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NURTURANT CHARACTERISTICS OF MALES: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
CUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS AND NONCUSTODIAL DIVORCED
FATHERS

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NURTURANT CHARACTERISTICS OF MALES:
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS
AND NONCUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
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by
MARY MARGARET HEATH
Norman, Oklahoma
1981

NURTURANT CHARACTERISTICS OF MALES:
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS
AND NONCUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences between nurturing characteristics of fathers who do and do not obtain custody of their children following divorce. Forty-two middle-class men participated: 14 custodial divorced fathers (CDF), 14 noncustodial divorced fathers (NDF), and 14 intact home fathers (IHF). Each CDF had actively sought custody. All participants were given the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS), the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), and the Hereford Parental Attitude Survey (HPAS). Six scales were observed: Nurturance of the EPPS, Masculinity and Femininity of the BSRI, and Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust of the HPAS. CDF were significantly higher on Nurturance than the IHF ($p < .05$). No significant difference was found between CDF and NDF or between NDF and IHF on Nurturance. IHF were significantly higher on Masculinity than NDF ($p < .05$). There was no significant difference between IHF and CDF or between CDF and NDF on Masculinity. No significant difference was found on Femininity, Acceptance, Understanding, or Trust. Methodological problems are discussed and suggestions for related research are given. Results indicate CDF have greater needs to demonstrate kindness, sympathy, and affection toward others than do IHF. It was concluded that NDF rating on Masculinity could be related to lowered self-esteem as a result of separation from their children. The total sample of fathers appear to have attitudes indicative of emotional availability to their children.

NURTURANT CHARACTERISTICS OF MALES:
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS
AND NONCUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS

The last half of the 1970s showed a sharp increase in interest and in the amount of literature published regarding the father. It appears that this trend is a direct result in the shift of interest that men are taking in their role as fathers. Fathers are taking a more nurturant role in child-rearing, are becoming more child-centered, and as a result there has been a widespread reappraisal of the father role in child-rearing (Nash, 1976).

Prior to the 1970s there is a minimal amount of literature dealing with fathers. When researchers attempted to learn about child-rearing practices and attitudes of fathers, the bulk of the data were gathered from mothers and/or children. Rare indeed was it for researchers to interview fathers directly (Lamb, 1976; Nash, 1965; Roman & Haddad, 1978).

Lack of interest in the father/child relationship can be attributed to a great extent to the influence of psychoanalytic theory and its emphasis on early human experience. The mother/infant relationship was assumed to be unique; mother was by nature the primary force in the life of the child and therefore the natural and superior caretaker of the child.

This attitude was strengthened by the growing cultural acceptance of the instrumental-expressive theory (Parsons & Bales, 1955) of parental roles. In this context the father role is one of competence, mastery, and interactions with the world outside the family. The mother is affectionate, supportive, concerned with interpersonal relationships within the family. If the instrumental-expressive theory has credibility it is as much a function of the culture as of biology (Bardwick, 1971). Levine (1977) states that the culture has not thought about fathers in connection with child-rearing. Both men and women are socialized towards thinking of child-rearing as woman's activity and against thinking of it as an appropriate male identity. As early as 1961 Bronfenbrenner (1961) was predicting the demise of the instrumental-expressive theory. Commenting on the increased popularity of love-oriented discipline techniques, he predicted that males exposed to this "modern" pattern of child-rearing would develop more of the virtues and liabilities commonly associated with females, that fathers would give more parental authority to mothers and take on some of the nurturant and affectional functions traditionally associated with the maternal role. As cultural attitudes are changing men and women are indicating that they are capable of both instrumental and expressive behaviors. In regard to child-rearing there is mounting evidence that this is so.

The renewed interest in fathering is occurring at the same time as the rapidly increasing rate of divorce. The 1970s showed an increase in the number of fathers seeking and gaining custody of their children following divorce. There appear to be no accurate national statistics on the number of men who have been awarded custody, but the executive director of Parents Without Partners estimates that it is 15% of divorcing fathers (Levine, 1976). If fathers are taking a more nurturant role, it seems likely that this changing role is affecting fathers' increased desire to obtain custody of their children following divorce. Some fathers may view themselves as capable of providing primary nurturing care for their children.

Early studies by Bronson (1959) indicate a positive correlation between fathers nurturance and masculinity in sons, while Mussen and Distler (1960) found high masculine boys had more affectionate relationships with their fathers than did low masculine boys. Paternal nurturance is related to sex role orientation in kindergarten age boys (Biller, 1976). It seems that masculine development is facilitated when the father is both masculine and nurturant. Lamb (1976) concludes there is one consistent finding concerning the influence of a father who is warm and nurturant and participates extensively in child-rearing. These fathers have masculine sons and feminine daughters.

Kotelchuck (1976) charges that there is no hard evidence whatsoever to support the notion that children relate uniquely to their mother. Most experimental studies dealing with attachment have excluded the father from the design, looking only at the mother, child, and a stranger. In a series of four studies Kotelchuck observed the father, mother, and child in a laboratory setting. A total of 300 children ranging in ages from six months to 24 months were observed. An individual who was a stranger to the child was also observed with the family. The results indicated that infants do attach to their fathers and there appeared to be no unique mother-child bond. Further analysis of the data indicated that paternal care-taking practices make a difference in the child's attachment to the father, though a minimum level of care-taking is necessary for this relationship to exist. Children who appeared to have least attachment to father came overwhelmingly from families with lowest care-taking fathers.

In an observation of mothers, fathers, and newborn infants in a hospital room, Parke and Sawin (1976) found that fathers were just as involved as mothers with their infants and performed as many nurturant behaviors as mothers. This held true across social class, there being no difference between middle class fathers who had participated in child birth classes and lower class fathers who had not participated.

Lamb (1977) observed attachment behavior of 20 infants

in interaction with their mother, father, and a stranger. Four observations were made in the home when each infant was 7, 8, 12, and 13 months of age. Results indicated a clear preference for the parent over the stranger at each age. There was no preference for one parent over the other.

An important observation was made by Lamb (1979) concerning these attachment studies. The families that were observed were not atypical in any way except by an overrepresentation of middle class samples. The fathers studied had not played a major role in the care-taking of the infants.

The literature indicated that fathers are able and willing to perform nurturantly towards their children, that children do form an emotional attachment to their fathers, and that it takes a minimal amount of father/child interaction for this to occur. When, on a daily basis, a father has had an opportunity to interact to a greater extent with his child, it seems likely that the bond might be stronger and the father's nurturing abilities greater. Some fathers, then, may be capable of providing primary nurturing care for their children and be highly desirous of doing so. The divorced custodial father provides an opportunity to examine this possibility.

One of the first works which sought to study single fathers is that of Mendes (1975). This descriptive study examined the motives which led men to become single fathers and the father's on-going adjustment to his role. The findings led

Mendes to divide the subjects into two groups: Seekers (fathers who actively sought to become sole single parents) and Assenters (those who accepted but did not choose the role). The most crucial aspect of the parenting experience seemed to be whether or not the father chose the role of custodial parent. Fathers who actively sought custody of their children described themselves as loving and stable parents and experienced the parenting role as pleasurable and an important form of self-validation. This group defined and performed the parental role in ways that are less sex-typed than other fathers. Assenters, on the other hand, did not necessarily enjoy the fathering role. This group included both divorced and widowed fathers. Their attitudes towards their children before becoming single parents ranged from rejection to high acceptance. Evaluation of their postcustodial relationship towards their children ranged from poor to excellent.

An exploratory study by Greene (1977) again divided fathers into the Seekers and Assenters groups. This study examined the fathers' reason for obtaining custody and its relationship to fathers' effectiveness as parents. Results indicated that men who actually sought custody were more effective parents. The major factors involved in effective parenting were the father's ability to work at maintaining an open relationship with his children and his ability to be nurturant and give of himself. Fathers' perceptions of their

relationship to their children following divorce has been studied by Greif (1977) whose sample of 40 divorced fathers did not include sole custody fathers although some did share joint custody with their ex-wives. These fathers considered emotional development at the top or near the top of the list of nine areas in which they felt they had influenced their children.

Perhaps the most comprehensive study of divorced fathers to date is that of Gersick (1975). This study compared the characteristics of men who do and do not seek custody of their children after divorce. There was a trend, though non-significant, for custody seekers to rate "caring" their greatest strength and for non-seekers to rate "discipline" as their greatest strength. The emotional aspects of their relationship with their children appeared to be highly important to men in both groups. Gersick suggests that this is an area that may often be ignored in discussion of the father role. Not only did fathers in this custody sample profess to feel deeply about their children, they also felt that raising them was important enough to make sacrifices, often regarding careers.

It may be that single fathers of preadolescent children are more aware of their children's emotional needs than single fathers of adolescents (Mendes, 1976). These fathers of younger children more often reported that they openly declared their love for their children, were more physically demonstrative

than those who were fathers of adolescents.

A two year longitudinal study of the impact of divorce involved both families of divorce and intact families (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976). In the divorce group all children were in the custody of their mothers. The divorced fathers over time became less nurturant and more detached from their children; they ignored their children more and showed less affection. These fathers reported a sense of loss of their children and the experience of great pain over seeing their children intermittently. They seemingly coped with this pain by withdrawing from their children even further.

Many writers have dealt specifically with day-to-day problems single fathers encounter (Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978a, 1978b; Levine, 1976; Orthner, Brown, & Ferguson, 1976; Roman & Haddad, 1978; Victor & Winkler, 1977). Keshet and Rosenthal (1978a) report that initially considerable anxiety is created for the single father in recognition of his new role and that much of the anxiety is created by his fear of his lack of competency as a caretaker. Often he depends too much on the reaction of his children to his own behavior. As he begins to feel more competent as a parent this dependency lessens and he is able to create a more secure environment for himself and his children.

