

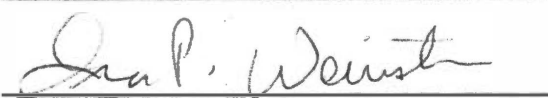
March 18, 1969

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Frank A. Brown III entitled "Sex Role Identification of Children of Divorced Parents." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours of credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.


Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor for
Graduate Studies and Research

SEX ROLE IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN
OF DIVORCED PARENTS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
The University of Tennessee.

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Frank A. Brown III
March 1969

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to explore the effects of parental divorce on the male college student's over-all adjustment and his difficulty in completing the sex role identification process. Behavioral ratings of the Ss and their scores on the MMPI were used to test each of these effects. Specifically it was hypothesized that the conflict in the home preceding the divorce, more than the separation from one of the parents after it, was likely to cause difficulty for the "child" in the sex-typing process. It was also suggested that in cases where the male "child of divorce" originally blamed the father for the parental conflict and subsequent separation he would be less likely to complete the sex-typing process than those male "children" who did not blame the father. Further it was felt that the remaining parent's remarriage would presumably enhance the probability for the successful completion of the sex-typing process. This hypothesis, unlike the others, was not, however, supported by the data. Finally it was suggested that those male "children" who had difficulty in adopting sex-appropriate social behavior, and who thus appeared to be less masculine than those who had not, would show poorer over-all personality adjustment. Data in support of this hypothesis approached statistical significance. The results of the study were then discussed in relation to the traditional psychoanalytic and differential reinforcement theories of the sex-typing process.

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INTRODUCTION

The effect of divorce upon children of divorced parents poses both a personal and a social problem. Few parents divorce without considering the effects of the divorce upon their children, and many of them, if asked, would probably consider these effects deleterious to their child's development in several ways. Similarly many school guidance counselors and civil authorities probably have been struck with the proportion of problem children who are from homes "broken" in spirit, if not in fact (Despert, 1953). The intricacies in accurately measuring the effects of actual divorce on these children are, however, primarily responsible for the scant attention experimentalists have paid to systematic study of them. However, some research has been undertaken along two lines, the psychodynamic and the sociological, although neither group of researchers has been able to satisfactorily solve the technical problems involved.

The sociological approach (Batchelor, 1953; Monahan, 1957) has emphasized the relation of the "child of divorce" to the world around him. However, this approach has provided no theories about the causes of his behavior by merely showing the simple association of delinquency rate (McCord, McCord, and Thurber, 1962), suicidal rate (Batchelor, 1953), or rate of mental illness (Madow, 1947; Blumenthal, 1967; Lidz and Lidz, 1949; Gerard and Siegel, 1950) to divorce.

These studies have been marked by poor controls, particularly for socioeconomic class, which correlates inversely with divorce, mental illness, and delinquency, and thus confounds any simple relation among them. The effect of the child's experience before, during, and after his parents' divorce is thus much more complex than the sociological approach has surmised.

Studies of the psychodynamic variety (Meyer, 1947; Freudenthal, 1959; Levy, 1943, Lidz, 1957) have been only slightly more successful in probing the effects of divorce. As Rowntree (1955) states, they have generally suffered from poorly defined samples (Batchelor, 1953; Nye, 1957; Landis, 1960), having included children of widowed, separated, as well as divorced parents, undifferentiated in the same sample. The present study endeavored to separate these different experiences and their respective effects.

Past researchers have blundered, moreover, by failing to realize that even in the event that they do uncover several effects of the divorce itself, and of its aftermath, these are probably of much less importance than the effects of the parental conflict precipitating the divorce (Nye, 1957) and are probably confounded by them. Thus, until the effects of the conflict are more thoroughly examined, the study of the relatively minor after-effects of divorce - of remarriage (Christiansen, 1956; Landis, 1960), of parental absence (Rouman, 1955; Hetherington, 1966; Essig, 1946; Freudenthal, 1959; Winch, 1949), and of the marriage preferences of the children them-

selves (Levy, 1943) - should only be considered in relation to them. The present study thus attempted to focus primarily on the effects of the conflict leading to the divorce, and particularly on the relation of the child's difficulty in sex role identification to the conflict, to parental absence, to his blame of his parents, and to their subsequent remarriage. It also endeavored to compare the general adjustment of those children who had difficulty in the sex-typing process with those who did not.

The study of the effects of the conflict between the parents has been frustrated by a further obstacle in using an adequate comparison population. The problem is one of individual differences, and lies in the fact that there are many kinds of, and reasons for, divorce and marital conflict (Altus, 1958; Rowntree, 1955; Levinger, 1966; McCord, 1962) which have as many kinds or degrees of effect on the child. The study of these effects would, however, require a sample much larger than is readily accessible here, and thus lies beyond the scope of the current study. Further, such studies limit the generalizability of results more than is at present necessary in such a new area for research as this.

