors dealing with the problems of family life such as Wallin and Riley (52), feel that the emotional state of the mother during this period has a definite effect on the unborn child and so perhaps is as important to the family as the crisis adjustment after

the birth. The research on this problem could have been approached in any of several ways as mentioned by Wallin and Riley, but because of the almost certain possibility that few mothers would admit, even to themselves, that they did not want and love their children, the investigators used a type of questionnaire relying on construct validity. The theoretical construct assumed is that the attitude of the mother to the expected child is consistent with her attitude toward the child when born, and that most lay persons regard nausea, vomiting, and other pregnancy disorders to be predominantly organic in origin rather than a mental reaction to pregnancy.

There is some agreement in the literature that a disturbed reaction to the experience of pregnancy is indicative of anxiety about, or a wish to avoid the consequences of pregnancy. Giles, Mengert, and Wasman have noted that nausea and vomiting are coincident with knowledge of pregnancy. Giles observed that morning sickness was more frequent in unmarried than in married mothers although the differences he reports are not statistically significant. Robertson found that disturbed sexual functioning and excessive mother attachment were significantly correlated with the occurrence of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. Insofar as these characteristics indicate a negative attitude to marriage, Robertson's findings may be taken as evidence of an association between pregnancy reactions and acceptance of motherhood since the woman who rejects the role of wife may also reject the role of mother. Despres in a study of 100 pregnant married women found that those who were not happy with the fact of their pregnancy were significantly more apt to experience nausea and vomiting (and to experience nausea over a longer period of time) than women favorably disposed toward their pregnancy. (52, p. 140)

Anonymous questionnaires were administered. The groups studied consisted of 63 mothers with one child under two years of age, and 37 mothers with two children, the younger being under two years of age. Pregnant mothers were excluded. All the mothers lived in a student housing project and all were in a similar age range with a similar educational background. Religious affiliation differed but was considered immaterial since

religious affiliation was found to have no relation to any of the relevant variables. The questions asked were all similar to the following examples:

1. Did you go out to visit people less during your pregnancy than before?

2. Did you have any nausea when you were pregnant? How long did it last? When did it start?

3. Did you have more or fewer headaches when pregnant than you had before you became pregnant?

4. Were there any foods you couldn't stand during pregnancy? etc.

There were 16 such questions. The questionnaire also contained 13 questions pertaining to the infant's adjustment such as:

1. To what extent has your baby had trouble with: not eating enough?

2. eating too much?

3. too few bowel movements?

4. not being able to hold his food down?

5. gas pains?

Although the findings demonstrated no significant correlation between infant and pregnancy adjustment scores of the 63 one-child mothers, they did show a significant score difference between infant and pregnancy adjustment in two-child mothers. A mother's attitude toward her second pregnancy was found to be positively related to good or poor adjustment of the baby after its arrival. The authors explained this by speculating on the cultural behavior surrounding childbirth. Women who are pregnant for the first time are usually surrounded with special

attentions offered by the joyful husband, relatives, and friends, and it is this attention that probably counteracts any lack of enthusiasm in the prospective mother. When the second child comes along this welcoming behavior is almost entirely absent, especially when the first child was a boy. Another disturbing factor for some may be the threat of breaking the love attachment with the first child, or the increased financial hardship anticipated because of the second pregnancy, all of which could add up to resentment of the unborn child and a consequent poor adjustment.

Landis and Landis (29) also consider the psychology of the pregnancy important, for both the expectant mother and the father. Although they make no mention of its possible effects on the infant, they do conclude that it can strongly affect the husband-wife relationship. Besides the obvious physical changes that take place in a pregnant woman, there are also a number of not quite so obvious psychological changes that are common. Landis and Landis argue that these changes can be positive or negative ones, depending upon whether the child was planned for and desired or unplanned for and undesired, and in either case there seems to be a decrease in sexual desire in most women which in itself can cause marital problems if the husband does not understand the reason nor appreciate its temporary nature. He may react by being critical and irritable toward his wife and she may feel herself to be a "semi-invalid" and demand pampering, be irritable herself, and generally hard to live with. She may be emotional and touchy about her condition and pick out the slightest indication that her husband is embarrassed about being seen with her. On the other hand, the authors admit that many women naturally feel a

sense of well-being when pregnant and report that they actually look better, with the exception of their figures. And many husbands feel that their wives are actually as attractive or more than usually attractive to them during pregnancy. Some men become more considerate and protective, assuming an even more masculine role than before. If this were the case, then the pregnancy experience could be an enjoyable one for both prospective parents and rather than create tension and strain in their relationship, it might enhance it.

Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (45) were concerned with the importance of the mother's attitude during pregnancy when they interviewed 379 mothers and asked them to mark on a continuum how they felt when they first learned they were pregnant. While 68 percent were either pleased or delighted, the remaining 32 percent ranged from "some reservations to displeased"; no bright spots involved. The ones who were pleased stated that to wait until you could afford a baby was ridiculous; the others almost all depended on low income for a reason not to be pleased. The authors found that the attitude of the mother depended upon: the ordinal position of the child--those having a first child are more apt to be pleased; the distance between children--the greater the distance between two children, the more apt to be delighted; the sex of the existing children--seemed more likely to be pleased with the pregnancy if they were still trying for a boy; next happiest were those with all boys but trying for a girl; and least happy were those who already had one of each sex. The mother's age was tested but was found to have no bearing on the degree of enthusiasm felt. In the area of personal adjustment, those who had high esteem and affection for the husband seemed

happier about the pregnancy, and those who had low self-esteem tended to be the same ones who didn't want children in the first place. There was no indication that those mothers who had to quit work because of the pregnancy rejected their pregnancy any more so than did mothers who had never worked or who didn't care for their jobs. The trend seemed to be that those mothers who had been enthusiastic about their "careers" were equally as enthusiastic about motherhood. The key seemed to be their general satisfaction with life.

Finally the authors attempted to correlate the mother's attitudes while pregnant with her degree of warmth and affection when the infant was actually there and again 5 years later when he was a pre-schooler. It was found that only a very slight relationship exists between attitudes toward the unborn and the infant, and even less between the unborn and the pre-schooler. There was a high correlation, however, between the attitude toward the infant and the attitude toward the same child as a pre-schooler (greater than .01). The same variables were tested for attitude toward the infant as were discussed previously concerning pregnancy attitude: ordinal position and sex of the child--the first child did not elicit any more warmth from the mother after arrival than did later children, though girls seemed to have gleaned more than boys; distance between children--no difference after arrival than before; sex of existing children--same as discussed for pregnancy attitude; mother's age--the older a mother was, the warmer she was toward the child, except if it were the first, then her age made no difference. Her personal adjustment affected her attitude toward the infant in the same way it had affected her attitude toward the pregnancy.



To determine the relationship between intent toward the first conception as well as certain factors in the wife's background with the physical and emotional experience of pregnancy was the purpose of a study done by Landis, Poffenberger, and Poffenberger (30). The sample used in this study was 212 students' wives living in barrack-apartments on the Michigan State College campus in the spring of 1949. The mothers, who each had only one child under  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years of age, were divided into three groups according to their responses to a questionnaire. One group consisted of 81 mothers who had tried to avoid pregnancy, the second group of 55 who were indifferent, and the last group of 76 who had planned conception. The younger wives, ages ranging from late teens to 22 years of age, were found more often among the group who tried to avoid conception ( $P > .01$ ). Highly related to intent toward conception was the wife's role at the time of conception ( $P > .01$ ). Those enrolled in school to complete their degrees were most regretful, those working outside the home were next, and those who had been at home only were least. This latter group was more often found among those who planned the pregnancy. The most significant emotional factors noted were the initial reaction to the knowledge of conception, the degree of emotional upset, and the degree of happiness in the early part of the pregnancy. Among those who had tried to avoid pregnancy, an increase in the level of emotional upset was recorded during the first trimester (significant at the .01 level). The other two groups also had an increase but it was slight and insignificant. Although 55.1 percent experienced nausea some of the time during the first part of the pregnancy, 26.5 percent during the midpoint, and 15 percent in the latter part, there was no relationship between the

nausea and the intent-nonintent groups. Fear of childbirth and worry over the child were not related to the groups either, though 63.2 percent of the entire sample experienced this. (Note that these findings are not in accord with Wallin and Riley.)

Thompson (49) also became concerned with the attitude of the primiparas, lamenting the fact that physicians have been so concerned with the physical needs of the mother and child they most often ignore the equally important emotional climate. He suggested that women having their first child need psychiatric care just as much as they need physical care. He interviewed 100 pregnant women attending a prenatal clinic in the New Haven Hospital, October 1938. He found that all of them had some emotional problems such as marital adjustment, sexual adjustment, poor living conditions, and attitude toward pregnancy, which were not conducive to a good marital relationship nor to the birth of a healthy, wanted child.

A Pregnancy Research Questionnaire was given to volunteers of three groups in a study by Edward (20). Fifty were unwed with an age mean of 19.5 years, education of 11.7 years. Fifty were primigravida from a low income bracket with an age mean of 19.7 years, education mean of 11.1 years. And, 50 were multigravida of a low income with an age mean of 25.3 years, education of 10.7 years. These women were compared with each other for: 1) psychosomatic anxiety before and during pregnancy; 2) amount of nausea recalled before and claimed during pregnancy; 3) sleep disturbances recalled before and claimed during pregnancy; and, 4) attitudinal differences concerning the pregnancy.

As might be expected, the unwed women expressed less desire for

pregnancy, less maternal feeling, and less nausea during pregnancy than either the primigravida or multigravida. They overtly expressed more depression and withdrawal and saw the maternal role as being less ascendant than the primigravida. When the primigravida and multigravida were compared, primigravida were younger, expressed a greater desire for pregnancy, expressed greater fears for the coming baby, were less irritable, and reported a greater degree of marital happiness. In all but one case a correlational analysis demonstrated a significant tendency for psychosomatic anxiety, nausea, sleep disturbances as recalled before pregnancy to be related to the overt expression of the same factors during pregnancy for all women. All of the women also exhibited a significant increase in these factors during pregnancy.

Treat and Fund (50) stress the importance of a good marital relationship before the child is even conceived if the experience of pregnancy and parenthood is not to pull them apart. If the foundation is a good one, they add, these experiences can draw the couple closer together. Most couples marry because they love each other, not because they have a conscious intent of raising a family. Some marry with the feeling that if children come soon, that's all right, and if they don't come soon they will come later. Our authors caution that the problem begins when two people marry with the intent not to have children for awhile, until that college degree is earned, or that savings account gets a little healthier. There are many reasons for postponing children, but if the methods of postponement do not work, and the baby does come, there are four attitudes that the couple may choose from:

1. both accept the baby

2. both reject the baby
3. father accepts, mother rejects
4. mother accepts, father rejects

While the first is most common, the other three trouble-makers are numerous. The authors suggest that good prenatal care for psychological reasons as well as physical, for both the mother and father would be most helpful. They suggest that one of the most effective devices is group therapy in the form of prenatal classes for husbands and wives in the same situation for the purpose of learning specific information concerning child care, sharing problems and fears, and gaining support from one another.

Summary. It is apparent now that much like the experience of parenthood, that of pregnancy can be a positive or a negative one, depending on a number of related factors or variables, and that this experience, whichever type it may be, also affects the parents' attitudes toward the infant after it is born and affects their own attitudes toward parenthood in general. This in turn influences the marriage relationship, the type and amount of affection shown the child and the childrearing practices to be adopted by the family. One block builds upon the one before it. This period of time, then, is far more important to the well-being of the parents, the marriage, and the child than has previously been suspected. And this is especially true of "first-timers." Marital problems after parenthood often begin with the emotional changes during pregnancy.

Our authors have agreed that there are some basic factors that contribute to the positive or negative aspect of the pregnancy experience.

For instance, all women experience some increase in either the amount or degree of emotional upset during this period. How it is handled perhaps helps decide its importance to the future. Almost all women, when pregnant for the first time, go through a period of worry and even fear concerning the child and their own well-being. Again, the intensity of the fear and how it is dealt with make the difference. While there seems to be little agreement upon the cause and importance of nausea common to so many pregnant women, some interesting findings have resulted from various studies done on the problem. One author claims it is a symptom of mental unrest pointing to rejection of the unborn child, while others say there is no such relationship. The concluding author of this section stressed the importance of marital stability before conception even takes place. There have been numerous other factors mentioned such as age of the mother, original position of the unborn, sex of the previous children--all environmental circumstances which when lumped together may be worthy of notice.

#### Sexual adjustment after first child

Of the many aspects of a husband-wife relationship, perhaps one of the hardest to research is sexual compatibility. Even in our enlightened age many men and women are still hesitant about discussing this problem even with each other; for this reason the information in this area is more limited than any other. Landis, Poffenberger, and Poffenberger (30) did a study of the effects of the first pregnancy on sexual adjustment which should prove to be pertinent to the present study. Their sample of 221 couples lived in student housing at Michigan State

College with children or a child no older than 2½ years of age. All of the husbands were full-time students and about half of the wives had had some college education. The study was done as an interview-anonymous questionnaire. The couples were asked the question, "What effect, if any, did pregnancy have upon your sexual adjustment?" Their answers were compared to responses of a question rating sexual adjustment during three periods of marriage: before pregnancy, during pregnancy, and since the birth of the child. Because it was thought that outside factors might influence the degree of sexual adjustment, the couples were also asked questions concerning contraceptive methods if used, the planning of pregnancy or lack of it, the effect of the pregnancy on the mother's health, and the possibility that fear of another pregnancy inhibited sexual desire. They concluded that those who had a good sexual adjustment before pregnancy generally had a good adjustment during pregnancy and following the birth of the child. In a few cases pregnancy either increased or decreased their sexual adjustment after pregnancy. As each trimester of the pregnancy passed, more and more couples reported a decrease in sexual desire. The general level of sex desire was reported to be somewhat lower after the birth of the child as compared to before pregnancy. There was reported a relationship between confidence in the contraceptive being used and better sexual adjustment following the birth of the child. Thus, it would seem that fear of another pregnancy and childbirth was a factor in hindering good sexual adjustment. They also found that wives who experienced better health during pregnancy adjusted better to sex relations after the birth than did those who were in poor health during the period.