Mendes (1976) suggests that since the single father role has not yet been institutionalized in the culture there are no

clear guidelines as to how that role is performed. This in itself creates problems of stress for the single father. However, others report finding little indication that single fathers experience role strain or difficult adjustment to the new role (Bartz & Witcher, 1978; Orthner, Brown & Ferguson, 1976). Apparently these fathers felt quite capable in their ability to be primary parent. The problems they experienced were not unlike those experienced by most families. Gersick (1979) reports that the problems experienced by single fathers were exactly the same as those widely experienced by single mothers.

Lamb (1979) has a somewhat unfavorable outlook concerning the functioning of single parent families. He states that child-rearing is something that many people cannot do adequately as single adults functioning in isolation. However, he expresses the belief that today's single fathers are more likely than single mothers to succeed in meeting the demands placed on them because they are a highly select and self-motivated group. Gersick (1975) refers to the motivation factor as a determining factor in the success of divorced fathers with custody. Because child custody has developed into a procedure with exceptionally strong norms, fathers who pursue a counter-traditional course require more than a preference but an equally strong motivation.

The purpose of this study was to examine the difference

between the nurturing characteristics of fathers who obtain custody of their children and fathers who do not obtain custody of their children following divorce. Nurturance refers to an emotional closeness to, an acceptance of, tenderness toward, empathy with, willingness to give to and care for one's child. This study sought to determine by measurement if some fathers do have nurturant characteristics which could make them capable and competent primary parents. The data should add to the now growing body of knowledge concerning the father's influence on child development and the father's capabilities as primary parent. Likewise, it should be advantageous to counselors, lawyers, judges, and social agencies involved in making decisions concerning child custody.

Method

Subjects. Forty-two fathers participated in the study. Fourteen of these men were divorced and had legal custody of at least one child under the age of 12 years. These custodial divorced fathers (CDF) had actively pursued custody of their children either through negotiations with divorcing wives or through court order at time of divorce or following divorce. The fourteen men in the noncustodial divorced fathers (NDF) group were divorced fathers whose children were 12 years of age or under. These fathers had not initiated an attempt to obtain custody of their children. None of these men were currently married. Fourteen intact home fathers were selected

to serve as a control group. These men were all married and living in the home with their wives and at least one child 12 years of age or under.

The CDF included five fathers who divided custody: They had legal custody of at least one minor child while the ex-wife also had legal custody of one such child. Of this group two fathers had legal custody of one of their two children, two fathers had legal custody of two of their three children. In these four situations the mothers had maintained custody of the youngest child, in three cases an infant. One father had legal custody of four of his five minor children. The other nine CDF had sole custody of all their children. Two of the CDF have remarried since obtaining custody of their children.

A total of 87 children are represented by these 42 fathers. Forty-one men were Caucasian, one was Mexican-American. Additional demographic data is to be found in Table 1. Multiple t tests were computed on the data and age of father was found to be the only variable showing significant difference. The CDF were significantly older than the IHF; $t(26)=4.4$, $p<.05$. The NDF also were significantly older than the IHF; $t(26)=3.9$, $p<.05$. No significant difference in age was found between the CDF and NDF.

Insert Table 1 about here

Instruments. The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was administered to measure sex role orientation. This instrument measures masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions rather than bipolar ends of a continuum (Bem, 1974). It has both a Masculinity and Femininity scale each containing 20 personality characteristics selected on the basis of sex-role desirability. It also contains 20 neutral items, a total of 60 items. It yields a Femininity score, Masculinity score and an Androgyny score (the difference between one's endorsement to masculinity and femininity). For purpose of this study an Androgyny score was not computed. Normative data were obtained from Stanford University students. A test-retest reliability over a four week period reports Masculinity $r=.90$, Femininity $r=.90$, Androgyny $r=.90$.

Bem (1975) reports individuals who have similar Masculinity and Femininity scores are more likely to display behavioral adaptability. Bem, Martyns, and Watson (1976) found certain males to be high in nurturant behavior and masculinity. Sex-typed individuals experience most negative feelings when they perform cross-sex behavior (Bem & Lenney, 1976). Fathers high on femininity participate more in child-related activities than fathers low on femininity (Russell, 1978).

The Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) (Edwards, 1957) was used as a measure of nurturant characteristics. The EPPS has been used extensively in the study of personality

(Buros, 1972). It is designed to measure 15 independent normal personality variables. Only the Nurturance scale was observed in this study. The EPPS also provides a measure of test consistency and profile stability. Each item presents a pair of statements representing different personality traits each of which are assumed to have equal social desirability. The subject is asked to choose which statement in each item is more characteristic of himself. The instrument contains a total of 225 items.

The 15 scales of the EPPS are based on the manifest needs of Murray (1938) and the statements in the EPPS are designed to measure these needs. Normative data are provided for college students and adults. The general adult normative group had 4,923 females and 4,031 males. Separate norms are provided for males and females. Reliability was determined by the split-half method. Coefficients for all variables ranged from .60 to .87, Nurturance $r=.78$. Reliability was also computed by the test-retest method. Range for these coefficients on the 15 scales is .74 to .88, Nurturance $r=.97$.

The Hereford Parental Attitude Survey (HPAS) (Hereford, 1963) was used as a measure of the father's attitude toward his child in areas concerning emotional support. The HPAS measures parental attitudes and behaviors on five scales. This yields a total score reflecting positive or negative attitudes as well as scores on each scale. This study included

only the scales (3) Acceptance, (4) Understanding, and (5) Trust. The Acceptance scale assesses the parent's willingness to allow a child to behave in an age-appropriate behavior manner and see the child as an individual. The Understanding scale taps the parent's ability to share ideas and feelings with a child. The Trust scale measures parent-child feelings of confidence versus suspicion and doubt.

The HPAS is an outgrowth of a joint project of Austin-Travis County (Texas) Mental Health Society, the Austin Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the University of Texas. It was normed on 72 parents from the Austin Public Schools and public schools in Taylor, Texas. Reliability was computed by means of split-half method. Results indicate for Confidence $r=.72$, Causation $r=.77$, Acceptance $r=.68$, Understanding $r=.86$, and Trust $r=.84$. Intercorrelation among scales range from .33 to .62. Since the initial project the HPAS has received acceptance as a research instrument (Boll, Dimino, & Mattsson, 1978; Summerlin & Ward, 1978; Tavorima, 1975; Wright, 1975).

Procedures. The men in the CDF and NDF groups were identified through contacts made with professional people or individuals who had knowledge of these fathers. Each father in the CDF group was screened to determine status of custody and if the father had actively pursued custody. The members of the NDF group were screened to determine if an attempt had

been made to gain custody.

All men in the IHF group were members of an Oklahoma City men's service organization. Cooperation from this organization was enlisted by a unanimous vote of its executive board. The president of the organization then contacted the fathers within the membership and gained permission from them to have the researcher contact them by telephone. A list of the names of these fathers was given to the researcher and subjects were chosen randomly from this list.

The men were contacted by telephone by the researcher. Each one was informed that the study was concerned with attitudes of fathers living in three different situations: (1) divorced and sole custody of children, (2) divorced and non-custody of children, and (3) married and living in home with children.

Meetings with nine of the CDF and two of the NDF took place in these men's homes. Eight of the IHF were interviewed in the organizational meeting room. Meetings with one CDF and one NDF occurred in local restaurants at the request of these men. Other interviews took place either at the man's place of business or the researcher's office. Time for the interviews ranged from one to two and one-half hours.

Each participant was given a folder containing a consent form, a demographic questionnaire, and the three instruments used in the study. All measures were paper and pencil, self-

administered, and presentation was random.

Design. It was the purpose of this study to observe nurturance as a personality characteristic of fathers. Six variables related to nurturing were observed: the Nurturance scale of the EPPS, the Masculinity and Femininity scales of the BSRI, and the Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust scales of the HPAS. The variables were treated independently. The intent was not to determine any particular relationship or difference between these six variables.

The Nurturance scale of the EPPS was chosen to measure nurturance as a long-standing personality characteristic of each father. The Masculinity and Femininity scales of the BSRI could give an indication of each father's adherence to characteristics which have been determined to be socially sex-appropriate. The Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust scales of the HPAS would then give measurement of attitudes specifically related to the fathers' emotional involvement with their children.

Results

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was computed to analyze the data (SAS computer program). The overall difference among the three groups was found to be significant (Hotelling-Lawley, $F(12,66)=2.42$, $p<.0115$; Pillais' Trace, $F(12,70)=2.55$, $p<.0073$; Wilks' Criterion, $F(12,68)=2.49$, $p<.0092$). Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) computed

for each of the dependent variables indicate the significantly differentiating variables to be Nurturance, $F(2,41)=6.91$, $p<.0027$ and Masculinity, $F(2,41)=4.18$, $p<.0227$. No significant difference was found among the three groups on Femininity, $F(2,41)=1.78$, $p<.1813$; Acceptance, $F(2,41)=1.92$, $p<.1599$; Understanding, $F(2,41)=.53$, $p<.5930$; or Trust, $F(2,41)=.28$, $p<.7579$.

An examination of the group means of the significant variables indicate the CDF to be effecting the difference on the Nurturance variable and the IHF to be effecting the difference on the Masculinity variable. This information is presented in Table 2. To further examine this, post hoc tests

 Insert Table 2 about here

of comparison were made using the Tukey test of honestly significant difference (HSD). Results indicate that on the Nurturance scale CDF scored higher than the IHF, $HSD(41)=3.91$, $p<.05$. No significant difference was found between the CDF and the NDF or between the NDF and IHF. IHF scored significantly higher than NDF on the Masculinity scale, $HSD(41)=3.91$, $p<.05$. No significant difference was found between IHF and CDF or between NDF and CDF.

