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Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

Beth Hazel Cunningham

Date of Birth — Date de naissance
September 15, 1943

Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance
Canada

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe
107 - 10818 81° Ave.
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 1Y4

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

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Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
Dr. William Hague

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

JOINT CUSTODY: A CASE STUDY

by

BETH CUNNINGHAM

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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(Signed) ..... Beth K. Cunningham

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

#107, 10818 - 81 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta

T6E 1Y4

DATED ..... Sept. 17 ....., 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 "Joint Custody: A Case Study" submitted by Beth H. Cunningham in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

W. Hague
Supervisor

Rosemary Lahud

Clark Forest

Date July 9, 1982

To Jill and Marcy

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ABSTRACT

This is the case study of a divorced family who have successfully participated in a joint custody arrangement for three years. Both the mother and the father have shared legal as well as physical custody of their daughter, and they share responsibility for major decisions in her life. The child has two homes and spends alternate weeks in these homes.

The purpose of this study was to determine from the perspective of the children, of the mother, and of the father the factors which contribute to making joint custody either a healthy or an undesirable alternative, as well as some of the advantages and disadvantages of a joint custody agreement.

A non-schedule standardized interview format was used, with the researcher using open-ended questions to elicit information. Interviews were conducted with the mother, father, daughter, the daughter's teacher, and long-time family friends.

This family has found a shared custody arrangement to be highly satisfactory, with all family members experiencing many positive benefits. The parents had achieved a harmonious relationship unusual for divorced couples. The study showed that joint custody can be beneficial.

Implications for counsellors working with divorcing families were discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Statement and Purpose

The following study grew out of a personal and professional interest in new family structures, particularly those being created in response to the rising divorce rate. When couples with children divorce, mothers usually retain custody of the children; however, some parents are now arranging for joint custody which involves sharing the responsibility for important decisions which affect the children. In some cases, it also involves sharing their physical care on a more equal basis.

This study involves an exploration of the literature pertinent to understanding current custody practices, and, by means of interviews and analysis, a comprehensive investigation of a joint custody family.

The purpose of the study is to determine from the perspective of the children, of the mother, and of the father:

1. Factors which contribute to making joint custody a healthy alternative;
2. Factors which contribute to making it an undesirable alternative; and

3. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of a joint custody agreement.

For this study, the family investigated is one where both parents agree that the children live with both of them, where the children are old enough to be interviewed, and where the children move frequently enough from one home to the other to enable the researcher to observe them in both homes.

The parents are either divorced or separated, maintain two separate residences within close geographical proximity, and have mutually agreed to joint custody (that is, it was not imposed by the courts).

Background

A high divorce rate is a current fact. Statistics Canada (1980) recently revealed that the number of divorced persons, as a percentage of the total adult population, increased by more than 500 percent during the last two decades. In Alberta, the 6,531 divorces granted in 1979 affected 6,800 dependent children. Bene (1976) makes the projection that up to 35 percent of the children born around 1970 will be affected by the divorce or long-term separation of their parents.

Often our current high divorce rate is perceived as an index of social disorder with only negative consequences for individuals and society (Ahrons, 1979). A small but

growing number of professionals who work with families are urging society to view divorce, not as the death of a family, but rather a reorganization (Ahrons, 1981; Gettleman and Markowitz, 1974; Grief, 1979a, 1979b; Roman and Haddad, 1978; Stack, 1979). These people consider divorce to be a process, a redefinition of the structural and behavioral roles of the family. They believe that the old way of thinking of divorce as a rigid status, and as a state of social deviance, does not facilitate a healthy resolution for either the divorcing family or society in general.

During this century, the nuclear family has been considered the "natural" unit of society, with few people aware that it was produced by social conditions, namely, the transition to wage labour which separated the home from the workplace at the time of the industrial revolution (Stack, 1976, p. 506). The nuclear family structure "perfectly fitted the needs of a mass-production society with widely shared values and life-styles, hierarchical bureaucratic power, and a clear separation of home life from work life in the marketplace" (Toffler, 1981, p. 209).

Zaretsky (1974) traces the development of the family over several centuries, noting that society has come to view the nuclear family as the only healthy family form, and to believe that emotional life is formed only through the family. Stack describes the nuclear family thus:

> The intense, introspective, privatized family of Freud, God-given, natural unit of society which is charged to cradle the search for happiness amidst the perils of the industrial bureaucratic metropolis. (1979, p. 50)

Philippe Aries, a French historian, also linked the Industrial Revolution, with its division of labor, to the development of the nuclear family; however, he has been critical of the effects. This family form changed childhood into a prolonged time period spent in an intimate and restrictive environment. Aries viewed these protective boundaries as limiting a child's "emotional and moral understanding and his or her ability to cope with the industrial order" (Stack, 1976, p. 508).