### Marriage adjustment

There is a great deal of information about marriage adjustment, much of which is vital to understanding of the young parent. The importance of a good, sound marriage relationship before the advent of a child has already been mentioned in previous sections of this chapter. The problem of marriage adjustment itself is probably as complex as parenthood. Many of the variables are the same, such as: reasons for marrying, religious affiliation, personality traits, age and health of the individuals, and economic position. It is the task of this review to answer the question, "What constitutes a happy marriage and what factors detract from good marital adjustment?"

Defining marital adjustment as "the extent to which a husband and wife have developed harmonious, effective, mutually satisfying behavioral patterns that are conducive to optimum psychological growth," Aller (1) attempted to find the correlation between this adjustment and financial problems, childrearing problems, academic achievement, and certain traits or characteristics of the couple. Her sample included 100 couples, married fewer than 11 years, having one or both spouses enrolled at the University of Idaho during fall semester, 1960. The marital adjustment scores were obtained individually by means of the Marital Adjustment Test by Locke and Wallace, with no chance for spouse collaboration. The personality characteristics were classified through the California Psychological Inventory by Gough. The interviewees were assured of anonymity and encouraged to be frank with their answers on the inventories and questionnaires. Fifty-seven percent of the men and 62 percent of the women reported at least one problem in their marital relationship causing

serious difficulties. The six mentioned most often were stubbornness, nagging or criticism by spouse, in-laws, selfishness, jealousy, and spouse doing less than his or her share of the "family chores." Of those who had children while still attending school, increased financial load was the most frequently mentioned problem. For this group other related problems were also frequently mentioned, such as: getting a baby sitter, limited time for enjoying children, homestudy more difficult, less time for study, increased duties, can't attend activities together, and so on.

Parent subjects experienced guilt feelings arising from lack of time for their own families and anxieties concerning the effect of parent substitutes on the children. Whether this has a harmful effect on the child or children is debatable, but it seems to be a disturbing element in some student marriages, either because the mother resents not being able to complete her schooling or because she would prefer to stay home and care for her child. (1, p. 615)

The resulting sacrifice of companionship was not conducive to optimum development of togetherness in husband-wife relationships.

Of personality traits, self-control and responsibility were found to be positively and significantly related to marital adjustment.

It has been suggested that children in the home keep the parents together, acting as a cementing factor or a common interest. This theory has perhaps stemmed from the fact that the divorce rate is much higher among childless couples than among those with children. Landis and Landis (29) argue that this result proves the opposite to be true. Couples have children because they are well adjusted to one another and want children; they are not adjusted because they have children.

Some people are emotionally and temperamentally unsuited to be parents for the same reasons that they cannot adjust happily in the married state. An emotionally unstable



spouse can wreck a marriage whether children are present or not. If there are children, the complications are greater. (29, p. 442)

The authors state that most people who marry hope to have children eventually but plan to wait a few years before having the first child. They refer to two studies done at Cornell University by Anderson and also by Rockwood and Ford who reported that the highest percentage of those interviewed planned to have their first child sometime in the second year of marriage, and the highest percentage of those already married did have the first child after 31 to 33 months of marriage. The reasons they gave for their preferment were: need to become adjusted to each other, and lack of desire to be tied down to the responsibilities of parenthood too early in their marriage. Landis and Landis list as the most common reasons they found for postponing children:

1. Financial instability--some people feel it is not fair to a child to be born into a home that is financially unstable.
2. Emotional immaturity of the couple--available evidence suggesting that happier marriages result if the couples have time to make the early marital adjustments before the coming of the first child. This adjustment period varies greatly from one couple to the next.

Many young people feel that when they are ready to be married they are automatically also prepared and qualified to rear children, without any further training. This indicates the naivete with which young people enter into parenthood. While much progress has been made in educating these young people, there is still much to be done. Even if such training is offered, most young people still do not feel the need to take advantage of such training, until the truth is forced upon them by the arrival of a child.

Sometimes husbands and wives who have lived together for two or three years and have worked out satisfactory relationships in all areas are baffled to find, after the first baby arrives, that new and unexpected differences arise, requiring readjustments in their relationships. The arrival of the first baby is one of the first major occasions calling for readjustments. (29, p. 448)

The arrival of the third person in the house upsets the status quo and again the couple must achieve a satisfactory working arrangement. The new interaction pattern involves different roles for each. (29, p. 449)

In the same book, Landis and Landis discuss other factors (other than children) which can complicate marriage adjustment. "A marriage can be no better than the two personalities that go into it." They conclude that in the long run it is the personality traits of the marriage partners that make the difference. In an attempt to sum up with those most important they have narrowed it down to three such traits: 1) flexibility, 2) ability to identify, 3) the desire and ability to work through problems rather than ignore them or give up on them. It is interesting to note that these same traits are necessary for successful parenthood as well. Other, perhaps minor, factors which have been known have a relationship to happiness or unhappiness in marriage are: family background, occupation of the husband, good health, age of marriage, and emotional maturity. Religious affiliation was thought important enough to discuss in a section of its own.

Research studies show that in general the presence of a religious faith is associated with more favorable chances for marital success.

Studies covering approximately 25,000 marriages showed that there were three times as many marital failures among those with no religious affiliation as among those within given religions. (29, pp. 321-322)

Landis and Landis feel that there are many aspects of the religious philosophy which are compatible with marriage and family living. It is only natural that:

Those who desire a good marriage will want to start with every possible advantage in favor of the success of the marriage; the presence of constructive religious attitudes will contribute favorably to chances for success. Religious attitudes are often a key to the general personality pattern of an individual. This explains in part the greater success of marriages between those who have a positive religious belief. (29, p. 329)

Another study done by Landis (27) was concerned only with the time required to achieve marriage adjustment. The sample, 792 married couples, filled out information schedules in the presence of a field assistant. The sample seemed to be biased, he reports, in the direction of superior marital happiness but does represent a reasonably good cross section of the urban and semiurban married population of California at the middle and upper-middle cultural levels. Landis found a very close relationship between the length of time required to adjust in marriage and the happiness of the marriage. If couples failed to work out adjustment in three or more of the problem areas they classified their marriage as average or unhappy. These problem areas, as they listed them were: first, and hardest to reconcile, sex relations. After this came spending the family income, social activities and recreation, in-law relationships, religion in the home, and associating with mutual friends.

Winch (53) handles the investigation on marriage adjustment in a little different way. He wanted to find the relationship between personality and marriage adjustment without danger of an established marriage relationship contaminating the responses. To do this he used in his sample only engaged couples who were not yet married and then did a follow-up using the same couples after they had been married some time. He found that his hypothesis concerning the personality-marriage adjustment

relationship was a correct one and that the personality has a causal effect on marital happiness rather than vice-versa.

Benson (4) apparently agrees with the conclusions of Landis and Winch when he states:

These findings [meaning those of Burgess and Wallin which he himself statistically analyzed] and those of other studies sustain the conclusion that interests of an individualistic, pleasure-seeking character are, on the average, hostile to harmony and happiness in marriage and family living. In the writer's opinion, it not infrequently happens that such interests are ones which initially attract the couple together and which form the substance of their companionship. On the other hand, the studies show that home, children, love, and religion are favorable motivations for marriage. The role of religion is understandable in view of its teachings that home, children, and love are important interests for the married couple to have. (4, p. 143)

Burgess and Cottrell (12) who studied 526 couples in a marital adjustment research report that couples are happier and better adjusted if they want children, whether they have them or not. The next happiest are those who desire children and get them. The third happiest are those who do not desire to have children and do not have any, and the fourth in line of happiness and adjustment are those couples who did not want children but have them anyway.

Summary. In summarizing this section and relating it to the immediate problem of this thesis three major points should be reviewed. First, it is evident by the discussions related above that the young married do have a number of problems with which to contend in the early years of their lives together. These problems can be enhanced or diminished, depending upon the emotional maturity and personality traits of the individuals involved, but they must be dealt with in some fashion. Second, it also seems reasonable that while it is important to future

marital happiness for the couple to desire children, if a child comes too soon in the marriage these problems mentioned above are only made more difficult. Third, the requirements for a happy marriage adjustment are so similar to those requiring a happy parenthood adjustment that it would seem an impossibility for one to take place without the other. In other words, two very unhappily married people cannot hope to salvage their marriage and themselves by having a child and adding to their adjustment problems.

#### Early marriages

Perhaps most closely related to marriage adjustment is the next topic of discussion--that of early marriages. Thus far we have dealt with some of the problems involved when a young couple sets out to start a new life with one another. It has been pointed out that there are many adjustments to be made in the first few years of this new life. One might well ask, now, would the problems be the same for those who marry very early in life? Does the current trend toward extremely early marriage enhance or deteriorate the quality of the marriage? Why are so many of our young people turning to marriage years before their parents did? And, what are the characteristics of youthful marriages? Perhaps most important to this study, does a marriage of two very young people provide the proper environment for the creation of stable family units?

Sussman reports from an article found in Population Bulletin (42) dealing with this subject. The article includes discussions from such well known sociologists as Paul Glick and Margaret Mead as well as quotes from the Bureau of the Census. The evidence appears to indicate that

child marriage are not stable, nor are they "effective transmitters of the values so essential to a free and lasting culture." For instance, the highest divorce rates come from women between the ages of 15 and 19 and those ages coming in second are not even close (23.5 separations and 12.6 divorces compared to the next highest of 9.0 and 7.3, respectively, of the 20 and 24 age group). Mead suggests that even though these young couples may be ideally suited for one another at the time, they are overwhelmed by their own lack of self-identification, never having found the individuals who were themselves.

Burchinal (11), also, has attempted to answer some of these questions in his own writings. He defines youthful marriages as that marriage which takes place between two people when one or both have not yet reached their 19th birthday. He suggests several reasons for the increase in marriage rates among young people. The reasons he gives are:

1. Reflection of the insecurity of our times and a need to find someone to depend upon and trust.
2. Pursuit of personal happiness in which obligation of marriage is not seen as a burden, but as a means of satisfaction.
3. Encouragement from the contemporary romantic and glamorous image of marriage and unrealistic over-evaluation of marriage.
4. "Everybody else is doing it."
5. Impact of previous wars and continuation of the draft.
6. Current reduction of economic risk in marriage with the wives working, extended credit opportunities, general prosperity, etc.
7. Earlier dating, more serious dating relations at younger years, acceleration of adult status as reflected in all advanced levels of activities.

8. "Forced" marriages because of increased sexual stimulation in mass media and inability or unwillingness to resist.

9. An escape from unhappy home, school, or community situation. Parent-youth tension.

Burchinal gives us a few characteristics of the youthful marriage, as well:

1. From 18 percent to 56 percent of all youthful marriages are "forced." Of high school marriages, 87 percent are "forced."

2. Traditionally, lower status persons have married earlier than middle or higher status persons; however, there are also studies that have argued with this supposed trend.

3. Youthful marriages predominantly involve young girls and their slightly older husbands.

4. Young marriages are not generally elopements but reflect the characteristics of the conventional wedding.

5. Youthful marriages are less satisfactory, generally, to the participants and less stable than marriages contracted by persons out of their teens, but the author cautions against over-generalization of the hazards of youthful marriages. Burchinal concludes with the statement that we cannot use age only as a criterion for predicting marriage success.

Perhaps many of the conclusions made by Burchinal in the article mentioned above came from his study of 357 girls who had married before high school graduation. The findings are much the same. In this study he attempted to find a relationship between the early marriage and parental relations, personality needs, and dating histories. The most

significant relationship did exist in the area of dating history. The married girls, in comparison to a group of control girls had started dating and going steady younger and had more steady boyfriends, felt they had been in love more frequently, and dated more seriously at all ages. The married girls were also found to be disproportionately in the lower social status.

Concerning divorce rates and educational level, the facts, as Click and Carter (23) found them suggest that circumstances which encourage persons to continue successfully through high school or college and to postpone marriage past teen age also discourage them from dissolving their marriages by divorce. In other words, higher educational attainment is correlated with greater marriage stability.

Age-standardized marriage and dissolution rates computed from the 1950 Census data provide evidence that, on the average, the most stable unions are those of women who complete college and the least stable are those of women who drop out of high school before graduation.<sup>1</sup> (23, p. 296)

They summarized by saying that persons who discontinue their education before high school graduation have lower incomes, higher rates of marriage separation, divorce or widowhood, and have more than the average number of children. There is heavy strain on these families due to poorer health, need for larger living quarters, and smaller likelihood of assistance from the older generation.

Perhaps the study by Landis and Landis (29) might be included here, though their couples were slightly older than the high school married so far discussed. This investigation was an attempt to determine the success of the college marriage which became so prevalent after World War II with the advent of the G.I. Bill. The authors found that 95 percent of the

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<sup>1</sup>See Tables 87 and 102 in the Census Monograph by Paul C. Glick, American Families, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1957.



couples studied were either "happy" or "very happy." Because it was felt that these responses might have been influenced by the fact that they were all still in the early years of their marriage they were compared with other couples not in school who had been married less than four years. The divorce rate was lower than the usual among these college-educated couples. The authors discuss some of the unique problems that married couples going to school may encounter.

1. Willingness to give up life as a single student. Two students may be swept along by the tide and get married after a short period of acquaintanceship without realizing they must now give up their active social life.

