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Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

Laurie Donna Tobias

Date of Birth — Date de naissance

December 27, 1952

Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance

Canada

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

609-8210 111 St., Edmonton, Alberta

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

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Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse

Dr. J. Paterson

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SEX ROLE ORIENTATION AND ADJUSTMENT  
OF SINGLE PARENT WOMEN

by

LAURIE DONNA TOBIAS

C

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

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(SIGNED) *Laurie Tobias*

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

#609, 8210 - 111<sup>th</sup> Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T6G 2C7

DATED: June 8, 1982.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SEX ROLE ORIENTATION AND ADJUSTMENT OF SINGLE PARENT WOMEN submitted by LAURIE DONNA TOBIAS in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in Counselling Psychology.

*J. P. Steiner*  
.....  
Supervisor

*Barbara L. Linder*  
.....  
*Neil D. Blatt*  
.....

Date: June 8, 1982.

To my Mother and Father

## ABSTRACT

This study was exploratory in nature designed to gain a better understanding of one of the factors that may be related to the adjustment of women to single parenthood. The factor investigated was sex role orientation. Three groups of single parent women (Androgynous, Masculine oriented and Feminine oriented) were compared in relation to their psychological health and their role performance in five major areas of functioning. It was expected that the androgynous women would be experiencing the least difficulty with the major role areas and would be experiencing the best level of psychological health.

The study was carried out in two stages with 72 women participating in stage one. The Bem Sex Role Inventory was administered to determine the sex role orientation of each of the women. The Demographic Questionnaire was also administered to obtain background information. Sixteen of these women were chosen to participate in stage two, six Masculine oriented women, five Feminine oriented women and five Androgynous women. A semistructured interview schedule was developed and used to elicit information from the women regarding their role performance in five major areas of functioning. The Personal Orientation Inventory is an objective measure of the women's psychological health.

Analysis of the responses to the interview schedule indicated that women from all three groups were coping effectively with the major role areas in their lives. The

Masculine oriented women were found to have somewhat more active and satisfying social lives. The Androgynous women were found to have the best relationships with their extended families.

Comparison of the three groups of women in relation to psychological health, as measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory, indicated that the Masculine oriented group of women had achieved a somewhat higher but not significantly higher level of psychological health in comparison to the Androgynous and Feminine oriented women. The Feminine oriented women scored significantly lower than the Masculine oriented women on a subscale which measured sensitivity or responsiveness to one's own needs and feelings. The Feminine oriented women also scored significantly lower than both the Masculine oriented and Androgynous women on a subscale which measured self regard.

The findings indicated that the women from all sex role orientation groups were generally functioning at similar levels both socially and psychologically.

Implications for counsellors dealing with single parent women were discussed. Suggestions were made with regard to areas that could be researched in the future.



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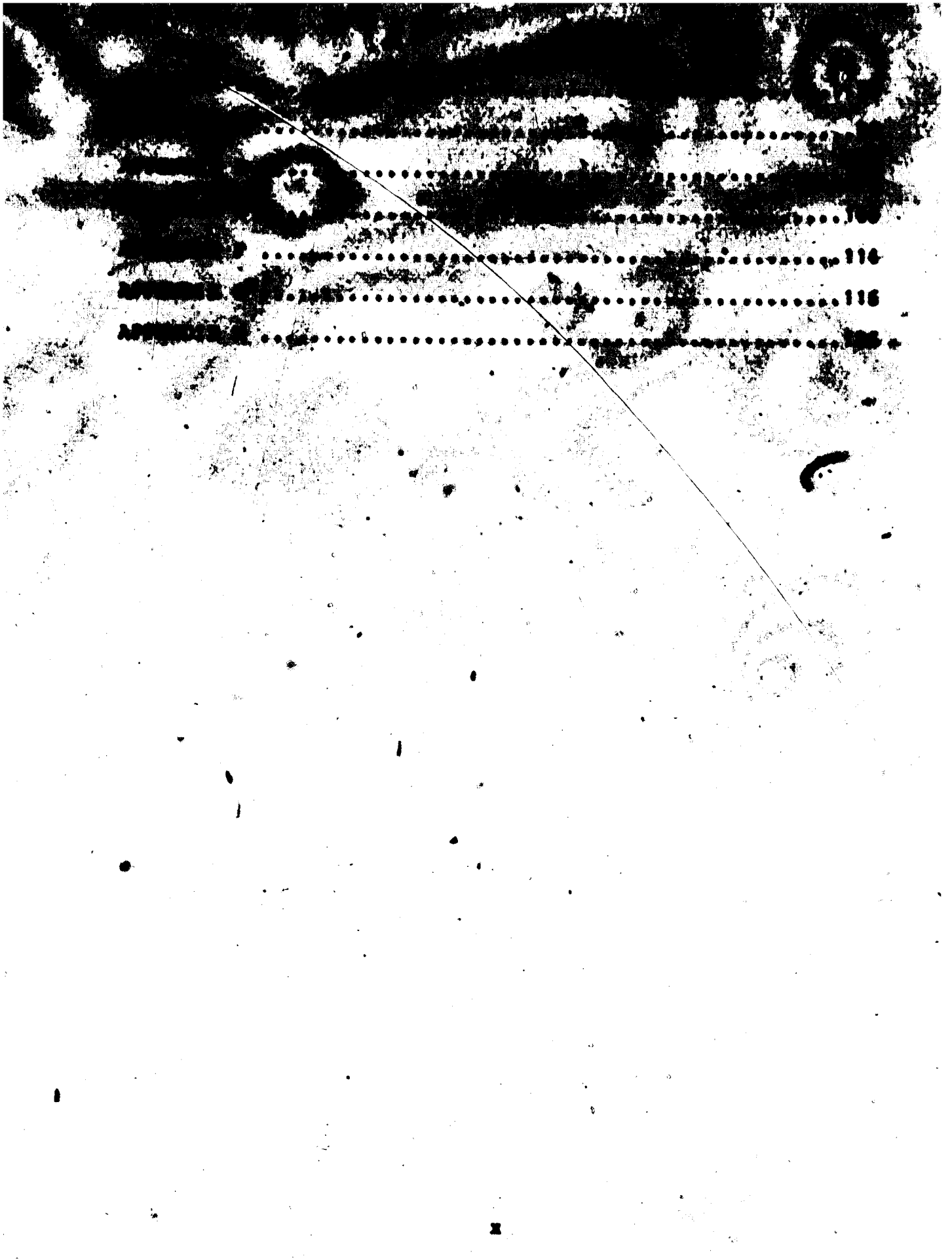
A special thank you is given to the single parent women who by so willingly sharing their experiences with me made this study possible.

To Richard for your love, support and patience I extend a very special and loving thanks.

## Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY .....	1
A. Background to the Problem .....	1
B. Purpose of the Study .....	3
C. Justification for the Study .....	4
D. Overview .....	4
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	5
A. Overview .....	5
B. Part One .....	7
The Increase in Families Headed by Females ..	7
The Experience of Parenting Alone .....	8
Factors Related to the Social and Psychological Well-Being of the Single Parent Woman .....	17
Summary .....	20
C. 'Part Two' .....	21
Sex Roles .....	21
Androgyny .....	23
D. Conclusion .....	28
III. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	29
A. Stage One .....	29
The Demographic Questionnaire .....	30
The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) .....	31
B. Stage Two .....	34
The Social Adjustment Scale .....	35
The Adjustment Interview Schedule .....	37

Personal Orientation Inventory .....	38
Role Anchoring Scales .....	41
C. Limitations of the Study .....	41
D. Evaluation of Data .....	42
IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS .....	44
The Sample .....	44
A. Role Areas .....	47
Work Role .....	47
Parenting .....	49
Social and Leisure Life .....	50
Relationships with Extended Family .....	52
Economic Situation .....	54
Androgynous Women .....	55
Masculine Oriented Women .....	56
Feminine Oriented Women .....	56
Summary .....	57
B. Psychological Health .....	58
Summary .....	62
V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS .....	64
A. Discussion .....	64
B. Implications .....	70
1) Counselling .....	70
2) Socialization .....	71
3) Concept of Androgyny .....	72
C. Suggestions for Further Research .....	73
REFERENCES .....	76
APPENDIX A .....	90



IV.1	Number of Women Occupying Descriptive Categories (N=71) .....	43
IV.2	Number of Women Occupying Descriptive Categories of Marital Status (N=72) .....	44
IV.3	Number of Women Occupying Descriptive Categories of Occupational Status (N=72) .....	46
IV.4	Number of Women Occupying Descriptive Categories of Sex Role Orientation (N=72) .....	47
IV.5	Number of Women by Sex Role Orientation Occupying Descriptive Categories of Adjustment to the Work Role (N=16) .....	48
IV.6	Number of Women by Sex Role Orientation Occupying Descriptive Categories of Adjustment to the Parenting Role (N=16) .....	50
IV.7	Number of Women by Sex Role Orientation Occupying Descriptive Categories of Adjustment to the Social and Leisure Role (N=16) .....	51
IV.8	Number of Women by Sex Role Orientation Occupying Descriptive Categories of Adjustment in their Relationships with Extended Family (N=16) .....	53
IV.9	Number of Women by Sex Role Orientation Occupying Descriptive Categories of Adjustment to the Economic Role (N=16) .....	54
IV.10	POI profiles for Masculine oriented, Androgynous and Feminine oriented women .....	59
IV.11	Analysis of Variance for Three Sex Role Orientation Groups on Personal Orientation Inventory Scales (N=16) .....	60
IV.12	Scheffe Pairwise Contrasts of Means on Feeling Reactivity for Three Sex Role Orientation Groups (N=16) .....	61
IV.13	Scheffe Pairwise Contrasts of Means on Self Regard for Three Sex Role	
IV.14		

Table

Page

Orientation Groups (N=16) .....62

## I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### A. Background to the Problem

Today, one in ten of all Canadian families are one parent families. Between 1966 and 1971 the number of one parent families grew by 28.7%. This is almost three times the rate of increase of two parent families, which increased by 10.5% (National Council of Welfare, 1976). Of the single parent families in Edmonton, 87% are headed by females (Larson, 1980). A woman becomes a single parent through: (1) bearing children out of wedlock; (2) becoming separated or divorced; (3) becoming widowed (Brandwein, Brown, & Fox, 1974).

Many single parents regard their mode of living as a workable and preferable alternative to two parent family life and defend it as a valid option (Hunt & Hunt, 1977). Because of such factors, a large and growing number of women are heading households in Canada.

Concurrently, interest has developed in how these women adapt to new roles. Within this context, an androgynous attitude toward sex roles has been encouraged as a positive, healthy mode of functioning. Rossi (1964) has outlined some of the characteristics of the androgynous concept:

An androgynous conception of sex role means that each sex will cultivate some of the characteristics usually associated with the other in traditional sex role definitions. This means that tenderness and expressiveness should be cultivated in men, so that a male of any age in our society would be psychologically and socially free to express these

qualities in his social relationships. It means that achievement need, workmanship and constructive aggression should be cultivated in women so that a female of any age would be similarly free to express these qualities in her social relationships.(p. 99)

The androgynous personality integrates and balances the best aspects of both the male and female sex role (Sturdivant, 1980). According to Bem (1975) "the androgynous individual should be able to remain sensitive and engage in whatever behaviour seems most effective at the moment regardless of its stereotype as appropriate for one sex or the other"(p. 2). Marecek (1979) argued that traditional ideas of gender appropriateness, on the other hand, constrain men and women from developing broad, flexible behaviour repertoires and thereby limit human adaptability. Because of this behavioural flexibility, Sturdivant (1981) speculated that the androgynous person would be able to function more effectively and achieve greater self-actualization.

Little is known about the factors contributing to the single mother's psychological health and her ability to handle the multiple responsibilities that are related to being sole parent in the home. However, some writers (Marecek, 1979; Kurdek & Siesky, 1980) have suggested that because the single mother must play the role of both provider and nurturer she may find herself needing to demonstrate characteristics or behaviours of both masculine and feminine sex roles. Therefore, Marecek (1979) suggested, "If androgynous identities allow women to assume roles other



than their traditional roles with a minimum of anxiety, self-doubt or discomfort, then such identities may be more consistent with social realities" (such as single parenthood)(p. 246).

Based on this literature, one would expect that a highly differentiated sex role orientation would interfere with the single mother's ability to handle her multiple roles and her psychological health. On the other hand, an androgynous orientation would lead to behavioural flexibility and greater mental health.

#### **B. Purpose of the Study**

The objective of this study is to generate ideas regarding one of the factors that may be related to the successful adjustment by women to single parenthood, sex role orientation.

The study is descriptive, focusing on the information acquired through taped interviews and questionnaires. It is conducted in two stages. In stage one questionnaires are used to obtain background information and to classify the sex role orientation of 72 single parent women. In stage two an interview schedule and questionnaire is used with 16 of these women (five androgynous, five feminine oriented and six masculine oriented) to elicit information regarding their social and psychological experiences. The three groups of women are described and compared in relation to their social adjustment and level of psychological health.

### C. Justification for the Study

It is evident from a review of the literature, that women are managing the challenges of single parenthood with varying degrees of success. For some women, single parenthood creates serious adjustment problems whereas others find it a liberating, growth promoting experience. The question that comes to mind is: what variables determine the woman's ability to overcome the difficulties and cope with being a single parent? As there is a paucity of research in this area (Brandwein, Brown & Fox, 1974; Brown, Feldberg, Fox & Kohen, 1976; Burlage, 1978), the researcher suggests that there is a need to investigate and provide answers to this question. Research of this type will provide counsellors with a base from which they can develop effective counselling strategies which will contribute to the woman's sense of social and psychological well-being and subsequently to that of her children.

### D. Overview

The purpose of the study was briefly introduced in this chapter. A review of the research literature related to the study is presented in Chapter II. Chapter III consists of the methodology and design used for the collection of data. The findings and conclusions based on the research data are presented in Chapter IV, with a discussion of these findings and implications for future research being in Chapter V.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### A. Overview

An extensive body of literature exists on female-headed families. A number of concerns have been raised and approaches utilized to study this population.