Characteristics of the sample. The overall means of these groups were compared to the normative data of each

instrument. A z statistic was computed. Results on the Nur-
 turance variable indicate no significant difference between
 this sample and the sample with which the EPPS was normed,
 $z=1$, $p<.05$. However, comparison of the overall Masculinity
 mean with the mean of the BSRI normative sample indicate the
 overall means of this sample to be significantly higher than
 the normative sample, $z=6.67$, $p<.05$. Although this study was
 not concerned with relationships between the variables, a
 correlation coefficient was used as a means of comparing this
 sample with the normative sample of the HPAS. A correlation
 matrix for the sample in this study indicated Acceptance/
 Understanding $r=.22$, Acceptance/Trust $r=.6$ and Understanding/
 Trust $r=.46$. A test for difference between independent cor-
 relations was computed using the Fisher's z transformation.
 Results indicated no significant difference in any of the
 three comparisons; Acceptance/Understanding, $z=1.49$, $p<.05$;
 Acceptance/Trust, $z=1.06$, $p<.05$; Understanding/Trust, $z=.16$,
 $p<.05$.

Discussion

Results of this study suggest that fathers who obtain
 custody of their children following divorce, when compared
 to intact home fathers, have a higher level of needs defined
 by the Nurturance scale of the EPPS. The EPPS describes these
 as needs to assist others less fortunate, to treat others with
 kindness and sympathy, to show a great deal of affection

toward others. This finding seems in keeping with the conclusions of Mendes (1975) and Greene (1977) who wrote about the emotional involvement and nurturant behavior of custodial divorced fathers. These studies compared divorced fathers who actively sought custody of their children with fathers who accepted but did not seek it.

There is no indication that custodial divorced fathers have a higher level of nurturing needs than noncustodial fathers in the present study. There was a trend, although non-significant, for custodial fathers to score higher than non-custodial fathers on the Nurturance Scale. This is similar to the finding of Gersick (1975) who reported custodial fathers more often than noncustodial fathers rated "caring" as their greatest strength. Gersick's study reports that the emotional aspects of their relationship to their children appeared to be highly important to men in both groups. Neither Gersick (1975), nor Greene (1977) included married fathers as a comparison group.

Twelve of the custodial fathers in the present study expressed beliefs which indicated they considered themselves the more competent of the two parents, more emotionally involved with their children, and thought their children much better situated with them. Many of them also expressed regret that the children did not have daily interactions with their mothers and believed that the children were missing some important aspect of life by not being with their mothers. In several cases

the child's involvement with the mother followed the line of most divorce decisions: Visitation with the noncustodial parent is "reasonable and seasonal". Nine of the interviews with custodial fathers took place in their homes and afforded an opportunity to meet the children. The level of affectional interaction between these children and their fathers appeared high, apparent, and appropriate.

It is possible that age of father is a factor effecting the result of the Nurturance mean. Fathers in the intact home group were significantly younger than the custodial divorced fathers and also significantly younger than the noncustodial group. There was no significant difference in age between the custodial divorced fathers and the noncustodial divorced fathers. Although the EPPS measures characteristics which are stable and not situation specific, it is possible that these characteristics could change over time. As some men reach a greater level of maturity they may tend to develop more nurturant characteristics. The study might have been improved by controlling for age. No such difference was seen among the three groups on any other demographic variable.

It was expected that the custodial divorced fathers might rate themselves lower on the Masculinity scale than the other two groups. The reasoning being that the more a man involves himself in areas that have been traditionally female, the less he might adhere to the traditional male role. This was not

the case with this group. Although the intact home fathers scored significantly higher than the noncustodial fathers, no significant difference is seen between the custodial divorced fathers and intact home fathers or between the custodial divorced fathers and the noncustodial divorced fathers.

An unexpected result occurs with the noncustodial divorced fathers' scores on the Masculinity scale. It seemed likely that noncustodial divorced fathers would be similar to intact home fathers in this regard. Lower ratings by the noncustodial group may be related to self-esteem. Bem (1977) reports that individuals who score low on both scales of the BSRI also score lower on tests of self-esteem. This is interesting in light of the report of Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1976) that fathers separated from their children by divorce experience a great sense of loss and depression which continues over time. Fathers interviewed in the present study expressed such feelings. One father whose children now live in another state said a friend advised him that the sooner he could forget about his children the better off he would be. He is unwilling and unable to do so, but the pain and distress of the separation is great for him. Others related determined efforts to stay as involved as possible with their children. One of these wrote on the questionnaire that he had taken Parent Effectiveness Training but wasn't sure how well he practiced it when he visited his children. He stated that his own

children were very bright and easy to communicate with.

Noncustodial divorced fathers who are willing to participate in a study dealing with parenting attitudes of fathers may be different from the population of noncustodial divorced fathers and it is likely that this group did not constitute a random sample. Refusal to participate was much greater for this group than for the custodial group.

The Femininity scores indicated no difference among the three groups. Apparently fathers who have custody of their children do not view themselves as having more of the characteristics traditionally associated with females than other fathers. This result agrees with that of Gersick (1975) who found no difference between custodial divorced fathers and noncustodial divorced fathers on the Femininity scale. Gersick's sample of custodial fathers included both fathers who sought custody and those who had accepted it after their wives deserted them. The decision was made to use the BSRI in the present study based on the findings of Mendes (1975) regarding the difference between Seekers and Assenters.

Although no significant difference among the three groups is seen on the observed scales of the HPAS, it seems these results support the idea that all fathers have nurturant potential and the ability to make themselves emotionally available to their children. All three groups scored relatively high on the Understanding scale. Items on this scale deal with

communication and freedom of expression between parent and child: A willingness to share feelings and attitudes. Items on the Acceptance scale deal with age appropriate behavior and responses are affected by the individual's knowledge and understanding of normal child development. There was a tendency on the part of custodial divorced fathers to score higher on this scale. This may reflect the closer involvement custodial fathers have had with their children. There was also a tendency for noncustodial fathers to score lower on this scale than the other two groups. Keshet and Rosenthal (1978a) write of the increased interaction of a father with his child increasing the father's feeling of competency as a parent.

The fact that the custodial divorced fathers differ significantly from the intact home fathers on only one of the six dependent variables leaves the result of this study inconclusive. The heterogenous nature of the custodial group may have effected the results. Fathers who have remained single and have custody of all their children may differ from those who have divided the child custodial responsibilities with their ex-wives. Many factors enter into child custody decisions other than nurturant characteristics of either parent and other nonnurturant factors may have been justification for these custodial fathers receiving custody. A larger sample size and more controls for selection of the noncustodial divorced group might present more conclusive results. As much

might be learned about custodial divorced fathers by comparing a larger sample with intact home fathers only. Future studies might include married fathers who have reversed the traditional role with their wives. More might be learned in regard to custodial divorced fathers by comparing the relationships of the several scales of the EPPS. Other studies might also look at the relationship between father and child. Longitudinal studies involving single fathers and children would provide information about the effects, if any, on the child who is reared by a father solely.

There are obvious methodological problems in this study which restrict its generalizability. Such may be inherent in studies of this type because of the difficulties involved in identifying and securing cooperation of subjects. However, the outcome of this study does make more apparent that the instrumental-expressive theory (Parsons & Bales, 1955) is ready to be relegated to history. Many fathers are capable of providing an emotionally expressive presence for their children. Continued involvement of these fathers with their children can increase the number of enduring nurturant relationships available to the children. Particularly when divorce occurs, parents, lawyers, judges, and counselors might well consider the importance and advantages of a father having a continuing close relationship with his children.

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Table 1
Demographic Data by Status of Child Study

<u>Characteristic</u>		<u>Custodial Divorced</u>	<u>Noncustodial Divorced</u>	<u>Intact Home</u>
Age of father	Mean	36.07	36.0	29.70
	S.D.	4.23	4.9	3.90
Number of years of education	Mean	15.86	15.64	15.14
	S.D.	2.42	2.74	1.2
Number of years of marriage	Mean	10.89	10.20	8.00
	S.D.	3.96	5.00	4.47
Number of children	Mean	2.86	1.90	1.43
	S.D.	1.40	.80	.49
Number of years divorced	Mean	2.96	2.61	
	S.D.	1.83	1.81	
Number of years legal custody	Mean	2.57		
	S.D.	1.80		
Annual income	Mean	\$28,750	\$24,285	\$31,250
	S.D.	10,638	10,455	5,489

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables
by Status of Child Custody and by Total Sample

<u>Variable</u>		<u>Custodial Divorced</u>	<u>Non-Custodial Divorced</u>	<u>Intact Home</u>	<u>Total Sample</u>
Nurturance	Mean	18.07	14.50	12.14	14.90
	S.D.	4.69	3.73	4.25	4.25
Masculinity	Mean	115.35	105.78	118.85	113.33
	S.D.	8.67	14.50	13.22	12.38
Femininity	Mean	98.07	96.57	89.50	94.71
	S.D.	14.47	9.99	13.55	12.82
Acceptance	Mean	14.14	9.78	10.43	11.45
	S.D.	4.11	7.65	6.73	6.34
Understanding	Mean	19.00	18.28	17.00	18.09
	S.D.	3.16	6.42	5.49	5.21
Trust	Mean	13.78	13.35	12.00	13.04
	S.D.	6.04	7.34	6.35	6.60

APPENDIX A
PROSPECTUS

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS
AND NON-CUSTODIAL DIVORCED FATHERS

The 1970s might well be labeled "...the era of paternal rediscovery" (Lamb, 1979, P. 938). Prior to this time there is a minimal amount of literature dealing with the father's role in child development. "The matricentric concept of child care is reflected in the psychological literature" (Nash, 1965, P. 264). "Fathers, it would seem, are generally undervalued, at least by psychologists, in our culture. The strong interest in mothers to the neglect of fathers seems to have a long history in technical writings" (Nash, 1965, P. 265). When researchers have attempted to learn about child-rearing practices and attitudes of fathers, the bulk of the data have been gathered from mothers and/or children. Rare indeed was it for a researcher to interview fathers directly (Lamb, 1976; Nash, 1965; Roman & Haddad, 1978). It would seem that researchers assumed that mothers knew more about fathering than fathers knew. Such has been the exceptionally low priority of fatherhood

"...because of the real and evident lack of interest in fathers by psychologists and others, we have no data on what fathers in the 1950s or 1960s, or earlier, really thought about their role (Nash, 1976, P. 65).