2. Readiness for parenthood. Since the wife usually works to put her husband through or is going to school herself, the couple usually plans to postpone having children for a few years. If unplanned for children do come, the couple must then reorient themselves.

3. Willingness of husband to help wife. Because both partners are so busy outside the home, either going to school or working, it is important that each do his share of the housework. A husband who thinks he is above helping with the children, washing dishes, or scrubbing floors and demands to be waited upon can be a problem to the marriage. The same holds true with the wife. Both must be hard workers to make their household run smoothly.

4. Present income and financial backing. Some parents are willing to continue to help pay for their children's education even after they marry, but most parents hold with the traditional feeling that once two people marry they are an independent family unit, their marriage

indicating that they no longer expect to depend upon parental help or direction. Many problems arise with in-laws if they are supporting the couple for they may still think of their son or daughter as being under their jurisdiction.

Martinson (39) found that ego deficiency on the part of the young male who married shortly after high school showed up in ways such as personal and social maladjustment more often than among those of the same age who had remained single. Personality, then, is a factor closely related to age, especially in the young. Martinson's study does not tell us, however, whether this relationship is one of cause or effect.

Moss and Gingles (40) did a study on the relationship of personality and early marriage by administering

. . . personality scale and questionnaires to 3,456 girls in the ninth through twelfth grades in small town Nebraska high schools. Later reports from school indicated that 313 girls married before their nineteenth birthday and 123 married at older ages. Comparisons between the original data collected from the two groups of girls indicated that the girls who marry young were less stable, had less satisfactory relationships with their parents, and were more likely to have dated earlier, had more serious dating relationships, less frequently planned to attend college, and less frequently reported their parents were desirous of their attending college, though there were no apparent differences between the two groups in the ability of parents to finance a college education. (40, p. 373)

Summary. It can be concluded, then, that while age is only one factor among many which affect the stability and happiness of a marriage, it can be a crucial one. While it may be true that many early marriages do last and are happy ones, the trend, at least, is not a positive one, and the chances of this being so are rather slim. The authors discussed above have given us some reasons why this seems to be so. Married couples can expect to have problems to solve and adjustments to make,

but when the couples are very young these problems are increased because of their very immaturity and lack of experience and thus adjustment is harder. It has also been noted that the characteristics of those who marry young are not those characteristics conducive to stable marriage and parenthood. Reasons for marrying at an early age are most often not strong enough to stand the strain which is almost invariable.

#### Romanticism in marriage

In the above section it was mentioned that there are many problems to be overcome and adjustments to be made if a couple is to learn to live together harmoniously. Perhaps one of the most difficult to overcome for all newlyweds, young or old, is that of over-romanticism and disillusionment in marriage.

Landis, Cuber, Treat, and Fund (28) remind us that most couples are not aware that adjustment after marriage is a normal part of all marriages. The perfect marriage is romanticized in all the literature, movies, and other media that young people are surrounded with. In these stories, if the couple love each other, they get married and live happily ever after. No one mentions that their success or failure in marriage depends upon how they meet and deal with problems in the early months and years of marriage.

Through his reading and studying of other research projects, Hobart (25) also has concluded that our unrealistic idealization induced by the romantic love emphasis in our culture would suggest a resulting disillusionment reaction in marriage. He set up his own study of the problem with a sampling, non-random, of students and their off-campus dates, fiancées,

and mates at a West Coast sectarian college. Each person was rated or given a score on his or her disagreement and agreement estimate of 15 items. The conclusions were that post-marital disillusionment does exist for both male and female, and is stronger for the male. While all areas were not equally strong in created disillusionment, some appeared more often than others. They were: personal freedom, marital roles, having children, in-law relationships, values on neatness, values on savings and money, and attitudes toward divorce.

Truxal and Merrill (51) wrote an article in 1952 portraying the critical viewpoint some sociologists have of romantic love as a basis for stable marriage. They summarized that the groups' expectations making up romantic love are: 1) marriage is the source of the only true happiness, 2) the affinities are ideal love relations, and 3) each individual has only one ideal mate to find, and that mate will be immediately recognized upon sight. We are culturized, so to speak, into accepting as fact the inevitability and necessity of falling in love before marriage. Like other cultural mores, it goes unquestioned. It is believed that if this romance cools after marriage has settled down, then this marriage is a failure. The authors point out that under this spell of romantic love, men and women fail to perceive that happiness in marriage is not a "fortuitous and delightful" event, but a long and gradual process, involving many complex readjustments of two persons to each other.

Romantic lovers believe that men and women who are sexually attracted to one another are "naturally" kind and solicitous, anxious to devote their best efforts to their mutual welfare, and have no other purpose than the safety and comfort of the children brought into the world through their sexual collaboration. This assumption is scientifically unfounded. (51, p. 110-111)

The authors claim that it is because the average man and woman in the United States does not lead a very exciting life that they seek release from their tedious reality by searching for a romantic love affair.

It is false and dangerous . . . not in suggesting that an individual may be extremely happy with the husband or wife of his choice but rather in thinking that, if this happiness does not measure up to what we have been taught to expect, something is wrong with the marriage. We take for granted that the tranquil matrimony is, strictly speaking, against the romantic rules. (51, p. 112-113)

Beigel (3) sheds a new light on the problem. While he seems to agree with all that our previous authors have said, he carries the analysis one step further. He believes that it is not the romanticism of love itself but the pretense and self-deception that are dangerous. Especially in early marriage it happens often that undiluted adolescent feelings--such as the relief felt when the need to assert one's power and personality or one's independence, or the desire to escape depressing home restriction is satisfied--are experienced as love and allowed to determine the selection of the mate. It is this lesser emotion which we often confuse with love that is the cause of our high divorce rates, and not the fact that we now use love as a basis for choosing our marriage partners, as has been suggested. He describes true love as an understanding and mutual assistance in emotional conflicts, moral support and common interest, mutual confirmation and emotional security, which if existing between a man and wife has a chance of creating an atmosphere of loyalty and friendship, tolerance, and confidence greater than that found in any other type of union.

Despert (15) also supports love and its power. She portrays a family who learned to enjoy one another and live itself simply through

love. They did not envy others for their social positions, fine luxuries, or money. They did not try to be something they were not. They proved to themselves and those who knew them that these material things others value so highly are not necessary for a full, rich life. To live within the reality of one's self is necessary.

Summary. The summary, then, finds us pointing the finger of blame on a culture which emphasizes love and romance with work and effort, and on a human tendency to pretend and deceive society and oneself in order to live up to the idealistic standards such a culture sets up. We see that there are many reasons for marrying; we call them all "love" and blame love if the marriage fails. Most important, perhaps, we see that the wedding ceremony does not end with the words, ". . . and they lived happily ever after," but only gives the couple the chance to try and do so.

#### Marital role conceptions

In order to become an acceptable parent in our society, one must first be a wife or a husband. In summaries of past sections it has already been concluded that in order to be a successful and happy parent, one must enjoy a stable marital relationship with his or her spouse. Problems which can prevent this type of relationship have already been discussed. In one sense, then, this section, concerned with a marriage partner and his concept of his marital role, is an extension of those previous sections because it, too, is a marriage adjustment problem and can be a negative or positive influence on the relationship. The task of this part of the review is to discover if role conception really is a problem, and why this is or is not so, and if it is a problem, how can a couple deal with it?

Dyer (18) gives us a start by answering the first two questions when he says, "The forming of a new family constitutes a major change in the behavior patterns of the young man and young woman involved since they occupy now an entirely new status and role of husband and wife." He predicts that the interaction will run smoothly if the following conditions exist:

1. High level of agreement of norms and personal preferences.

By norms he means the things many take for granted until they encounter other cultures, such as type of wedding ceremony (if there is to be a ceremony, family construction (monogamy, polygamy, etc.).

2. Agreement on role definitions and expectations of each other:

The way a person performs in his new role depends upon how he feels about this position and how or what he feels he is supposed to do in this role; the way a wife expects her husband to behave and what she expects him to do--are her role expectations of a husband, and vice-versa. While an engaged or newly married couple may discuss role expectations and be entirely satisfied with the agreement they come to, the actual performance of the role may be a different thing and fall short of the agreement.

3. If role performance is in agreement with role expectations and positive sanctions result. One partner may be trying to adjust his actions to suit the expectations of the other but receive no feedback or cues as to how well he is doing. If progress is being made, he needs to know about it.

Taking a look at husband and wife roles separately, Cooper (14) discussing husband-and-fatherhood, and then Linton (33) discussing wife-and-motherhood, give us some insight.

Cooper (14) outlines the basic responsibilities of the good husband. These include providing companionship, financial support of the family, and a satisfying sex life for his wife and assuming a positive role in the rearing of children. In order to achieve a good marriage the husband must first know what his role is, what kind of marriage partner he wants to be, and what responsibilities he is willing to assume. Then he must gain the necessary knowledge and skill in order to play his role effectively. He suggests that while the husband plays an important part in helping his pregnant wife get the adequate amount of rest and nourishment, and in continuing to help her while the baby demands much of her time, his real role as a father takes on importance as the child becomes older and especially during the adolescent stage. How does a prospective husband and father go about securing the necessary knowledge and skill to do well in such a role? The author concedes that there is no course of "ten easy lessons" or any other short educational program which can do the job. When one understands the many complex elements which compose such a role, one is convinced that it takes all the education that can be secured from home, school, and community, beginning at birth and continuing throughout marital life.

Linton (33) brings out very clearly the difficulties of the "women in the family" by comparing our culture with the mores of primitive societies. In such societies there is no confusion as to male and female roles. The division of labor is fairly equitable--the woman's work a continuous one, and hard, but the man's usually harder and more dangerous. Both men and women are contributing equally and skill found in either sex is rewarded with admiration and prestige. In such societies there



is emotional satisfaction for women as well as men. Since the whole society recognizes and values the woman's skills, she can be sure of admiration if she plays her part well. The ideal marriage is one in which a good provider is mated to a good housekeeper. This combination is the basic requirement, and congeniality and affection is to be regarded as a pure dividend, a sort of lucky addition. In the Western world, women's work has been simplified, but it has also been devaluated. Their job is no longer considered a full-time job and no longer carries much prestige. The opening of many various paid occupations to women has helped to change their status. Girls of today are restless and confused because they do not know what will be expected of them in adult life. They anticipate that they will get married, but nothing in their education trains them for this role. There is little training for being a modern housewife and mother and still less recognition that these are important occupations. Consequently, we have built up a situation in which the woman is almost certain to be frustrated. She is caught on the horns of a dilemma. While the pre-machine age mother had so much else to do that the time spent responding to the demands of her children was limited, mothers of today fill their empty hours by developing child care into "busy work," or else shift as much of the burden of child training as possible from home to school and continue on with a career outside the home. This author concludes by asserting that we need a new interpretation of the first principles of the institution of marriage, which are that its main functions are those of an economic unit and those of raising children.

The next two authors approach the problem by dividing the marriage group not by sex but rather by their social status, or class.

Motz (41) asks, "How do conceptions of husband-wife roles and the playing of husband-wife roles vary in terms of the status (meaning the couple's social class) of the actor?" Her study was carried out among married students living in the Indiana University community in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1949. The typical couple consisted of a veteran-student husband of 24½ years and his non-veteran wife who was a year younger. They were largely dependent on the G.I. Bill for their support in a small furnished apartment during their second year of marriage. Roles were categorized into two polar types for husbands and two for wives. The conventional role of the husband revolves around the bread-winning duty of the man. His prestige and authority are dependent upon his working. In the home, it is his job to do the heavy men's work and to help out with other housework in emergencies, and to supervise and guide the children. The value of his education is vocational. His other activities are restricted to those that are defined as "male." The counter-role of a conventional wife is subordinate to that of the husband. The physical care of house and children as well as of the husband is her forte. Education is considered as something nice to have but not very useful in marriage. It is wrong to work except for pin money for one's self or because of necessity.

In contrast to the conventional conception is the companionate conceptions of husband-wife roles which emphasizes personality needs of husband and wife and greater equality in the assumption of economic, household, parental, and social responsibilities. Education and employment are considered valuable for the personal growth of man and wife. Authority is not dependent upon income.

The students and their wives used in this study tended to define marital roles in much the same way. For the majority, the appropriate role for the man is companionate and that for the wife is conventional. But several tendencies within these common conceptions are noteworthy. Whereas upper-middle and upper-lower class husbands and wives do not differ in their definitions or roles, the conventional definition of husband-wife roles is espoused by more women than men with lower-middle class background. The most significant differences are found in terms of the employment status of husbands and wives. Women who work full-time tend toward conventional conceptions and those who work part-time tend toward companionate conceptions of both husband and wife roles.

Rainwater (43) attempted to compare the feelings of a workingman's wife about herself and her world with those of an upper-middle class woman by producing a series of significant pictures for them to comment upon. They have found that there is a tendency to see oneself in the picture and describe it accordingly. Many specific characteristics were found to be common to the working-class wife. In summary, she is apt to be wishful, shy, anxious, afraid of loneliness, uncertain, realistic about life, hard working as she attempts to make herself and her surroundings as attractive as she can, sympathetic for the unfortunate, psychologically passive, sexually more vulnerable though concerned about morals and doing the right thing.

Summary. Perhaps the most significant conclusion to be drawn here is that people embarking on marriage would do well to realize that there will be differences in role expectations and conceptions. These differences must be worked out to the mutual satisfaction of both partners

if a happy relationship is to result, and this would best be done before the onset of children, though new roles and thus new differences will arrive with the first child, and they, too, must be dealt with democratically. Of secondary importance is the source of these differences. Our authors have suggested that they can be attributed to differences in cultural backgrounds, differences in social class status, differences in sex-linked characteristics, and more drastically, changes in the times due to technological advancements. To have an awareness of these role conception variations and some degree of understanding concerning their source can do much toward aiding the young couple in solving their own problems happily.