Toffler (1981) suggests that a crisis in industrialism is now contributing to the fracture of the family form which it originally spawned. Nuclear households are shrinking in number, and other family styles are rapidly increasing. Roman (1977) suggests that the nuclear family is already a nostalgic dream.

Although some people are beginning to believe that the idealized nuclear family is not the only healthy family structure, many still see alternative forms as pathological or deviant. Ahrons suggests:

> We are in the process of expanding our definition of family so that family styles which were once considered deviant are not considered variants; we need to depathologize divorced families as well. (1979, pp. 512-13)

Meyer Elkin (1978) argues that there are no intact families because every family structure has cracks.

> A family is not a static phenomenon. Rather it is a dynamic pulsating system of persons who love each other, fight each other and inevitably are shaken by all kinds of crises of varying magnitude on the "wrecktor scale." (p. vi)

Roman and Haddad (1978) point out that even in these so-called intact families, new forms of family life are coming into being. Men and women are no longer content to function within sex-defined roles. More women are working outside the home and more men are sharing responsibilities for the children. Both sexes have different expectations for family and career responsibilities with an accompanying shift in legal and financial rights. Toffler writes, "Courts are swamped by cases involving role redefinition, as alternatives to the nuclear family multiply and gain acceptance" (1981, p. 223).

Despite the worry of the experts about the future of the family (and they are usually referring to the idealized nuclear family of the middle classes), literature abounds which is hopeful about the adaptive ability of individuals and families.

Gregg Edwards (1979) states that "the primary social group--'family'-- is an adaptive form which adjusts to the realities of its environment" (p. 67). He goes on to say:

> As the cost of living soars, more adult members of the household seek employment, and individual adults seek additional work. As the emotional and economic burden of child rearing increases, some families commit themselves to fewer offspring, and seek government measures to reduce their burden. On an even more fundamental level, individuals who perceive that traditional family forms offer diminished utilities--e.g. rewards or security--experiment with new primary group forms which they believe offer better prospects for their survival and satisfaction. (1979, p. 68)

Edwards also cites Wilson, author of Sociobiology, who found that, in the context of other biological beings,

humans are among the most variable in mating, child-rearing, and group formation habits. In fact, he discovered human correlates "for almost all those patterns which have been used to describe basic animal group behavior" (Edwards, 1979, p. 73).

Edwards extends a further principle from lesser life form development to human development. He says that "under conditions of uncertainty and environmental fluctuation, generalists with many strategies do better than highly specialized species" (1979, p. 80). This could mean that having a variety of family forms to choose from is better for our survival than having only the nuclear family.

Carol B. Stack (1976) has studied and written about rural and urban black communities in the United States, and documented stable kinship bonds and mutual aid among the people in these communities. They provide each other with stability and flexibility within extended family networks, despite having been labelled by professionals "as 'broken,' 'disorganized' and 'pathological'" (p. 506). Because she has seen how resilient and adaptable poor black families can be, Stack believes that middle class families are capable of being equally creative in "optimizing situations to suit their needs. Few individuals or families are fragile, though many are poor" (1979, p. 60).

Kellam, Ensminger and Turner mapped the variations of families in a single poor black neighbourhood in Chicago. They indentified 86 different combinations of adults forming

family units (Toffler, 1981).

The Agonies of Transition

Toffler believes that the confusion and turmoil surrounding the family now is the precursor to a variety of family forms and more varied roles for individuals. He states:

> Which specific family forms vanish and which ones proliferate will depend less on pulpit pounding about the "sanctity of the family" than on the decisions we make with respect to technology and work. While many forces influence family structure--communication patterns, values, demographic changes, religious movements, even ecological shifts--the linkage between family form and work arrangements is particularly strong. Thus, just as the nuclear family was promoted by the rise of the factory and office work, any shift away from the factory and office would also exert a heavy influence on the family. (1981, p. 216)

Barriers to change still exist. As a society, we have yet to develop a respect and tolerance for new variety in family forms. We have grown up perceiving the nuclear family as normal, so that variations are viewed with suspicion. We are caught up in what Toffler calls "the agonies of transition." The potential is there for each of us to create our own personalized family structure--perhaps several in a lifetime. Meanwhile, as Toffler explains:

> Caught in the crack-up of the old, with the new system not yet in place, millions find the higher level of diversity bewildering rather than helpful. Instead of being liberated, they suffer from over-choice and are wounded, embittered, plunged into a sorrow and loneliness intensified by the very multiplicity of their options. (1981, p. 223)

In a sense, we are all pioneers. Massive changes are taking place, at a bewildering pace, in our society. We have lacked positive role models for men and women to follow whether divorced or not. Generally, we have focused on the negative rather than the positive: on weaknesses rather than strengths. We need research which will explore innovative new family forms--which will recognize changes in kinship patterns and which will free us from our biases about traditional family structure.