The one significant contribution that research into the psychodynamics of children of divorce has made is in comparing the damaging effects of divorce with the effects of continued home conflict. Several studies (Nye, 1957; Landis, 1960; McCord, 1962) comparing the effects of a "broken home" with those of an "unhappy, unbroken home"

have concluded that children from the latter show poorer adjustment than children from the former homes. In these studies, however, the problems of defining such subjective categories as "unhappy" and "poor" versus "best adjustment" have not been operationally met, and have left the results somewhat less conclusive than might have been hoped for. The emphasis of these studies on the social behavior of the children and the nature of their interaction with others was, however, adopted as an important part of the present study.

It appears in general then that problems with (a) defining, (b) finding, and (c) using adequate control groups, have been responsible for the paucity of research on the characteristics of "children of divorce." Although, as has been demonstrated by Landis, Nye, and McCord, the effects of continued home conflict might be more serious for children than the divorce itself, such a conclusion ignores more precise hypotheses about the relationship between the conflict and the nature of the child's poor adjustment. The conflict between the parents as it varies in degree and length probably affects children of different ages somewhat differently. In all but the few best handled cases, however, most children are likely to react by blaming themselves, by being greatly confused about their parents' feelings toward them, and by harboring marked ambivalence toward their parents. It is felt that this ambivalence is particularly strong toward the parent whom they learn to blame. Similarly, in families where a great deal of conflict is felt but no divorce or separation

has been made, the blame and confusion will already be present among the children who will, consequently, it is felt, encounter more difficulty in the sexual identification process than their counterparts from "widowed homes." In contrast, the blame and ambivalence are probably relatively absent among children who have lost one parent to death because of the remaining parent's constant love for them and for the lost parent.

It is felt too that "children of divorce" will suffer more from the social stigma of their parents' separation, and/or from their perception of this stigma, than those children in families where a parent is lost by death. This, it is suggested, will make them more socially sensitive, more defensive, perhaps with more feelings of inadequacy than their counterparts in "normal" homes, and perhaps with more feelings of hostility and aggression toward both parents and perhaps to authority figures in general. It was believed that consideration of their test behavior, and particularly that observation of the nature of their interaction with their peers and authority figures, would serve to check the validity of the following hypotheses:

1. In cases where the male "child of divorce" originally blamed the father for the parental conflict and divorce, it is believed that he will have more difficulty in identifying with the appropriate sex role than those who did not blame the father.

2. It is expected that boys from "divorced" homes whose parent at home did not remarry would have more difficulty in identifying with the appropriate sex role than those boys whose only parent did remarry.
3. It is expected that conflict in the home is more likely to create difficulty for male children in identifying with the appropriate sex role than is the prolonged absence of one parent.
4. It is believed that children who do not attain a high degree of appropriate sex typing of behavior, while frustrating the expectations of parents, peers, and society in general, also experience less personal acceptance, and are thus more likely to become emotionally or socially maladjusted beyond the area of sex role adjustment than their peers who have less difficulty in the sexual identification process.

I. METHOD

Subjects

The primary reference group for this study was composed of male college students whose biological parents had been divorced. These students constituted the "children of divorce (D)" group. A secondary comparison group, used to control for the separation of parent and child, was composed of male students not included in the D group but who had lost one biological parent to death. These constitute the "children of widowed parents (W)" group. A third group used to control for the effects of conflict in the family was composed of male students whose parents had never been separated for more than three months, and who had never been separated from their parents for more than the same length of time prior to their entry into college, but who rated their present families as having an extreme amount of conflict. These students constituted the "non-separated conflict (NC)" group. The final group, which was used to give a stable frame of reference to facts uncovered about the aforementioned groups, was composed of male students from families in which there had been no parental divorces, no deaths, no separations, and no unusual (as the student saw it, or was willing to admit) amount of conflict. These students comprised the "normal (N)" group.