#### Family relations

Under the auspices of the American Institute of Family Relations, Cavan (2) edited a source book in 1960 which includes statements from such men as LeMasters. Quoting LeMasters from this book, ". . . men and women by nature (and by culturalization) have different interest emphasis and even marriage cannot fuse the two." Many marriages could be saved if each would accept these innate and necessary differences and respect them. Understanding is the key word. While lodges, hunting, sports participation, and to some extent business, still belong to the man, women are concerned about religion and children. Sometimes conflicts arise when one partner becomes intensely preoccupied with this personal interest as is often the case with a mother and her children. This same mother may be irritated because she feels her husband isn't interested in the children. The author admits there may be a "marginal man" who would rather

work around the house and spend his free time with his wife rather than go hunting and fishing, but he is a rare species and wives should not expect it.

On the other hand, Sirjamaki (46) argues that in our culture individual values are too often sought in family living. While there seems to be considerable cultural affirmation of individualism, there is a lack of traditional familism in which the family existed for the benefit of its members. Many of the husband's prerogatives have been parceled out to other members in the modern family. He maintains that family roles of husband and wife should be based on a sexual division of labor, but with the male status being superior. The husband is the head of his family, its main economic support, and its representative in the larger community. Women, consigned to domesticity, are mothers and homemakers. People in our culture are expected to marry--married life is felt to be the normal, desired condition for all adults and brings the greatest personal happiness and fulfillment. It permits the proper exercise of sex for the procreation of children and for individual satisfaction. Ultimately the fullest felicity of the couple is believed to be achieved by having children, whose arrival and subsequent nurture are viewed as bringing satisfaction to basic biological and social needs. Childless couples are sometimes regarded as possessed of a selfishness which blights their union.

Lucky (34) investigated five pairs of concepts concerned with marital interaction. Couples were defined as satisfied (S) or less satisfied (LS) and were asked to mark their perceptions of self, spouse, mother, father, and ideal self on the Interpersonal Check List.

1. Self, and self as marked by spouse. Significant differences were found between the S couples and the LS male subjects. It seems to be more important to marital happiness that the husband's concept of self be close to or slightly below the concept his spouse has of him.

2. Self and ideal self. While the ideal always exceeded the self, the S person seemed to be closer to his ideal than the LS.

3. Self and parent of the same sex. S and LS women pictured themselves as different from their mothers; S men saw themselves as very much like their fathers, while LS men saw their fathers as more dominant and more hostile than themselves.

4. Spouse and parent of the opposite sex. S wives found that their husbands exceeded their fathers on all traits. LS wives found husbands and fathers dissimilar, with husbands exceeding fathers on the dominant, hostile dimensions.

5. Spouse and ideal self. S groups found their spouses significantly more similar to their ideal selves than did the LS subjects.

The hypothesis of the study was that when individuals see themselves as they are and their spouses understand them for what they are, the result is usually higher satisfaction in the marriage than when there is discontinuity between one's perception of himself and how his spouse views his personality characteristics. There seems to be some evidence in favor of such a hypothesis.

By submitting a checklist of 25 common problem areas to a group of couples in the study, Brim, Fairchild, and Borgatta(9) found they could categorize family problems into five major areas that seemed to be

unrelated to one another. They are: child rearing, husband and wife relationship, style of life (socio-economic status), community participation, and religion. They also found that family problems reflect role incongruities and specific situations faced by family members. Their findings also contradict the assumption so often made that economic problems of families are related to interpersonal ones and also the clinical assumption that interpersonal problems in the marital and parental roles are closely related. In summary, one might say that when a family is having trouble in one area of relationships or in one situation, it is likely to have trouble in other areas and situations. Troubles are inter-related and not independent of each other; each feeds upon the other like a cancerous affliction.

Summary. Perhaps the best way to summarize such a section is simply to restate the important points concerning family relations as they were brought out by our various authors. It seems that marriage is a must in our society and children within that marriage are of equal importance. It might also be said that we as a society need to evaluate our purposes in marriage and concentrate less on the self and more on the family as a unit. While it has not been disputed that the need for individual freedom for each member or partner within a family unit is evident, and that more understanding concerning individual needs is necessary, it might be well not to sluff off entirely the traditional familial attitude that once existed abundantly. It seems that somewhere along the marital line husband and wife must come to terms with themselves and with each other to eliminate perceptual discontinuities. It might also be concluded that "trouble comes in bunches" and the wise

ones will set their houses in order by eliminating the source and not the symptoms.



## METHOD

Description of sample

The sample is composed of married students attending Utah State University. The names of those eventually used were obtained from the housing office at the university. There were 40 couples used, all living in university housing, either in the new university apartments or in the old "pre-fab" apartments during the spring quarter of 1964 or fall quarter of 1964. The housing office provided the author with a list of couples who had just one child, and that child under three years of age. It was first thought that for best results, and to eliminate the danger of too much dependence on recall, the sample would be limited to couples having only one child aged one year or younger, but it was found that not enough such families existed on the campus so the age level of the child had to be raised to three. One or both members of each couple had to be attending school at the time of the study. Religious affiliation was not limited to any one sect. However, it was felt after interviewing each couple at the time the questionnaire was given that the majority of them were of the Latter-day Saint (or Mormon) religion. It might be assumed that all were at least influenced by this particular religion since the whole community is basically a Mormon one and most of the activities within the community are either university or church sponsored. There was no attempt to measure financial status, though a degree of homogeneity might also be assumed here, too, since all were living in the university housing where the rent is

lower than the town apartments.

#### Development of the questionnaire

The independent variables were selected on the basis of which items were expected to be most apt to influence the degree of crisis felt by the couple. These variables were:

1. Personal-miscellaneous information
  - A. last grade completed for women, grade now attending  
for men
  - B. age
  - C. sex
  - D. number of years married
  - E. major in college, if college was attended
  - F. occupation at the time of the child's conception
  - G. occupation at the present time
  - H. baby's age at the present time (also used to determine  
how soon after the marriage the baby arrived)
2. Experience with children
  - A. general experience
  - B. professional experience
  - C. study groups attended without academic credit
  - D. classes concerning children taken in school for credit
3. Stability of the marriage before the birth of the baby
4. Aspirations about life's greatest fulfillment before the  
respondent was married
5. Religious commitment (not sect, but degree of commitment)

6. Expectations about parenthood vs. actual experiences

--degree of romanticism concerning parenthood

7. Attitudes toward children in general

Determining the degree of crisis for each couple could be done either through a discussion and letting the couple themselves decide upon their own rating, or through a questionnaire, which would require the investigator to rate each respondent individually from the information provided by the couple. The latter was decided upon. The method of rating will be discussed later in this same chapter. There are many experiences a couple must adjust to when they are confronted with parenthood for the first time. After reviewing the literature, the 15 most often mentioned as possible trouble spots were chosen to make up the crisis rating. Briefly, they are:

1. night-time activities
2. time required
3. decrease in social activities outside the home
4. expenses
5. quantity and quality of husband-wife relationship
6. worry
7. sexual responsiveness of mother
8. extra work required
9. mother's appearance
10. disrupted schedule
11. housekeeping standards
12. timing of the baby's arrival
13. feeling of neglect on the part of husband or wife

14. desire to have a child (or non-desire)

15. spouse's reaction to the pregnancy during the pregnancy itself

Several different types of questions were used. Most often used was the unfinished statement question with a number of choices, one to be selected by the respondent as that which best describes him--a modified Likert Scale. At first a Motz (41) type set of statements was used in Part VII (Attitudes toward Children) and Part VIII (Crisis Rating). This type of questioning involves a series of short positive and negative statements about a certain experience or feeling. The respondent checks off as many as he feels apply to him, and the investigator rates the attitude by the proportion of positive and negative statements checked.

#### Pilot study

A pilot study was made during the spring of 1964. Eight couples from the list were given the questionnaire and then were interviewed. Questions asked during the interview were concerned with the mechanical aspects of the questionnaire in an attempt to discover which parts were ambiguous and which, if any, failed to allow the respondent to express his feelings adequately. Other questions concerning the couples' actual experiences with their baby were discussed so that the interviewer would have some basis of judging the validity of the questionnaire. Each respondent was timed as well, so it could be determined about how long the questionnaire would take to complete. The average time was 20 minutes. After analyzing the results of these eight interview-questionnaire sessions, three significant changes were made in the questionnaire itself. Part IV-- the section dealing with the aspirations of the individual as he remembered them before marriage seemed to have a limited number of choices. Originally

the choices were three: marriage, parenthood, or employment. In the revised questionnaire two more were added. They were academic success in college and social achievement in college. Since the sample was to consist entirely of student couples, most of whom had attended some college or had intentions of doing so prior to their marriage, these additions were thought appropriate. The second revision had to do with Part VIII--the crisis scale itself. This section was originally in the form of a Motz Inventory. After discussing this section with the pilot couples, however, it was decided that for best results a Likert scale, which allows more variation in the degree of emotion felt, would prove more satisfactory. For example, when a respondent was asked to reject or confirm a statement concerning resentment felt at having to get up in the night to feed the baby, he wanted to be able to qualify his decision by indicating how much he resented this responsibility, or how much he did not, if that was the case. In addition, it was decided that a set of open-end questions would be added to Part X, giving the respondents further freedom to express their feelings and verify their answers in the previous sections in their own words. It was hoped that these questions would catch some personal sidelights that a more formal, closed-end question could easily miss. The revised edition of the questionnaire took about 30 minutes to complete, and in no case did it take more than 45.

Final study carried out: method

The revised edition of the questionnaire was ready for use near the end of spring quarter, 1964. As many couples as possible were contacted before school closed for the summer. The following quarter, in the fall

of 1964, a new list was obtained from the housing office. Some on the old list had failed to return or were no longer eligible, either because of the age of their child, or a change in address. If the couple could be reached by telephone, an appointment was made and a time set for the researcher to call at their apartment with the questionnaire. If the couple did not have a phone, they were contacted in person and an appointment was made for a later date. There was not one case of a couple refusing to cooperate, and in fact, most seemed anxious to participate. The questionnaire was brought to the home at the time agreed upon previously and the study was briefly explained, much in the same way as it is on the first page of the questionnaire (see Appendix). The general instructions found on the second page were then discussed. The respondents were asked not to write their names or any identifying marks on the questionnaire so that they might feel free to answer the questions as honestly as possible. They were asked not to converse with one another while working on the questionnaire. It was stressed how important it was that they each respond on his questionnaire exactly as he felt without being influenced by the spouse. Since there were several different types of questions used, each requiring a different method of responding, these were pointed out and explained. If it was necessary for the investigator to leave before the couple had finished, two plain, blank envelopes were also left with them. They were instructed to each place his completed questionnaire in one of the envelopes, seal it, and leave it so until it could be picked up by the investigator. However, it was thought best to remain with the couple while they were working on the questionnaire if at all possible in case questions or some

misunderstandings should arise, or they be tempted to converse with one another on certain points. Only rarely were the forms left to be completed without the investigator.

After the questionnaires were completed and set aside, the investigator often found that he could hold a rather informal interview with the couple, since many of them were so interested in the study that they wished to discuss it further. Their comments proved to be another excellent source of information concerning the emotions and problems of young parents and many of them were used in the analysis to strengthen or verify a point. One young wife, for instance, told of her particular anxiety about becoming a mother because she was so young and had been an only child in her family, and unused to small children. Her mother, she said, shared her anxiety. The results of her questionnaire revealed that she did, in fact, have a rather difficult adjustment after the baby's arrival and that there were a number of things concerning infants for which she was not prepared.

#### Methods of scoring

Parts I, III, IV, and V were rather simple to handle since they required no rating or scoring on the part of the researcher, but each possible response was merely assigned a code number so that it might be identified on an index card. The responses in Part II were given a rating according to the amount of experience the parents indicated having had in the past. Each rating was then coded for the index cards. The respondent was given 5 choices or levels of experience. Each question was to be answered by putting in the appropriate number attached to the

level of experience he felt he had had. For instance, a "1" meant no experience, "2" meant some limited experience, "3" seldom, and so forth. A "5" means very frequent and steady experience. The same set of choices was used for both "A" and "B" questions under Part II. When scoring these responses it was decided that if each assigned number was to represent a true value, then "no experience" should be represented by an "0" rather than a "1" so this change was made on all the questionnaires as the scores were tallied.

There were four separate situations described under question "A" as well as a space for "other" in case the respondent had participated in a unique situation not anticipated by the researcher. This leeway, however, was not used in any significant way by any of the respondents, so the four situations mentioned were all that were used in scoring of this question. That meant there was a possible score of 20 if the respondent had "very frequent and steady experience" in all four situations. A score of 0 to 2 indicated almost no experience in any of the situations; 3 to 8, fairly frequent experience; and 9 to 14, very frequent experience; and 15 to 20, steady experience. Each of these ratings was then given a code number and it was entered on the respondent's index card.

The same system was used for question "B" of the same Part II. In this case, however, there were only two situations suggested, making the highest possible score 10. A total score of 0 to 2 meant almost no professional experience; 3 to 6, fairly frequent, and 7 to 10, very frequent professional experience. Again, there were no "other" situations described by any of the respondents. The remaining questions, "C" and "D" did not require any scoring.



Part VI was not scored or coded, but was used for discussion purposes.