To a great extent this situation can be attributed to the influence and popularity of psychoanalytic theory (Lamb, 1976; Nash, 1965; Rossi, 1964). With its emphasis on early human experience, the mother/infant relationship was assumed to be unique. In fact it was seen to be the prototype of all later love relations (Lamb, 1976). The society readily adopted this assumption that mother was by nature the primary force in the life of the child. Therefore, the mother was the natural and superior caretaker of the child.

At this same time there was growing cultural acceptance of the father role as instrumental and mother role as expressive (Parson & Bales, 1955). In this context males were viewed as independent, assertive, dominant, achievement oriented. Women were viewed as submissive, nurturant, dependent, sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others, affiliatively oriented (Bardwick, 1971). In some respects this is in conflict with psychoanalytic theory from which it developed.

"Freud assumes that every person is constitutionally bisexual, which means that he inherits the tendencies of the opposite sex as well as his own..." (Hall, 1954).

Of the oedipal conflict, Freud writes,

"...in accordance with bisexual constitution, a boy wants to take his mother's role as love

object of his father - a fact which we describe as the feminine attitude" (Freud, 1972, P. 118).

Alfred Adler, on the other hand, describes in every individual a striving for superiority, of overcoming and at the same time a "feeling of belongingness, the social interest" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, P. 138). These "drives" are correlates of the instrumental and expressive characteristics of Parson and Bales.

From this frame of reference, it might be expected that men and women are capable of both instrumental and expressive behavior. And in regards to child rearing there is mounting evidence that this is so. During the latter half of the 70s there has been an increase in the amount of literature dealing with fathers. It appears that this trend is a direct result in the shift of interest that men are taking in their role as fathers. It does appear that fathers are taking a more nurturant role in child rearing, are becoming more child-centered, and as a result there has been a widespread reappraisal of the father role in child rearing (Nash, 1976).

This renewed interest in fathering is occurring at the same time as the rapidly increasing rate of divorce. One of the problems that arises out of divorce is custody of minor children. The 1970s have also shown an increase in the number of men seeking and gaining custody of their children following divorce. There appears to be no accurate national

statistics on the number of men who have been awarded custody, but the executive director of Parents Without Partners estimates that it is at 15% (Levine, 1976). What has been defined as a social problem may well be a social opportunity (Rossi, 1964).

If, indeed, there has been a change in the father role in the past ten years, in what manner and to what extent has it changed? If fathers are taking a more nurturant role, what is the relationship of this changing role and fathers' increased desire to obtain custody of their children following divorce? It has been stated that fathers' increased interest in custody is a matter of fathers becoming aware of their own potential as caretaking parents (Romans & Haddad, 1978). Moreover, with the threat to the father of losing the relationship with his child, also comes the threat of losing an important source of self-definition (Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978a). It is to these issues that this study will be addressed.

Review of the Literature

The changing role of the father. The first line of a recently published book entitled simply Fathering (Green, 1976) reads "No one is taking notice of father" (p. 1). At the time the material for that publication was being gathered the situation described appeared to be so. However, the last half of the 70s has shown a sharp increase in interest and in the amount of literature published regarding the father. Father is now in the spotlight of research in family life and child development. Whether or not he becomes a star remains to be seen. Not only has there been an increase of interest, but also a change of emphasis. In the past literature concerning the father dealt mainly with the nature of identification, sex role adaptation, academic achievement, and moral development (Biller, 1970, 1971a, 1971b, 1974; Burton & Whiting, 1961; Carlsmith, 1964; Lessing, Zagorin & Nelson, 1970; Mischel, 1961; Santrock, 1972, 1975). The trend in the literature today is towards an investigation of the nurturant, caring, and child-rearing aspects of fathering (Cohen & Campos, 1974; Gearing, 1978; Feldman & Ingham, 1975; Lamb, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1979; Lamb & Stevenson, 1978; Levine, 1976, 1977; Parke & Sawin, 1976; Pleck & Sawyer, 1974; Roman & Haddad, 1978; Reuter & Biller, 1973; Tracy, Lamb, & Ainsworth, 1976).

For over a score of years the instrumental-expressive

theory (Parson & Bales, 1955) has been an assumption fundamental to research and literature involving the father role.

"The father role is...high both on power and 'instrumentality' - hence low on 'expressiveness'. The mother role is high on power and on 'expressiveness', thus low in 'instrumentality'" (Parson & Bales, 1955, P. 45).

The father role is one of competence, mastery, and interaction with the world outside the family. The mother is affectionate, supportive, concerned with interpersonal relationships within the family. Although the theory does not eliminate the expressive quality of the father role nor the instrumental quality of the mother role, most researchers and writers have proceeded as though it were an "either/or" polarity. If the instrumental-expressive theory has credibility it is as much a function of the culture as of biology. Bardwick states it concisely.

"...children are born with personality characteristics that lead to behaviors and these behaviors are reacted to evaluatively by parents. The child with these behavior potentials is a member of a specific sex, and the behaviors are evaluated by what is acceptable for members of that sex (Bardwick, 1971, P. 95).

As early as 1961 child-developmental and "prophet", Urie Bronfenbrenner was predicting the demise of the instrumental-expressive theory. Commenting on the increased popularity of love-oriented discipline techniques, he predicted that males exposed to this "modern" pattern of child rearing would develop more of the virtues and liabilities commonly associated with females. And further predicting

"...the balance of power within the family has continued to shift, with fathers yielding parental authority to mothers and taking on some of the nurturant and affectional functions traditionally associated with the maternal role (Bronfenbrenner, 1961, P. 79).

Despite such predictions, as late as 1968 we read elsewhere,

"The most distinctive feature of the relationship between the father and son...can be fully appreciated only when it is seen as an integral part of the pattern of masculine instrumentation (Benson, 1968, P. 188).

The studies dealing with fathers nurturance and masculinity in sons give sufficient reason to question Benson's statement. An early study by Bronson (1959), data based on interviews with fathers and observations of their sons, reported a

positive correlation between boys masculinity and fathers who were warm, supportive, and affectionate. Mussen and Distler (1960) (data collected from interviews with mothers) found that high masculine boys had more affectionate relationships with their fathers than did low masculine boys. Paternal nurturance is related to sex role orientation in kindergarten-age boys (Biller, 1976). It seems that masculine development is facilitated when the father is both masculine and nurturant. What limits the boys masculine development is not father's participation in activities that have traditionally been viewed as feminine, but in the father's surrendering any masculine role (Biller, 1971a).

Commenting on his own review of the literature concerning nurturant fathers and their children, Lamb (1976) concludes there is one consistent finding concerning the influence of a father who is warm and nurturant and participates extensively in child rearing. These fathers have masculine sons and feminine daughters.

Reuter and Biller (1973) found that in college males high paternal nurturance combined with moderate paternal availability is related to high scores on personality assessment measures. This holds true also for high paternal availability combined with moderate paternal nurturance.

A pioneer study by Tasch (1952) inquired into the role of the father as revealed by the father himself. The planning

for this study was made in 1943, a time when literature regarding the father was sparse. Eighty fathers were interviewed concerning 13 categories of activities in which they were involved with their children. Forty-one percent of the fathers reported activities related to emotional development as being an area in which they were involved with their children.

According to attachment theorists this essential aspect of child development occurs in the first year of life. In its simplest form attachment refers to seeking and maintaining proximity to another individual (Bowlby, 1969). Broadly stated, it is essential for an infant's development that the infant have a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with another person, a relationship which is mutually satisfying to both (Bowlby, 1973). Moreover, the infant is biologically programmed to seek the proximity of such a protective person.

Perhaps no other person has been more influential in fostering the understanding and acceptance of attachment theory than John Bowlby (1951, 1969, 1973). At the same time he has advanced the primacy of the mother-child relationship.

"...the child's relationship to mother...is without a doubt in ordinary circumstances, by far his most important relationship during these years...little will be said

of the father-child relation; his value as the economic and emotional support of the mother will be assumed" (Bowlby, 1951, P. 13).

The final phrase of the above quotation has raised protests from those who more recently have studied the father and his role in child development (Lamb, 1975, 1976; Gersick, 1975; Nash, 1965; Nash, 1976; Lewis & Weinraub, 1976; Kotelchuck, 1976; Roman & Haddad, 1978).

Kotelchuck (1976) charges that there is no hard evidence whatsoever to support the notion that children relate uniquely to their mother. That most experimental studies dealing with attachment have excluded the father from the design, looking only at the mother, child, and a stranger. In a series of four studies Kotelchuck observed the father, mother and child in a laboratory setting. A total of 300 children were observed ranging in ages from six months to 24 months. An individual who was a stranger to the child was also observed with the family. The results from all four studies indicate that infants do attach to their fathers and there appeared to be no unique mother-child bond. Further analysis of the data indicated that paternal caretaking practices make a difference in the child's attachment to the father, though a minimun level of caretaking is necessary for this relationship to exist. Children who appeared to have least attachment to father came overwhelmingly from families with lowest caretaking fathers.

In an observation of mothers, fathers, and newborn infants in a hospital room, Park and Sawin (1976) found that fathers were just as involved as mothers with their infants, and performed as many nurturant behaviors as mothers. This held true across social class, there being no difference between middle class fathers who had participated in child birth classes and lower class fathers who had not participated.

In a highly controlled study, Lamb (1977) observed attachment behavior of 20 infants in interaction with their mother, father, and a stranger. Four observations were made in the home when each infant was 7, 8, 12, and 13 months of age. Results indicated a clear preference for the parent over the stranger at each age. Both a multivariate and univariate test was made of the data. Neither showed a preference for one parent over the other. "...it seems that both parents are affectively salient" (Lamb, 1976, P. 325).