In order to find male students to constitute these experimental and control groups, questionnaires (see Appendix A) were given to ten

Introductory psychology classes chosen at random from among those 22 which were taught. Only those males present in class on the day the questionnaire was administered, numbering 361, were included in the initial sampling. While none of them refused to take the questionnaire, 37 male subjects (Ss) (including seven who were potential experimental Ss) in choosing to omit their names from it made themselves unavailable for the study proper. Of the 62 students who, because of their responses to the questionnaire, made themselves eligible for the D, W, and NC groups, 52 eventually participated in the experimental procedure. Of these, 25 were in the D group, 15 in the W group, and 12 in the NC group. Six others who lived with their father were eliminated at random from the W group in order to make the proportion of Ss living with their mothers similar to the proportion found in the D group. The remaining four - one each in the D and NC groups, and two in the W group - were unable to participate or were indisposed for various uninvestigated reasons. Eighteen male Ss were, meanwhile, selected at random from the same original pool of psychology students to fill the N group. Of these, two refused to participate, while the remaining sixteen joined with the 52 experimental Ss in undergoing the experimental procedure described below. In addition an equal number of similarly enrolled coeds, 68 altogether, were asked to participate, and 60 agreed. They were chosen at random from among those present in class the day the questionnaire was distributed and, although they participated in the entire experimental procedure, the purpose of their

presence was only to make the group personality evaluation procedure more like an everyday situation for the male respondents.

Instruments

The basic data used in testing the major hypotheses were derived from two diverse sources:

1. A pencil-and-paper inventory of personality. Responses to a short form of the MMPI (questions #1-366, 374, 383, 397, 406, 461, 502) including each of the "validity" scales and the first nine "clinical" scales (scale #10, Si, was excluded in order to save the Ss' time) provided much of the data used in testing the hypotheses.
2. Ratings in groups on expressive characteristics. Following an hour-long group discussion among several experimental Ss each was rated by the author and a clinically trained assistant on the following characteristics by using the corresponding criteria for a high rating described in Appendix B: masculinity, leadership, self-confidence, energy, aggressiveness, defensiveness, gregariousness, independence, at easeness, and need for achievement. On all of these traits the Ss were rated from one (low) to seven (high).

Procedure

According to the class schedules of the individual Ss the 128 participants were formed into 31 relatively equal-sized groups (23 groups of four Ss, three groups of five Ss, two groups of three Ss, and one group each of two, six, and seven Ss) of approximately equal sex distribution. They arrived for the two hour testing session two groups at a time, each group being given a separate room. The experimental procedure was composed of two hour-long tasks which were undertaken by the Ss in counterbalanced order as one group performed the first while the other finished the second, and then switched tasks. Completing a pencil-and-paper short form of the MMPI was one of the tasks, while the other involved the following more complicated procedure.

Seated in a circle as a group, the Ss were told that part of the experiment was concerned with the process of group interaction, and that the experimenter, and an assistant (who participated in several randomly picked groups), who were present throughout the hour's discussion, would rate them on certain variables (see Appendix B) while they discussed anything they chose. The group was left to its own devices at that point though the author occasionally entered into the conversation in order to ensure the participation of the more quiet Ss so that they could be more reliably rated on those characteristics presupposing some verbalizations. Group discussions generally centered on the draft, political views and events,

sex and marriage, classes, future plans, and the experimental procedure itself, although no one guessed the personality variables under consideration.

A pilot study was first carried out over a period of several months just prior to the present study to test the feasibility and reliability of this latter procedure. Students of both sexes from similar introductory psychology classes were organized into groups of from three to seven in size. Groups of four seemed to offer the best balance of economy of time and intimacy. Ratings of the various personality indices were also carried out on five, seven, and nine point scales. Of these the seven point scale seemed to give the best combination of reliability and meaningfulness, and was thus adopted for later use. In the meantime practice on nine trial groups, including two whose interaction was recorded on video tape for reference purposes, increased the agreement of, or reliability between, the ratings of the author and his clinically trained assistant. These ratings were almost always done independent of the knowledge of the particular experimental group to which the Ss belonged although unfortunately, on occasion, during the course of the group discussion a subject (S) would mention facts about his family, such as that his parents were divorced, which made his anonymity impossible. Inter-rater reliabilities from .80 to 1.00 with a mean of .88 (using Spearman's formula) were achieved in rating Ss on the characteristics

listed in Appendix B so that for the study proper two ratings of all Ss were not necessary under the assumption that the remainder who were rated only by the author were similarly reliably rated.

II. RESULTS

Reliability and Validity of Ratings

The same trained assistant who participated in the pilot study was present during the study proper to rate Ss independently of the author in several randomly picked groups involved in the group personality evaluation procedure. Two ratings were thus obtained for fifteen, or approximately one-quarter, of the experimental Ss. Interrater reliability coefficients for the ten personality characteristics described in Appendix B ranged from .75 to 1.00 with a mean coefficient (Spearman) of .907.