Part VII was an attempt to measure the respondent's attitude toward children in general. A series of 20 questions, 10 positive and 10 negative, were listed. The respondent was asked to check as many as he felt reflected his feelings. Some of the respondents argued that they could not be sure what they would do in some of the situations suggested in these statements because they had never been confronted with the decision in real life. While it is true that our theories and our practices do not always coincide, it was thought that one might come close to the parent's real attitude if at least his theories were rated on a general negative or positive basis. It would be well to mention here that all of these statements were given to four staff members in the Department of Family and Child Development at Utah State University with no indication of which were intended to reveal positive or negative attitudes toward children. The staff members were instructed to put a plus or a minus sign by each statement as they saw fit. Any statement not receiving a perfect plus or a perfect minus rating by all four judges was discarded. This, it was felt, would further insure the validity of the scoring procedure. If the respondent checked six of the positive statements and four of the negative statements, he would receive an algebraic score of plus two. If he checked six negative and only four positive, his score would be a minus two. According to this method, then, a respondent could come out with one of the following scores:

1. plus 6 to plus 10 (positive attitude)

2. plus 1 to plus 5 (somewhat positive attitude)
3. zero (neutral)
4. minus 1 to minus 5 (somewhat negative attitude)
5. minus 6 to minus 10 (negative attitude)

Each one of these categories was given a code number and entered on the respondent's index card.

Part VIII was the crisis rating itself. This part consisted of 16 statements about parenthood in areas that might require adjustment on the part of the new parents. Each statement was followed by four reactions of varying intensity. The respondents were asked to put a check by the one that best described their feelings or reactions at the time they were becoming adjusted to their baby. For example, question number 1 had to do with getting up several times in the night to care for the baby. This sometimes causes a problem in the husband-wife relationship because one or both may be often cross and irritable from lack of sleep. They were then asked to rate the degree to which this constituted a problem in their home. The choices were: very disturbing (given a value of 4), somewhat disturbing, (value 3), slightly disturbing (value 2), and, not at all disturbing (value of 1). If the respondent felt that this was a very disturbing problem for him, and he checked the appropriate box, he would receive a score of 4. The highest score possible, then, was 64. A respondent could get such a score only if he found all 16 areas "ver disturbing" during the adjustment period. The lowest score possible, or in other words, the very least degree of crisis, was 16. The rating categories were arbitrarily set up on the following scale:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Crisis rating</u>
49 to 64	Severe
38 to 48	Moderate
27 to 37	Mild
16 to 26	Very mild or none

Each of these categories was given a code number and entered on the respondent's card.

Part IX was not scored but was used for discussion in the analysis under General Romanticism. The respondents were asked to compare their expectations of parenthood with their actual experience during the first three months of the infant's life. Then again, with their actual experience now. If one indicated that during the first three months of the child's life he was "very disappointed" in the rewards of parenthood, but now he found it "much more rewarding" than he had expected it to be, his response might be interpreted as meaning that he had a great deal of adjusting to do at first but that he had done so quite satisfactorily. There was the possibility of moving in the opposite direction, or of remaining the same.

Again, Part X, the open-end statements, were not rated or scored but were very helpful in getting a fuller picture and better understanding of the respondent's feelings.

## PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

General findings

In general, the hypothesis that the birth of the first child initiates a crisis reaction has not been validated in this study with this particular group of respondents. However, neither has the LeMasters-Dyer romanticism prognosis been disproved in this study. The data in Table 1 indicates that the respondents in this study report a less severe crisis reaction to the birth of their first child than has been found to be true in other studies. Also indicated in this same table, is a similarity in the response of both men and women. Several other variables, in addition to sex of the parent, were included in the study.

Table 1. Crisis reaction by sex

Crisis reaction	Women	Men	Total
Severe crisis	1	1	2
Moderate crisis	11	9	20
Mild crisis	24	24	48
Very mild or no crisis	4	5	9
Total cases			79

Using the method described in the previous chapter, our respondents were placed in the categories indicated in Table 1. Only two respondents

reported having suffered what might be termed a severe crisis. Only 20, or 25 percent of the 79 respondents, reported a moderate crisis; 48, or 61 percent (the largest group), reported a mild crisis; and 9, or 11 percent, reported no crisis at all, or at least a very mild one. It is significant to note in Table 1 that the difference between the degree of crisis experienced by men, and that experienced by women, is negligible. Thus, part of the hypothesis, that women experience a greater crisis than do their husbands, has not been sustained.

#### Education

It was assumed that with maturation and continued education would come the readiness to take on the responsibility that is needed before one can readily accept an infant into the family. For this reason it was hypothesized that for those women who married early in life and were forced to discontinue their education early, the responsibility of child care added to the regular wifely duties would require a greater adjustment than that experienced by the older, more educated woman. The fact of early marriage itself is reported by many authors (11, 22, 38, 27) to be the cause of many unstable marriages and caring for a young baby does not lessen the responsibilities of marriage. Of the 40 women respondents in this sample, 12.5 percent did not graduate from high school; 25 percent did graduate but went no further; 40 percent had some college background; and 22.5 percent did at least graduate from college, some having gone on to do graduate work. Although the results have no statistically significant correlation, there seems to be a trend in the opposite direction more than was hypothesized. Those women with some college experience, but

who did not graduate, tend to suffer more from the baby crisis than those with some high school or those with just a high school diploma and no more. This trend, however, seems to stop there. Those who did graduate from college and those who have done some graduate work indicate a reversal of this trend. It may be that the problem lies in the degree of independence a girl tastes before she is burdened with the responsibility of child care. High school students are still under the protecting wings of their parents and have not yet experienced many of the satisfactions of self-reliance and independence which the college coed has experienced. Perhaps the college student has a more tangible goal in mind for herself than does her younger sister and finds that having a baby to care for disrupts her progress. On the other hand, the college graduate, who has an easier time accepting the motherhood role according to these results, may have already had time to live out her need for independence. Having accomplished college graduation, she may well have accomplished her search for selfhood as well.

For men, the picture is quite different. The amount of education completed before the arrival of the first child represents a different kind of variable for men than for women. While a new mother's education generally must come to a halt, or at best a postponement, this was not true of the men in this study. It is true that some men find they must quit school and get a job in order to support a new child. However, since this particular sample consisted only of couples with the husbands in school, this was not the case with them. The importance, then, of this factor has more to do with how much school the breadwinner has left before he can actually win the bread, or how much having a baby

around interferes with his study schedule. It was hypothesized that those who had just begun college and already had the beginnings of a family to support would be more disturbed than those almost finished with school, where prospects of full-time employment seemed nearer at hand. Again the findings indicate no statistically significant correlation. There is some indication that the freshmen and sophomore students as well as the graduate students suffer more of a disturbance upon the arrival of a child than do the juniors and seniors. Of the 8 lower division students, 37.5 percent reported a severe or moderate crisis; out of 17 juniors and seniors, only 18 percent reported a severe or moderate crisis; but out of 14 graduate students the percentage of severe and moderate cases climbs back up to 29 percent. While it is understandable that young men just beginning their college careers would be somewhat apprehensive about supporting a child as well as a wife, graduate students, though near the end of their financial dilemma, may find the strain and pressure of graduate work influencing their attitudes toward an infant in the home. This, perhaps, can be sustained by some of the comments the graduate student husbands themselves made. While almost all of them admitted that having children while in college was "difficult," "not easy," "disturbing," etc., only two mentioned a financial burden specifically.

#### Age of parent

An interesting finding emerged when a correlation was made of the age of the parent and the degree of crisis felt. Statistically there was no real difference, but this could be attributed to the fact that several age groups were combined to make a statistical analysis possible.

In the process the differences were buried. However, if these age groups are left to themselves, a definite trend is apparent.

Age of respondent	Percent found in the severe or moderate crisis category
20 or under	33.5%
21 to 22	35.0%
23 to 24	38.0%
25 or over	12.0%

It may be noted that men and women were not separated when the age variable was reported. There was, surprisingly, no difference between men and women in degree of crisis felt. This interesting result held true in most of the variables studies, and for this reason these two groups have been combined for analysis of most of the data. (See Table 1, p. 78).

#### Number of years married

There is a significant correlation relating the number of years married to the degree of crisis, and as was hypothesized, the relationship was a negative one. Because there were several couples who had been married less than one year before the birth of their first child, and almost the same number who had been married for a year or more, a reasonable comparison could be made, as indicated in Table 2.

Considering the reports of others on this subject as indicated in the Review of Literature, it was only natural to assume that the same findings would repeat themselves here, which they did. Most family researchers will agree that at least the first year of marriage should be



Table 2. Number of years married before the birth of the first child

No. of years married	Severe-moderate crisis	Mild-very mild or no crisis	Total
Less than 1 year	15	25	40
1 year or more	7	32	39
df = 1	$\chi^2 = 3.34$	$p > .05$	
Chi square contingency table			

reserved for the couple alone. This is the time for them to become adjusted to one another, to become accustomed to functioning as man and wife, and to organize their thoughts and actions around marital relations. To have additional adjustment thrust upon them at this time apparently makes this period more difficult. This is especially true if the pregnant wife finds herself often sick, tired, and irritable without any obvious reason. While it is often possible for the young couple to survive the ordeal quite happily, it still presents an undesirable strain and hardship on the first year of marriage. This view is shared by many of the respondents in their verbal and written responses. As Table 2 indicates, 40 parents reported that their children were born within the first year of marriage. (The reader must keep in mind that these 40 parents represent 20 children since each two had just one child.) As far as can be determined, only 2 of these 20 were conceived out of wedlock. The question was not asked directly in the questionnaire or by the investigator, but the information was voluntarily rendered by these two couples. Of these 40 parents, 55 percent suggested that it would have been better for them had they

waited another year or two. The main reasons given were: They would like to be more financially able to support a child; they felt they would like to have become better acquainted with one another first; they felt it would be best to be through with school before beginning a family. Of the 24 parents who had their first child in the second year of marriage, only 8, or 33 percent, thought they should have waited awhile. Their reasons were the same as those above. There were 6 parents who had their first child in the third year of marriage. Of these, no one wanted to wait any longer and two felt they should have had their baby sooner. This trend follows the same pattern throughout. Six parents reported the first child in the fourth year of marriage. Of these, 4 would have had the baby sooner and none of them would have waited any longer. Of the 3\* who reported a child in the fifth year, one would like to have had the child sooner, but neither of the other two wanted to wait any longer. This trend can be described graphically. If this sample can be considered as representative of all college couples, it could be concluded that the best time for most such couples to begin their families is somewhere near the end of the second year of marriage.

#### Major in college; degree of childhood education

The reasons for including this factor as an independent variable are two-fold. If a person were to major in fields concerned with children such as elementary education, child development, child psychology, etc., or participate in special study groups outside of school where such topics were discussed, one might assume that this person had a

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\*One husband failed to complete the questionnaire and it had to be discarded.

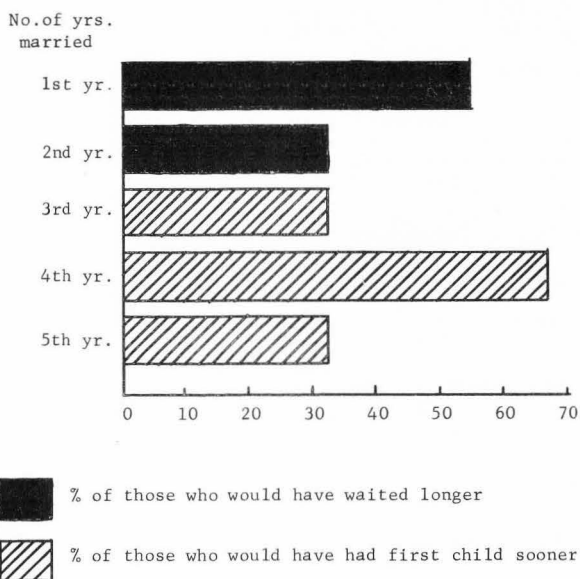


Figure 2. Relationship between dissatisfaction with the timing of the firstborn and the number of years married before the child's arrival

sufficient interest in children to carry him through a baby crisis with a minimum of difficulty. Another reason, of course, is the possibility that this person would also be well enough informed about the facts of infancy that a baby in the home would not be a shock to the organization of that family. These suppositions, however, did not hold true with this particular group. The majors reported seemed to fall into the following categories:

1. All those who seemed directly related to the problem, such as elementary education, home economics, child and family development, were combined to form one subgroup.
2. Sciences
3. Arts and humanities
4. Social sciences
5. Miscellaneous (including such majors as wildlife resources, physical education, beauty school, etc.)

Those in group 1 who might be expected to suffer the least amount of crisis on the basis of the two factors discussed, did not record any easier adjustment to the baby than did those in any other group. These findings appear to suggest that to have a baby in one's home is far different than studying about one in a text book. It is also probable that most child-related courses emphasize the older baby and child and spend very little time on the newborn. Our whole culture seems to be guilty of this tendency. Movies, books, advertisements, and in fact all of our information media picture and treat the baby as though he were a one-year-old--six or seven months at the earliest, and forget to mention what took place before he reached that stage. This is only

natural for their purposes. The newborn is not nearly as charming and rosy-cheeked as he will be in six or seven months. In fact, he is most often red, scrawny, mouse-like, bald, sleepy, and odd proportioned. Usually he is not at all the idealized baby pictured on baby food ads. Here are some of the comments made by the respondents of this study which illustrate some general misconceptions about babies.

"A baby just doesn't follow the rules about sleeping and eating."

"I didn't realize there would be perpetual diaper changing."

"Theory is different than practice."

"Having a baby is fun, but some of my preconceived ideas about babies were wrong. They take a lot of time."

"The first few weeks were harder than I expected."

"Our baby at five months is more what I expected it to be from the beginning."

"When I thought of having a baby I thought of the fun parts, not the problems and the work."

"Our little boy has brought us much joy but a second child will be much easier to adjust to because I'll know more what to expect."

"A baby is more work and doesn't sleep as much as they say."

"Our baby wasn't as cuddly as I expected."

"Having a baby around is not the bed of roses I had expected."

"I majored in child development in college but I was still afraid to bathe my own baby when we got home from the hospital. I just didn't know how."