The early researchers approached the single parent family as a deviant family form, referring to it as broken, multi-problem, or disorganized. "These families were typically poor, and much of the concern was to note the outcomes for children growing up in such homes. Researchers looked for problems of delinquency, poor school performance, and lowered I.Q." (Burlage, 1978, p. 1). As criticized by Brandwein et.al. (1974) and Herzog and Sudia (1968) these studies concentrated on the pathological effects of single mothers on their children. The assumption was that the absence of a father figure would cause permanent damage to the child, particularly to the son's personality.

More recent researchers have taken the view that the single parent family is an alternative family form rather than regarding it as a deviation of the traditional two-parent family. Herzog and Sudia (1968) have urged that the fatherless family be studied, "as a family form in its own right - not a preferred form, but nevertheless one that exists and functions and represents something other than the mere absence of true familiness" (p. 181). Over the past ten years a number of researchers (Atlas, 1981; Bell, 1975; The

Canadian Council on Social Development, 1971; Guyatt, 1971; Knight, 1980; Weiss, 1975, 1979; Woolley, 1975) have investigated the functioning of the single parent family, taking into account both its strengths and weaknesses. Other researchers, Menzies (1976) and the National Council of Welfare (1976), have studied the relationship between economic factors and female-headed families. Another body of research has dealt with the effects of the single-parent family on the children (Herzog & Sudia, 1968, 1971; Raschke & Raschke, 1979). One of the most recent areas of study has explored the social and psychological experience of the single parent mother (Brown, Feldberg, Fox & Kohen, 1976; Burlage, 1978).

The following literature review is divided into two sections. The focus of part one is on the research and literature of the past ten years which has approached the single parent family as an alternative family form. A description of the recent work which has examined the rise in families headed by females, studies which have investigated the experience of parenting alone, and evidence concerning the factors related to the social and psychological well-being of the single mother is provided in this section. Part two of the literature review is an examination of research on to one factor that may be related to the adjustment of the single parent woman, sex role orientation. The criticism that theorists have of the traditional approach to sex roles is discussed, as is the

theory and research on an alternative view of sex roles, androgyny.

## B. Part One

### The Increase in Families Headed by Females

In 1974, according to figures drawn from Statistics Canada's survey of Consumer Finances, there were 305, 520 one-parent families with at least one child under the age of eighteen—approximately one in ten of all Canadian families. Women were heads of 261, 230 (85.5%) of these families, and men of 44,290 (14.5%). (National Council of Welfare, 1976, p. 4)

According to Statistics Canada (1974), the number of one parent families is growing at a rate triple the rate of growth of two parent families. Twenty percent of single parents are separated; thirty percent are divorced; thirty percent are widowed; twenty percent have never married (Knight, 1980).

Ross and Sawhill (1975) have suggested that, "most of the growth in female-headed families, has been related to increased marital disruption and to the higher proportion of marital dissolutions which involve children"(p. 24). Atlas (1981) has attributed the increase in single parent families to:

1. Men and women each recognizing the legitimacy of their own needs and feeling limited by their traditional family roles.
2. Lengthened lives and more leisure time.
3. A growing public acceptance of the single parent family.(p. 6)

Although a percentage of women do marry or remarry, single parenthood is not necessarily a temporary situation.

As pointed out by Brandwein et.al. (1974):

Over and over the literature assumes that the single parent state is temporary. Although many women especially those under thirty, do remarry, a greater proportion, especially after the age of thirty, remain divorced (Carter & Glick, 1970) ... Because of the assumption that divorcees will remarry, society does not feel obligated to provide supports for single parents. (p. 511)

### The Experience of Parenting Alone

According to LeMasters (1957) the family can be conceptualized as a small social system. The addition or removal of one family member forces a reorganization of the total family system. Each person within the system must shift his or her position and assume the roles of that position. In her position as sole parent, the single mother must shoulder all of the responsibilities traditionally shared in the two parent family:

Of the twenty-three million women who are unmarried, more than fifteen million of us maintain homes, raise families, work, pay our bills, provide guidance for our children and struggle to achieve stability in our financial, moral, emotional, spiritual and sexual lives and all of this alone. (Yates, 1976, p. 1)

As explained by Weiss (1979) the single parent family, "is vulnerable to overloads of several types because of the absence of a second parent within the household who might provide support on a day to day basis and a reserve capability with which to meet new demands" (p. 281).

Bott (1971) discovered a basic division of labour in the organization of two parent families she studied. There was considerable variation within this division of labour. However, the husband's major responsibility was to support the family financially. The wife was responsible for the housework and child care. In the single parent family this division of labour is impossible. As a result, the single parent mother is responsible for three main groups of responsibilities. She must carry out those tasks associated with being the financial provider for the family. She is responsible for tasks associated with child care such as nurturing, disciplining and responding to the children, setting rules, helping with homework, feeding and clothing of the children, provision of child care when at work or out socially. Tasks involved with home maintenance such as meals, laundry, cleaning, repairs, and decorating are also her responsibility.

#### 1) The Single Mother as Breadwinner

The responsibility of supporting the family financially becomes one of the many roles that the single mother must assume. Researchers, Burlage (1978), Espenshade (1979), Kriesberg (1970), found that support from the husband in the form of child support and/or alimony tended to be unreliable and irregular. In 1973, the incidence of poverty in one-parent families in Canada was fifty-three percent, approximately four times that of two-parent families. Among male single parents

the poverty rate was fourteen percent, among female single parents it was fifty-nine percent. Only forty-five percent of all single parents were employed full-time. Another forty-one percent relied primarily on welfare for their income. (National Council of Welfare, 1976)

A number of obstacles stand in the woman's way of providing for her family through her own earnings. First of all, the traditional upbringing of girls may not have socialized them for the wife and mother role or prepared them to be financially independent and self-sufficient. Burlage (1978) reported that women "had to overcome the psychological problems of becoming the breadwinner - their fears of failure, feelings of inadequacy, confusion and lack of information about the world of work ... They were not psychologically 'job ready'" (p. 359). As explained in the report by the National Council of Welfare (1976), on one-parent families in Canada,

We have not allowed or encouraged young women to choose from a variety of options in terms of careers or lifestyles ... when they suddenly find themselves single parents, they must still face the enormous gap between the old roles that their traditional upbringing trained them to fill and the new roles that they are now expected to shoulder. (p. 6)

Not only does the socialization process interfere with the woman's ability to handle the provider role but discrimination in the labour market may create difficulties for her:



Discrimination takes many forms: employer attitudes which characterize female single parents, in particular, as unreliable and unstable, and all mothers as having too many "distractions" (meaning their children); in a preponderance of dead-end jobs for which only women are hired; and in considerably lower pay scales than men. (National Council of Welfare, 1976, p. 6)

Another constraint placed on the woman is her family's needs and demands which in conjunction with being a full time wage earner can involve the physical strain and fatigue and a sense of being overwhelmed by too many things to do. (Herzog & Sudia, 1971).

Given that these obstacles exist for the single parent woman, it is logical that Schlessinger and Todres (1975) found financial pressure ranked as the number one problem of single parent women and that Weiss (1976) found that fifty-five percent of all separated and divorced mothers worry about money most or all of the time.

Although the breadwinning role may be a very difficult one for many women, researchers have found that this role can provide social and psychological rewards for the woman. "In spite of the strain involved in combining the childrearing and breadwinning roles, some women were found to feel increased self-confidence and self-esteem when they managed to do both" (Burlage, 1978, p. 362). Weiss (1979) found that work provided the woman with a social world alternative to that of home and family as well as a meaning and purpose in life. For

example, he quoted one woman as saying, "The finances are the number-one consideration in my working, but the job really does help. You know, you are away from your house and your children and you are coping with a different situation altogether. Your job is therapy" (p. 21).

## 2) The Single Mother as Parent

Just as the single parent has the sole responsibility of financially supporting the family, she has the sole responsibility for childrearing, which like the breadwinning role, has its difficulties, as well as its rewards. Weiss (1979) described some of the problems of raising children alone:

- a. Parents reported feelings of anxiety, concern and guilt over their childrearing practices. They feared that their children may be harmed psychologically because there was no father figure in the home. They worried about being too indulgent as well as on the other hand being too restrictive.
- b. Parents found it difficult not having someone to consult with when a difficulty arose or an issue (allowances, bedtimes, dating) needed to be discussed.
- c. Not having someone to share the task of responding to the children's needs and wishes was a problem.

- 13
- d. Not having someone to balance or minimize the parent's mistakes (impulsive anger, overprotectiveness) was another worry for the single parent.  
(p. 267-272)

Durlage (1978) found another problem with parenting alone was child care while the woman was working. The National Council of Welfare (1976) reported that, "many thousands of children daily endure inadequate and often makeshift child care arrangements because there is nothing else available"(p. 12). "... although there was a 100 percent increase in the number of day care, lunch and afterfour spaces from 1973 to 1974, there were still only 55,181 such spaces to serve the 362,000 children of one-parent families"(p. 13). It is not surprising that many women reported being worried and anxious over the child care arrangements they had made.

As with the breadwinner role, not all women found difficulties with parenting alone. Atlas (1981) described the following benefits:

- a. A reduction in tension, hostility, and discord within the family and an increase in family solidarity and consistency.
- b. Flexibility in planning quality time with children.
- c. A democratic working together approach to problem solving and daily living.

- d. An opportunity for growth and sharing.
- e. The widening experience: two differing spheres of influence.
- f. The extended single parent community.
- g. The opportunity for young people to mature, gain independence, and feel needed and valued as contributing members of the household.

(p. 27)

### 3) The Single Mother as Household Manager

The responsibility of maintaining the home is the third major role assumed by the single parent. Burlage (1978) suggested that based on time budget studies of the employed, still-married woman with children, paid employment combined with the responsibility of household tasks plus child care is an overwhelming burden for the single mother. "If she is employed full-time for forty hours per week, it can be estimated that household and paid employment together require a minimum of 84.8 hours per week" (Burlage, 1978, p. 40).

Weiss (1979) found that almost all the women he interviewed did not have enough time or energy to maintain the home the way they liked. Brown et.al. (1976) found that the housework, repairs and maintenance were a low priority for the divorced working mothers she studied. These tasks were 'sandwiched' in when there was time.

Although the combining of household tasks with the breadwinning and parenting roles can be overwhelming for some women, Brown et.al. (1976) discovered women who enjoyed the new sense of control they had over the housekeeping. As one woman stated, "The best thing is that I don't have to answer to any one. I can be more relaxed ... I can make my own time. I'm my own boss"(p. 127).

#### 4) Difficulties of Parenting Alone

Weiss (1979) discovered that many women experienced role stress as a result of feeling overloaded by the multiple responsibilities they were carrying out:

##### a. Responsibility Overload

"All the obligations you can imagine are on your shoulders. This overwhelming responsibility that includes everything, it's all yours, whether you want to assume the responsibility or not"(Weiss, 1979, p. 268).

##### b. Task Overload

"In the beginning I couldn't figure out how I was going to get them over to the nursery school or home for lunch or who was going to take care of them. It just seemed like there were a thousand schedules to arrange and food, and clothes"(Weiss, 1979, p. 272).

##### c. Emotional Overload

"I just get down. Feel sorry for myself. Sorry

for me. I get depressed. I guess that's about the word. Tension headaches, the whole thing. When things get really bottled up in me that's how things come out. Tension headaches and nerves. And I get depressed a lot over it all"(Weiss, 1979, p. 276).

#### 5) Benefits of Parenting Alone

##### a. Relief from a bad marriage

"My marriage was destroying me ... Because he didn't want anybody that could think on their own. He wanted somebody that would do as he said, with no questions asked"(Weiss, 1979, p. 260).

##### b. The Freedom to make Decisions

"I make a decision and that's it. There's nobody to argue with... There's no pressure ... I do the controlling"(Weiss, 1979, p. 262).

##### c. Enhanced Self-Esteem

"I had a very damaged ego when I came out of the marriage. As I gained in the ability to do things and the knowledge that I had value professionally, and that I was able to take care of my own kids, and that I was able in some ways to do better financially than my ex-husband had done, that was a good feeling for me"(Weiss, 1979, p. 263).

##### d. Closeness to the Children

"I found, living with my kids, that I grew very close to them. I found that they were small people, that they had all the same emotions and values and physical needs as big people. And that was very rewarding" (Weiss, 1979, p. 264).

#### 6) Summary

As illustrated by the research on single parenting there are a number of problems and difficulties that may be encountered by these women. Many women found coping with these problems an insurmountable challenge.

However, other women were able to handle the difficulties and apparently enjoy single parenthood. As stated previously, the question that comes to mind is: What variables determine the woman's ability to overcome the difficulties and cope with being a single parent?

The following section will address this question.

#### Factors Related to the Social and Psychological Well-Being of the Single Parent Woman

There has been very little research carried out to investigate and understand which factors increase or decrease the single mother's social and emotional well-being. However, based on the research in the area the following factors seem to be related to the adjustment of the single mother.

##### 1) Source of Income

Bould (1977) reported that "...the mother who fully assumed both roles and earned her family's support was

more likely to be better off than the mother who stayed home and depended upon unreliable, unstable, controlling or stigmatizing sources of income"(p. 347). Burlage's (1978) research supported these findings, "...our research would suggest that what is important to mothers in receiving financial help is that it be reliable, frequent and non-stigmatizing"(p. 363).

## 2) Employment and Education Background

As discussed by Burlage (1978), those women who had been employed prior to becoming single parents or had an adequate education and/or training which allowed them to enter the work force with reasonably little difficulty, found it easier to take on the responsibility of head of the household and sole provider. "It is the single parent mother who is poorly educated and has a low income ... who is experiencing the greatest life stresses" (Guttentag, 1976, p. 13).

## 3) Child Care Arrangements

Burlage (1978) suggested that good quality, dependable and affordable child care arrangements reduced the stress for single mothers.

## 4) Length of Time as a Single Parent

Marotz-Baden (1979) explained that "...stress usually dissipates over time as families reorganize without the absent member" (p. 8). Other researchers have found that the first few months of single parenthood may be the most difficult (Bohannon, 1971;



Goode, 1956; Weiss, 1975).