Using the Ss' Mf scores as criteria, the validity of the masculinity ratings which they earned was also computed using Spearman's formula for rank-order correlation. A coefficient of $-.595$ was thus obtained, which was significant at the .001 level. The fact that the coefficient was negative merely reflected the fact that a high rating was indicative of high masculinity while a high score on MMPI scale #5 was evidence for relatively low masculinity.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 proposed that in cases where the male child of divorced parents originally blamed the father for the parental conflict and divorce, he would have more difficulty in identifying with the appropriate sex role than those who did not blame the father.

This hypothesis was tested in two ways, using two diverse means of estimating the Ss level of identification with the male role.

The first method involved a one-way analysis of variance with three levels using (high) scores on scale #5 (the Mf scale) of the MMPI as indications of the Ss' relative difficulty in identifying with the male role. Specifically scores were used of the 16 Ss from the N group, and the 25 Ss from the D group who were divided according to their replies to the questionnaire (see Appendix A) into "blamed father" (N = 14) and "not blamed father" (N = 11) categories. (The "not blamed father" category included seven who blamed their mother and four who could not recall who they blamed or who blamed neither parent.) The results are summarized in Table I. An F of 5.24 was obtained, which was significant at the .01 level. Duncan's New Multiple Range Test (Edwards, 1960) showed that this high level of significance was due to the significant differences at the .05 level

TABLE I
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MMPI MF SCORES FOR "NORMAL,"
"BLAME FATHER," AND "NOT BLAME FATHER" GROUPS

Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	2	197.48	5.24*
Within Groups	38	37.69	
Total	40		

*p < .01.

between the mean Mf scores of each of the three groups from each other. Not only, therefore, was the mean score of the "not blamed father" group significantly different from that of the "blamed father" Ss, but both of these means were significantly larger than the mean Mf score of the N group.

The second method involved a similar analysis using ratings of the masculinity of Ss from the N, "blamed father," and "not blamed father" groups. Here a low rating was used as a criterion for defining difficulty in identifying with the male role. While the results indicated in Table II using this second criterion give additional support to the hypothesis, they are not as positive as the above, for, while an F value of 3.30 was obtained which was significant at the .05 level, the "blamed father" and "not blamed father" group

TABLE II

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MASCULINITY RATINGS FOR "NORMAL,"
"BLAME FATHER," AND "NOT BLAME FATHER" GROUPS

Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	2	214.82	3.30*
Within Groups	38	65.10	
Total	40		

* $p < .05$.

means were significantly different in the predicted direction only at the .10 level. Furthermore, while it was not crucial to the hypothesis, the "not blamed father" group mean was not significantly different from that of the N group.

Hypothesis 2

In the second hypothesis it was suggested that boys from "divorced" homes whose parent at home did not remarry would have more difficulty in identifying with the appropriate sex role than those boys whose remaining parent did remarry. In testing this hypothesis the two indices of male role identification were also used so that the hypothesis was tested in two ways. The results, summarized in Tables III and IV, indicate, however, that neither their MMPI scores on scale #5 nor their masculinity ratings demonstrated any significant difference between the boys in the D group whose remaining parent remarried ("remarried" group) versus those whose parent did not ("not remarried" group). The mean score on the MMPI Mf scale for the "remarried" group (N = 13) was 32.62 versus 32.08 for the "not remarried" group (N = 12). When the scores of those boys living with their fathers (N = 3) were excluded, again no significant differences were found as the means were 32.33 and 32.50 for the "remarried" and "not remarried" groups respectively.

Using the masculinity ratings the results were similar as mean ratings of 3.3 for the "remarried" and 3.5 for the "not remarried" groups were found.

TABLE III

TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF MMPI MF SCORES OF SUBJECTS
FROM "PARENT REMARRIED" AND "PARENT NOT REMARRIED" GROUPS

Group	N	Mean MMPI MF Score	t Value
"Divorced"	25	32.36	
Remarried	13	32.62	
Not Remarried	12	32.08	.124
Remarried, Living With Mother	12	32.33	
Not Remarried, Living with Mother	10	32.50	.098

TABLE IV

TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF MASCULINITY RATINGS
OF SUBJECTS FROM "PARENT REMARRIED" AND
"PARENT NOT REMARRIED" GROUPS

Group	N	Mean Masculinity Rating	t Value
"Divorced"	25	3.4	
Remarried	13	3.3	
Not Remarried	12	3.5	1.38
Remarried, Living With Mother	12	3.3	
Not Remarried, Living with Mother	10	3.5	1.42

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis stated that conflict in the home is more likely than the prolonged absence of one parent to create difficulty for male children in identifying with the appropriate sex role. This hypothesis was tested in two ways by using a one-way analysis of variance with four levels utilizing (a) MMPI Mf scores, and (b) masculinity ratings of Ss from each of the four experimental and control groups.