It is interesting to note that these responses were typical throughout the sample and were not limited to those who experienced a harder

adjustment. It should be emphasized, however, that these statements are only the more negative reactions which were selected to put over a point. Almost every negative reaction was matched by a positive one by the same parent, and these also will be discussed later. The point to be made here is that lack of knowledge and the need for general parent education for young couples is almost universal.

The respondents were also asked to report whether or not they had participated in any study groups organized for the purpose of learning about child growth and behavior. This study group must have been prior to the birth of the child and affiliated with a university where credit was received. Only 17 out of the 79 said they had done so and of these 17, 15 reported only a mild or very mild crisis. This, in itself, is significant, indicating there is potential value in such programs. Respondents were asked if they had taken any formal classes for which they received university credit, such as psychology or child development. About 56 percent reported none, while the remaining 44 percent had received anywhere from 3 to more than 20 hours of such credit. While there is a trend for the rate of severe and moderate crisis subjects to go down as the amount of credit in such classes goes up, the correlation is not significant. Once again it appears that our child-related classes are not preparing young people for the early stages of parenthood. It is recognized that such preparation is normally not the function of such classes. Understandably they are set up to look at the whole child from start to finish and the first few months of infancy can reasonably take up only a small portion of the class schedule. Once this fact is recognized and accepted the next obvious step is to somehow

fill the gap with classes, either university or community sponsored, which function for this specific purpose.

Experience caring for babies under two;  
professional and non-professional

Of this sample, 33 percent reported almost no experience with children under two years of age; 41.5 percent reported fairly frequent experience; 21.5 percent very frequent experience; and 4 percent steady experience. There was no difference between degree of crisis and the amount of experience reported. According to the questionnaire this experience included caring for babies under two in the parental home, baby sitting for neighbors, or helping a friend or relative outside the respondent's parental home.

Of the 79 respondents, 71 percent had no professional experience working with children under two; 28 percent had some; and 1 case reported frequent professional experience working in a hospital nursery. There is a low correlation between the amount of professional experience and the crisis reaction.

Apparently the experience of caring for a newborn, constantly, in one's own home is a very different experience than baby sitting with an older baby or child for a few hours. Perhaps had the question been more precise and asked how much experience one had had with a newborn brother or sister while one was still living at home, the results would have been quite different. As far as professional experience goes, there are the same generalization problems. Teaching a junior Sunday School class of two-year-olds for an hour or two a week does not prepare one for parenthood. Only one person reported specifically that she had some

experience working with babies in a hospital nursery while going to school, and her experience, singularly considered, can hardly be of any significance if one is attempting to make any generalizations. Caring for older babies now and again, as has been the experience of most of this sample, may prepare one for caring for such children, but does not appear to prepare one to care for a newborn child.

Occupation of the parent at the time of conception

This item was scored separately for men and women since employment has a different meaning for each. Due to faulty questioning, however, the data on men had to be discarded. It was finally decided that the sample was a lopsided one in this respect, for it is reasonable to assume that the biggest crisis would come for the husbands who had to quit school to support a baby. Since none of these had quit school, they were not affected in such a drastic manner, and, this information was not analyzed.

There is some information about the women, but it, too, is rather inadequate to form any conclusions. It was the hypothesis that those women who were going to school or working before the baby was and enjoying their activities, would suffer a greater degree of crisis if the baby forced them to quit than would either those who were not actively engaged outside the home, or those who were, but who were not enjoying it. This hypothesis is backed up by some of the literature reviewed. Unfortunately, however, these respondents were not asked if they enjoyed what they were doing prior to the birth of the child, nor if the change itself disappointed them. They were asked what they were doing before the birth and what they were doing now. For this reason it can only be



reported what effect the change itself had on the mother, not what effect the type of change had or why. The one female in the severe crisis category reported that she was working full-time and now was a full-time homemaker. Whether this contributed to her difficult adjustment cannot be determined. Of the 11 moderate crisis representatives, 7 reported a change in occupation but the types were too diversified to make any assumptions. Of the 24 in the mild crisis group, only half had to make a change in occupation. Again the types of changes were numerous and only half of the 4 very mild or no crisis group made some change. It may be enough to say, in view of this information that any kind of a change, whether it be a welcome one or not, adds to the amount of adjusting to be done.

Stability of the marriage before the birth  
of the baby

It was the assumption for this variable that the more stable and happy the marriage, the easier it would be to begin a new adventure, such as embarking upon parenthood. Therefore, the expected relationship is inverse. Or, the higher the stability rating, the milder will be the expected crisis reaction. This hypothesis was upheld.

In this section of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to rate their own marriages along the scale provided. Nineteen rated their marriages as "much happier than most." None of these reported a severe or even moderate crisis. Twenty-seven rated themselves as having a "somewhat happier" than average marriage--one-third of these were in the severe or moderate crisis group. Thirty-three rated their marriages as either "about as happy as most" or "less happy than average."

Why have these two categories been combined? We can assume that these people felt they were getting along as well as anybody, but we cannot assume that this is either a happy marriage or an unhappy one. This depends upon how these people see other marriages. If they have seen most marriage situations as unhappy, then they might expect that this is the best that can be done when two people live together constantly and thus rate their own unhappy marriage as an average one. Or the experience might have been just the opposite. By combining the first two rating categories ("much happier" and "somewhat happier") and comparing it to the one category we are unsure about, we get a table such as the following. This table shows that of the 46 "happier than most" marriages, only 9 suffered a severe or moderate crisis. A significant reversal ( $p > .05$ ) is found in the less happy group. Of the 33, 13 suffered a severe or moderate crisis.

Table 3. Marriage rating versus degree of crisis

Rating	Severe or moderate crisis	Mild, very mild, or no crisis
Happier than most	9	37
Average, or less happy than most	13	20

df = 1

$\chi^2 = 3.77$

$p > .05$

Chi square contingency table

Premarital aspirations for the future

"Those couples who look forward to having children in their marriage have much happier marriages whether they actually get those children or not"(12,p.260). Apparently the reaction of joint anticipation is a cementing one, and indicates a degree of maturity on the part of both husband and wife. This is partially the reason for the selection of future aspirations as a factor which could influence the degree of crisis experienced. In the questionnaire the respondents were asked to remember which one of the following aspirations seemed, before marriage, to offer the greatest fulfillment in the future: marriage, parenthood, employment, academic success in college, or social achievement in college. Because the sample was so small, and because so many of the respondents could not make a choice between marriage and parenthood, these two choices were combined in analyses and compared with the last three, also combined. Invariably something is lost in such a grouping, but since so many of the respondents themselves could not differentiate their own feelings, the combination seemed a natural one and the loss small. The results are found in Table 4.

It is interesting to note that 60 percent of the entire sample felt that marriage and parenthood offered the greatest opportunity for personal fulfillment. In view of the ratio above, it is not hard to understand why such a small percentage of this particular sample fell into the severe or moderate crisis categories. This table is further verification of Landis' point of view (29) and sustains the hypothesis of this study. The relationship is an inverse one which is significant at a level of confidence greater than .05.

Table 4. Future aspirations before marriage versus crisis experience

Aspiration	Severe or moderate crisis	Mild, very mild or no crisis	Total
Marriage and parenthood	9	38	47
Other (social success; academic success; employment)	13	19	32
<b>Total</b>			<b>79</b>
df = 1 Chi square contingency table		$X^2 = 4.39$	p < .05

Another anticipated finding was verified in the results of this particular variable. It was assumed that marriage and parenthood would be the choice of a greater number of women than men. This is not a random assumption but a general, cultural characteristic hinted at in the literature review (37). It seems that the fact of being married and of fulfilling oneself by having children is part of the expected female role in our culture. The role of husband and father in our culture is only a secondary one for men. In this sample, 31 women compared to 23 men chose marriage and parenthood, whereas 16 men compared to 9 women chose "other," indicating that the reality of the cultural image for this group approaches the .05 level of confidence.

#### Religiosity

While no attempt was made to control the type of religious affiliation represented in this sample, it happened that the sample was taken from a predominantly Mormon area and that the majority of the respondents

were, in fact, affiliated with this particular religious group. They were asked to indicate the degree of their religious commitment. Knowing the emphasis that the Mormon church, and most religions for that matter, place upon home and family life with a responsibility to rear children as a major commandment, it was expected that the response toward children would be influenced by religion. However, questions still remained. Would a deep religious conviction of the glorification of parenthood overpower the initial disappointment felt during the first few months of the infant's life and thus reduce the degree of crisis? Or, would this glorified concept of parenthood unite with our cultural romanticism and make the shock more profound? The latter reaction was the expected one.

Landis (29), however, appears to be closer to the truth when he states that religion in the home contributes to happier, more stable marriages and helps the individual develop the characteristics necessary for successful partnership in marriage and parenthood. In this study 75 percent of the respondents reported that religion was "extremely important" in their lives, 18 percent said it was "somewhat important," and the remaining 7 percent stated that it was of "minor" or "no importance." The type of correlation found between degree of religiosity and degree of crisis was not anticipated. When religion has only "some," "very little," or "no" influence upon the individual, it also has no influence upon the degree of crisis experienced. The factor of religion hindering or helping in this adjustment does not appear to be present. It must be concluded that for these individuals the degree of crisis experienced is dependent upon other factors. When religion is

of "extreme" importance to the parent the picture is different. These people are less likely to experience a severe or even moderate crisis. It is interesting that in this sample, all those who experienced only mild or no crisis found religion to be extremely important. These results are indicated in Table 5. In view of the sustaining value of a deep religious conviction, this reaction is not hard to understand. Apparently the conviction that one is doing the right thing according to one's religious teachings and beliefs is powerful enough to sustain a person through the disappointments and trials of this new experience. This is not to say that parenthood has not been too romanticized for the religious person, but rather that the fact of "doing the good and right thing" compensates for the difficulties and helps to make it a rewarding experience.

Table 5. Religiosity versus degree of crisis

Religiosity	Severe or moderate crisis	Mild, very mild, or no crisis	Total
Extreme importance	13	46	59
Little or no importance	9	11	20
Total			79
df = 1		$\chi^2 = 3.89$	p = .05
Chic square contingency table			

Christensen (10) has pointed out that discrepancy between one's behavior and one's values may produce negative results, which may have a bearing on this finding in which it could be concluded that consistency

between one's behavior and one's values may enable one to respond to a crisis situation with a minimal negative reaction.

#### General romanticism and adjustment

This is a very difficult and vague area to measure for everyone has feelings, pleasant or unpleasant, that are difficult to explain. It is difficult to know why feelings change, but they do seem to creep in and out of our systems quietly, influencing our manner of speech, our present attitudes, and our sense of emotional well-being. These feelings shift and change like the sands. If a person is asked how he feels about his life he would probably be at a loss to reply in just a short sentence or two. The best he could do would be to relate the way he felt at that particular moment, and tomorrow might be a different story. Everyone is affected by so many things, in so many ways, it is no wonder that human emotions are the complex phenomena psychologists see them as being today. It is important that this complexity be kept in mind during this discussion in which an attempt has been made to pinpoint an emotion and ask for a description of this emotion in a sentence or two.

Parents were asked to describe what they expected in their child, as well as what they found when that child arrived. The purpose was to determine in what ways parenthood was different from what they had anticipated. Although some mention has been made of this in earlier sections, it is included here for more intensive analysis. Though parents may use many terms in one short paragraph while attempting to describe their child and the impact he has made upon their lives, the

lists below are the result of an effort to organize these feelings in the order of those mentioned most often, or by the greatest number of parents.

Table 6. Differences between expectations regarding parenthood and reality, for men and women separately

Men		Women	
Positive differences	Negative differences	Positive differences	Negative differences
*(4) more fun	(4) more time	(8) more fun	(3) more worry
(4) more rewarding	(3) more frustrating	(8) more personally rewarding	(6) more time
(3) easier to care for	(3) more tied down	(3) less work	(3) baby's constant presence
(2) more attached to	(3) harder to discipline	(2) more attached to	(2) doesn't sleep at night
(1) less tied down	(2) more worry		(2) less social life
	(1) doesn't sleep at night		(2) general disillusionment
	(1) more expense		(1) less rewarding
			(1) more chaos
<u>14</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>33</u>

\*Numbers in parentheses represent the number of time mentioned.



Table 7. Differences between expectations regarding parenthood and reality, for men and women combined

Positive differences	Negative differences
*(12) more fun	(15) more worry
(12) more personally rewarding	(10) more time required
(6) less work	(5) less social life
(4) more attached to	(4) more frustration and chaos
(1) less tied down	(3) more work
	(3) baby's constant presence
	(3) less sleep
	(3) harder to discipline
	(2) general disillusionment
	(1) less rewarding
	(1) more expense
<hr/> 35	<hr/> 50

\*Numbers in parentheses represent the number of times mentioned.

Although there are many less tangible feelings left out of this list, it should be useful to those who are attempting a parenthood preparation class or study group. For instance, it is evident that both husbands and wives find parenthood both rewarding personally and a real strain as well. Most of these couples seemed to be very aware of the financial burden a baby can be and therefore were prepared for it while at the same time they were not aware of the time and work an infant could require of them. There are differences in reactions of husbands and wives. The men seemed to find that caring for an infant was much more frustrating than they had imagined it would be, while only one woman even mentioned the chaos an infant can cause to her routine. As the totals at the bottom of each column are examined, it will be noted that the women had far more negative reactions than did their husbands and the major reaction for women was worry. This

is understandable since it is the mother who is most directly concerned with the newborn and has the initial responsibility for its care. Keeping in mind that this particular sample had a relatively low crisis rating, it is interesting to note that almost 60 percent of the 85 responses were negative ones.