#### 5) Availability and Use of Support Systems

Throughout the literature, support systems are stressed as being important in relieving the social, personal, economic and parental burdens encountered by single parents. Colletta (1979) described support systems as "forces at the person to person and social levels which enable people to master the challenges and strains of their lives" (p. 837). This author (1979) further explained that support systems allow the individual to mobilize psychological resources and complete tasks which then averts the harmful effects of stressful situations. Bronfenbrenner (1976) stated that the parent will perform her nurturing role better and improve the quality of the interaction with her children if support systems exist. Colletta (1979) pointed out that without adequate support, the build up of stresses may have deleterious effects on the parent's ability to care for her children.

Family, friends, single parent organizations, counsellors and religion were support systems used by those who participated in Weiss' (1979) study on single parents. Guyatt (1971) recommended that better support systems such as subsidized day care, preventive counselling services and rehabilitation programs through Manpower be provided to help the single parent function more adequately. The Canadian Council on Social

Development (1971) recommended similar support systems as well as equal employment opportunities for women, Big Brother/Big Sister organizations, subsidized housing and homemaker services. Bell (1975) recommended increased financial support for recreation, transportation and babysitting.

#### 6) Non-traditional Sex Role Attitudes and Orientation

Brown, Perry and Harburg (1977) investigated women's coping behaviour over a four month period during marital dissolution. One of their major findings was that nontraditional sex role attitudes, particularly those rejecting the exclusive importance of home-centred motherhood, were found to be significantly related to lowered distress and increased well being.

Marecek (1979) and Kurdek and Siesky (1980) suggested that an androgynous sex role orientation may be related to the well-being of the single mother.

#### Summary

The female headed family has become a common feature of today's society. Because there is only one parent to carry out the responsibilities traditionally shared by two parents, single parenting can be very taxing for the mother and children involved. Research indicates that the way in which the woman adjusts to her single parent position and the multiple roles associated with the position, varies from individual to individual. Although there has not been a systematic investigation into the factors related to the

single mother's social and emotional well-being, there are indications that the source and amount of income, level of education and training, quality day care, length of time as a single parent, use and availability of support systems and nontraditional sex role attitudes and orientation may be factors which contribute to the social and psychological adjustment of the single parent woman. Researchers (Brandwein, Brown & Fox, 1974; Burlage, 1978) have urged that more work be done to help understand the complex question of the single mother's adjustment.

As the purpose of this study is to explore one of the factors that may be related to the woman's adjustment, sex role orientation, section two of this chapter is a presentation of the literature in this area.

### C. Part Two

#### Sex Roles

In western society,

masculinity and femininity are conceptualized as polar opposites rather than qualities that can exist in different balances within each individual ... Men are to be independent, rational, achieving, competitive, success-oriented, tough, self-reliant, and aggressive. Women are to be emotional, nurturant, interpersonally oriented, dependent, caring, and intuitive. Men are urged to be "the big wheel", the "breadwinner" ... Women are urged to be wives, mothers, lovers, sex objects, caretakers... (Olds, 1981, p. 7)

As explained by Sturdivant (1980), the danger resulting from this dichotomous view of gender appropriateness is that both men and women are constrained from developing broad,

flexible behaviour repertoires and thereby human adaptability is limited. In the case of the single parent mother who must rear her children, manage a household and support her family, a variety of competencies and a diversity of traits are required to handle these various roles. She is in a position where she must meet both masculine and feminine role expectations.

Aslin (1976) has argued that one of the major reasons that single parent women have difficulty coping is because they have not been socialized to function as independent, autonomous people:

Woman's traditional socialization focused on gaining all her sense of identity from the wife and mother roles. These roles were summarized by Stevens (1971) as essentially the role of nonbeing: "These roles are intrinsically passive. They require the subjugation of oneself to the needs of others - a husband and children (p. 13)." In addition to overtly not developing her own identity via a career or other important involvements with society, she is programmed to find her identity through her man. Specifically the division of marital sex roles has meant that the wife is dependent on her husband for economic support, for social status, for all interactions with societal institutions, for emotional satisfaction and for companionship and conversation. Thus the traditional female socialization yields women unprepared to function as autonomous adults. (p. 38)

Recently, psychologists have been investigating an alternative to the dichotomous view of sex roles. "The proposed integrative conceptualization of sex role characteristics and behaviour has been given the name androgyny ... Derived from the Greek andros, meaning man, and gyne, meaning woman" (Olds, 1981, p. 19).

## Androgyny

"Androgyny refers to the relatively equal development within one person of the personality characteristics traditionally associated with men as well as women. Androgyny, as a personality and behavioural characteristic represents the flexible integration of the traditional "masculine" and "feminine" polarities within an individual of either sex"(Olds, 1981, p. 20). According to Sturdivant (1980) all human beings have the capacity for what our society has classified as "feminine" and "masculine" characteristics. The androgynous personality would integrate and balance the best aspects of each role. Through the androgynous personality each person can free themselves from rigid, out-moded sex role standards and display a wider range of useful human skills.

Researchers and theorists have focused on two hypotheses related to androgyny:

1. Traditional sex role concepts restrict behaviour in significant ways.
2. Androgynous individuals are more effective and psychologically healthier than sex-typed individuals.

With relation to the first hypothesis, Sandra Bem (1975) suggested that, "The Androgynous (henceforth all capitalized sex-role descriptions will refer directly to Bem and her BSRI) individual should be able to remain sensitive to the changing conditions of the situation and engage in whatever behaviour seems most effective at the moment

regardless of its stereotype as appropriate for one sex or the other" (p. 634). For example, the Androgynous person is someone who is both assertive and yielding, independent and tender, aggressive and gentle, and capable of both expressive and instrumental behaviour depending on the situational appropriateness of the behaviour. Bem designed a number of experiments using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) as a measure of sex role orientation to demonstrate that Androgynous subjects were able to respond more appropriately to a given situation than Masculine or Feminine oriented subjects, while on the other hand showing that sex-typed subjects have "behavioural deficits" and are lacking the abilities to respond effectively in certain situations. Bem (1975) found that Androgynous individuals were able to perform cross-sex behaviour with little reluctance or discomfort whereas sex-typed subjects were not able to respond appropriately in an experiment where subjects were required to show independence when under pressure to conform (masculine behaviour) and nurturance when given an opportunity to interact with a baby kitten (feminine behaviour). Bem and Lenney (1976) reported that sex-typed individuals actively avoided a variety of activities which were stereotyped as more appropriate for the opposite sex. These subjects also felt greater psychological discomfort when engaging in cross-sex behaviour. Subjects were asked which of a series of paired activities they would choose to perform for pay while being

photographed. Sex-typed subjects preferred sex-appropriate activities more than Androgynous or sex-reversed subjects. Bem, Martyna and Watson (1976) reported that Androgynous individuals displayed situationally appropriate behaviour when interacting with a baby and listening to a lonely student. On the other hand, Masculine males showed behavioural deficits when undertaking the two traditionally "feminine" behaviours. These studies lend support to the hypothesis that traditional sex roles do restrict individuals in performing simple everyday tasks and that Androgynous individuals are able to engage in situationally appropriate behaviour regardless of its masculine or feminine stereotype.

\* The second hypothesis, that androgynous people may be better adjusted, more effective and psychologically healthier than sex-typed individuals is based on the first hypothesis. In other words, psychologically androgynous individuals may be better adjusted than sex-typed subjects because of their greater behavioural flexibility. According to Kagan (1964) and Kohlberg (1966) the highly sex-typed person attempts to keep behaviours consistent with the internalized sex role standard. This is done by suppressing behaviour that might be considered undesirable or inappropriate for his/her sex. Forisha (1978) suggested that the sex-typed individual is restricted because behaviour comes from external norms and the expectations of others. How one thinks, feels and acts depends on whether one is

male or female. Forisha (1978) further explained that role oriented behaviour is limiting and constraining. Androgyny, however, leads to better adjustment because the individual does not restrict his/her behaviour. The androgynous individual is capable of responding genuinely, authentically and openly. Behaviours, emotions, and attitudes are chosen because they are the most appropriate for the individual's situation. As can be seen from the following studies the results of the research to test these ideas are not conclusive.

Androgynous self-concepts have been found to relate to higher self-esteem (Orlofsky & Windle, 1978; Spence, Helmrich & Stapp, 1975) whereas high femininity scores were found to related to high anxiety, low self-esteem and low social acceptance (Consenting & Neillbrun, 1964; Gall, 1969; Gray, 1957; Orlofsky & Windle, 1978; Sears, 1970; Webb, 1963).

Deutsch and Gilbert (1976) reported that sex-typing (high Femininity scores on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)) in college women was associated with poor overall adjustment as measured by the Revised Bell Adjustment Inventory. In addition, Flaherty and Dusek (1980) and Orlofsky and Windle (1978) found that an Androgynous sex-role orientation was associated with personal adjustment in women.

Cristall and Dean (1976) and Nevill (1977) reported that their data suggested a positive correlation between



### Androgyny and self-actualization.

Although these findings suggest that an Androgynous orientation in women may be related to higher self-esteem, personal adjustment and self-actualization, other researchers have found a Masculine orientation in both men and women may lead to better adjustment (Deutsch & Gilbert, 1976; Flaherty & Dusek, 1980; Jones et.al., 1978; Orlofsky & Windle, 1978; and Silvern & Ryan, 1979). According to Silvern and Ryan (1979), "Androgyny vs. traditional sex-typing was associated with superior adjustment only among women and only insofar as androgyny was associated with high Masculinity"(p. 761). Jones et.al. (1978) found that those individuals with a Masculine orientation were most adaptive regardless of gender and Orlofsky and Windle (1978) reported that cross-sex typing permitted effective opposite sex behaviours and was associated with high self-esteem in women.

Worell (1978) pointed out, "The limited research data accumulated so far suggest that sex roles emphasizing either instrumental, expressive or Androgynous orientations may have differing implications for the psychological well-being of males, and females in American culture"(p. 778). Olds (1981) warned that "...it would be premature to make any definitive conclusions on the basis of studies which largely correlate the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) scores and measures of self-esteem or self-actualization through paper and pencil tests... In one sense, these experiments can be

considered only a beginning in establishing the validity of the construct of androgyny" (p. 22).

#### D. Conclusion

Theoretically, one would expect that the single mother who perceived herself as having an equal endorsement of both desirable Masculine and desirable Feminine attributes (an Androgynous orientation) would be experiencing less difficulty handling her multiple roles and would also be experiencing better psychological health than the women with a Feminine orientation or a Masculine orientation. One would expect that the balance of positive male and positive female attributes would allow the Androgynous woman to be more behaviourally flexible and adaptive to a variety of situations such that she could handle both the 'Masculine' and 'Feminine' responsibilities with little discomfort and anxiety which in turn would lead to less stress, higher self-esteem and better psychological health.

### III. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Chapter III consists of the procedure used in conducting the study, the method of data collection and a description of the sample.

#### A. Stage One

In order to gather a sample of single parent women, a number of agencies expected to have a clientele of single mothers were contacted and asked for their assistance. All agencies agreed to help. They were requested to distribute letters (Appendix A) to their single parent mothers which explained the nature of the study. Enclosed in the letter was a response card which was to be mailed to the researcher if an individual was interested in participating. Those women wishing to take part were asked to come to the University of Alberta on one of two nights to complete a questionnaire. Approximately twenty women took part in this way. The following agencies distributed letters for the researcher: the Personal Development Centre which provides preventive educational programs as well as personal, marriage, family and group counselling; Big Sisters which matches females, six to seventeen years of age with adult female volunteers; Uncles at Large which matches boys ages six to sixteen from father absent homes with adult men; the Family Services Association, an agency that offers family counselling as well as family life education courses such as Divorce Adjustment; the Parent Resource Unit which provides

assistance and resource material to parent groups and committees; and the Family Life Education Council, an educational agency, that offers a number of educational programs including courses to help newly singled people cope with this transition period. A number of day care centre directors and social workers in the city of Edmonton also distributed letters to their clientele. In addition, the researcher administered the questionnaire to another twenty-nine women attending meetings offered by Catholic Social Services for divorced, widowed and separated people. Another fifteen women completed the questionnaire in their homes and returned it to the researcher through the mail or in person. The final six questionnaires were completed by women attending Terra school, which provides counselling and educational classes for unmarried pregnant girls and mothers. In total 72 women participated in stage one. All women who participated in stage one were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) and the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)(Appendix C).

#### **The Demographic Questionnaire**

The demographic questionnaire was constructed to gather information regarding the woman's marital status, length of time as a single parent, length of time married, number of children, employment status and educational level. As well, questions dealing with problem areas and life satisfaction were asked.

### **The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)**

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) is a paper and pencil self-report instrument designed to distinguish between individuals who perceive themselves as being masculine, feminine, androgynous or undifferentiated in their sex role identification. It was utilized to classify women in this way for the present study.

The BSRI was designed in 1974 by Sandra Bem as an alternative to earlier masculinity-femininity scales which conceptualized masculinity and femininity as opposite ends of a single bipolar dimension. Her purpose was to develop a sex role inventory which would not build in an inverse relationship between femininity and masculinity in order that the concept of androgyny could be empirically investigated. The BSRI treats femininity and masculinity as two independent dimensions thus enabling an individual to determine if she or he is high on both dimensions (androgynous), low on both dimensions (undifferentiated) or high on one dimension and low on the other (either "feminine" or "masculine") (Bem, 1981).

According to Bem (1981), the construction of the BSRI was based on two theoretical assumptions:

First, largely as a result of historical accident, contemporary American culture has clustered heterogeneous attributes into two mutually exclusive categories, each category considered both more characteristic of and more desirable for females and males; these cultural prescriptions are well known by virtually all members of the culture. Secondly, individuals vary in the extent to which they use these cultural definitions as idealized standards of

femininity and masculinity for evaluating their own personality and behaviour. (p. 10)

The inventory contains sixty items. Twenty of the items are characteristics which are stereotypically feminine (e.g. affectionate, sympathetic, sensitive to needs of others) and twenty are characteristics which are stereotypically masculine (e.g. independent, assertive, forceful, dominant). The remaining twenty characteristics serve as filler items (e.g. friendly, sincere, likeable).

Respondents are asked to rate themselves on each of the sixty items using a seven-point rating scale ranging from one ("never or almost never true") to seven ("always or almost always true").