The results of the first analysis are indicated in Table V. Utilizing the Mf score, an F of 14.36 was obtained, which was significant beyond the .001 level. The use of Duncan's New Multiple Range test was unnecessary as simple observation of the mean scores of the four groups indicated that the N and W group means (23.38 and

TABLE V
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MMPI Mf SCORES
OF THE FOUR EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	3	417.33	14.36*
Within Groups	64	29.06	
Total	67		

*p < .001.

23.47 respectively) were obviously not significantly different from each other, while the NC and D means (31.25 and 32.36 respectively) were also essentially equal. That the mean for the D group was so much more similar to the NC group mean than to the W mean was taken to demonstrate that conflict between parents more importantly than separation from them was instrumental in causing their male children difficulty in identifying with the masculine role.

Similar results were obtained for the masculinity ratings. The results are summarized in Table VI. An F of 3.34 was obtained which was significant at the .025 level (one-tailed). Again, Duncan's New Multiple Range test was unnecessary. On the scale from 1 (low masculinity) to 7 (high) the N and W group means were essentially equal (4.25 and 4.07 respectively), while the NC and D means were much lower.

TABLE VI
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MASCULINITY RATINGS
OF THE FOUR EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	3	435.8	3.340*
Within Groups	64	130.5	
Total	67		

*p < .025.

(3.12 and 3.40). Again the hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that the mean rating for the D group is significantly closer to the mean for the NC group with which it was similar in terms of conflict than to the mean of the W group with which it was similar in terms of parental absence, while the means for the W and N groups did not differ significantly from each other.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that children who do not attain a high degree of appropriate sex-typing of behavior, while frustrating the expectations of parents, peers, and society in general, also experience less personal acceptance, and are thus more likely to become emotionally or socially maladjusted apart from the area of sex role adjustment than their peers who have less difficulty in sexual identification.

While no personality rating of the total adjustment of each subject was made, the fourth hypothesis was tested using combined (summed) scores on scales one, two and three of the MMPI (the "neurotic triad," Dahlstrom and Welsh, 1960) as a measure of personality stability, with high total scores meaning relative inefficiency of adjustment and lower scores indicating correspondingly good adjustment. A one-way analysis of variance with four levels corresponding to the four experimental groups was then carried out. The results are summarized in Table VII. As an F of 2.12 was obtained,

which was significant only beyond the .092 level, no significant difference in the degree of over-all adjustment between the groups was demonstrated.

TABLE VII
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MMPI "NEUROTIC TRIAD" SCORES
OF THE FOUR EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Source of Variation	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	3	243.80	2.12*
Within Groups	64	115.00	
Total	67		

* $p = .092$.

It was noted, however, in partial confirmation of this hypothesis, that on all but three MMPI scales (#7, 8 and F) the mean T-scores of the D and NC groups were higher than those of the W and N groups, thus indicating a greater degree of emotional instability among Ss in the former groups. While none other than scale #5 were significantly higher, the difference between the mean scores on the Ma and Pd scales approached significance. These results are summarized in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

MEAN MMPI "T" SCORES FOR THE FOUR EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Group	MMPI 1	MMPI 2	MMPI 3	MMPI 4	MMPI 5	MMPI 6	MMPI 7	MMPI 8	MMPI 9	MMPI L	MMPI F	MMPI K
N	54	54	58	58	56	55	58	59	60	41	61	50
W	56	54	58	60	57	55	60	63	61	41	59	51
NC	60	58	62	69	71	55	57	62	66	42	58	51
D	61	59	64	69	73	61	58	63	66	42	59	51

According to the group personality evaluation procedure there was also a tendency for the D and NC groups to be more "defensive" and less "at ease" (see Appendix B) than the W and N groups. This was taken as additional though partial support for the fourth hypothesis. No other significant or suggestive differences between the groups were found using the personality ratings, the results of which are summarized in Table IX.

For each of these hypotheses, however, the possibility is always present that some factor other than conflict in the family is responsible for poorer adjustment and difficulty in sex role identification of the children. As a check on this possibility families of the four experimental groups were compared with respect to a number of social characteristics, summarized in Table X, such as parental age, income and education, family size, and ordinal position of the subject at the time of parental divorce or death. No significant differences between the groups were found except on the last variable where, as would be expected, it was found that children of divorced parents were significantly younger (average age 8.8) at the time of separation from one of their parents than the children of widowed parents (who were on the average 11.7 years old). However, because the D group is on the average younger now than the W group, members of each group have lived approximately the same length of time without one parent,

TABLE IX
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PERSONALITY RATINGS
FOR THE FOUR EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