Divorce research to date has mainly focused on one aspect at a time: for example, the effect of divorce on the children, or on the custodial parent. Research which investigates the total family system is still quite limited. These factors of the total family system justify an exploratory look at joint custody, one of the newly evolving, but still atypical, family structures being adopted by some divorcing families.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review covers five basic areas. The first is an historical overview of child custody practices. The second is a review of the current legal system and custody, and the influence of the book Beyond the Best Interests of the Child. The third is about divorce and loss, particularly in relation to fathers. The fourth is a report on the California Children of Divorce Project, and the fifth is a review of joint custody including a description of what it is as well as current research.

Historical Overview Relating to Custody

Just as the nuclear family is a cultural creation, so the custom of awarding custody to the mother is a reflection of legal trends and social morals. Before the 19th century when the feudal order prevailed in England, the custody issue was simple: children belonged to their father. He supported them, and he had a right to their services. In the 19th century, the emphasis started to change from parents' rights to children's rights. As society became aware that children required some care, the legal system began to reflect this changing attitude; however, the tendency

to view children as chattels to be awarded to one parent or another has died slowly.

Since the 1800's, in the legal sense, both parents have been considered equal in terms of the right to be awarded custody. Judges supposedly make their decision based on the best interests of the child; however, even when confronted with two parents who appear to be fit, since the 1920's, judges have awarded custody to the mother 90 percent of the time (Nehls and Morgenbesser, 1980). Commenting on this fact, Foster, Jr., and Freed (1979) explain that the custom of awarding custody to fathers in the past, and to mothers in more recent decades, is merely a reflection of prevailing attitudes towards property rights and the care of children.

Roman and Haddad affirm the same thing. Whether custody was granted 100 years ago to father, and is now granted to mother, the reasons remain the same.

> In matters of custody, a woman's subordinate position explains both the long supremacy of the father and the new reign of the mother. Whether the woman is denigrated as less than human or exalted to the very suburbs of heaven, exempted from custody, or virtually guaranteed it, her relation to her children reflects man's dominant position in society and the forms that have been devised to protect that dominance. (Roman & Haddad, 1978, p. 24)

In an agrarian society, women worked along with their husbands, and no special premium was placed on motherhood. There was no need for the home to be "a refuge, a place for leisure and retreat from the cruelty of the

'outside world'; it was a part of the world, a center of work, a subsistence unit" (Rich, 1977, p. 29).

With industrialization and urbanization, wage labour was split from private labour. Fathers moved away from the house and the maternal instinct was invented, making a virtue out of what seemed to be a necessity. Thus a new ideology about the family and about motherhood was born.

Roman (1977) believes that this ideology has been reinforced by psychoanalysts and sociologists. Psychoanalysts believed that "understanding early childhood was a key to the psyche" (p. 2). Since the mother was most involved in raising the child, it was assumed that her influence was greatest. As a result, the role of other people such as fathers, relatives, and people of the community was minimized. Sociologists such as Parsons, when speaking of the father's instrumental and the mother's expressive role in the family, have further "ossified the options open to adults" (Roman, 1977, p. 2). Both men and women have become victims of this ideology. Stereotypes about motherhood and the family prevent women from achieving economic equality just as they prevent men from achieving parental equality. Okin (1974) believes that women will only be freed from their functionalist definitions when society recognizes that reproduction, sexuality, and the socialization of children are separable from each other.

Relating this to custody decisions, awarding custody to the mother may at one time have reflected social reality.

Now the reality has changed. Traditional roles are blurring as more women pursue careers and more men desire to share in the nurturing and socialization of their children. As women derive less of their sense of self-worth from their mothering roles, and more from their careers, they are more willing to transfer nurturing responsibilities to fathers. These changes are evident in so-called intact families as well as in divorced families. In fact, several authors point out that since shared parental responsibility has become very much evident in intact families, it is quite logical that it would become a viable alternative for divorcing families (Elkin, 1978; Greif, 1979b; Noble & Noble, 1975).