Cohen and Campos (1974) found that in a laboratory setting infants between 10 and 18 months showed significant preference for mother over father. Infants did show preference for father over a stranger. The attachment behaviors being observed were proximity, which has been shown to be the most accurate index of attachment (Feldman & Ingham, 1975), and distress. Distress has been shown to be an insensitive measure of attachment and may be an indication of insecurity on the part of the infant (Feldman & Ingham, 1975; Lamb, 1977).

An important observation is made by Lamb (1979). The families that have been observed in these attachment studies were not atypical in any way except by an overrepresentation of middle class samples. The fathers studied had not played a major role in the caretaking of the infants.

Levine (1977) states that the culture has not thought about fathers in connection with child rearing. Both men and women are socialized towards thinking of child rearing as a woman's activity and against thinking of it as an appropriate male identity. Some professionals in counseling are suggesting that fathers are in need of educational and counseling opportunities to help them develop the expressive, child caring nature of themselves. Gearing (1978) proposes a three stage counseling program designed to help men develop their "innate potential for nurturance and fathering" (P. 54). The focus of this program is to ease the transition into fatherhood with emphasis on helping new fathers accept personal responsibility for parenting. A similar program has been reported in use by Resnick, Resnick, Packer, and Wilson (1978). These father classes conducted by a counseling psychologist, developmental specialist, early childhood educator, and nurse are so designed that fathers may take part in any or all as meets the individual need.

Will the family of the 80s continue to define child care as the woman's domain and mothers as the primary nurturant parent? There is much to indicate that the culture is

already questioning this presumption. As men and women learn to work out new options for work and family life it becomes increasingly evident that child care is the concern of both. The literature indicates that fathers are able and willing to perform nurturantly towards their children, that children do form an emotional attachment to their fathers, and that it takes a minimal amount of father/child interaction for this to occur. When, on a daily basis, a father has had an opportunity to interact to a greater extent with his child, it seems likely that the bond might be stronger and the fathers nurturing abilities greater. Some fathers, then, may be capable of providing primary nurturing care for their children and highly desirous of doing so. If some fathers desire to care for and stay emotionally close to their children, it could be an indication of a high degree of nurturant characteristics of those fathers. One manner of examining this possibility is to look at single father families; more specifically, fathers who have obtained custody of their children following divorce.

Fathers with custody. The single-father family is only one aspect of the single-parent family which has received increasing attention by social scientists in the past ten years. The single-parent family has been referred to as a "phenomenon" (Burgess, 1970; Mendes, 1976b), a "social problem" (Burgess, 1970), "dysfunctional" (Burgess, 1970;

Mendes, 1979), or merely "atypical" (Mendes, 1975, 1976b; Greene, 1978). The October 1976 issue of *Family Coordinator* was devoted entirely to fathers, with major attention to single fathers. The initial issue of The Family Advocate (1, 1978) devoted itself to fathers and custody and a recent issue of Counseling Psychologist (7, 1978) focused on men with considerable emphasis on the transitional role of the father. The publishing market has experienced a surge of books dealing with fathers' rights in custody (Biller & Meredith, 1974; Galpher, 1978; Levine, 1976; Noble & Noble, 1975; Roman & Haddad, 1978; Vail, 1979; Victor & Winkler, 1977; Woody, 1978a).

In fact, neither the single-parent nor the single-father family is a phenomenon in American history (Bane, 1978; Mendes, 1976b, Orthner, Brown, & Ferguson, 1976). According to Bane, in previous centuries it was common for children to live with neither parent and that today more children are living with at least one parent than ever before. What has changed is the cause of single-parent families. Prior to the twentieth century the major cause of single-parenting was death of a spouse. Because of the high maternal death rate this often meant single-father families. Today the major reason for single-parenting is the divorce of marital partners. More and more this, too, is creating single-father families.

One of the first works which sought to study single fathers is that of Mendes (1975). This descriptive study examined the motives which led men to become single fathers and the father's on-going adjustment to his role. The findings led Mendes to divide the subjects into two groups: Seekers (fathers who actively sought to become sole single parents) and Assenters (those who accepted but did not chose the role).

"...the most crucial dynamic of any father's parental experience was whether or not he chose to become a single parent" (Mendes, 1975, P. ix). Of the 16 subjects included in the Seekers, all were divorced or in the process of divorcing. The Assenter group included seven subjects who were widowers.

All of the Seekers expressed great satisfaction at the role of fatherhood and reluctance to disrupt a gratifying relationship with their children. Nine of the 16 said that they had been actively involved in the routine care of their children since infancy. This group of Seekers defined and performed the parental role in ways that are less sex-typed than other fathers. These fathers saw themselves as loving, strong, and stable parents. Seven reported that they had had no interests in such care (indeed, one described it as "her job") but had been involved in play, teaching children to walk and talk. In general, all Seekers experienced fatherhood

as pleasurable and an important form of self-validation.

Assenters, on the other hand, did not necessarily enjoy the fathering role. Their attitudes towards their children before becoming single parents ranged from rejection to high acceptance. Evaluation of their present relationship towards their children ranged from poor to excellent. Although Assenters as a whole performed fewer expressive functions than Seekers, the widowed Assenters performed more than did those divorced Assenters who became single fathers when their wives chose not to take custody.

It should be noted that amongst the Seekers, three fathers expressed strong possessive attitudes toward their children, particularly sons. One such father had abducted his children before receiving custody, another stated that he had married his wife expressly because she agreed to bear him a son. Mendes states that such possessiveness was not expressed by the other Seekers.

An exploratory study conducted by Greene (1977) again divided fathers into the Seekers and Assenters groups. This study examined the fathers' reason for obtaining custody and its relationship to fathers effectiveness as a parent. Fathers in the sample of 30 were located through single parent organizations in the suburban areas surrounding Washington, D. C. Using interviews with and observations of the fathers and their children, areas addressed were

(1) reaction to custody decisions, (2) process of role transition, (3) functions of individuals within the family (4) resources (external and internal) that members use (5) parenting style of fathers, and (6) individual family members adjustment to single father household. In a separate analysis all fathers were placed in one of three groups: Good -- those who functioned best; Adequate -- the average in overall functioning; Fair -- the least well functioning.

Results of the study indicated that men who actually sought custody were more effective parents "because they were more emotionally involved in the relationship" (Greene, 1977, P. 120). The major factors involved in effective parenting were the father's ability to work at maintaining an open relationship with his children and his ability to be nurturant and give of himself.

Perhaps the most comprehensive study of divorced fathers to date is that of Gersick (1975). Comparing a sample of 20 divorced custodial fathers with 20 divorced non-custodial fathers, the questions addressed were

- (1) what characteristics differentiate men who seek custody from men who do not?
- (2) what characteristics differentiate men who are granted custody from those who are not?
- (3) what are men's experiences with divorce laws and procedures in the state from which the sample

was drawn?

- (4) how do some men experience the role of fathers, and how do they describe and evaluate their own performance in that role?

A greater number of fathers from both groups rated as their greatest parental strengths the areas involving good understanding, communication, patience, love, caring, attention. There was a trend, though non-significant, for custody seekers to rate "caring" their greatest strength and for non-seekers to rate "discipline" as their greatest strength. It should be mentioned that both seekers and non-seekers were to be found in each of the sample groups. The emotional aspects of their relationship with their children appear to be highly important to men in both groups.

"Although the interview was presented as being concerned with divorce in general, much of the content of the men's unstructured responses dealt explicitly with emotional needs and attachment to their children" (Gersick, 1979, P. 322).

Gersick suggests that this is an area that may often be ignored in discussion of the father role. Not only did fathers in this custody sample profess to feel deeply about their children, they also felt that raising them was important enough to make sacrifices, often regarding careers.

Fathers' perception of their relationship to their

children following divorce has been studied by Greif (1977). This sample of 40 divorced fathers did not include sole custody fathers though some did share joint custody with their ex-wives. The results indicated that these fathers considered emotional development at the top or near the top of the list of nine areas in which they felt they had influenced their children. Results of this study are of particular interest because of the scale used to measure fathers' perceptions. Greif developed this measurement based on ten of the 13 categories of involvement studied by Tasch (1952). The Tasch study showed 41% of the fathers reporting emotional development as an area of involvement. It would appear this is some indication of the change in fathers' perception of their role during the years from 1952 to 1977.

It may be that single-fathers of preadolescent children are more aware of their children's emotional needs than single-fathers of adolescents (Mendes, 1976b). These fathers of younger children more often reported that they openly declared their love for their children, were more physically demonstrative than those who were fathers of adolescents.

A two year longitudinal study of the impact of divorce involved both families of divorce and intact families (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976). In the divorce group all children were in the custody of their mothers. The divorced fathers over time became less nurturant and more detached.

from their children, they ignored their children more and showed less affection.

"A pervasive concern of the fathers was the sense of loss of their children. For most this declined with time, but for many it was a continuing concern. Eight fathers who had initially been highly involved, attached, affectionate parents reported that they could not endure the pain of seeing their children only intermittently....and by two years after the divorce had coped with the stress by seeing their children infrequently although they continued to experience a great sense of loss and depression" (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1976, P. 426).

Providing nurturance and emotional support has not come easy for all custody fathers (Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978a). Fathers in this study felt they were unprepared for dealing with their children's emotional upsets. Expression of negative feelings created particular problems. The authors posit that the inability to deal with their children's negative feelings is a result of these fathers' inability to deal with their own negative feelings. Furthermore, as males are socialized in our society they are not prepared to be nurturant. Emotional responsiveness is emphasized as a feminine trait and therefore a part of the mother role.

"The more successful a man has been socialized in instrumental behavior, the more likely he is to lack interpersonal skills" (Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978b, P. 15).

Many times the custodial father depends too much on the reaction of his children to his own behavior. However, he is able to learn his new nurturant role through interaction with his children.