	N Group		W Group		NC Group		D Group	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Masculinity	4.25	1.25	4.07	1.24	3.12	1.15	3.40	1.02
Leadership	4.10	1.08	3.87	1.20	3.83	0.94	3.88	1.16
Self-confidence	3.78	1.17	3.90	1.38	4.00	1.22	3.86	1.22
Energy	4.16	1.18	3.93	0.98	4.25	1.27	3.88	1.23
Aggression	3.79	0.86	3.97	1.14	4.03	1.04	4.18	1.22
Defensiveness	4.16	1.21	4.13	1.11	4.58	1.46	4.52	1.35
Gregariousness	3.72	1.29	4.17	1.19	3.92	1.08	3.98	1.17
Independence	4.06	1.11	4.00	0.98	4.29	1.23	4.18	1.46
At Easeness	4.06	1.24	4.00	1.24	3.67	1.05	3.72	1.22
Need for Achievement	4.12	1.24	3.83	1.16	3.88	1.28	4.04	1.27

TABLE X
SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOUR EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Group	N	Mean Age	Age of Father	Age of Mother	Family Size	Mean Combined Parents Income	Yearly Father's Education	Mother's Education	Ordinal Position	Age at Time of Death or Divorce	Years Since Death or Divorce
N	16	19.6	47.1	44.3	4.9	14,300	12.6	10.5	1.8	-	-
W	15	20.5	49.2 ¹	48.8 ¹	4.9	10,800	12.1	10.1	2.1	11.7*	8.8*
NC	12	19.3	46.3	45.1	5.1	13,500	13.2	10.7	2.3	-	-
D	25	18.2	47.7	46.4	4.8	12,400	12.7	10.4	2.1	8.8*	9.4

¹As if still living.

* $p < .05$.

III. DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this investigation was to differentiate the effects of physical separation from one of the parents from the effects of prolonged family conflict upon children of divorced parents. Thus the critical hypothesis was the third which stated that conflict in the home is more likely than the prolonged absence of one parent to create difficulty for male children in identifying with the appropriate sex role. The critical comparison in testing this hypothesis was between the scores and ratings of "children" from the NC group who suffered through abnormal family conflict but not separation, and similar scores and ratings of the W group who have undergone separation from one parent but no great deal of family conflict.

It was assumed, with good reason, that the conflict experienced by the NC group was similar to that experienced prior to parental divorce by Ss in the D group, as several of the NC Ss stated on the questionnaire that they had expected their parents to divorce for some time. Likewise the prolonged absence of one parent was thought to affect Ss from the W and D groups in a similar fashion particularly because for essentially equal proportions of them (80 percent and 88 percent respectively) the absent parent was the father, though, of course, the reasons for the parent's absences were not at all alike.

Because of sampling limitations the D and W groups were not equalized or matched in terms of another important variable, the ages of the children at the time of the divorce or death (McCord, 1962; Furfey, 1927). As reported in Table X on page 26, children in the W group were significantly older at the time of their parent's death than were their counterparts in the D group at the time of their parents' divorce. In order to determine whether or not this significant age difference could have been responsible for the disparity between the two groups in terms of adjustment and difficulty with sex role identification, the W group was divided into two age groups which were compared with each other. The critical ratings (i.e., of masculinity) and scores (i.e., on MMPI scale #5) of Ss who were five years old or less at the time of their parent's death were compared using a simple "t" test with those of the W Ss who were six or older. These results are summarized in Table XI. As no significant differences

TABLE XI

TEST FOR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE
MEAN Mf SCORE AND MASCULINITY RATINGS OF TWO
GROUPS OF "W" SUBJECTS

<u>S's Age at</u> <u>Parent's Death</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u> <u>Mf Score</u>	<u>t Value</u>	<u>Mean</u> <u>Masculinity Rating</u>	<u>t Value</u>
0-5	6	24.3	.241	4.19	.298
6+	9	22.8		3.99	

were found it appears that the W Ss were, in fact, a valid control for the effects of prolonged separation between parent and "child of divorce."

As the importance of the inequities between the experimental and control groups is now known to be minimal, a more detailed scrutiny of the meaning of the results can be made.

Confirmed by the data, hypothesis 1 provides the tool for such an analysis. It suggests that one of the reasons male children of divorced parents have difficulty identifying with the appropriate sex role may be that they frequently blame the father for the conflict at home, and for the resultant divorce. If this is so, these feelings of blame may, in turn, increase the emotional distance between the father and the child and may consequently reduce the power of the father to reinforce the child for adopting masculine behavior. In addition, these hostile feelings toward the father may constitute in themselves an enduring reminder for the child not to behave like the father, in a masculine manner; that is, they may function as strong negative reinforcement for adopting the appropriate sex role. Among children from widowed homes, on the other hand, similar feelings of abandonment and consequent hostility (Freudenthal, 1959) are probably less likely to linger both because of the relative steadiness and warmth of their relationship with the parent prior to his or her death, and because of their lingering positive memories of that relationship.