The women's movement has stimulated many of these changes. Now it appears that a backlash to the women's liberation movement is developing "an awareness and assertiveness of what are perceived as fathers' rights" (Benedek & Benedek, 1979, p. 1540). Men's organizations have been formed in the United States, ranging from rational law-abiding father advocacy organizations to groups which are angry and militant. Members of the latter are separated and divorced fathers "dedicated to protecting each other from what they describe as vengeful ex-wives, prejudiced judges, money-hungry lawyers, and soft-headed social workers" (Noble & Noble, 1975, p. 3). Often they operate outside the law in aiding members to kidnap their children and disappear. It is becoming common to read newspaper accounts of child

snatching. In fact, in the United States, "kidnapping one's own children may well be on its way to being a Federal offense" (Newsweek, 1980, p. 63).

The fact of such conditions reflects the burden of grief, loss, pain, and anger which fathers experience after a divorce which has cut them off from their children. Men may be willing to be ex-husbands but they may not be willing to be ex-parents. Unfortunately, at a time when fathers are seeking more involvement with their children, the usual divorced household prevents them from achieving it.

The Legal System

Families both intact and divorced, and professionals who work with families, are all struggling in a labyrinth of confusion where there are no precedents or established role models for our new family structures. Goslin (1979) suggests that when issues of responsibilities are unclear in our everyday life, we turn to other institutions to define or accept these responsibilities for us. Thus he explains the extraordinary increase in the influence of the legal system in our lives, as we turn to lawyers and courts to help us define our responsibilities.

> Both the interjection of the courts, and the reliance upon the courts tend to make our decision-making processes adversarial, rather than co-operative, and tend to define problems in "yes-no," "win-lose" terms, when in reality, most questions have a broad range of possible solutions. (Goslin, 1979, p. 116)

Many writers agree that the adversary system in our courts is destructive to divorcing parents. Rather than being enabled to work out the most positive custody arrangements, they are set against each other in a way that compounds their anger. Many people agree that the adversary climate needs to be changed. As O'Neil and Leonoff point out, "the 'adversaries' are, after all, parents and will remain so" (1977, p. 30).

It is encouraging that legal journals are publishing an increasing number of articles on joint custody; however, there is still a heavy emphasis on how to improve the evidence on which a judge bases his decision about who is the better parent.

Beyond the Best Interests of the Child

One of the books most frequently mentioned in literature on child custody is Goldstein, Freud and Solnits' Beyond the Best Interests of the Child (1973). Because of the status of its authors, and probably also because of its publication at a time when so many custody decisions are facing the courts, it has had a substantial influence on lawyers, judges and helping professionals (Roman & Haddad, 1978; Stack, 1976).

Goldstein et al. (1973) are writing about adoption and foster care situations as well as contested child placements where the involved adults are unable to reach agreement

and have to turn to the law for resolution. Their book focuses on "the development of guidelines to decision making in law concerned with the selection and manipulation of a child's external environment as a means of improving and nourishing his internal environment" (p. 7). They state clearly their belief that it is in society's best interests for the law to put the child's needs first. Their guidelines are based on a psychoanalytic framework of growth and development. They believe that a "visiting" or "visited" parent "has little chance to serve as a true object for love, trust, and identification, since this role is based on his being available on an uninterrupted day-to-day basis" (p. 38). They also believe that children are capable of loving more than one adult only if "the individuals in question feel positively to one another. Failing this, children become prey to severe and crippling loyalty conflicts" (p. 12).

Central to their theory is the importance of a "psychological" parent and a stable and unvarying environment. An adult becomes a psychological parent from day-to-day interaction with each child. "The role can be fulfilled either by a biological parent or by an adoptive parent or by any other caring adult--but never by an absent, inactive adult, whatever his biological or legal relationship to the child may be" (p. 19).

Regarding the stable environment, they write:

> Physical, emotional, intellectual, social and

> The instability of all mental processes during the period of development needs to be offset by stability and uninterrupted support from external sources. Smooth growth is arrested or disrupted when upheavals and changes in the external world are added to the internal ones. (p. 37)

The authors cite the consequences which occur at different ages for children who have had disruption of continuity. They state firmly that a custody decree should be final, and not subject to challenges by the non-custodial parent. In addition, the custodial parent, not the court, should decide how much contact the non-custodial parent should have with the children.