Parents were also asked to compare the rewards of parenthood in the first 3 months of the infant's life with those felt later. The 14 who had babies still under 3 months of age were disqualified from this section. Of those 65 remaining, 37 reported no change at all, or they felt that things were no different now than when the baby was younger. Of the 18 who suffered a moderate crisis in the beginning, 12 reported that for them now parenthood was much more rewarding, while 2 were more disappointed than at first. The remaining 4 in this group reported no change. Of the 43 in the mild crisis category, 25 remained the same, while 17 reported a good adjustment and 1 found more disappointment later than at first. Those in the two extreme categories (extreme crisis and very mild or no crisis) reported very little change at all.

The conclusions to both the romanticism and adjustment factors appear simply to be that parenthood is a rewarding experience which is often enhanced by time and experience, but nevertheless somewhat of a shock that requires more work and adjustment than many couples had expected.

#### Attitude toward children

It was felt that among those who had a positive attitude toward children and respected them as people with rights of their own, the crisis effect might be less severe. The series of 20 questions making up Part VII

of the questionnaire was designed for this purpose. Half of them reflect a rather high degree of warmth, acceptance, and understanding of children in general on the part of the parent, while the other half do not. The respondents were asked to check any statements they felt reflected their feelings. All of the 79 respondents in this sample rated well on the positive side. This result might mean one of several things. Either attitude toward children has little bearing on the primary adjustment period, or the percentage of severe and moderate crisis people in this particular sample is so low that this factor does not appear to be an influence. Or, the generally high rating on attitudes toward children may account for the absence of the severe crisis reaction which has characterized other studies. The hypothesis that positive feelings toward children will minimize the crisis reaction does not appear, however, to have been sustained in that those who experienced a severe crisis in this study gave evidence of the same affirming attitudes toward children which characterized the other respondents. Perhaps, again, affirming and warm attitudes toward children may not be an adequate substitute for knowledge as a preparation to care for an infant.

There are other interesting and pertinent findings to be explored about which no hypothesis was made, but which are valuable if one is to view the entire picture of early parenthood among students. For instance, a number of open-end questions which it was hoped would pick up individual problems not otherwise accounted for provided some relevant interesting data. While many of the answers were so varied that an attempt to group them would prove impractical, some of the questions evoked quite similar responses:

## 1. "For us, having a baby . . ."

The majority responded positive to this with such conclusions as: "was a joy," "brought a sense of fulfillment," "greatly enriched our lives," "is wonderful," etc. Even those in the severe and moderate crisis category expressed these feelings.

## 9. "The most disturbing (thing) about having a baby is . . ."

For men and women both, such problems as the worry of caring for the baby, disciplining, and keeping it healthy were mentioned far more often than any other thing. Following these concerns most often mentioned for men as most disturbing was the confusion and chaos a baby creates in the home while for women it was a personal loss they felt. Some felt it more strongly in the way they looked, others in the way they acted--more impatient, more moody, more "inclined to lose my temper," etc., and still others felt a loss of personal selfhood. For these women giving their all to the baby meant there was nothing left over for themselves.

Mentioned third in order of frequency by the men was the problem of having to get up in the night to care for the baby's needs. This is understandable since all of these fathers are attending school and know the importance of getting a good night's rest if studies are not to suffer. The women mentioned both the problems of upset routines and scheduling and the discomfort of the pregnancy and labor. Other problems mentioned less frequently by both or either sex were finances, social limitations, and the time and work a baby requires.

## 10. "If I could start over again . . ."

A large majority of both sexes responded positively here, but many

did so with some reservations. The most typical answer was: "I'd do the same thing over again," but next most often appeared, "Maybe I'd wait a year or so before having a baby." This latter response came from a cross-section of all the crisis categories. No analysis has been made relating it to age or number of years married except as these two variables have already been discussed (see Figure 1).

A separate analysis was also made on each of the 15 items that made up the dependent variable itself--the crisis. Each item was examined according to the contribution it made toward the crisis, the degree of crisis, and the sex of the respondent (see Appendix B). It provides, perhaps a more specific analysis of the information given in Tables 6 and 7. For instance, it is clear, after studying item 2 that the time required to care for a baby affected men and women in a similar manner, whereas item 3 points out that women worry about parenthood and its responsibilities a great deal more than men, but men are concerned about the upset in routines (item 10). Reading the tables another way we can see which areas most often concern those in the severe and moderate groups compared to those in the mild or no crisis groups. A good example of this is found in item 7--sexual responsiveness of the wife after the first child. Those who suffered the most crisis, both men and women, also reported that either themselves (if they were women) or their wives were less responsive, while those who suffered only a mild or no crisis reported slightly more responsiveness on the part of the wives or themselves (if they were women).

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Summary

The main hypothesis for this study was that the birth of the first child initiates a crisis reaction in the marriage. The respondents in this particular sample did not indicate this to be true to the degree that had been expected. Only 28 percent of the entire sample reported a moderate or severe crisis. The remaining 72 percent were classified as experiencing either mild, very mild, or no crisis.

Several factors were found to be associated with the degree of crisis experience in response to parenthood. Education was among these. Among women, those who suffered the least crisis were those who had graduated from high school and those who had graduated from college. Those who had started on one or the other, but did not finish, suffered a greater crisis. The student's major in college appeared to have little or no influence on the degree of crisis experienced.

Age, also, was found to be associated with the crisis response. The men who were freshmen or sophomore, as well as those who were graduate students, experienced the greatest crisis. When men and women were grouped together and age was analyzed, those who were age 25 or over were found most often in the very mild or no crisis category. Age groups immediately below 25, however, seemed to suffer more crisis than did the youngest of the respondents.

Experience with children, older than infants, did not appear to have any bearing on the degree of crisis, but there were too few who

reported a significant amount of experience to make a conclusive statement.

There was a trend toward romanticism of parenthood among all the respondents, especially the romanticism of motherhood, and many new parents were disappointed during the first few months.

Among the statistically significant findings (approaching the .05 level of confidence or higher) are these:

Men and women both suffer from the baby crisis, and to comparable degrees, though for different reasons.

More crisis is suffered among parents who have not been married more than a year than among those who have been married longer. The best time seems to be the end of the second year.

A stable, happy marriage before the birth of a baby does contribute to a better adjustment of parenthood after the baby arrives.

Less crisis is experienced by parents who aspired to marriage and parenthood as the most fulfilling goal in life in preference to social success, academic success, or employment.

Very religious people suffer less crisis than those who feel religion is of little or no importance. For the latter group, the crisis may be greater or smaller, depending upon other factors.

### Conclusions

It may be concluded that:

1. Romanticism of parenthood does prevail in our culture, and many new parents are unprepared for the experiences they will face in the first few months of parenthood.
2. Value orientation does have a bearing on the degree of crisis

experienced. One's orientation in family and religious life can be a factor minimizing the crisis.

3. Readiness for parenthood helps minimize the crisis reaction: Interruption of school or diversion from important personal goals, etc. accentuates the crisis.

4. Parenthood has a different meaning for women than for men.

#### Suggestions for further studies

There are a number of shortcomings in the present study as well as some suggestions for further studies that might be of interest. Upon analysis of the data derived from this study it was discovered that some very obvious and pertinent questions were left out of the questionnaire. For instance, although the respondents were asked to evaluate their marital adjustment as they remembered it before the birth of their baby, they were not asked if their marriage was a happy one now. This particular question, if asked directly, may be a threatening one to the respondent, but it is important enough to be attempted in some subtle way if one were to carry out a similar study in the future. Another question that might well have added to the study is, Was the baby planned for? Although this was hinted at in several places with statements and questions concerning the timing of the baby's arrival, nowhere is the respondent asked directly if this baby was or was not planned for. The third most obvious omission could have been included among the questions concerning the mother's activities before and then after the baby arrived. She was not asked if she enjoyed her previous activities. This obviously would make a difference in her feelings toward her new role. While Sears, Macoby, and Levin (45) found that this did not make a difference in the mother's attitude toward her



child, it would have been of interest to the investigator to compare the results of the two studies. It was, in fact, because of this omission that the section concerning the present and previous activities of the mother was rendered valueless and the data inconclusive.

It has already been mentioned that those couples who have just one child and are no longer in school because of the inability to support the child while attending school were automatically omitted from this study. A further study might include just such a subgroup for a comparison of results. Of course, student couples, themselves, are a unique group, and the findings of this study cannot be generalized over the entire population of new parents. Another study might also take this into consideration and either combine student and other couples or use only other couples, omitting the students. There is a good chance that the results might be quite different.

It has been hinted at through this study that there is a need for more participation in parent education classes or study groups among prospective new parents. The fact that so few of the respondents in this sample reported having been connected with such a preparation is indicative of the lack of it. While it is hardly within the realm of a master's thesis, it would be a very worthwhile and interesting project for some investigator in this field to organize just such a class and then, using the members as an experimental group, and nonmembers as a control group, repeat a study similar to the present study. Such studies as those suggested above might well add strength to the author's convictions that prospective parents do need to be better prepared for the task before them, that this preparation should begin even before the

wedding ceremony, if possible, but certainly before the conception of the first child; and that family life educators, psychologists, family doctors, and all those involved should band together to see that the young couple is made to feel the importance of such a preparation and is helped to get it.

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## APPENDIX A



## DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The birth of a baby is something that has many different meanings to different people. Sometimes it represents fulfillment of hopes and dreams, and sometimes it is an event that has disturbing impact on the people involved. Sometimes children arrive at times that are "just right" and sometimes their arrival presents problems and adjustments in terms of other plans and commitments. Some parents are familiar with the characteristics and needs of infants, and other know little about them. These latter ones often feel helpless and threatened by the responsibility of caring for a child about whom they know so little.

Because the birth of a baby arouses so many variations in parental responses, and because we need to know more about what these responses are, among different parents, the Department of Family and Child Development is conducting a study of the impact of a baby's birth on his parents' marriage. To do this, we need your help. We are asking some young parents, all students, to tell us something of their feelings about parenthood.

We hope you will feel free to share with us some of your feelings about this experience. Your doing so may help us to know more about what parenthood means to young couples today.

You are, of course, entitled to anonymity in return for your helping us in a venture of this kind. We will not need your name on the questionnaire, and in no way will you be identified as an individual in our study. Your willingness to help us with the study is sincerely appreciate.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. You need not write your name or any other identifying marks on your questionnaire.
2. After you have begun answering the questionnaire, DO NOT consult with anyone, especially your wife or husband. It is important that the answers you give represent your thoughts.
3. There are many different types of questions. Be sure to read the instructions carefully before beginning each new set.
4. When you have finished the questionnaire as best you can, put it in the envelope provided (there is one for each of you) and seal that envelope. I will pick it up at the time we have previously arranged and you may put it in a sealed box with the others that have been collected.

Before you begin, let me express our appreciation for your cooperation and thank you for your time and help. And also let me remind you once more that the success or failure of this project depends upon your attitude toward it and your willingness to tell us your real feelings.



## PART II (continued)

For questions C and D check the appropriate box.

- C. Prior to the birth of my child I participated in study groups without any academic credit organized for the purpose of learning about child growth and behavior.
- ( ) yes ( ) no
- D. Prior to the birth of our child I took classes in which I studied about children in such departments as psychology or child development, etc. and accumulated:
- ( ) no credit (did not take any) ( ) 10 to 20 hours credit
- ( ) 3 to 10 hours credit ( ) more than 20 hours credit

## PART III

Put a check in the appropriate box.

When I compare our marriage with the marriages of my friends and relatives, I would say that our marriage WAS before the birth of our baby:

- ( ) much happier than most ( ) somewhat unhappier than most
- ( ) somewhat happier than most ( ) much more unhappy than most
- ( ) about as happy as most

## PART IV

Put a check in the appropriate box.

During the 2 or 3 years preceding our marriage the think I looked forward to with the feeling that it offered me the greatest fulfillment as a person was:

- ( ) marriage ( ) parenthood ( ) employment
- ( ) academic success in college ( ) social achievement in college

## PART V

Put a check in the appropriate box.

When I compare my religious commitment with that of other people I know, I feel religion is:

- ( ) extremely important in my life ( ) is of minor importance in my life
- ( ) somewhat important to me ( ) has essentially no importance in my life

## PART VI

Prior to having a baby of their own in their home, most people have an expectation of what a child is like and what it will mean to care for a baby. Often this expectation proves to be quite different from what is true later, after they have had some experience in caring for their child. In what ways has parenthood (or caring for your child) been different from what you thought it would be?

## PART VII

This is an attempt to measure how you feel about children. Put a check in the box by the statements that you feel, generally speaking, are true, or best reflect your feelings. (Fathers--replace the word "mother" with father.)

- ( ) 1. When a mother sees her child quarreling or fighting with other children she ought to first try to find out what is the matter before doing anything.
- ( ) 2. If a small child came to visit my two or three-year-old and wanted to play, I would insist that my child share any possessions his visitor wanted to play with.
- ( ) 3. When a child gets angry and is aggressive toward his parents it is time for a spanking.
- ( ) 4. Parents are the best judge of what is good for a child; there is no need for them to have to make decisions.
- ( ) 5. When a child cries because his parents are about to leave him in nursery school or with some other group they should plan to stay with him until he no longer feels he needs them.
- ( ) 6. If a small child came to visit my two or three-year-old I would help my child find something he would be able to share with his visitor.
- ( ) 7. When a parent sees her child quarreling or fighting with other children she ought to take him away immediately until he can learn to get along, letting the child know he is a bad boy (or girl).
- ( ) 8. When a child is just learning to handle a spoon and wants to feed himself, mother should let him try, even though he is liable to get very messy.
- ( ) 9. If a child makes a scene in public and has a habit of showing off when others are around it probably means he needs more attention than he is getting.