"By identifying with the children, he comes to share the emotional authority with which he has imbued them...as he begins to feel more competent as a parent, he is able to differentiate between his feelings and fears and the realities of his children's experience (Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978b, P. 18).

In essence, as the father is creating a more secure and nurturant environment for his child he is creating one for himself.

It becomes increasingly evident that many fathers experience an emotional closeness, a nurturant attitude towards their children. When these fathers have been closely involved with their children prior to divorce, the reality of losing daily contact with their children presents a threat which makes them keenly aware of the more expressive nature of themselves.

"It [divorce] is an experience that makes a man realize with shocking suddenness what

the costs are of living in a society that considers childrearing to be the function of women" (Levine, 1976, P. 36).

It would seem that the bond of fatherhood is not easily discarded by some fathers. Perhaps the males role traditionally is in the occupational area and is not altered very much by either marriage or fatherhood. "It can be argued, however, that it is altered by divorce." (Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978c, P. 10).

Does the custodial divorced father have a greater degree of nurturant, child caring characteristics than the non-custodial divorced father? Do non-custodial fathers and married fathers more nearly approximate the traditional, instrumental father role? A further look at single father families is needed.

That the single-parent family can be a viable family is the position of Mendes (1979). Single-parent families are not a homogeneous group and the diversity of these families is often blurred in the social science literature.

"Professionals who fail to see the diversity among single-parent families while attempting to help them risk...viewing the family in terms of who and what are missing rather than who and what are present (Mendes, 1979, P. 193).

It has been suggested by Mendes (1976) that since the

single-father role has not yet been institutionalized in the American culture there are no clear guidelines as to how that role is performed. This in itself creates problems of stress for the single father. Many writers have dealt specifically with the day to day problems these men do encounter (Keshet & Rosenthal, 1978a, 1978b; Levine, 1976; Orthner, Brown, & Ferguson, 1976; Roman & Haddad, 1978; Victor & Winkler, 1977). There is indication that many of the problems that single fathers encounter as a result of taking custody are exactly the same as those widely experienced by single-parent mothers (Gersick, 1979). Gasser and Taylor (1976) report that divorced custodial fathers consider themselves well adjusted to their role more often than widowers and that these fathers are more familiar with roles in home management and child care than were fathers in the past. Keshet and Rosenthal (1978a) report that initially considerable anxiety is created for the single father in recognition of his new role and that much of this anxiety is created by his fear of his own competence as caretaker.

Burgess (1970) points out that any parent at some time feels inadequate in the task of child rearing. The divorced parent is faced with the added burden of guilt of having deprived the child of the necessary second parent. Psychological literature has well-informed the parent that the child who grows up in such a "dysfunctional" setting can be expected to

have personality difficulties in regards to sex role, to be involved in delinquent activities, or at least to have an adjustment problem with peers and teachers.

Lamb (1979) has a somewhat unfavorable outlook concerning the functioning of single parent families. He states that child rearing is something that many people cannot do adequately as single adults functioning in isolation. However, he expresses the belief that today's single fathers are more likely than single mothers to succeed in meeting the demands placed on them because they are a highly select and self-motivated group. As single fatherhood becomes more commonplace, inability to cope will become as common as among single mothers. Gersick (1975) refers to the motivation factor as a determining factor in the success of divorced fathers with custody. Stating child custody has developed into a procedure with exceptionally strong norms, fathers who pursue a countertraditional course require more than a preference, but an equally strong motivation.

A most positive report is found elsewhere.

"If there is one most impressive conclusion we can make from our interviews with single parent fathers, it is this: these fathers feel quite capable and successful in their ability to be the primary parent of their children" (Orthner, Brown, & Ferguson, 1976, P. 436).

Though they had anticipated finding considerable role strain and adjustment to being primary parent, the conclusion of these authors was that there was little indication that this was so. The problems that these fathers experienced were not unlike the problems experienced in most families.

Similar findings are reported by Bartz and Witcher (1978). While they agree that the custodial father finds himself in a new and socially undefined role, most are emerging in good shape. Custodial fathers, through a process of preparation before divorce (close involvement with children) and adjustment afterward, are creating very workable situations. This study points out that it was involved with custodial fathers who have been successful in their role and that little is known about the father who may have tried, failed, and eventually relinquished custody.

The custodial father in our culture is making society aware that what we have long referred to as "mothering" is, indeed, "parenting". It is not only women who can or should provide children with tenderness, gentleness, empathy, and an expressive emotional presence.

"Hopefully, the notion that fathers are the instrumental leaders of the family while mothers control the expressive role has been laid to rest" (Orthner, Brown, & Ferguson, 1976, P. 236).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the difference between the nurturing characteristics of fathers who obtain custody of their children and the nurturing characteristics of fathers who do not obtain custody of their children following divorce. Nurturance refers to an emotional closeness to, an acceptance of, tenderness toward, empathy with, willingness to give to and care for one's child. Little of the research concerning fathers and child custody has been based on scientific evidence. There is a need in this field for empirical studies which can affirm or reject the current evidence being generated by descriptive methods. This study will seek to determine by measurement if some fathers do have nurturant characteristics which would make them capable and competent primary parents. Such data should add to the now growing body of knowledge concerning the fathers influence on child development and the fathers capabilities as primary parent. This information should also be advantageous to counselors, lawyers, courts, and social agencies involved in making decisions concerning child custody. For further discussion of this subject see Appendix E.

The study will attend to three specific measures related to nurturance: (1) sex role orientation as measured by the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), (2) nurturance as measured by

the Nurturance scale of the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS), and (3) parental attitudes as determined by the Hereford Parental Attitude Survey (HPAS). Based on the evidence of available literature two hypotheses can be made.

1. Divorced custodial fathers exhibit more nurturant characteristics than non-custodial divorced fathers.
2. Divorced custodial fathers exhibit more nurturant characteristics than fathers from intact homes.

In addition to testing these hypotheses the study will explore the differences which may exist between non-custodial fathers and intact home fathers.

Method

Subjects. This study will require three groups of subjects; (1) Custodial Divorced Fathers (CDF), (2) Non-custodial Divorced Fathers (NDF), and (3) Intact Home Fathers (IHF). Twelve subjects will be chosen for each group making a total of 36 subjects. The subjects included in the CDF group will have actively pursued custody of their children either through negotiations with divorcing wives or through court order at time of divorce or following divorce. Subjects for the NDF group will be fathers who did not initiate any attempt to obtain custody. Fathers in the IHF group will be currently married and living in the same home with their wives and children. All fathers in the CDF group will have obtained custody when at least one child was under the age of 12. All subjects will be volunteers. Demographic data will be collected.

Subjects in the CDF group will be selected through contacts made with lawyers, divorce counseling facilities, or individuals who have knowledge of custodial fathers. CDF will be screened by the researcher to determine status of legal custody, reason custody was granted, and manner in which custody was obtained. This screening will eliminate subjects who obtained custody by default. The researcher recognizes the possible bias of selection inherent in the method of

selection of this group. However, because of the unusual nature of this group, the possibility of a very small sample pool, and the difficulty in identifying these subjects, this method is justified. This problem will be addressed in the results.

Subjects for the NDF group will be in the same manner as the CDF group. The only screening will be to determine that subject did not initiate any request for custody.

Names, addresses, and phone numbers of subjects for the IHF group will be randomly obtained through the public schools.

Subjects will be informed that the study is concerned with attitudes of fathers living in three different conditions: (1) divorced and sole custody of children, (2) divorced and non-custody of children, and (3) married and living in home with children.

Procedures. The researcher will make the necessary contacts to obtain names of potential subjects. The subjects will be contacted by telephone. Where possible, screening will be done by telephone to determine subjects eligibility for CDF and NDF groups. A meeting between researcher and subject will be arranged either in subject's home or researcher's office. Tests given will (1) Bem Sex Role Inventory, (2) Edwards Personal Preference Survey, (3) Hereford Parental Attitude Survey. The order of presentation of tests will be

random. All tests are paper and pencil tests and are self administered.

Instruments. The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) will be used to measure sex role orientation, one measure of the dependent variable, nurturance. This instrument measures masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions rather than bipolar ends of a continuum (Bem, 1974). It has both a Masculinity and Femininity scale each containing 20 personality characteristics selected on the basis of sex-typed desirability. It also contains 20 neutral items, a total of 60 items. It yields a Femininity score, Masculinity score and an Androgyny score (the difference between one's endorsement to masculinity or femininity). Normative data was obtained from 444 male and 279 female students at Stanford University and 117 male and 77 female students at Foothill Junior College. A test-retest reliability over a four week period shows Masculinity $r = .90$, Femininity $r = .90$, Androgyny $r = .93$. Validity was determined by the internal consistency method and coefficient alpha computed separately for the Masculinity and Femininity scales. The results of the Stanford sample were Masculinity $\alpha = .86$ and Femininity $\alpha = .80$. In the Foothill sample Masculinity $\alpha = .86$ and Femininity $\alpha = .82$.

In order to broaden the base and understanding of psychological androgyny, Bem has conducted a number of studies using

the BSRI. Bem (1975) reports androgynous individuals are more likely to display behavioral adaptability. Bem, Martyna, and Watson (1975) found androgynous males to be high in nurturant behavior and masculinity. Sextyped individuals experience most negative feelings when they perform cross-sex behavior (Bem & Lenney, 1976). Androgynous fathers interact more with their children than masculine fathers and fathers high on femininity participate more in child-related activities than fathers low on femininity (Russell, 1978). Gersick (1975), using the short form of the BSRI, found no difference in femininity scores of custodial divorced and non-custodial divorced fathers.

The Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) (Edwards, 1957) will be used as one measure of the dependent variable nurturance. The EPPS has been used extensively in the study of personality. It is designed to measure 15 independent normal personality variables. Only one of these 15 scales, Nurturance, will be observed in this particular study. In addition to the measurement of these variables, the EPPS provides a measure of test consistency and profile stability. Each item presents a pair of statements representing different personality traits each of which are assumed to have equal social desirability. The subject is asked to choose which statement in each item is more characteristic of himself. The test contains a total of 225 items.