In addition, the data in confirmation of the third hypothesis suggest that the mere absence of one parent is of relatively little consequence in determining the successful completion of the sexual identification process. The failure of the data to support the second hypothesis (that "children of divorce" whose "remaining" parent remarried will have less difficulty in adopting the appropriate sex role than those whose parents do not) actually gives further credence to the third, for again it would appear that the absence of one parent, whether real or foster, is of relatively little import as it seems to be of greater concern whether there was or was not a good deal of conflict between the original parents prior to the remarriage.

In addition to these salient conclusions, the general findings of this study in comparing the effects of parental absence and parental conflict on the degree of sex-typing in male children also have some theoretical merit as they appear to give added weight to the differential reinforcement theory of the sex-typing process.

Proponents of the traditional psychoanalytic theory of identification (Freud, 1938; Bronfenbrenner, 1960) have stated that psychosexual threat and the anxiety reducing mechanisms such as "identification with the aggressor" (Freud, 1946) are responsible for the formation of appropriate sex role behavior. According to them the absence of the parent of the same sex (in this case, the father), in removing the opportunity for resolution of the oedipal complex, "not infrequently favors the inversion of the male" (Freud, 1938). Indeed, numerous

studies (Leichty, 1960; Lynn and Sawrey, 1959; Winch, 1949; Sears, Pintler and Sears, 1946; Rouman, 1955; Hetherington, 1966) have found the development of inappropriate sex-typing in such one-parent situations. These studies have, however, been limited to young children or to the effects of short-term father absence where difficulty in sex-typing is of "short duration" (McCord, 1962).

The present study as well as those reported by Nye (1957), and Greenstein (1966) on the effects of prolonged father absence on sex-typing in the adolescent appear to indicate, contrary to the expectations of the psychoanalytic theory, that there is no disruption of the sex-typing process due to father absence. Of course, this is not to say that there are no other effects of such an upsetting experience.

The results of these investigations, again including the present one, do, however, seem to be more compatible with the differential reinforcement theory of the sex-typing process (Parsons, 1958; Mowrer, 1950; Colley, 1959; Bandura, 1963) which puts them nicely into theoretical perspective. For theorists of this opinion the "acquisition of appropriate sex-typing is contingent upon what the child learns are the expectations which significant adults and others in life have for him" (Colley, 1959). Thus, even in the father's absence, the mother is able to differentially reward the male child for sex-appropriate behavior, and punish him for exhibiting the opposite, thereby accounting for the lack of evidence for difficulty in sex-typing among members of the W group.

Not only does the differential expectation theory provide an explanation for the lack of difficulty father-absent boys have in sex role identification, it also suggests a possible reason for the significant association found in this study between difficulty in sex-typing and family conflict, particularly when the latter is blamed on the father. In such cases the normal learning process, which is called sex-typing, is disrupted. Usually, when all goes well, the male child initially identifies with the mother; then, as certain role characteristics of the father and males in general become discriminable to the child from those expectations for the feminine sex, he is reinforced for adopting the culturally normative sex-appropriate social behavior. The child from an unhappy, conflicting home is, however, torn by ambivalence toward his parents and is not consistently reinforced for manifesting "masculine" behavior. In addition, generalization of his feelings of antipathy toward his father may be seen as negative reinforcement for adopting the male role itself. Finally, the data in support of the fourth hypothesis show, in accord with Altus' (1958) and Goode's (1956) findings, that such children, who have difficulty in adopting sex-appropriate behavior patterns, are more likely to be less stable emotionally and less socially adjusted than their peers whose behavior fulfills the expectations society has for them.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a pilot questionnaire to explore the importance of several variables affecting children of divorced parents. Although your parents may not be divorced or separated we request that each of you answer these questions for purposes of comparison. We are asking you these questions because we really want to know these "facts" about your life, what you think, and how you feel and because we believe that your answers will enable us to begin to learn how to help children whose parents are divorced by understanding their unique experiences and problems. We are asking them too because we are convinced that it will contribute to your education in some small way for you to ask yourself exactly what your parents influence has been. Although this questionnaire contains material which is personal, we hope you will decide to take it. If you should decide not to, we shall understand and respect your decision. If you decide to we can assure you that the information you give us will be held in the strictest confidence.