> If the choice . . . is between two psychological parents and if each parent is equally suitable in terms of the child's most immediate predictable developmental needs, the least detrimental standard would dictate a quick, final, and unconditional disposition to either of the competing parents. (p. 63)

In making the decision between two equally suitable parents, Goldstein et al. (1973) suggest that "a judicially supervised drawing of lots . . . might be the most rational and least offensive process for resolving the hard choice" (p. 153). In any case, the task of the judges is to "salvage as much as possible out of an unsatisfactory situation" (p. 63).

Criticisms of Beyond the Best Interests of the Child have come from both lawyers and counsellors (Ahrons, 1980; Foster, Jr., & Freed, 1978, 1979; Roman & Haddad, 1978; Stack, 1977). Although the intent of Goldstein et al. was to provide guidelines which would enable a judge to make the

best decision for a child, Foster, Jr., and Freed (1978) describe the book as "an academic example of over-reacting and replacing inflexibility with rigidity" (p. 331). They believe that this book has provided a serious setback to the argument for an award of joint custody. Ahrons (1980) writes that Goldstein et al. seem to concur with the societal stereotype that "when spouses divorce, their total relationship dissolves" (p. 202).

In an article written specifically in response to the publication of Beyond the Best Interests of the Child, Stack (1976) discusses two problems. First, she believes that the guidelines Goldstein et al. propose for child custody are likely to increase the tension and conflict between the parents, pitting them against each other in a custody fight.

> The changing needs of boys and girls as they grow up, and the not uncommon life cycle crises that adults encounter are not considered. Instead of encouraging men and women to offer reciprocal emotional support to one another and to their offspring, the guidelines require legally divorced parents to sever totally their personal relationship with each other. (p. 507)

In the event of a crisis, the custodial parent might fear that a request for help from her/his former partner would threaten custody of a child. In addition, the child would not have had a chance to develop a relationship with the non-custodial parent which would make it easier for him/her to step in to help.

Stack considers the second problem even more serious:

> Goldstein et al. value a child's ongoing relationship with one specific adult in one specific environment over the possibility that in-depth exposure to the life style and environment of a non-custodial mother or father may better prepare a child for personal and public life in our society. (p. 509)

Stack believes that a child benefits from exposure to the world views of the non-custodial parent and the entire set of relatives of that parent. The child is enriched by the opportunity for contact with other adult role models. Goldstein et al. "prefer a child to be protected and isolated in what is left of the fragmented nuclear family" (p. 507).

Roman and Haddad (1978) share Stack's viewpoint. They say that the authors try to "preserve a diluted version of the nuclear family rather than acknowledge, indeed encourage, the organization of new forms of family life" (p. 115). They point out that Goldstein et al. do not cite any social science data which shows that single parent custody is desirable (and Roman & Haddad say there is none). They also do not refer to any empirical studies from extensive literature on adoption and foster placement. They do refer to psychoanalytic sources but without acknowledging that major criticisms have been levelled at these sources.

Roman et al. state that children do have existing relationships with both parents, and they demonstrate great determination in continuing to love and have contact with both of them. This attachment is reciprocal, but Goldstein

et al. ignore the needs of the non-custodial parent and the mutual bond experienced by that parent and child.

Divorce and Loss

Gettleman and Markowitz (1974) believe that "the single most potent weapon in the anti-divorce arsenal that reinforces the pain associated with divorce has been the analogy between divorce and death" (p. 55). People who make such comparisons seem to believe that both death and divorce contain certain destructive elements. Gettleman and Markowitz believe that there is a primitivism to thinking that divorce, which terminates a customary social relationship, can be compared to death, which terminates a life. In their book they devote a whole chapter to The Myth of the Damaged Child, stating that anti-divorce indoctrination, and the designation of the child as "victim" can be as harmful to a child as the divorce itself.

Paul Bohannan (1970), in his description of the six stations of divorce, states that emotional divorce "results in the loss of a loved object just a fully--but by quite a different route of experience--as does the death of a spouse" (p. 37). The natural reaction to a loss is grief and Bohannan points out that there are no traditional rites for mourning a divorce.

William Goode (1964), a well known writer on the sociology of the family, believes that the experiences of death and divorce are equally disorganizing. He cites six

major experiences they have in common, the one most applicable to this study being loss of an adult role model for the children. His views are similar to those of many other writers, and indeed to a prevalent attitude in society, that divorce automatically means that a child has lost one parent (Bohannan, 1970; Goldstein et al., 1973; Oates, 1969).