The test yields a masculinity score which is the mean of the self-ratings on the twenty masculine items and a femininity score which is the mean of the self-ratings on the twenty feminine items. Using the median split technique an individual is classified as androgynous (above the median on both the masculine and feminine scores), as undifferentiated (below the median on both the masculine and feminine scores), as feminine (above the median on the femininity scale and below the median on the masculinity scale) or as masculine (above the median on the masculinity scale and below the median on the femininity scale). The medians are based on the normative data of a 1978 sample of Stanford University students. (In addition, the masculinity and femininity raw score ratings can be converted to standard scores. The difference between the masculinity and

femininity standard scores are then computed and converted to T scores ( $X=50$ ;  $S.D.=10$ )).

Using the median split technique, Bem (1981) reported that 39% of the females were classified as feminine, 12% as masculine, 30% as androgynous and 18% as undifferentiated. For males, the corresponding per cents were 12, 42, 20 and 27.

The psychometric analyses of the BSRI were based on two samples of undergraduate students at Stanford University. The 1973 sample consisted of 279 females and 444 males. The second sample completed the BSRI in 1978 and included 340 females and 476 males.

Test-retest reliabilities were computed using a test-retest interval of approximately four weeks. Twenty-eight males and twenty-eight females from the 1973 Stanford sample were retested. All scores proved highly reliable. Test-retest reliabilities for the females were: femininity = .82; masculinity = .94; F-M = .88. Test-retest reliabilities for the males were: femininity = .89; masculinity = .76; F-M = .86 (Bem, 1981).

Coefficient alpha was computed to determine the internal consistency of the BSRI. Males and females were computed separately for the masculinity score and femininity score and the Femininity - minus - Masculinity score. The results for the 1973 and 1978 females, respectively were: femininity = .75 and .78; masculinity = .78 and .78; F-M = .78 and .82. The results for the 1973 and 1978 males,

respectively, were: femininity = .87 and .86; masculinity = .86 and .87; F-M = .84 and .82 (Bem, 1981).

Evidence regarding the validity of the BSRI has been based on studies reporting sex differences on the masculinity and femininity BSRI scales. In two groups of college students, males (n=444 and 117) scored significantly higher (X=4.97 and 4.96) than females (n=279 and 77; X=4.57 and 4.55) on the masculinity scale ( $p < .001$ ). Conversely the college females scored significantly higher (X=5.01 and 5.08) than the college males (X=4.44 and 4.62) on the femininity scale ( $p < .001$ ) (Bem, 1974). In a group of studies looking at the instrumental and expressive functioning only the androgynous individuals showed consistently high levels of behaviour in both domains, whereas nonandrogynous individuals were frequently low in one or the other of the two domains (Bem, 1975; Bem, Martyna, and Watson, 1976). These findings provide additional support to the fact that the BSRI does identify the groups of individuals it was designed to identify.

#### B. Stage Two

Of the 72 women who completed the BSRI and the demographic questionnaire, 18 were chosen for stage two of the study. One woman was unable to participate due to the bus strike in Edmonton at the time and one woman did not have the time to be interviewed. Therefore, 16 women took part in stage two. As the purpose of stage two was to



describe and compare three groups of women, the researcher interviewed five androgynous women, five feminine oriented women and six masculine oriented women.

The main criteria for choosing women to participate in stage two were sex role orientation and full time occupation outside the home either as a student or an employee. All but one of the women had been a single parent for more than one year. The researcher felt that those women on their own for more than one year would have had time to establish a set of patterns and new life styles as single parents.

It was decided to collect data from these 16 women by means of an interview technique supplemented with a questionnaire. An interview schedule (Appendix D) was developed from the Social Adjustment Scale - Interview (SAS) and an Adjustment Interview Scale developed by Marg Kendall (1977) for use with single mothers. In addition to the interview, the subjects were asked to complete the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI). This was administered as a means of objectively evaluating the level of personal adjustment of each woman through this measure of psychological health.

#### **The Social Adjustment Scale**

The Social Adjustment Scale (SAS) was designed to measure both instrumental and expressive role performance in six major areas of functioning: work as either worker, housewife or student; social and leisure activities; relationships with extended family and nuclear family; and

marital and parental roles. Each of these role areas is assessed in terms of role performance, interpersonal relations, friction and role satisfaction. There are 42 specific items contained in the scale which are rated on a 5-point scale with defined anchor points. The remaining 6 items are global judgments of the five role areas and an overall rater evaluation rated on a 7-point scale. A two month period prior to the interview is assessed (Paykel et.al., 1971).

The SAS was modified from the Structured and Scaled Interview to Assess Maladjustment (SSIAM). It had been used with both psychiatric and non psychiatric populations, suicide attempters, and methadone maintained patients. The Social Adjustment Scale-Self Report (SAS-SR) was derived from the SAS and was found to provide results which were essentially the same as the SAS. It had been utilized in assessing university students and women attending consciousness raising groups (Weissman, 1978). The SAS was originally designed for a prophylactic trial of antidepressants and psychotherapy in outpatient women.

Interrater reliability of the SAS was tested by comparing the scores of two raters who were research assistants experienced in testing and interviewing. Thirty-one joint interviews were held on a separate sample of depressed patients. Independent ratings were made by both raters, with one rater conducting the interview alternately with alternate subjects. There was 86 per cent agreement

between raters within one point on a five point scale. The mean Pearson correlation of .80 indicated good agreement between raters (Weissman et.al., 1971). The scale was found to have discriminative power. The mean factor scores for the depressed patient sample and a normal patient sample were examined and differences were tested for significance by the t test. The depressives were significantly impaired on all factors (Paykel et.al., 1971).

A factor analysis was performed on the scale ratings resulting in six independent dimensions (work performance, interpersonal friction, inhibited communication, submissive dependency, family attachment and anxious ruminations). These factors cut across the various role areas, marital, parental, social and leisure and work which provided evidence for the meaningfulness of the factors (Paykel et.al., 1971).

#### **The Adjustment Interview Schedule**

Kendall (1977) designed the Adjustment Interview to be used with single parent women for use in her thesis, 'Maternal Influence on the Father-Absent Child' (1977). The interview was divided into five sections, with each section looking at one aspect of the mother's adjustment: self-esteem, social contact, practical adjustment (time, energy, finances) attitude toward men and perception of child's adjustment. Each aspect was rated on a five point scale, with "5" representing the highest rating (Kendall, 1977).

Test-retest reliability scores ranged from .60 to .80 on a pre-study sample of four husbandless mothers, with no more than a one-point difference between any of the test-retest scores. This interview schedule corresponded with questionnaires constructed by the Canadian Council on Social Development (1971), Guyatt (1971), and Marsden (1969). These questionnaires were developed to obtain information about problems of adjustment of single parent women. The validity of this interview schedule was judged by its correspondence with these previous questionnaires. Questions allowed both subjective and objective responses and both were given equal weight on the interview rating scales.

#### Personal Orientation Inventory

The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) was administered as an objective measure of the woman's psychological health. Shostrom (1964) developed this self-report inventory as a "comprehensive measure of values and behavior seen to be of importance in the development of self-actualization" (p. 5). It consists of 150 two-choice statements which purport to assess the healthy psychological growth of an individual. Subjects are asked to choose the statement in each pair which is true or mostly true of themselves. The instrument takes approximately thirty minutes to complete.

The items are scored in terms of two basic scales of "personal orientation", inner directed support and time

competence. The Inner-Directed scale measures whether the individual is self directed; that is, guided by internalized motivations and principles or other directed, more influenced by external pressures. The Time-Competence Scale measures the person's ability to live in the present rather than the past or future. In addition, the POI consists of ten subscales, each of which measures an element of the psychological construct of self-actualization: person's values, feelings, self-perception, synergistic awareness, and interpersonal sensitivity.

When the raw scores obtained from each of the scales are plotted on the profile sheet, which is based on an adult normal sample (Shostrom, 1966), they can be converted to standard scores ( $X=50$ ;  $S.D.=10$ ). Shostrom (1964) stated that if most of the scale scores fall above the mean of 50 then the person is functioning at an effective level. However, if most of the scores fall below the mean, the individual may be experiencing difficulty in his or her personal effectiveness.

Research findings suggest that the POI is a reasonably valid and reliable measure of self-actualization. Shostrom's (1964) findings, that the POI discriminated between individuals who had been clinically assessed as having a high degree of healthy functioning and those who did not, provided evidence for the construct validity of the POI. Fox, Knapp and Michael (1968) found hospitalized psychiatric patients scored significantly lower on the POI scales than

did Shostrom's (1964) samples, lending further support to the construct validity of the test. The negative correlation with neuroticism (Knapp, 1965), alcoholism (Zaccaria & Weir, 1967) and measures of pathology obtained from the MMPI (Shostrom & Knapp, 1966) indicated that the POI scales have good concurrent validity. Further evidence of concurrent validity was reported by Knapp and Comrey (1973) who found a positive significant relationship between self-actualization and emotional health and Mattocks and Jew (1974) whose results indicated that the higher the level of self-actualization, the better the adjustment as defined by the Dymond (1954) Q-Sort Adjustment Scale.

Test-retest reliability was reported by Klavetter and Mogar (1967) for a one week interval. Reliability coefficients ranged from .52 to .82 for the subscales with coefficients for the Time-Competence and Inner Direction scales being .71 and .77 respectively. Test-retest reliability coefficients over a two week period were reported by Wise and Davis (1975) as .75 for Time Competence and .88 for Inner Direction.

Internal consistency coefficients using split-half methods were reported by Wise and Davis (1975) as .50 for Time Competence and .84 for Inner Direction on the first administration of the POI. On the second administration, two weeks later, the coefficients were .73 and .87 for the Time Competence and Inner Direction Scales respectively. Weiss (1977) reported internal consistency coefficients of .61 for

Time Competence and .83 for Inner Direction.

#### Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher contacted the eighteen women chosen to participate in stage two of the study. An interview time was arranged. All interviews were conducted in the Education Clinic at the University of Alberta. Each interview was tape recorded with the subject's permission. Following the interview, subjects were given the option of completing the POI at that time, or later in their own homes. All questionnaires were returned to the researcher within two weeks of the interview.

Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and willingly signed a release form (Appendix F) allowing their questionnaires and tapes to be used for research purposes. Because of the interest in the results, shown by the women, they were told they would receive a copy of the results following the completion of the study.

#### C. Limitations of the Study

The major limitations of the study are related to the gathering of the sample and the sample size. First of all, the 72 women who participated in stage one of the study were not chosen at random from the general population of single parents. The women volunteered to participate in the study after learning of it through agencies that were serving as support systems for many of the women. Therefore, there may

be some bias to the study findings as the women may not be representative of the general population of single parents.

Secondly, the 16 women interviewed were a restricted sample group in that they were either working outside their homes or going to school full time and had been single parents for more than one year. The experiences of women receiving welfare assistance and/or working in the home full time may be quite different from the women in this sample, as may be the experience of those who have been single parents for less than one year.

Thirdly, the findings of the study are based on the responses of only 16 single parent women, making it difficult to generalize the findings to the larger population of single parents.

It is recommended that conclusions be viewed keeping in mind both the limitations of the sample and the exploratory nature of the study.

#### D. Evaluation of Data

A descriptive technique is used to report the data obtained from the sample. The taped interviews were transcribed. Patterns of responses were identified and used with the format of the Social Adjustment Scale (SAS) (Appendix H) to operationally define three categories of adjustment in relation to each of the five major areas of functioning.



Each of the participants' level of functioning was assessed in terms of these categories of adjustment. The three groups of women (masculine, feminine and androgynous) were compared relative to their levels of adjustment for each role area. Following this procedure, the POI was scored to obtain an objective evaluation of each woman's level of psychological functioning.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter IV consists of a presentation of the research data. Three groups of women (androgynous, masculine oriented and feminine oriented) are described and compared in relation to their psychological health and their ability to handle five major areas of functioning: work, parenting, social life, relationships with extended family and financial situation. Responses to questions from the Interview Schedule (Appendix D) were used to describe the role performance of the single parent in relation to these five areas. Scores from the Personal Orientation Inventory were used to compare the three groups of women in relation to their psychological health.

First of all, the sample of women who participated in the study is described. Secondly, findings are presented for each of the five major areas of functioning. Women are grouped in relation to levels of adjustment and sex role orientation. This is followed by a description of the three groups of women in relation to their overall level of adjustment. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the data comparing the three groups of women in relation to their psychological health.

##### **The Sample**

The 72 women who participated in stage one of the study were between the ages of 16 and 54 (Table 1) with a mean age of 34.4.

Table 1  
 Number of Women Occupying  
 Each Age Category (N=71)

Age Categories		
16-28	29-41	42-54
22	30	19

Thirty-seven of the women were raising one child; 26 were raising two children; seven women were raising three children and two women were raising four children (Table 2).

Table 2  
 Number of Women Occupying  
 Categories of Family Size (N=72)

Number of Children			
1	2	3	4
37	26	7	2

There were 24 separated women, 30 divorced women, 6 widowed women and 12 unattached women (Table 3).

Table 3  
Number of Women Occupying  
Descriptive Categories of Marital Status (N=72)

Marital Status			
Separated	Divorced	Widowed	Unattached
24	30	6	12

With regard to occupational status, 40 of the women were working full time outside the home. Another 30 women were full time students, while 8 were working part time and 4 were full time homemakers (Table 4).

Table 4  
Number of Women Occupying  
Descriptive Categories of Occupational Status (N=72)

Occupational Status			
Full time workers	Full time students	Part time workers	Full time homemakers
40	20	8	4

The classified sample consisted of 17 Androgynous women (23.6%), 15 Masculine oriented women (20.8%), 25 Feminine oriented women (34.7%) and 15 undifferentiated women (20.8%) (Table 5).

**Table 5**  
**Number of Women Occupying Descriptive**  
**Categories of Sex Role Orientation (N=72)**

Sex Role Orientation			
Androgynous	Masculine	Feminine	Undifferentiated
17	15	25	15

Their ages ranged from 22 to 43 with a mean age of 32 years. Ten of the women were raising one child; four women were raising two children; one woman was raising three children and one was raising four children. Six women were divorced, seven were separated, two were unattached and one was widowed. Nine were working full time while seven were full time students. These women had been single parents from ten months to eight years with the mean length of time being 3.24 years.