Your name: _____ Sex: M F

Birthdate: _____

Age at first date: _____

How often did you date in High School? _____

How often do you date now? _____

Are you married? _____ engaged? _____ pinned? _____ going steady? _____
dating one girl (boy)? _____ dating around? _____ not dating? _____

Age you'd like to (or did) get married? _____

Please rate yourself on the following (circle the numbers)

emotional	1	2	3	4	5	intellectual
open	1	2	3	4	5	withdrawn
mother oriented	1	2	3	4	5	father oriented
self confident	1	2	3	4	5	feel inadequate
religious	1	2	3	4	5	irreligious

Father: occupation _____ Age _____
living? _____ dead? _____ when? (date) _____
approximate income _____
education _____ religious preference _____

Mother: occupation _____ Age _____
 living? _____ dead? _____ when? (date) _____
 income _____ education _____
 religious preference _____

Parents: married when (date)? _____
 widowed? _____ if so, when (date)? _____
 mother remarry? _____ father remarry? _____ if so, when? _____
 divorced? _____ if so, when (date)? _____
 mother remarry? _____ father remarry? _____ if so, when? _____
 separated? _____ if so, when (date)? _____
 mother remarry? _____ father remarry? _____ if so, date _____

- if your parents were (are) divorced or separated
 who did you blame it on at the time? mother father both
 who do you blame it on now? mother father both
 how long before the divorce or separation were you aware there
 was going to be one?
 how much open conflict was there in your home before the
 divorce or separation?
 none very little normal amount very much very, very much

How many brothers do you have? _____ their ages _____

How many sisters do you have? _____ their ages _____

With whom do you live now (not in the dorm) at home? _____

If you have ever been separated from your parents for more than
 3 months, put down how long and the circumstances:

Please rate your family on the following: (If you are married, rate
 your family before you were married.)

cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	conflicting
emotional	1	2	3	4	5	intellectual
mother oriented	1	2	3	4	5	father oriented
open	1	2	3	4	5	uncommunicative
religious	1	2	3	4	5	irreligious

Comments?

APPENDIX B

CRITERIA FOR RATING SUBJECTS DURING THE GROUP

PERSONALITY EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Masculinity

The subject has a masculine appearance, good physique, and is not effeminately dressed; is authoritative, aggressive, confident; crosses legs the "male" way; has spread out and relaxed posture; may have low, deep voice; may express athletic interests; is dominating; has mature self-knowledge or insight; is independent.

Leadership

The subject directs the group, particularly at the outset; asks others their opinions; selects or changes the topic of discussion; may talk the most; summarizes and reports back to the examiner the results of the discussion or the feelings of the group members.

Self-confidence

The subject talks at least an average amount; speaks with conviction using words like "always" or "never"; maintains his views though others may disagree with them; doesn't have his hands up around his face; is not very nervous or shy.

Energy

The subject talks more than the average; directs energy toward the ends of the group; may be agitated, talks fast and excitedly; has many ideas about discussion topic.

Aggression

The subject disagrees with others often and may not be diplomatic in expressing his disagreement; questions the experimental procedure; forceful in stating his views; critical.

Defensiveness

The subject does not talk much, or if he does, he does not tell much about himself; may tend instead to direct others and ask their opinions; talks very little about his own feelings; may intellectualize; may be quick to see personal attack in other's statements.

Gregariousness

The subject is very sociable; shows interest in personal aspects of group members (i.e., where they are from, etc.); is jovial, at ease, oriented toward emotions of group more than task; talks about common friends; has a pleasant personality; may be the jokester.

Independence

The subject is willing to stand alone in the group; would like to start own business rather than work for father; doesn't look

at the examiner for support; is original, intelligently assertive, perhaps nonconforming, even eccentric.

At Easiness

The subject is relaxed in group; doesn't stumble over words; talks average amount or more; sits comfortably; is emotionally responsive, able to help others with their anxiety about group.

Need for Achievement

The subject is success oriented; talks a lot about money; may be studying for status profession (i.e., pre-med); has planned for future a good deal; may have come back to school after marriage or armed forces; is ambitious, competitive.

VITA

Frank Augustus Brown II was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 6, 1945. As the son of medical missionary parents, he lived in the Orient and received nearly all of his elementary and high school education at the Canadian Academy in Kobe, Japan. He graduated in June, 1962. The following September he entered Davidson College in North Carolina which he attended for three years. He transferred for his senior year to Asheville-Biltmore College where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in June, 1966.

He entered the Graduate School at The University of Tennessee in the fall of 1966, and began study toward a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology which he received in March, 1969.

He is married to the former Gail Christine Simon of Asheville, North Carolina.