The 15 scales of the EPPS are based on the manifest needs of Murray (1938) and the statements in the tests are designed to measure these needs. Normative data is provided for college students and for adults who are head of household. The college normative group contained 749 females and 760 males. The general adult normative group had 4,923 females and 4,031 males. The instrument yields a percentile score for both normative groups and a T score for the college group. Separate norms are provided for males and females.

Reliability was determined by the split-half method. Coefficients for all variables ranged from .60 to .87, Nurture $r = .78$. Reliability was also computed by the test-retest method. Range for these coefficients on the 15 scales is .74 to .88, Nurture $r = .97$. Validity was determined by the product-moment correlations of the EPPS with the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (r ranges from $-.14$ to $+.22$) and the Guilford-Martin Personnel Inventory (r ranges from $-.39$ to $+.33$).

The EPPS has been compared with the Work Motivation Inventory, a measure of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Cunningham, Wakefield, Ward, 1975). Self actualization was associated, more than any other level, with giving (nurture). The EPPS was used to measure self-other orientation between 37 married couples (Santee, 1975). Modification of the instrument was required for "other" orientation. Respondents were shown

to have different preference for themselves than for others. Ellsbury (1976) examined the possibility that the EPPS contained sex stereotyped items. Twenty-five items were found to be stereotypic. The relationship between personality characteristics, occupational interests, and psychological androgyny was studied by Puig-Casaurance (1976). Women in nontraditional occupational fields were found to have the highest degree of psychological androgyny. Adams (1976) explored the relationship between achievement, nurturance, and satisfaction in the mothering role of mothers of preschool children. Low nurturing mothers scored high in Achievement, Exhibition, Autonomy, Dominance, and Aggression. High nurturing mothers scored highest in Achievement and Nurturance as well as attributing nurturant qualities to their husbands.

The Hereford Parental Attitude Survey (HPAS) (Hereford, 1963) will be used as a measure of father's self-reported attitudes toward his child in areas concerning emotional support. The HPAS measures parental attitudes and behaviors on five scales. This yields a total score reflecting positive or negative attitudes as well as scores on each scale. The Confidence scale reflects the degree of adequacy, satisfaction, and certainty the subject has in the ability to be a good parent. The Causation scale indicates feelings about the child's behavior as to whether it is determined by parental interaction or due to inherited or supernatural causes.

Acceptance assesses the parent's tendency to reject a child and child-like behavior, rather than to allow a child to behave in an age-appropriate manner and see the child as an individual. Understanding taps the parents ability to share ideas and feelings with a child. Trust measures parent-child feelings of confidence versus suspicion and doubt. This study will include only the scales (3) Acceptance, (4) Understanding, (5) Trust.

The HPAS is an outgrowth of a joint project of Austin-Travis County (Texas) Mental Health Society, the Austin Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the University of Texas. It was sponsored by grants from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health and the National Institute of Mental Health. Purpose of the project was to define methods of training parents to be more effective in parental roles. The instrument was normed on 72 parents from the Austin Public Schools and parents from the public schools in Taylor, Texas. Reliability was computed by means of split-half method. Results indicate for Confidence $r = .78$, Causation $r = .77$, Acceptance $r = .68$, Understanding $r = .86$, and Trust $r = .84$. Intercorrelation among scales range from .33 to .62. Validity was determined by interrater reliability and product moment correlation coefficient between each item and its total scale score. Range of coefficients for each scale are: Confidence $r = .40$ to .80, Causation $r = .38$ to .86, Acceptance $r = .34$ to .68,

Understanding $r = .38$ to $.81$, Trust $r = .22$ to $.75$.

The initial project made use of the HPAS in a pre-test, post-test measure of the effect of parental discussion groups on parental attitudes. Results indicate a significantly greater change in the attitudes of the discussion group than a group using the lecture method or the group with no treatment. Tavormina (1975) used the HPAS to compare differential effectiveness of behavioral and reflective group counseling in work with parents of mentally retarded children. While treatment groups showed improvement over control groups, no significant difference was found between methods except on the Causation scale. The behavioral group showed significant improvement over the reflective group on this scale.

Wright (1975) employed the HPAS in evaluating indirect treatment of children through principle-oriented parent consultation groups. Results showed significant change in confidence and causation but none in acceptance, understanding, and trust, suggesting that parents learned more in managing and controlling their children than in being emotionally supportive of them. This study was used also to test the validity and reliability of a parent survey developed by Wright.

Boll, Dimino, and Mattsson (1978) found the HPAS to be a sensitive measure of the attitudes of mothers of children with congenital heart defects. This study examined the

relationship between personality styles and parental attitudes of mothers whose children had congenital heart defects and mothers whose children were healthy. No significant difference was found in the two groups except on the Understanding scale (reciprocal exchange of feelings). Mothers of the experimental group scored significantly higher ($p = .01$) than the control. Moreover, all mothers with outgoing, sociable, extroverted characteristics had more positive parental attitudes.

The HPAS was used to measure the change in parental attitudes of parents participating in Systematic Training of Effective parenting (STEP) (Summerlin & Ward, 1978). Parents who had completed the training showed significant difference in attitudes from parents who had not yet participated. A discriminant function analysis indicated that acceptance and trust were the variables which accounted for the largest between groups variations.

Design. The design of the study is a 1 x 3 factorial design with status of child custody (custodial divorced, non-custodial divorced, intact home) as the independent variable. The graphic design is as follows.

	CDF	NDF	IHF	
Nurturance	n = 12	n = 12	n = 12	
				Total N = 36

Each cell will contain 12 subjects; 12 CDF, 12 NDF, and 12 IHF for a total of 36 subjects.

The dependent variable, degree of nurturance, will be measured by three instruments; the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) and the Hereford Parental Attitude Survey (HPAS). Two scales, Masculinity and Femininity, from the BSRI will be observed. One scale, Nurturance, from the EPPS will be observed. Three scales, Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust, from the HPAS

will be observed. This will give six observations of the dependent variable. All observations are determined by self-report measure.

BSRI	1. Masculinity
	2. Femininity
EPPS	3. Nurturance
HPAS	4. Acceptance
	5. Understanding
	6. Trust

The 12 CDF, the 12 NDF, and the 12 IHF will complete the BSRI, the EPPS and the HPAS for a total of 36 administrations of each instrument. Across the observed scales of these three instruments this will give six observations for each subject and a total of 216 observations of the dependent variable.

Data Analysis. Data obtained from the observations will be analyzed by a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Multivariate analysis has proven the most powerful and appropriate method for behavior and educational research (Kerlinger, 1973). Characteristically, the MANOVA is able to analyze simultaneously multiple dependent variables and multiple independent variables. The procedures attempt to find the maximum differentiation among groups. Alpha level for the test of significant difference will be set at .05. If the MANOVA is significant the individual ANOVAs will be examined to determine which are significant. Individual comparisons

will be made of the significant ANOVAs to determine which variable is significantly different. A discriminant function analysis will be performed to determine which of the variables accounted for the greatest difference among the three groups.

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APPENDIX B
CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Consent For Research Participation

I (print name) _____ do hereby consent to participate in a research study concerned with the attitudes of fathers living in three different conditions: (1) divorced and sole custody of children, (2) divorced and non-custody of children, and (3) married and living in home with children.

I understand that I will be given three self-administered measures and an interview questionnaire. Further, I understand that all information provided by me is confidential and that the results will be kept in strict confidence. I will not be individually identified in any verbal or written report of the findings of this study.

I understand that within a reasonable time following this interview I will have an opportunity to have an interpretation of the data I furnish if I so desire. Also, I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from participation at any time.

(Signed)

(Street Address)

(City, State, Zip)

(Date)

APPENDIX C

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR DIVORCED FATHERS

It would be helpful to this study to have some basic descriptive information about you and your ex-wife.

About Yourself

Age _____
Race _____
Occupation _____
Religious Preference _____
Highest grade or level
of school completed _____
Age at time of marriage _____

About Your Ex-Wife

Age _____
Race _____
Occupation _____
during marriage / now
Religious Preference _____
Highest grade or level
of school completed _____
Age at time of marriage _____

What is your own current income level? (check one)

_____ below \$10,000	_____ \$20,000 - 29,999
_____ \$10,000 - 14,999	_____ \$30,000 - 39,999
_____ \$15,000 - 19,999	_____ above \$40,000

How long were the two of you married? _____

How long have you been divorced? _____

Was this your first marriage? _____

Was this your ex-wife's first marriage? _____

How many children do you have? _____

- | | <u>age</u> | <u>boy or girl</u> |
|----|------------|--------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |

During your children's infancy how involved were you in the daily routine care of them (changing diapers, feeding, bathing, playing, etc.)? (circle one)

none little moderate great deal almost total

Were your own parents divorced? _____

If so, how old were you at time of their divorce? _____

If, as a child, you had been forced to live with one parent or the other, which would you have chosen? _____

Which of your parents do you think you are most like?

In what ways? _____

Do you now have custody of your children? _____

If so, why did you decide to seek custody? _____

Please use the space below to make any other comments you care to make regarding your divorce, yourself, this particular study, or this questionnaire.

APPENDIX D

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR MARRIED FATHERS

It would be helpful to this study to have some basic descriptive information about you and your wife.

About Yourself

Age _____
Race _____
Occupation _____
Religious Preference _____
Highest grade or level
of school completed _____
Age at time of marriage _____

About Your Wife

Age _____
Race _____
Occupation _____
Religious Preference _____
Highest grade or level
of school completed _____
Age at time of marriage _____

What is your own current income level? (check one)

_____ below \$10,000	_____ \$20,000 - 29,999
_____ \$10,000 - 14,999	_____ \$30,000 - 39,999
_____ \$15,000 - 19,999	_____ above \$40,000

If your wife is employed, what is her current income level?
(check one)

_____ below \$10,000	_____ \$20,000 - 29,999
_____ \$10,000 - 14,999	_____ \$30,000 - 39,999
_____ \$15,000 - 19,999	_____ above \$40,000

How long have the two of you been married? _____

Is this your first marriage? _____

Is this your wife's first marriage? _____

How many children do you have?