#### **A. Role Areas**

##### **Work Role**

To describe the level of adjustment of each woman in the sample to the work role, questions were asked regarding work performance, quality of interpersonal relationships with coworkers and supervisors and feelings and satisfactions regarding the occupation or school program. The women were divided into three levels of adjustment, very

good, good and fair.

Table 6

Number of Women by Sex Role  
Orientation Occupying Descriptive  
Categories of Adjustment to the  
Work Role (N=16)

Level of Adjustment	Sex Role Orientation		
	Androgynous	Masculine	Feminine
Very Good	1	3	3
Good	3	1	1
Fair	1	2	1

Note: Typical responses for each level of adjustment can be found in Appendix G.

A very good level of adjustment indicated that the women were doing their jobs or school programs with no impairment or feelings of inadequacy. Relationships with most coworkers and supervisors were generally smooth. Occasional stress was experienced but it was infrequent and not severe. There was a high level of job interest and job satisfaction.

A good level of adjustment indicated good work performance, an average to high level of job satisfaction and job interest and generally smooth relationships with most coworkers. However, frequent stress was experienced in

relation to school work or the job situation.

A fair level of adjustment indicated a good level of work performance and generally good interpersonal relationships. This level of adjustment was characterized by dissatisfaction with the work situation and ongoing stress. As can be seen from Table 6, women from the three sex role orientations represented varying degrees of adjustment in relation to the work role.

#### Parenting

To describe the level of adjustment of each woman, in the sample, to the parenting role, questions were asked regarding the quality of interpersonal relations within the family and the woman's feelings and satisfactions towards parenting. The women were divided into three categories of adjustment, very good, good and fair.

A very good level of adjustment indicated a good overall relationship with the children; an active involvement in children's lives and open communication between family members. Feelings of adequacy as a parent also characterized women in this category.

A good level of adjustment indicated involvement in and awareness of the children's activities, interests, and feelings and generally open communication among family members. Concern regarding the parent child relationship and/or feelings of inadequacy as a parent characterized women in this group.

A fair level of adjustment indicated a lack of involvement in children's lives, limited communication plus concern regarding the parent child relationship and feelings of inadequacy as a parent.

As indicated in Table 7, women from all sex role categories were generally coping well with the parenting role.

Table 7

Number of Women by Sex Role  
Orientation Occupying Descriptive  
Categories of Adjustment to the  
Parenting Role (N=16)

Level of Adjustment	Androgynous	Masculine	Feminine
Very Good	3	4	3
Good	2	2	1
Fair	-	-	1

Note: Typical responses for each level of adjustment can be found in Appendix G.

### Social and Leisure Life

Social and leisure role adjustment was described from responses given to items on the Interview Schedule (Appendix D) regarding contact with friends, amount and type of social interaction and involvement in leisure activities. Questions were also asked regarding the quality of interpersonal relations and feelings and satisfactions towards social



life. The women were divided into three categories of adjustment (see Table 8).

Table 8  
Number of Women by Sex Role Orientation  
Occupying Descriptive Categories of Adjustment to  
the Social and Leisure Role (N=16).

Level of Adjustment	Sex Role Orientation		
	Androgynous	Masculine	Feminine
Active, satisfactory social life	1	4	2
Restricted but satisfactory social life	1	1	1
Restricted unsatisfactory social life	3	1	2

Note: Typical responses for each level of adjustment can be found in Appendix G.

An active, satisfactory social life consisted of having at least three close friends, doing something socially at least once a week and having well developed specific interests. Satisfaction with social life characterized women in this category.

A restricted but satisfactory social life consisted of having at least two close friends and some specific

interests. Social outings were restricted in number and/or type. Satisfaction with social life also characterized women in this category.

A restricted and unsatisfactory social life indicated restricted social outings in number and/or type. Dissatisfaction with present social life characterized women in this category.

Women in all categories stated that they often felt lonely. Many of the women desired more male companionship in their lives.

As can be seen from Table 8, the masculine oriented women appeared to have the most active and satisfying social lives in this sample of women.

#### **Relationships with Extended Family**

Relationships with members of the extended family were described from responses given to items from the Interview Schedule (Appendix D) regarding the quality of interpersonal relations, feelings toward members of the extended family and satisfactions with the relationships. The women were divided into three levels of adjustment: very good, good and fair.

A very good level of adjustment indicated good relationships with members of the extended family, open communication and regular, frequent contact. Emotional support was provided by family members.

A good level of adjustment as compared to a very good level indicated that relationships with family members were not as close and supportive and contact with family members

was not as frequent. Friction with one or more family members also characterized women at this level of adjustment.

A fair level of adjustment indicated that there was no regular contact with any members of the extended family. Family members did not offer each other support.

As can be seen from Table 9 the androgynous women maintained somewhat better relationships with members of their extended families than either the masculine or feminine groups of women.

Table 9

Number of Women by Sex Role Orientation  
Occupying Descriptive Categories of  
Adjustment in their Relationships with  
Extended Family (N=16)

Level of Adjustment	Sex Role Orientation		
	Androgynous	Masculine	Feminine
Very Good	5	0	2
Good	0	4	1
Fair	0	2	2

Note: Typical responses for each level of adjustment can be found in Appendix G.

### Economic Situation

Economic situation was described from responses given to items from the Interview Schedule (Appendix D) regarding the adequacy of the family's income to meet the mother's and children's basic financial needs. As can be seen by Table 10, the women were divided into three groups.

Table 10

Number of Women by Sex Role Orientation  
Occupying Descriptive Categories of Adjustment  
to the Economic Role (N=16)

Level of Adjustment	Sex Role Orientation		
	Androgynous	Masculine	Feminine
Very Good	2	1	1
Fair	3	4	3
Poor	-	1	1

Note: Typical responses for each level of adjustment can be found in Appendix G.

A very good economic situation indicated there was more than enough money for the family's basic needs and therefore no financial difficulties.

A fair economic situation indicated there was enough money to meet the family's basic needs but nothing extra to depend on in a crisis. Families at this level were in some debt.

A poor economic situation indicated ongoing financial difficulties with hardly enough money to make ends meet from month to month.

### Androgynous Women

The Androgynous women were generally coping well with the demands and responsibilities in their lives. Although some areas gave women more difficulty than others, none of the Androgynous women demonstrated consistent difficulty with role areas. These women did find parenting alone to be a demanding way of life but they also enjoyed many aspects of their situations. One woman in particular was extremely satisfied with her present life situation. She described her feelings about it this way:

I guess I get tired and run out of time simply because I try to 'pack' too much into a day... I like the freedom of thought and choice; the ability to watch your children grow emotionally without husband/wife rivalry; and having fewer obligations to another adult in the household.

Another of the Androgynous women was generally coping well but found parenting alone very demanding. She described her feelings this way:

It may be the most taxing experience I've had, but I view it as the most creative also. It has helped me to accept responsibility and establish long term goals. Its great to have someone to love who returns the feeling. I've also learned a great deal about myself.

Another woman stated:

Dealing with hurt, jealousy, bitterness, resentment sometimes overcomes me and sometimes I tend to let it carry over to my kids which is terribly, terribly wrong, but I am getting better... I have found out that I can be a very independent person. I can

probably accomplish whatever I want to. The kids and I have become very close and I know I couldn't have made it without them.

### **Masculine Oriented Women**

Five of the six Masculine women were generally coping well and satisfied with many aspects of their present situations. Only one of the women was experiencing little satisfaction with her present life situation. She described her feelings about being a single parent this way:

I have a very demanding job and I have difficulty finding the time to function at a level that is satisfactory to me... I am tired and feel harassed all the time. I feel guilty that my children are not in a normal situation. I never expected or considered I could meet their needs by myself. I fear the emotional problems that may appear in later life. This reinforces my feelings that, my children are 'second class' citizens.

In contrast, the following are statements representative of the other five masculine oriented women:

I have the freedom to make my own decisions about how to run my life and my household. I am able to do what I want to do when I want to do it. This freedom has been obtained at high personal cost and is greatly valued.

Another woman described her feelings this way:

I get to make my own decisions; the responsibility is solely mine. The triumphs, the failures are mine... Other people often ask me how I manage and the answer is that its always easy to manage to do what you want to.

### **Feminine Oriented Women**

Three of the five Feminine oriented women were coping well with the five areas of functioning. Two of the five women demonstrated consistent difficulty with the areas investigated.

Those women generally coping well provided these descriptions of their situations:

I feel closer to my daughter and my son than I ever felt when I was married. I have them as friends, and we enjoy our time together very much (limited though it may be). I have a lot of moral support from my family (parents and siblings) and I see them a lot... I have to admit at times I feel somewhat conceited that I am raising two children alone, and not only coping but enjoying it.

Another woman described her situation this way:

While I was working I found being a single parent was very difficult... As I began to feel stronger about the future for my daughter and I, we moved into a coop situation. I also quit my job and returned to university. Having a good support group seems to have made our life much easier. I became eligible for grants for single parents as well as day care subsidy.

In contrast, two Feminine women were found to be having difficulties with most areas. One of these women described her situation this way:

Finding money for clothes, babysitting etc. is difficult. I rack my brains trying to think of ways to make more money. I worry about not getting out to meet people (everything costs money- babysitting, bus fare, lunch) and so I am always lonely. I worry about providing for my son in the way I am determined to. I work 60 hours a week, clean house at night, try to spend special quality time with my son, spend weekends shopping and running errands and spend my spare time studying. I have trouble sleeping, I waste energy fretting and then get angry with myself for doing so, for being afraid. This is the first time in my life I've ever been really alone and having to rely on my not very adequate self.

### Summary

A comparison of Androgynous, Masculine and Feminine oriented women found that the three groups of women were experiencing similar levels of adjustment to the five major

areas of functioning in their lives. The Androgynous women had somewhat better relationships with their extended families and the masculine oriented women had somewhat more active and satisfactory social lives than the other two groups of women.

Only three of the sixteen women interviewed demonstrated consistent adjustment difficulty in relation to the five areas. Two of these women were feminine in their sex role orientation and one was masculine.

#### **B. Psychological Health**

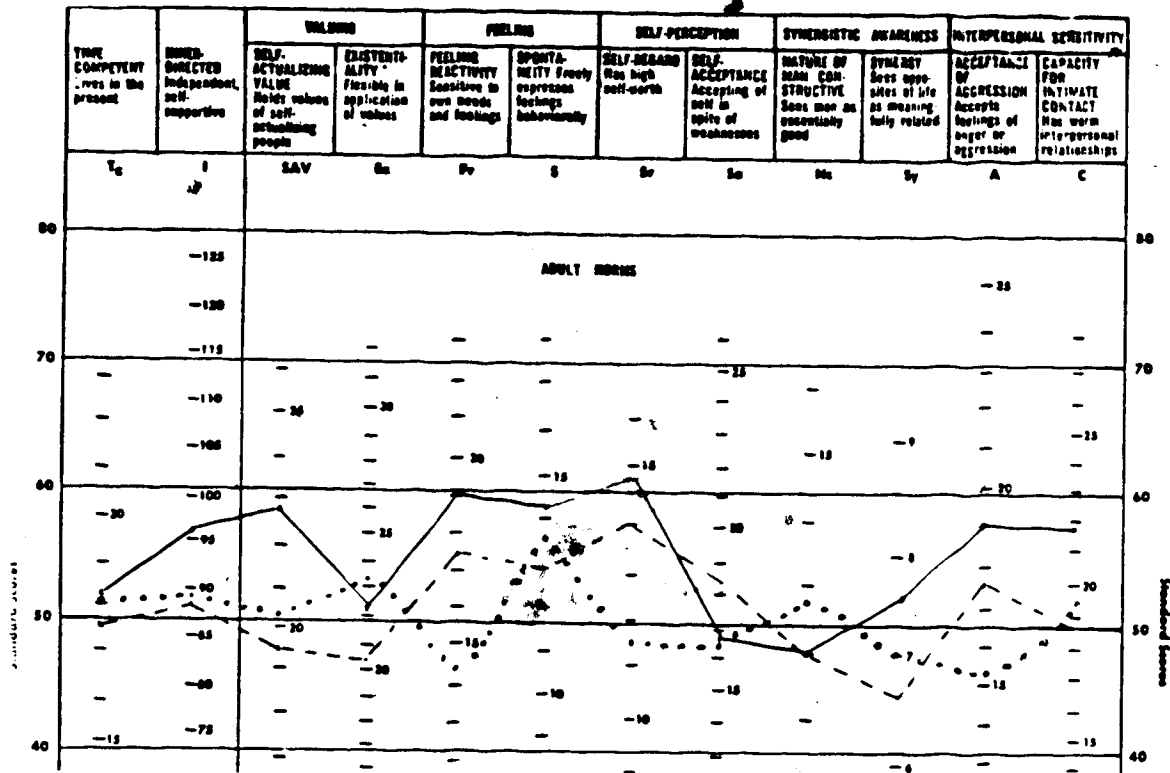
The Personal Orientation Inventory was administered to obtain an objective evaluation of each woman's level of psychological health. The women in the sample represent varying degrees of personal effectiveness in relation to their psychological functioning.

Data from three groups of women (Androgynous, Masculine oriented, Feminine oriented) were used to construct a POI profile in which mean major scale and subscale scores of each group were compared (Table 11). It was concluded from the comparisons that the three groups of women were all functioning at a healthy psychological level with the Masculine oriented group having achieved a somewhat better overall level of psychological health than either the Feminine or Androgynous women.



Table 11

POI profiles for Masculine oriented,  
Androgynous and Feminine oriented women



Mean Scale Scores

	Tc	I	SAV	Ex	Fr	S	Sr	Sa	Nc	Sy	A	C
M	18.3	95.7	22.7	22.3	19.0	14.3	14.8	16.7	12.0	7.5	19.5	21.7
F	18.2	88.2	20.2	23.2	14.4	13.6	11.4	16.4	12.8	7.0	15.2	19.4
A	17.6	88.0	19.4	20.2	17.4	13.0	14.0	18.2	12.0	6.6	17.6	18.8

Note: M = Masculine Oriented Women (————) N=6  
 F = Feminine Oriented Women (······) N=5  
 A = Androgynous Women (-----) N=5

Major scale and subscale scores from the POI were subjected to an analysis of variance to determine if there was a significant difference between the three groups of women on any of the POI scales. The results of the analysis of variance for each scale appear in Table 12.