- ( ) 10. Even young children have something to contribute to family discussions and entertainment.
- ( ) 11. When you discipline a child for misbehaving be careful not to show him any affection too soon afterwards.
- ( ) 12. Sometimes children have just cause to get angry with their parents and even show some aggression.
- ( ) 13. It is good for a family to have some rules that the children helped decide on.
- ( ) 14. When a child cries because his parents are about to leave him in nursery school or Sunday School they should tell him to stop acting like a big baby and let him cry it out.
- ( ) 15. In discussing family problems and plans young children may be permitted to listen only as long as they do not interrupt.
- ( ) 16. I think a baby should set his own feeding schedule--feed him when he is hungry.
- ( ) 17. Children should not be allowed to feed themselves until they can do it without making a big mess.
- ( ) 18. Usually when we must discipline a child it is important, too, to show him that you still love him.
- ( ) 19. If a child makes a scene in public or otherwise shows off when others are around, his parents ought to let him know they are ashamed of him.
- ( ) 20. It is better to keep a baby on a consistent feeding schedule, such as food every four hours.

## PART VIII

Put a check in the box that best describes your feelings at the time when you were becoming adjusted to your baby.

1. Many parents find that getting up several times in the night to care for the baby caused a problem in their relationship with one another because they were often cross and irritable the next day. Rate the degree to which this constituted a problem in your home.
- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| ( ) very disturbing     | ( ) slightly disturbing   |
| ( ) somewhat disturbing | ( ) not at all disturbing |
2. Babies require a lot of time. Many parents find that after having a baby they simply do not have the time to do some of the things they used to enjoy and would still enjoy doing if they could. To what extent to you

feel you have sacrificed some of your personal enjoyments to care for your child?

( ) a great deal

( ) some

( ) quite a bit

( ) very little, if any at all

3. Naturally a parent with a small baby has a little more difficulty doing things outside the home, for one always must think first of what to do with the baby. If you bring him along there is the added burden of carrying him and caring for him while away from home. Many solve the problem to some extent simply by not going out as much. How has your baby affected your social life?

( ) a great deal

( ) some

( ) quite a bit

( ) very little, if at all

4. Babies cost money and students most often don't have much to begin with. Perhaps many of the small luxuries you used to enjoy you have now given up because the baby needed something. Have you found that having a baby has been a financial strain?

( ) a great deal

( ) some

( ) quite a bit

( ) very little, if at all

5. It seems that having a baby to care for requires a lot of time and work and thus affects the quality and the quantity of husband-wife relationship. Measuring the quantity of your relationship by the amount of time you spend talking to one another, how has your relationship been affected?

( ) spend much less time talking together

( ) spend slightly less time talking together

( ) seem to have more time to talk

( ) we spend a lot more time talking together

Since amount of time together is not the only measurement of a relationship, how would you say the quality of your relationship has been affected? It may help you to think of your relationship in terms of companionship, intimacy, feeling of closeness, etc., during the time of adjustment to the baby.

( ) strengthened a great deal

( ) somewhat stronger

( ) somewhat weakened

( ) not nearly as strong as before

6. One of the problems of parenthood is the responsibility parents are faced with when they realize they now have a baby to feed, teach, and raise. Many parents become extremely nervous and tense about this responsibility, while others have total confidence in their abilities to be good parents. When you first began to take care of your child, how did you feel about your parental ability?
- ( ) worried most of the time that I was not being a good parent
- ( ) sometimes I worried that I was not a good parent
- ( ) I was fairly confident of my abilities as a parent
- ( ) I knew I could be a good parent if I worked at it
7. During the first two or three months after having a baby most parents feel a decline in sexual responsiveness due to tension, fear of a second pregnancy, or some other reasons. How did having a baby affect your relationships during these adjustment months?
- (Wives check one of these) (Husbands check one of these)
- ( ) I was much less responsive ( ) my wife was much less responsive
- ( ) I was slightly less responsive ( ) my wife was slightly less responsive
- ( ) I was slightly more responsive ( ) My wife slightly more responsive
- ( ) I was much more responsive ( ) my wife much more responsive
8. Many parents find that caring for a baby requires a lot more work than they had anticipated. The extra work can be tiring and time consuming. How much of a problem was it for you to adjust to this additional work?
- ( ) very difficult, it still irritates me
- ( ) it was somewhat difficult, occasionally it irritated me
- ( ) it didn't bother me much at all, I hardly noticed
- ( ) if anything, I enjoyed it
9. There are varied reactions to the attractiveness of women following their having a baby of their own. Some feel women's figures are more, some less, attractive after having a baby; others feel that women do not spend the same amount of time in personal care as was true earlier. How much do you feel appearance is affected because of motherhood in the first few months after the child is born?
- ( ) women almost never look as attractive as they did before
- ( ) some women do, but not generally



( ) some women look a little better, but generally there is no difference

( ) women usually look better than they did before

10. One of the problems that parents encounter with a new baby is the upset in their routines. They can no longer plan anything at a certain time because the baby is sure to disrupt the schedule. How much of a problem did you find this to be?

( ) very disturbing

( ) slightly disturbing

( ) somewhat disturbing

( ) not at all disturbing

11. Many women find they can no longer maintain the same housekeeping standards they had before the baby arrived. It worried them to have to leave the housework because the baby demands so much of their time. Some husbands, too, find this is disturbing to them. How much of a problem was this for you?

( ) very disturbing

( ) slightly disturbing

( ) quite disturbing

( ) not at all disturbing (or I saw no difference)

12. It is very natural for parents to love their new baby, but at the same time feel it would have been better for them had they waited before beginning a family. When you were adjusting to your baby, how did you feel about this?

( ) it would have been much better for us had we waited

( ) it might have been a little easier for us had we waited

( ) all things considered this was a pretty good time for us

( ) this was the very best time for us to have a baby

13. Many husbands and wives feel neglected after the baby arrives. Husbands, because the wife is often too busy caring for the baby to pay the same attention to him that she used to. Wife, because she now has to stay at home with the baby while the husband leaves her to go about his own business. How much of a problem was this for you?

( ) very disturbing

( ) somewhat disturbing

( ) slightly disturbing

( ) not at all disturbing (or I noticed no difference)

14. To me our child's conception was:
- ( ) looked forward to with eager anticipation
- ( ) planned for and resulted from desire for conception at that time
- ( ) a result of indifference but I was willing for conception to take place.
- ( ) unplanned for and disturbing
15. My (husband's/wife's) reaction to this pregnancy during the pregnancy itself was one of:
- ( ) pride and fulfillment ( ) disappointment
- ( ) general satisfaction ( ) indifference

## PART IX

Check the statement that comes closest to your feelings during both time periods.

- | 1. The rewards of parenthood to me were (are): | <u>1 to 3 months<br/>after child<br/>was born</u> | <u>Now</u> |
|--|---|------------|
| a. much more rewarding than expected           | ( )   | ( )        |
| b. more rewarding than expected                | ( )   | ( )        |
| c. about the same as I expected                | ( )   | ( )        |
| d. a little disappointing                      | ( )   | ( )        |
| e. very disappointing                          | ( )   | ( )        |

## PART X

Please finish the sentences to indicate your feelings

1. For us, having a baby: \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. To have children while attending college: \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Having a baby makes one feel: \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. Keeping a clean house with a baby around is: \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. The best time to start a family is: \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. The first few months after our baby was born: \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. After our baby was born, my husband (or my wife): \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. The most rewarding thing about having a baby is: \_\_\_\_\_ .
9. The most disturbing thing about having a baby is: \_\_\_\_\_ .
10. If I could start over again: \_\_\_\_\_ .

## APPENDIX B

## RESPONSES TO PART VIII

1. Many parents find that getting up several times in the night to care for the baby caused a problem in their relationship with one another because they were often cross and irritable the next day. Rate the degree of which this constituted a problem in your home.

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Not at all disturbing</u>		<u>Slightly disturbing</u>		<u>Somewhat disturbing</u>		<u>Very disturbing</u>		<u>Sample total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Severe	0	0	0	0	1*	0	0	1*	1	1
Moderate	27	11	45.5	33	27	44	0	11	11	9
Mild	25	35.5	46	46	25	12.5	4	4	24	24
Very mild or none	50	60	25	40	25	0	0	0	4	5
									40	39

\*Numbers in severe crisis refer to individuals, the others refer to percentages, except the totals, which again refer to individuals

2. Babies require a lot of time. Many parents find that after having a baby they simply do not have the time to do some of the things they used to enjoy and would still enjoy doing if they could. To what extent do you feel you have sacrificed some of your personal enjoyments to care for your child?

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Very little, if any at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Quite a bit</u>		<u>A great deal</u>		<u>Sample total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Severe	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Moderate	9	11	54.5	55.5	27	33	9	0	11	9
Mild	25	4	67	83	8	12.5	0	0	24	24
Very mild or none	50	60	25	40	25	0	0	0	4	5
									40	39

3. Naturally a parent with a small baby has a little more difficulty doing things outside the home, for one always must think first of what to do with the baby. If you bring him along there is the added burden of carrying him and caring for him while away from home. Many solve the problem to some extent simply by not going out as much. How has your baby affected your social life?

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Very little, if any at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Quite a bit</u>		<u>A great deal</u>		<u>Sample total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Severe	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Moderate	18	0	45.5	33	27	67	9	0	11	9
Mild	21	9	54	67	25	17	0	9	24	24
None	50	40	50	60	0	0	0	0	4	5

4. Babies cost money and students most often don't have much to begin with. Perhaps many of the small luxuries you used to enjoy you have now given up because the baby needed something. Have you found that having a baby has been a financial strain?

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Very little, if any at all</u>		<u>Some</u>		<u>Quite a bit</u>		<u>A great deal</u>		<u>Sample total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	Severe	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Moderate	18	0	64	55	9	44	9	0	11	9
Mild	33	16	50	58	16	12.5	0	9	24	24
Very mild or none	100	60	0	40	0	0	0	0	<u>4</u> 40	<u>5</u> 39

- 5a. It seems that having a baby to care for requires a lot of time and work and thus affects the quality and the quantity of husband-wife relationship. Measuring the quantity of your relationship by the amount of time you spend talking to one another, how has your relationship been affected?

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>We spend a lot more time talking together</u>		<u>Seem to have more time to talk</u>		<u>Spend slightly less time talking</u>		<u>Spend much less time talk- ing together</u>		<u>Sample total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	Severe	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Moderate	10	0	20	22	50	33	20	44	10	9
Mild	9	16	32	33	45	46	14	4	22	24
Very mild or none	67	25	33	50	0	25	0	0	<u>3</u> 36*	<u>4</u> 38*

\*The rest said it made no difference

- 5b. Since amount of time together is not the only measurement of a relationship, how would you say the quality of your relationship has been affected? It may help you to think of your relationship in terms of companionship, intimacy, feeling of closeness, etc., during the time of adjustment to the baby.

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Strengthened a great deal</u>		<u>Somewhat stronger</u>		<u>Somewhat weakened</u>		<u>Not nearly as strong as before</u>		<u>Sample total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	Severe	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Moderate	27	11	36	44	18	44	18	0	11	9
Mild	50	39	45	56.5	4	4	0	0	22	23
Very mild or none	75	60	25	40	0	0	0	0	<u>4</u> 38	<u>5</u> 38

6. One of the problems of parenthood is the responsibility parents are faced with when they realize they now have a baby to feed, teach, and raise. Many parents become extremely nervous and tense about this responsibility, while others have total confidence in their abilities to be good parents. When you first began to take care of your child, how did you feel about your parental ability?

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Knew I could</u>		<u>Fairly</u>		<u>Sometimes</u>		<u>Worried most</u>		<u>Sample</u>	
	<u>if I worked</u>		<u>confident</u>		<u>worried</u>		<u>of the time</u>		<u>total</u>	
	<u>at it</u>									
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Severe	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Moderate	9	0	18	55	45	45	27	0	11	9
Mild	37.5	37.5	29	29	21	33	12.5	0	24	24
Very mild or none	50	20	50	40	0	40	0	0	<u>4</u> 40	<u>5</u> 39

7. During the first two or three months after having a baby most parents feel a decline in sexual responsiveness due to tension, fear of a second pregnancy, or some other reasons. How did having a baby affect your relationships during these adjustment months?

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Much more</u>		<u>Slightly more</u>		<u>Slightly less</u>		<u>Much less</u>		<u>Sample</u>	
	<u>responsive</u>		<u>responsive</u>		<u>responsive</u>		<u>responsive</u>		<u>total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Severe	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Moderate	9	0	0	11	36	67	54.5	22	11	9
Mild	17	9	22	32	52	50	9	5	23	21
Very mild or none	25	0	50	80	25	20	0	0	<u>4</u> 39	<u>5</u> 36

8. Many parents find that caring for a baby requires a lot more work than they had anticipated. The extra work can be tiring and time consuming. How much of a problem was it for you to adjust to this additional work?

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Enjoyed it</u>		<u>Hardly</u>		<u>Somewhat</u>		<u>Very</u>		<u>Sample</u>	
			<u>noticed</u>		<u>difficult</u>		<u>difficult</u>		<u>total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Severe	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Moderate	18	11	18	33	64	44	0	11	11	9
Mild	4	30	46	30	29	39	0	0	24	23
Very mild or none	25	40	50	60	25	0	0	0	<u>4</u> 40	<u>5</u> 38







15. My (husband's wife's) reaction to this pregnancy during the pregnancy itself was one of:

<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Pride and fulfillment</u>		<u>General satisfaction</u>		<u>Indifference</u>		<u>Disa- pointment</u>		<u>Sample total</u>	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Severe	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Moderate	0	11	45	33	9	11	36	44	11	9
Mild	62.5	62.5	29	37.5	8	0	0	0	24	24
Very mild or none	50	100	50	0	0	0	0	0	$\frac{4}{40}$	$\frac{5}{39}$