- | | <u>age</u> | <u>boy or girl</u> |
|----|------------|--------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

During your children's infancy how involved were you in the daily routine care of them (changing diapers, feeding, bathing, playing etc.)? (circle one)

none little moderate great deal almost total

Were your own parents divorced? _____

If so, how old were you at time of their divorce? _____

If, as a child, you had been forced to live with one parent or the other, which would you have chosen? _____

Which of your parents do you think you are most like?

In what ways? _____

Please use space below to make any other comments you would care to make regarding yourself, this particular study, or this questionnaire.

APPENDIX E
JUDICIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RELATEDNESS
TO MALE CUSTODIAL PARENTING

JUDICIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RELATEDNESS
TO MALE CUSTODIAL PARENTING

There appears to be little doubt that fathers are going "public" with their abilities and desires to be nurturing, emotionally involved, care-taking parents. As Nash (1976) observed fathers are becoming more child-centered and society is granting some acceptance to this new role. Yet while many fathers may be rapidly and openly acknowledging their new-found nurturing capacity, courts are not.

"Our legal system, which has been trying to play 'catch-up' with this social revolution, has so far failed to find a comprehensive approach to dealing with new family concepts" (Johnson, 1979, P.6).

The evolution of custody decisions in the United States has gone through three identifiable stages:

- (1) Fathers' Rights Dogma
- (2) Tender Years Doctrine
- (3) Best Interests of the Child Concept

(Foster & Freed, 1979; Vail, 1979; Woody, 1978a). Fathers' Rights held that father had implicit custody rights unless he could be shown to be morally unfit. Such dogma was a natural outgrowth of the feudal order which allowed male dominance and supremacy (Foster & Freed, 1979).

The Tender Years began affecting custody decisions by

the middle of the 19th century. It holds that young children of both gender are to be awarded to the mother in custody disputes. The only exception being that she is unfit. By this time the industrialization of the nation had divided the wage labor of men from the private labor of women; motherhood became exalted and the maternal instinct was "invented" (Roman & Haddad, 1978).

During the 1920s the "best interest of parents" gave way to the Best Interest of the Child (Woody, 1978a) which most states now follow in theory but few in practice (Foster & Freed, 1979). Fundamental to this concept is that both parents have a right to the child. Court decisions, then, are on the basis of which parent is better able to take care of the child. When all other factors in a custody decision appear, in the eyes of the court, to be equal (and most often this is the case) courts revert to the Tender Years Doctrine as a "tie breaker" and children are placed with the mother.

"Men, who have largely created the laws and thus the mores under which we live, should take heedwho was it that elevated motherhood to a sanctified status?" (Noble & Noble, 1975, p. 114).

Ironically, the close tie that society has given mother to the child reflects the dominant position that men have been given. It has been an effective measure in protecting that dominance.

"The history of child custody cannot be seen

apart from the long history of woman's subordination to man and her struggle to break free of this inequality (Roman & Haddad, 1978, p. 24).

Today divorced fathers who desire to maintain close and emotionally involved relationships with their children find themselves the victim; victim of a culture created by their ancestors, both male and female. While there appears to be some undoing of this today, it is by women's decision rather than legal mandate. As women are willing to abdicate their "sanctified status", men are being liberated from unjust divorce and custody laws (Noble & Noble, 1975).

Perhaps the most provocative publication of the 70s regarding child custody in divorce is Beyond the Best Interests of the Child (Goldstein, Freud, & Solnit, 1973). While the authors address themselves to every type of child custody, the three pages dealing with custody in divorce has sparked considerable controversy (Foster & Freed, 1979; Galper, 1978; Roman & Haddad, 1978; Stack, 1976). The position taken by Goldstein, Freud, and Solnit is that once custody is determined (such decision to be made either by the divorcing parents or by the judge) the non-custodial parent no longer has any legal right to visit or make decisions regarding the child. The non-custodial parent would, in effect, become a non-parent. In this manner the security of the ongoing relationship of the child and the custodial parent is protected

(Goldstein, Freud, & Solnit, 1973). If the custodial parent so desired, the noncustodial parent could have access to the child.

It is argued by Stack (1976) that such an arrangement may serve to isolate children by severely limiting the enduring relationships available to them. Further, such a policy could only intensify the tension between divorcing parents and serve to create bitter custody battles. Gersick (1975) too, argues that such an arrangement would increase rather than decrease the psychological trauma to the child. Galper (1978), a social worker and divorced parent, argues that it is best for a child of divorced parents to feel valued, loved, and cared for by both parents. Foster and Freed (1979), both of whom are attorneys, refer to the book as an academic example of over-reaction, replacing inflexibility with rigidity.

In a strong reaction Roman and Haddad (1978) state that the psychological basis of Beyond the Best Interests of the Child is not sound. Children have a relationship with both parents and show a remarkable tenacity to continue to love both parents. Such an arbitrary approach ignores the ties that may exist between parent and offspring. And finally, "...the slightest sense of compassion suggests that under most circumstances a parent should not be legislated out of existence" (Roman & Haddad, 1978, P. 112).

That sexism may influence the recommendations of professionals involved in custody decisions was explored by

Woody (1977a, 1977b, 1978a, 1978b). In a survey of lawyers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, findings indicated psychiatrists in general tend to favor placement with the mother (female psychiatrists showing a greater tendancy) older professionals in general favor placement with the mother, and all married professionals tend to favor placement with the mother.

"In order to assume a role in child custody, counselors must take steps to recognize their own attitudes, beliefs, and values about child custody and about the issue of suitability of a parent" (Woody, 1977b, p. 170).

It is interesting to note that in this same study all professionals ranked Quality of the Relationship with the child as the first out of 20 criteria to use in determining the suitability for custody of either parent. The question raised is this: do some behavioral scientists involved in child custody decisions also revert to the Tender Years Doctrine as a "tie breaker"?

Another hint of sexism is observed in writings from the legal profession. In an attempt to point out the unrealistic legal features of the movie "Kramer vs. Kramer", Bertin (1980) entitles the publication "The Father as Mother" ! Stating that the impact of this film will be to prompt more fathers to ask and fight for custody, Bertin observes in his own practice an increased interest by such fathers. Interestingly,

these fathers, according to the author, tend to ignore that in the movie the court decision was not in favor of the father.

"Kramer vs. Kramer notwithstanding, current trends in sexual equality laws indicate that there will also be changes in the criteria by which child custody decisions are made. According to Woody (1978a) there is a clear mandate for behavioral scientists to be involved in evaluating which parent is better able to meet the needs of the child. At this time the role of the psychologist in child custody cases is ill-defined. Woody presents ten recommendations which can be used as guidelines for psychologists in making these evaluations. The psychologists should be able (1) to be open to parenting alternatives; (2) to help the most suitable parent vigorously pursue custody; (3) to maintain an objective stance; (4) offer information from an objective stance; (5) be a family advocate; (6) to help the father prepare for new parenting responsibilities; (7) to give attention to facilitating a more comprehensive father-child relationship; (8) to encourage proper future contacts between parents (9) to assure that institutional (schools, agencies, etc.) restrictions do not jeopardize professional services to the family; and (10) to gain adequate professional training in child custody. Woody (1977b) cautions that at no time should the "fitness" test be applied. From a psychological view point this implies the other parent to be unfit and such branding can only adversely affect the child.

Berstein (1977) proposes an even more actively involved role for the counselor assisting in custody decisions. If the counselor determines that the father is the more suitable parent for custody, the counselor should become actively involved in preparing that father for a custody fight: "...there is no such thing as overpreparation" (p. 33). An extensive checklist of basic requirements for father's preparation is presented. The counselor should, in Bernstein's view, work in cooperation with father's lawyer in order to serve the best interests of the child.

What will be the fourth stage in the evolution of custody decisions? In the literature there is considerable call for and evidence that the fourth stage will be Joint Custody (Cox & Cease, 1978; Galper, 1978; Noble & Noble, 1975; Roman & Haddad, 1978; Sassower, 1978; Victor & Winkler, 1977; Woolley, 1978). Joint custody is synonymously referred to as shared custody. This arrangement recognizes the rights and responsibilities of both parents in key areas for the child (Sassower, 1979). Parents share in decisions about medical, educational, and geographical matters which concern the child. Living arrangements may be made with one or arranged alternately between both parents. "There is no such thing as separate custody in marriage, nor should there be in divorce" (Noble & Noble, 1975, p. 160).

As a result of a two year research project in child custody, Woolley (1978) estimates that 10 to 15 per cent of

divorced parents have agreed to "shared" custody in some form. Shared custody is defined by Woolley as any method that permits children to grow up knowing and interacting with both parents in an everyday situation. Joint custody finds its greatest opponents not in the parents, but in the courts (Cox & Cease, 1978; Foster & Freed, 1979; Sassower, 1979; Woolley, 1978). Alleging that judicial experience has led to disappointment in such arrangements, Foster and Freed (1979) recommend that joint custody should be tried only in "unusual" situations and under "optimal" conditions. They state further that need of a child to have the companionship of his father could be a factor leading a court to decide for joint custody. It is not made clear if needing the companionship of the father is considered an "unusual" situation.

To date four states have laws specifically authorizing joint custody and twelve others are considering laws which would make it the preferred arrangement (Sassower, 1979). While joint custody may be, as Roman and Haddad (1978) suggest, a "revolution" away, it does appear to be a viable way of dealing with the problems of marriage dissolution for many families. Perhaps in retrospect Joint Custody will appear no more revolutionary than The Tender Years Dogma nor the Best Interests of the Child Concept.