Table 12  
Analysis of Variance for Three Sex Role  
Orientation Groups on Personal Orientation  
Inventory Scales (N=16)

Scale	Source	SS	MS	df	F	P
Tc	Groups	1.6	.80	2	.1	.89
	Error	91.0	7.03	13		
I	Groups	215.0	107.4	2	1.1	.35
	Error	1200.0	95.1	13		
SAV	Groups	32.0	16.2	2	1.4	.29
	Error	160.0	12.0	13		
Ex	Groups	24.0	12.0	2	1.1	.35
	Error	140.0	10.5	13		
Fr	Groups	59.0	29.3	2	5.7*	.02
	Error	66.0	5.1	13		
S	Groups	4.9	2.5	2	.3	.76
	Error	114.5	8.8	13		
Sr	Groups	34.0	17.0	2	7.4**	.01
	Error	30.0	2.3	13		
Sa	Groups	9.6	4.8	2	.6	.58
	Error	109.0	8.4	13		
Nc	Groups	2.2	1.1	2	.5	.60
	Error	26.7	2.06	13		
Sy	Groups	2.2	1.12	2	.54	.59
	Error	26.7	2.05	13		
A	Groups	50.4	25.22	2	2.35	.14
	Error	13.9	10.73	13		
C	Groups	16.9	8.46	2	1.07	.37
	Error	102.8	7.91	13		

Note: Refer to Appendix E - Part 1 for description of each scale.

\* F values significant at the .05 level.

\*\*F values significant at the .01 level.

As indicated in Table 12 significant differences between the groups were found on two of the subscales, feeling reactivity and self regard. Therefore a Scheffe Pairwise Contrast of Means Test was performed on the subscales, feeling reactivity (Table 13) and self regard (Table 14).

Table 13

Scheffe Pairwise Contrasts of Means  
on Feeling Reactivity for Three  
Sex Role Orientation Groups (N=16)

Groups	MD	SE	df1	df2	F	P
m-a	1.6	1.9	2	13	1.4	.52
m-f	4.6	1.9	2	13	11.3*	.02
a-f	3.0	2.0	2	13	4.4	.15

\*F value significant at the .05 level.

m = masculine

f = feminine

a = androgynous

As can be seen from an examination of Table 13 a significant difference exists between the Masculine oriented group and the Feminine oriented group on the feeling reactivity subscale. This finding would suggest that the Masculine oriented women, in this sample, are more sensitive or responsive to their own needs and feelings than are the Feminine oriented women.

An examination of Table 14 reveals a statistically significant difference between the Feminine oriented women and Masculine oriented women as well as the Feminine oriented women and the Androgynous women, on the self-regard subscale. This would suggest that the Feminine oriented women do not have as high a sense of self worth as the Androgynous and Masculine oriented women.

Table 14  
Scheffe Pairwise Contrasts of Means  
on Self Regard for Three Sex  
Role Orientation Groups (N=16)

Groups	MD	SE	df1	df2	F	P
m-a	.8	.8	2	13	.82	.67
m-f	3.4	.9	2	13	14**	.01
a-f	2.6	.9	2	13	7.3*	.05

\* F values significant at the .05 level.

\*\* F values significant at the .01 level.

m = masculine

f = feminine

a = androgynous

### Summary

Comparison of the three groups of women in relation to psychological health as measured by the POI indicated that the Masculine oriented group of women had achieved a somewhat higher but not significantly higher level of

psychological health in comparison to the Androgynous and Feminine oriented women. There were no significant differences between the three groups of women on the major scales of Time Competence and Inner Direction or on eight of the ten subscales.

However, the Feminine oriented women scored significantly lower than the Masculine oriented women on the subscale which measured sensitivity or responsiveness to one's own needs and feelings (feeling reactivity). The Feminine oriented women also scored significantly lower than both the Masculine and Androgynous women on a subscale which measured self regard.

## V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was exploratory in nature designed to generate ideas regarding the successful social and psychological adjustment of single parent women. This chapter consists of a discussion of the results, implications of the findings and suggestions for further research.

### A. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to compare three groups of women (Androgynous, Masculine oriented and Feminine oriented) in relation to two main areas of functioning: psychological health and the woman's ability to deal with the major role areas in her life. Findings indicated that the women from the three classifications of sex role orientation were generally functioning at similar levels. Contrary to expectations the Androgynous women were not better adjusted to single parenthood than the Masculine and Feminine oriented women. In this sample, 13 of 16 single mothers were found to be coping effectively. Not only were they able to handle the role areas discussed in Chapter II of breadwinning, parenting and housekeeping but many had established social networks and/or maintained good relationships with their extended families. As discussed in Chapter IV, parenting alone was not easy but might be viewed as a challenging, demanding way of life. With regard to psychological health, the Androgynous women were functioning

at an average level relative to the normal adult population, as were the Masculine and Feminine oriented women.

However, some differences between the three groups were observed. The Masculine oriented women had developed more active and satisfying social lives in comparison to the other two groups. The Feminine oriented group of women scored significantly lower than the Masculine oriented women on a subscale which measured sensitivity or responsiveness to one's own needs and feelings. The Feminine oriented women also scored significantly lower than both the Masculine oriented and Androgynous women on a subscale which measured self regard. A subjective observation made by the researcher indicated that the three groups of women differed in their approaches to coping with their life situations. The Masculine and Androgynous women were found to use a proactive approach whereas the Feminine women appeared to be more reactive.

The author offers the following explanations for the findings. First of all the differences between the groups is discussed, followed by an explanation of the similarities.

Femininity on the Bem Sex Role Inventory is characterized by traits such as sensitive to the needs of others, sympathetic, warm and eager to soothe hurt feelings. According to Bem (1981) those women describing themselves as having a high number of these traits and a low number of Masculine traits are sex-typed and motivated to keep their behaviour consistent with cultural prescriptions of

femininity. The traditional feminine stereotype has been associated with being nurturing, caring and looking after the needs of others. Women have also traditionally been taught and expected to anchor their self-esteem externally usually in the achievements and expectations of the men and children in their lives (Halas & Matteson, 1978). Therefore, Feminine oriented women may tend to put the needs and feelings of others first and consequently may lose touch with their own needs and feelings. Relying on external sources for their self-esteem may make it difficult for these women to develop inner strength and positive self-regard.

On the other hand, Masculinity on the Bem Sex Role Inventory is associated with qualities such as independence, self-reliance, and assertiveness. According to Halas and Matteson (1978) these qualities are related to the development of positive self regard and inner strength. According to Bem (1981), "masculinity has been associated with an instrumental orientation, a cognitive focus on getting the job done or problem solved" (p. 10). Therefore, it is logical that those women found to have a high number of Masculine traits (Androgynous and Masculine oriented) would have a proactive approach to life. Bem (1981) also stated that "masculinity is associated with an 'agentic orientation', a concern for oneself as an individual" (p. 10). This may explain the finding that the Masculine oriented women were most sensitive to their own needs and



feelings.

Although differences were observed between the three groups of women, generally the women were coping at similar levels. The researcher offers the following explanations.

Perhaps, the population chosen for this study was coping so well because most were well educated. They were occupied full time outside their homes, either as students or employees. Although limited, incomes were from stable, dependable, non-stigmatizing sources. Most had been single parents for more than one year. Those women who required child care arrangements had found dependable, high quality facilities available. The women had developed support systems of family and/or friends, church groups, single parent groups and counselling agencies. Therefore, it may be those environmental factors discussed in Chapter II, that play the major role in determining the woman's ability to cope. Having an adequate income, good education, good work situation, dependable child care and supportive friends and family may be more important in helping the woman cope with day to day demands than sex role orientation. As Kenworthy (1979) pointed out,

It should also be remembered that about 13% of all American families are headed by single women who, in their role as both father and mother, provider and nurturer, must surely be pushed to develop an ability to cope that would be called androgynous. Yet one in three of these families live at or below the poverty level...(p. 237)

In other words, women from all three sex role orientations may experience adjustment problems or find

themselves coping well, depending largely on their social and economic situations.

Secondly, as pointed out in Chapter III, the sample chosen to participate in the study was not a random one. The women volunteered to participate in the study after learning of it through one of the support services in the City of Edmonton. Perhaps women who volunteer to take part in studies such as this one are generally coping more effectively than the general population of single parents.

Thirdly, one must question the validity of the Bem Sex Role Inventory as an instrument for measuring sex role orientation. According to Kaplan (1979),

Bem seems to be implying that the essential parameters of situational appropriateness, flexibility, effectiveness and integration are measured in testing for an equal balance between masculinity and femininity. But I would argue instead that while these parameters may be likely outcomes of an equal balance between masculinity and femininity, they are not necessary outcomes. And likely is not sufficient if our empirical measures are to remain true to our conceptual understanding of the nature of androgyny. (p 224)

This author would agree with Hoyenga and Hoyenga (1979), "The relationships between androgyny and behaviour must be interpreted with some caution. All the predicted results have not been found ... suggesting that further refinements of measuring gender role are needed" (p.223-224).

Finally, the results of the study may be related to the median split procedure used for scoring the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Bem (1981) recommended, "If one is working with a small sample of subjects or with a sample containing one sex

it might be desirable to utilize the medians of the "normative sample" (p. 7). This procedure was followed by the researcher. However, the normative sample is a sample of Stanford University students which is a much different group of people than single parent women in Edmonton. Using the medians from the Stanford University sample with the single mothers in this study may have lead to an incorrect categorization of the women. As pointed out by Kaplan (1980),

One's classification using the median split procedure may vary, depending on the nature of the group from which the median cutoff points were derived ... In order to use the median split technique to derive scores that do not depend on the features of a specific population, it would be necessary to develop national norms, based on scores of a representative sample of the American population (p. 10).

Evidence for Kaplan's (1980) argument was reported by Abrahams, Feldman and Nash (1978) who found that men and women fluctuate in the extent to which they attribute Masculine or Feminine characteristics to themselves depending on the sex-typed demands of their life situations.

In summary, there were some differences observed between the three groups of women. However, the women from all groups were coping effectively and at similar levels. The expected differences between the groups were not found. The researcher suggests this could be a result of sampling bias, the importance of social and economic factors in adjustment to single parenthood or related to problems with the scoring procedure and validity of the Bem Sex Role

Inventory.

## **B. Implications**

### **1) Counselling**

A number of psychological and social factors appeared to be working together to either facilitate or hinder the adjustment of the single mother to her life situation. Therefore, it is crucial that counsellors be aware of these factors and develop skills through which they can assist the woman in gaining control of all facets of her life and function autonomously. Findings from this study suggested that the development of an "androgynous" self concept in the single parent may not be the key to the woman's successful adjustment. Rather, counsellors must assist the woman in coping with and surmounting the every day problems she encounters in our society. The woman may need vocational counselling, educational upgrading, access to good child care, financial assistance and emotional support. Aslin (1976), Rawlings and Carter (1979) and Sturdivant (1981) suggested a group counselling approach with single mothers. They found that women participating in all female therapy groups have the opportunity for companionship and emotional support. Practical advice, help in coping with loneliness and a sense of support, self-esteem and identity can be gained through the group.

Counsellors must be aware of their own attitudes when counselling single parent women. According to Aslin (1976),

"A therapist who supports the normative expectation that a female be primarily wife and mother will at least subtly communicate this attitude to her. Thus, the therapist may reinforce the client's sense of failure and lost identity and even encourage her to desperately find another mate rather than to be assertive and develop herself socially and intellectually"(p.41). Furthermore, findings from this study indicated that a mother alone with children does not automatically imply unhappiness and maladjustment but rather single parenting can be a positive, alternative lifestyle. Therefore it is important that counsellors concentrate on the growth potential of single parenthood and not view the family as incomplete and maladjusted.

## 2) Socialization

A number of women, in this study, had returned to school to acquire either first or second university degrees. Their objective was to receive an education which would lead to financially secure and satisfying employment. Burlage (1978) also found the majority of women in her sample sought further formal schooling; professional training or skills training. Burlage (1978), stated, "The question raised by these findings is whether it is possible to better prepare women to manage the combined responsibilities of being the primary provider and childrearer of the family"(p.371). This preparation could come from within the family unit and the educational system. According to Chafetz (1974), "The crucial changes, however, will come about (if, indeed, they

do) because we rear a new generation with different values... Changes in our behaviour today will create new values in our children which, in turn, can be expected to lead to further changes in norms and institutions"(p. 221).

### 3) Concept of Androgyny

The findings from this study did not suggest that the androgynous women were better socially and psychologically adjusted. As can be seen from a review of the androgyny research in Chapter II other findings have been varied and inconclusive.

Therefore, the author suggests that although the "construct of androgyny seems an exciting and important one in psychotherapy practice and research" (Berzins, 1979, p. 248) it is with caution that therapists use androgyny as a standard of mental health. It is important that our understanding of androgyny be deepened through further research and that current measures of androgyny be refined and revised. Vogel (1979) pointed out,

We cannot assume that an androgynous score on the Bem Scale is an automatic stamp of psychological health. What is needed at this point is a careful exploration, drawing on both experimental and clinical data, of the parameters of psychologically healthy androgyny, so that we can specify it, measure it, and ultimately facilitate it in our clients(p. 256).

### C. Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the ideas generated from this study a number of suggestions are made with regard to areas that need further research.

1. The development, implementation and evaluation of counselling or educational programs for single mothers may provide insight into the counselling needs of single parent women and the usefulness of certain counselling approaches.
2. To gain insight into particular problems and factors related to the adjustment of other populations of single parents, studies of this nature could be carried out on single mothers receiving welfare assistance; women who have been single parents for less than one year and single parent men.
3. A better understanding of the factors related to the adjustment of the single mother might be gained using a more complex model of the adjustment process (See Burr, 1972).
4. The issues examined in this research could be studied using a larger sample size and quantitative data, and methodology.
5. A longitudinal study of single mothers would provide an understanding of the single mother's experience over time. Changes in sex role orientation might be one aspect studied.
6. As Burlage (1978) suggested, research is needed to gain

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information regarding the education of single parent women. An investigation into the factors which enable certain mothers to return to school and the usefulness of the education in relation to the achievement of job security and higher earnings might help other mothers with their educational decisions.

7. Further research needs to be done on the socialization process to determine how women can be better prepared to function as autonomous adults. From research of this type educational programs could be developed and used with teachers, parents and students.
8. Given the many unanswered questions concerning both the theoretical concept and the empirical construct of androgyny, further research is needed to understand its implications for counselling and psychological well-being.



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**APPENDIX A**

**Letter to Mothers**

## APPENDIX A

Education N1-136  
Education Building  
University of Alberta

November 2, 1981

Dear single mother,

I am presently working on my master's thesis at the University of Alberta. I am investigating how single parent women are dealing with the responsibilities associated with being the sole parent in the home. My study involves two stages. During the first stage, all mothers who volunteer will be asked to complete a questionnaire at the University. This can be done on Monday, November 30th or Tuesday, December 1st any time between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. in Education north, room 2-139. This will take approximately one hour. From this group of women approximately fifteen will be chosen for the second part of the study. I would like to talk to these women about how they are handling the responsibilities of being a single parent. I expect that this interview will take approximately one hour. This will take place in January.

If you decide to volunteer, the sharing of the experiences and insights that you have acquired, will be of great help to me. At the same time, our discussion may be of interest to you. Your participation in this research will be greatly appreciated and I am looking forward to talking with you. I hope to see you on Monday, November 30th or Tuesday, December 1st. If you will complete the enclosed postcard, I will be in contact with you soon.

Yours sincerely,

*Laurie Tobias*

Laurie Tobias

*J. G. Paterson*

John G. Paterson  
Thesis Advisor

Enclosure



You may be wondering.....

How was my name obtained?

Certain agencies were provided with letters and requested to forward the information you have received, to single parent mothers using their facilities.

How do I participate?

Please come to the Education Building room N2-139, at the University of Alberta, on either Monday, November 30th or Tuesday, December 1st between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire. This will also give you an opportunity to meet me. It would also be helpful if you completed the enclosed response card.

What do I have to do in an interview?

Spend approximately one hour in your home talking with the interviewer, answering questions on a questionnaire.

What will the interview be about?

It will be a discussion about how you are handling the responsibilities associated with being the only parent in the home.

What will happen to my answers?

All information given is confidential. Your answers will be combined with those of other mothers participating, and then analyzed. They will then be incorporated into a master's thesis. You may have a summary of the findings if you wish.

Why should I participate?

Those who have participated in studies like this have described the experience as "interesting" and a "pleasant experience."

The only way new knowledge can be obtained is by people like yourself participating in studies like this. Only single parent mothers have the information needed for this research. Your contribution is very important.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Please feel free to bring your children along.

**APPENDIX B**  
**Demographic Questionnaire**

APPENDIX B

Background Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following questionnaire. Circle the answer which is correct for you. If the question does not offer a choice that reflects your answer, fill in your own.

1. I am presently: a) separated  
b) divorced  
c) widowed  
d) unattached
  
2. I have been a single parent for: a) less than three months  
b) 3-6 months  
c) 7 months-1 year  
d) 1-2 years  
e) 2-3 years  
f) 4-5 years  
g) over 5 years
  
3. If married at one time, how long were you married? \_\_\_\_\_

4. The ages and sex of the children living with me are:

Age	Sex
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. If there are other children living away from home, what are their ages and sex and who do they live with?

Age	Sex	Lives With
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

6. I obtain my income from: a) Earnings from employment  
b) Husband's allowance or pension  
c) Dividend payments from stocks  
d) An inherited estate.  
e) Another source.  
(Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. I am: a) Employed part-time outside the home.  
b) Employed full-time outside the home.  
c) Employed within the home.  
d) Other.  
(Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. My occupation is : \_\_\_\_\_

9. My gross annual earnings are: a) under \$4,999  
b) \$5,000-7,499  
c) \$7,500-9,999  
d) \$10,000-12,499  
e) \$12,500-14,999  
f) \$15,000-17,499  
g) \$17,500-19,999  
h) \$20,000-22,499  
i) \$22,500-24,999  
j) \$25,000 and over.

10. My gross annual income from other sources is: a) \$0-299  
b) \$300-499  
c) \$500-699  
d) \$700-899  
e) \$900-1,099  
f) \$1,100-1,299

11. My highest level of education is: a) less than grade nine  
b) some high school  
c) Senior Matriculation  
d) Some University  
e) Technical School  
f) University Degree  
g) Graduate degree

12. The type of accommodation I live in is: a) hotel  
 b) apartment  
 c) townhouse  
 d) condo  
 e) duplex  
 f) public housing  
 g) university housing  
 h) other  
 (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. If this accommodation is shared with others, besides your children, please indicate their relationship to you. \_\_\_\_\_

14. While being a single parent, I have found the following to be significant problems for me:

a) insufficient income	g) housing
b) child discipline	h) legal problems
c) obtaining employment	i) sexual problems
d) care for children when I want to go out	j) time
e) medical problems (health)	k) energy
f) dental problems	l) other

(Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Please rate these problems in order of importance: 1st \_\_\_\_\_  
 2nd \_\_\_\_\_  
 3rd \_\_\_\_\_

16. Would you please explain how these are problems for you?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(Please use the other side of the page if needed.)

17. What do you consider the most important thing about being a doctor?

18. In what way would you change your present situation if you could?

19. As you look back on your life do you feel a sense of:
- a) Great satisfaction.
  - b) Considerable satisfaction.
  - c) Moderate satisfaction.
  - d) Little satisfaction.
  - e) No satisfaction.

20. As you view your life at present, do you feel a sense of:
- a) Great satisfaction.
  - b) Considerable satisfaction.
  - c) Moderate satisfaction.
  - d) Little satisfaction.
  - e) No satisfaction.



APPENDIX C  
Bem Sex Role Inventory



Pages 99 and 100 are missing. These pages contain  
Appendix C, The Bem Sex Role Inventory.

This inventory can be obtained from The Consulting  
Psychologists Press, Inc., 577 College Avenue, Palo  
Alto, California 94306.

**APPENDIX D**  
**Interview Questions**

## APPENDIX D

The interview, as explained to you, on the telephone, will be focusing on you as a single mother. The questions will, for the most part, deal with the various tasks and responsibilities (the roles) that you are involved in on a day to day basis.

The various areas I would like to discuss with you are;

- a) You as a worker/student
- b) You as a homemaker
- c) Your social and leisure activities
- d) The relationship you have with your extended family.
- e) Your role as a parent
- f) Your relationship with your former spouse (only if applicable)
- g) Your economic situation
- h) Then, finally some general questions about your experience.

The interview will be taped for my use only. Everything we discuss will be kept completely confidential. If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer, feel free to say so. Any questions?

Let's begin by talking about the work you do or the school program you're taking.

### Work role (Includes student)

1. What kind of work do you do? or what program are you taking at school?
2. Were your reasons for working or going to school related to becoming a single parent?
- 3a What do you like about the work you do? The program you're taking?
- b Is there anything you dislike?
- c Have you found your work/courses interesting during the last two months?
- d Do you feel satisfaction when your work is completed?
- e Would you change your present work/school situation if you could?
- 4a Have you missed any time/classes from work/school during the last two months?
- b How many days/classes? What causes you to miss classes/work?
5. If your supervisor & coworkers (professors & classmates) were here, how would they describe your work performance? (Have you fallen behind? Have you been able to complete assignments?)

6. From your own point of view, how would you describe your work performance? (poor job? good job?)
- 7a How have you and the people at work/school been getting along the last two months?
- b Are there things they do which you especially appreciate? Can you give me an example?
- c Is there anyone you are close to?
- d Are there things they do which annoy you or make you angry? Can you give me an example?
- e Is there anyone you avoid because you know you'll get into an argument?
- f Have you felt upset or worried for any reason while at school/work these 2 months? (tension, tiredness, butterflies?)
- g What has been the reaction if any, of your employer & colleagues to your single parent situation?

#### Housework

- 8a How does the housework get done in your home? Who does what? I'm talking about meals, cleaning, laundry, groceries and errands.
- b Do you keep up with these tasks as well as you'd like to?
- c Has the organization of the housework changed since you've become a single parent?

#### Social/Leisure Activities

Now let's talk about your social life. I am going to ask you about your friends and about what you have been doing in your spare time?

- 9a First of all, has your social life changed since becoming a single parent? In what way?
- b How many close friends do you have? By close friends I mean people you have regularly seen or telephoned during the last two months.
- c What is the marital status of your friends?
- 10a How & where do you meet new friends? Is this satisfactory?
- b Have you been able to talk about your feelings openly with your friends?
- 11a What types of things do you discuss? not discuss?
- b How many times have you done something socially with friends in the last two months?
- c What kinds of things have you been doing socially? (entertaining, visiting, movies, sports, restaurants, shopping - ask specifically about each situation).

- d If there is little interaction: Are you kept in by a lack of money, somewhere to do, someone to go with?
- 12a Do you have any hobbies or special interests? (sports, politics, gardening, crafts, reading)
- b Have you been interested in these during the past 2 months? Have you had time?
- c What have you been doing in your spare time?
- 13a How have you been getting along with your friends during the past two months?
- b Have any of your friends been especially helpful, supportive?
- c On the other hand, have any of your friends gotten on your nerves or made you angry?
- d Was the other person aware that you felt this way?
- 14a Have any of your friends offended you or hurt your feelings during the past 2 months? Tell me about what happened. How long did it take you to get over this?
- b Do you act the same now toward that person as you did before they offended you?
- 15a Have you felt ill at ease, tense or shy when you have been with people during the last two months?
- b Have you felt anxious to get away or to be alone when with people? Did you avoid being with people because you felt uncomfortable?
- 16a Have you felt lonely or isolated and wished for companionship these last two months?
- b Have you felt this way when around people too?
17. Have you felt bored in your free time? Did you stay bored very long or could you find something to do?
- 18a How often have you dated in the last 2 months? (Are there certain things which interfere with the amount of dating you do?)
- b How much interest have you had in dating during the last two months?
- c Did you enjoy dating? (If not dating would you have been interested in dating?)
- d Would you like to marry (again)?

### Extended Family

The next questions are about your outside family, your relatives.

- 19a Let's start with your parents, then brothers & sisters. Do your brothers/sisters & parents live in Edmonton?

- b Have you seen or heard from them in the last two months?
  - c Are they supportive? In what way? Would you want more/less?
  - d Have you been getting along with them? Have you had any arguments with them?
- 20a During the last two months have you been able to talk about your feelings & problems openly with any of these relatives? What types of things do you discuss? Not discuss?
- b Is there anyone you feel especially close to? Avoided seeing?
- 21a For what types of things do you depend on your family for: (help, advice, babysitting, finances etc.)
- b When you go visiting or go out is it usually with family or friends?
- 22a Have you worried about things happening to members of your family? (what kinds of things? Health? Divorce? Jobloss?)
- b Have you ever felt that you have let your relatives down? (How did you let them down? Have you felt guilty?)
  - c Have you ever felt that your relatives have let you down? (How? Your feelings?)

#### Parental Role

- 23a What are your children's names & ages?
- b How did they respond to the separation? (if applicable)
  - c In what way have the children's lives changed?
  - d What kinds of things have you been doing with the children during the past 2 months? Let's start with (name).
  - e Has being a single parent family changed the amount of time you spend with your children. Please, explain.
24. Have you been able to talk (discuss feelings, problems) with your children during the last 2 months. Start with (name). Does he/she come to you with problems? (examples?)
- 25a How much friction (if any) has there been between you & the children?
- b Have you had to discipline them much in the past 2 months? Do you tend to snap at them when you are tired or upset?
- 26a What have your feelings generally been towards your children since being a single parent? during the past 2 months? (dislike/affection)
- b Since becoming a single parent, do you feel that your relationship with your children has changed? In what way?

#### Contact with Former Spouse (if applicable)

- 27a What are the nature of the contacts with your former spouse? Frequency?
- b What are your present feelings toward your husband?
  - c What is the nature of the relationship between the children & the absent parent? Are you satisfied with this?

Economic Adequacy

- 28a This question has to do with your finances. In the past 2 months have you had enough money for you basic needs?
- b Have you had to put off important things?
- c Do you have any savings?
- d In what way has your economic situation changed since becoming a single parent?

Use of Community Resources

- 29a With which of the following resources have you had contact? (Hand her a list of services).
- b What was your experience. Was the service helpful, easy to get to, adequate for your needs?
- c What changes are needed to make the service better?
- d Are there other services that you wish to apply to but have been reluctant to?

Community Attitude Toward One Parent Families

- 30a What are your perceptions of community attitudes? ( an example)
- b Have you experienced discrimination in obtaining housing, credit, work situations?
- c Have your children experienced difficulties? (School, neighbours)
- d How do you handle community attitudes?

Adjustment

- 31a During the lenth of time that you have been a single parent what have been some of the difficulties you have had to deal with?
- b How did you handle these difficulties? Did you have help? (from where)
- c Would you have wanted help from other sources?
- d What has been the most continuing problem?

Goals and Aspirations

- 32a What are your immediate goals for you and your family? Long term goals? (education, training, employment).
- b Do you have a plan for achieving these goals?

Conclusion

- 33a Have your feelings about yourself changed since you have been a single mother? In what way?
- b Could you identify your single greatest concern in being a single parent mother?
- c Could you identify a single greatest satisfaction?
- d Is there anything that you would like to add, any insights that you have acquired through your experiences?

**APPENDIX B**

**Personal Orientation Inventory**



**APPENDIX E**

Scoring of the POI scales is accomplished in terms of the two major scales, Time Competence (TC) and Inner-Directed (I), and the ten subscales, described below. Since the major scales are viewed as being clinically interpretable in relative or proportional terms, they are frequently seen as ratios covering the two major areas important in personal development and interpersonal interaction, time orientation and support orientation.

Time orientation reflects the degree to which the individual lives in the present rather than the past or future. Self-actualizing persons are those living primarily in the present, with full awareness and contact, and full feeling reactivity. They are able to tie the past and the future to the present in meaningful continuity, and their aspirations are tied meaningfully to present working goals. They are characterized by faith in the future without rigid or over-idealized goals. They are "time competent." In contrast, the "time incompetent" person lives primarily in the past--with guilts, regrets, and resentments--and/or in the future with idealized goals, plans, expectations, predictions, and fears.

Support orientation is designed to measure whether an individual's mode of reaction is characteristically "self" oriented or "other" oriented. Inner-, or self-, directed persons are guided primarily by internalized principles and

motivations while other-directed persons are, to a great extent, influenced by their peer group or other external forces.

Scores on each of the ten subscales are intended to reflect a particular facet important in the development of self-actualizing. These subscales may be defined as follows:

Self-Actualizing Value (SAV) measure the affirmation of primary values of self-actualizing people. A high score indicates that the individual holds and lives by values characteristic of self-actualizing people, while a low score suggests the rejection of such values. Items in this scale cut across many characteristics.

Existentiality (Ex) measures the ability to situationally react without rigid adherence to principles. Existentiality measures one's flexibility in applying values or principles to one's life. It is a measure of one's ability to use good judgment in applying these general principles. Higher scores reflect flexibility in application of values, while low scores may suggest a tendency to hold to values so rigidly that they become compulsive or dogmatic.

Feeling Reactivity (Fr) measures sensitivity or responsiveness to one's own needs and feelings. A high score indicates the presence of such sensitivity, while a low score suggests insensitivity to these needs and feelings.

Spontaneity (S) measures freedom to react spontaneously, or to be oneself. A high score measures the

ability to express feelings in spontaneous action. A low score suggests that one is fearful of expressing feelings behaviorally.

Self-Regard (Sr) measures affirmation of self because of worth or strength. A high score measures the ability to like oneself because of one's strength as a person. A low score suggests feelings of low self-worth.

Self-Acceptance (Sa) measures the affirmation or acceptance of oneself in spite of one's weaknesses or deficiencies. A high score suggests acceptance of self and weaknesses, and a low score suggests inability to accept one's weakness. It is more difficult to achieve self-acceptance than self-regard, but self-actualizing requires both.

Nature of Man--Constructive (Nc) measures the degree of one's constructive view of the nature of man. A high score suggests that one sees man as essentially good and can resolve the good-evil, masculine-feminine, selfish-unselfish, and spiritual-sensual dichotomies in the nature of man. A high score, therefore, measures the self-actualizing ability to be synergic in one's understanding of human nature. A low score suggests that one sees man as essentially bad or evil.

Synergy (Sy) measures the ability to be synergistic--to transcend dichotomies. A high score is a measure of the ability to see opposites of life as meaningfully related. A low score suggests that one sees opposites of life as

antagonistic. When one is synergistic one sees that work and play are not different, that lust and love, selfishness and selflessness, and other dichotomies are not really opposites at all.

Acceptance of Aggression (A) measures the ability to accept one's natural aggressiveness--as opposed to the defensiveness, denial, and repression of aggression. A high score indicates the ability to accept anger or aggression within oneself as natural. A low score suggests the denial of such feelings.

Capacity of Intimate Contact (C) measures the ability to develop contactful intimate relationships with other human beings, unencumbered by expectations and obligations. A high score indicates the ability to develop meaningful, contactful, relationships with other human beings, while a low score suggests that one has difficulty with warm interpersonal relationships (Knapp, 1976, pp. 5-7).

Page 112 is missing. This page contains Appendix E, Part 2  
the Profile Sheet for the Personal Orientation Inventory.

This profile sheet can be obtained from The Educational and  
Industrial Testing Service, San Diego, California 92107.

APPENDIX F  
Consent Form

APPENDIX F

CLINICS  
 M. HLOTT  
 SPEECH  
 N. L. JANZEN  
 PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING  
 B. LAMPARD  
 READING & LANGUAGE  
 D. B. SAWATSKY  
 COUNSELLING  
 H. JUERGENS  
 DR. ASSOCIATE CLINICIAN



FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
 CLINICAL SERVICES  
 ROOM 1-122 EDUCATION NORTH BUILDING  
 THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
 EDMONTON, ALBERTA  
 T6G 2G6  
 JOHN S. PATERSON  
 COORDINATOR

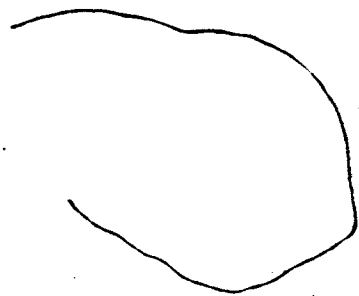
I, the undersigned, am giving my permission to participate in the study being conducted by Laurie Tobias, Graduate Student, University of Alberta. I understand that the taped interview, and information obtained through the questionnaires, may be used for research purposes by Laurie Tobias.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**APPENDIX G**  
**Responses of Women to**  
**Interview Questions**





**APPENDIX G**Work Role

1. Typical comments of those women classified as having a very good level of adjustment to the work role.

Work Performance

"The feedback that I get from them (supervisors) is that they're very pleased."

"They (supervisors), were just very pleased. They said I was a self starter, someone who follows through, and that my accomplishments are good."

"I think my co-operating teacher would be generally positive. I say that because he said some very positive things today. So far all the feedback is very good."

Interpersonal Relationships with Coworkers and Supervisors

"Really super (relationships)... They perceive me as for them and with them... They're a very nice group of people to work with."

"I get along with them (coworkers and supervisors) very well."

"It's really good. We do a lot of teasing and joking. There's no tension."

Job Satisfaction and Interest

"I find it (my job) challenging and really satisfying. Its the helping field and I like to help."

"Its a very interesting job. I very much like to work

with people. I'm an idea person. I'm always searching for new ideas. I like the change. I don't want to be sitting in a desk all day. I want to be up and moving about. There's a lot of variety."

"It (the job) is interesting. I really like it... Generally I really like the job. It involves me doing a lot of workshops and meeting new people."

2. Typical comments of those women experiencing a good level of adjustment to the work role but experiencing frequent stress related to the demands of course work or jobs.

"Being a full time student and parent offers little opportunity to do all the things that keep piling up. There is little time for just me by the time schoolwork has been attended to... I'm so tired. I'm doing my practicum and I really love it but I find the hours just too much... I'm always tired... I'd love to go on for my Master's. Its like a breath of fresh air for me... Its the practicum part I find really hard."

"It (being at university) gives you a lot of self-confidence... Its something that I always wanted to do... I always did want to teach... I'm achieving a goal that I probably never would have (but) There's a lot of pressure. You get one assignment done and you turn around and you've got another one and its due... It just seems like it never ends... You don't really have leisure time, even on your weekends you feel like you

should be working or something."

3. Comments of those women experiencing a fair level of adjustment to the work role. Comments reflect the stress and dissatisfaction felt by these women in relation to their jobs or school programs.

"I've just changed jobs. It was pretty taxing as far as time spent with my little girl. Basically, I found the hours were interfering with me personally health wise, and that I didn't see enough of my daughter and then when I wanted to go out I felt guilty because I had spent so much time at work... It was a great strain... I was sick of work."

"Its a very heavy job. there's a lot of responsibility. You're dealing with some problem children. Although I don't find it difficult...but its a big responsibility." (This woman went on to say) "If you've and a hassle with the kids in the morning and you're supposed to be getting organized you think about it during the day. You wonder how you're going to get it all done... I get very distracted... I'm overwhelmed."

"I don't like the atmosphere (at school) ...There's an intense competition... I'm not getting very good grades because I refuse to make it my entire life. If wanted to do that I'd probably have to spend 16 to 18 hours per day working... I resent being forced into a position of competing... I think that if I weren't such a strong person I might crumple under that."

## Parenting

1. Typical comments of those women described as having very good, relationships with their children.

"We're a very close knit family... (our relationship) has gotten so much better, much closer, more intensified, more meaningful. I have more energy to devote to them. I appreciate them so much more. I need them probably more than they need me. I've learned so much from them."

"She's (her daughter) my number one priority and time with her is another very high priority... I couldn't live without her."

2. Typical comments of those women described as having a good relationship with their children. Comments reflect the women's feelings that relationships with their children could be improved.

"Whatever went wrong she blamed me... She does not blame me quite so much now. She's still going through a terrible time... I'm trying very hard to be supportive... I'm able to spend more time relating to her and I can concentrate more on working with her and sometimes she gets very exasperated with me... I'd like to have it (our relationship) improved."

"I think he(my son) knows that I love him and that I'm concerned about his welfare...(but) we don't talk as much as we need to and that's because when... I get really into something I can work for three to four hours

at a stretch and so I work past his bedtime lots of times and that's not particularly good."

3. The woman described as having a fair relationship with her daughter attributed the recent decision of her daughter to move back with her father to her inability to give her daughter the love she needed. "I wasn't really giving her the kind of love she needed. I didn't have that much to give. I knew she needed more love but I just didn't have any more. I was pretty empty... I just felt all alone and I didn't have anybody there to talk to or turn to or get any attention from..."

#### Social and Leisure Activities

1. Typical responses of those women described as having an active, satisfactory social life.

"I found a few of my friends very, very supportive... They're really willing to listen if I'm about ready to blow a fuse."

"I'm able to phone my friends in the middle of the night if I'm really upset."

"I cannot believe the support that I received... To me it's important to work at maintaining friends and now because they're helpful and very comforting..."

Satisfaction with Social Life (These women expressed satisfaction with their social lives but most wanted more male companionship).

"I always want more companionship, a special companionship but as far as friends I don't need any

more special friends... I would like to go out with a nice person, like a man."

"I go to the Citadel regularly and I often just go to friends or relatives for dinner... Sometimes on a Saturday night or Friday night... I'd like to get dressed up and go out with somebody... and have a good conversation and a lovely time."

"I have friends at a certain part of my day and the other part of my day I have myself. I'm really comfortable with the situation being that way... I would like more male friends."

2. A typical response of women experiencing satisfactory but restricted social lives.

"I guess I really don't have much of a social life. I go to Bingo once a week. Most of the rest of the time when I do go out its to take the kids somewhere... Other than that I don't do much socializing... I'm just more comfortable on my own. I prefer it that way I guess. I like to sit home and relax and do my crafts."

3. Typical responses of women described as having restricted and unsatisfactory social lives.

"I would like to have a more active social life and I don't. This is where the loneliness comes in. Its like a downer. I get really down on myself."

"I would like to get out more. Right now its my daughter. I just don't feel that I can go out as much as I'd like to... I find that you can't sort of do things

on the spur of the moment..."

"I would desperately like to get out more... Not having money makes it tough. Most things conspire to keep you in. If you can get out you can't get a babysitter. If you can get a babysitter you don't have the money or its so far to take the bus its just not worth it... This life is very difficult to live. You're so hemmed in by your child being so young."

#### Relationships with Extended Family

1. Typical descriptions of family relationships from women that have very good relationships with members of their extended families.

"It gets better every day. We're very very close..."

"My sisters and I have a really excellent relationship... We understand each other quite well..."

"My mom was a single parent with three children to raise so she really understands and she's been very helpful... She's really good for moral support."

2. Typical responses of those women described as having good relationships with their extended families.

"We're (sisters and I) very open and very supportive. They've both been divorced... I talk to each sister two or three times a week. I see them about once a month."

(However, when talking about her mother this woman stated), "(I see her) as seldom as possible. My mother feels she has the right to run my life and tell me what to do and I just do not have a good relationship with my

mother."

"We (mother and I) tend to get on each other's nerves and my lifestyle is not something she's used to. My sister and I are really close. We get along really well."

3. Comments of those women described as having a fair relationship with their extended families. This woman lost all family support when she divorced her husband:
- "My mother pretty well rejected me at that time. She was very upset when it happened so I just decided if she felt that way about me I really didn't want anything to do with her... Our relationship has not been one of love." "(They (siblings) sided in with my husband. We're not close any more."
- "Its better for me not to be in the same city. When I'm really upset its better that I don't call them... We're not particularly close."
- "Pretty distant (relationship)... We don't make the effort very often... I guess they're there but they're busy and I'm busy..."

#### Economic Situations

1. Typical responses of those women described as having a very good economic situation.
- "That's a problem (financial) that I don't have... I am very comfortably off."
- "I've got it made (financially)... I'm extremely fortunate."



2. Typical comments of women described as having a fair economic situation.

"I'm always sort of behind but I do have enough money to buy groceries and things... I have nothing to fall back on."

"I have found things to be more expensive than I realized. Everything is going up... I'm finding it very difficult to meet all of the needs, the basic needs and there's not anything left over for emergencies and we've had so many emergencies and so I feel backed to the wall... All and all we're doing okay but its creating a pressure for me."

3. Responses of women described as having a poor economic situation.

"It (the money) doesn't go far. You really have to be careful... The only time I get really ~~upset and~~ worried is when we're two weeks to the end of the month and there's not enough money for groceries."

"Finding money for clothes, babysitting etc. is difficult. I rack my brains trying to think of ways to make more money... Not having enough money makes it tough."

**APPENDIX H**  
**Social Adjustment Scale (SAS)**  
**Item Content and Organization**

## APPENDIX H

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT SCALE (S.A.S.)  
ITEM CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

ROLE AREAS							
QUALITATIVE CATEGORIES	WORK	SOCIAL & LEISURE	EXTENDED FAMILY	MARITAL AS SPOUSE	PARENTAL	MARITAL FAMILY UNIT	ADDITIONAL ITEM
<u>BEHAVIOR</u>							
Performance	Time lost Impaired performance	Diminished contact with friends Diminished social interactions Impaired leisure activities Diminished dating	-----	Diminished intercourse Sexual problems	Lack of involvement Impaired communication	Economic inadequacy of family unit	-----
Interpersonal Behaviors	-----	Reticence Hypersensitive behavior	Reticence Withdrawal Family attachment Rebellion	Reticence Domineering behavior Dependency Submissiveness	-----	-----	-----
Friction	Friction	Friction	Friction	Friction	Friction	-----	-----
FEELINGS AND SATISFACTIONS	Distress Disinterest Feelings of inadequacy	Social discomfort Loneliness Boredom Disinterest in dating	Guilt Worry Resentment	Lack of affection Disinterest in sex	Lack of affection	Guilt Worry Resentment	-----
GLOBAL JUDGMENTS	Work global	Social & Leisure global	Extended family global	Marital as spouse global	Parental global	-----	Overall global

Weissman M. et.al. Social Adjustment Scale Handbook.  
(p. 13, Table 1) 1973.