Leonoff and O'Neil believe that the central psychological issue in divorce is loss and that the therapeutic focus should be on loss and subsequent mourning. They suggest it is the fear of loss which is at the heart of custody battles; however, the anger ventilated in custody battles does not deal with the inherent sadness which runs much deeper. "Mourning permits no substitute--it is a natural emotional state that follows significant loss" (p. 194). They believe that parents in custody battles may be experiencing abnormal and unresolved mourning reactions, triggered not only by breakdown of the marriage, but by fear of child loss. Although they suggest that this parental grasping for the child occurs particularly with women, other writers discuss the deeply painful effects of child loss on fathers.

Fathers and Custody

During 1976-77, Judith Greif (1979a, 1979b) conducted an exploratory study in greater New York City, where she interviewed 40 legally separated or divorced fathers, in an attempt to explore the father-child relationship from the

father's perspective. The fathers were generally white, Jewish, professional, middle-class men who had been married an average of ten years before separation. Over 80 percent of the children were in the full custody of their mothers, and the rest were in joint custody of both parents. Her findings showed that the more time a father spent with his child, the more effective he felt as a parent, and the more likely he was to continue an active involvement with his child.

Greif also reported that it is the structure of the post-divorce family which contributes most to this effect, rather than other factors such as specific characteristics of this child, the mother, the father or the marriage. Thus, those fathers with joint custody, or those who had estensive contact with their children, were more satisfied than fathers with little contact and no custodial rights.

Fathers with less contact with their children reported more physical and emotional stress. Being denied access to his children sometimes ultimately led to the father removing himself further, not because he did not love them, but because of the pain of facing what he had lost. Society has assigned him the role of absent parent, and eventually he gives up and assumes the role. None of the joint custody fathers in Greif's study reported this painful sense of estrangement. The longer the arrangement continued, the more satisfaction was reported by joint custody families. None had returned to court, although several other families

in the study continued court battles over custodial or visitation rights. Another characteristic of these joint cutody families was the parents' willingness to allow the children to have a relationship with the other parent, and to trust the other parent to care for the child. In many cases, great animosity was still experienced towards each other, and weeks would go by without their communicating with each other; however, they were still able to make joint custody a functional alternative.

In a longitudinal study of two years, Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1976) matched 48 intact families with 48 divorced families, all of whom had a child in nursery school. In all cases, the children lived with their mother. Their report focused on the changes in the functioning, behaviors, and life styles of the fathers, although the researchers acknowledged their belief in a functional systems approach to studying families. In fact, they reported that the family system was in a state of chaos and disequilibrium immediately after the separation. The peak of disruption seemed to occur at one year, and by two years, the family system was re-stabilizing.

Certain factors contributed to earlier stabilization. These were parental agreement in child rearing, a positive attitude toward the spouse and low conflict between the divorced parents. These factors, when combined with high frequency of father's contact with the child, were associated with "more positive mother-child interactions and

with more positive adjustment of the child" (Hetherington et al., 1976, pp. 425-426). Although it was less marked for fathers who continued frequent contact with their children, at the end of the two year period, these authors found that the influence of divorced fathers on their children had declined and was significantly less than that of fathers in intact families. These researchers also discovered the phenomenon of fathers who experienced the loss of their children as so painful that they saw their children infrequently even though they continued to feel loss and depression.

California Children of Divorce Project

The most complete and current study of divorce is the California Children of Divorce Project conducted by Judith Wallerstein and Joan Kelly from 1971 to 1977. The sixty families which they studied came initially for six weeks of divorce counselling. Each family member was also interviewed individually and extensively. Approximately one year later and then at five years, each family member was interviewed again. Their results have been published in the book, Surviving the Breakup (1980). The researchers found that divorce produced not one, but three patterns in people's lives.

> Among both adults and children five years afterward, we found about a quarter to be resilient (those for whom the divorce was successful), half to be muddling through, coping when and as they could, and a final quarter to be

> bruised: failing to recover from the divorce or looking back to the predivorce family with intense longing. Some in each group had been that way before and continued unchanged; for the rest, we found roughly equal numbers for whom the divorce seemed connected to improvement and decline. (1980a, p. 67)

For the children, most had found the divorce a shock, even if they had been living in a home full of conflict and unhappiness. After five years, 28 percent of the children approved strongly of the divorce, 30 percent disapproved strongly, and 42 percent were somewhere in the middle. Most still clung to a fantasy of their parents' reconciling.

Boys took longer to adjust than girls, but by five years no difference showed between the sexes. In the 34 percent who were doing well psychologically at the five year mark, self-esteem and a sense of self-sufficiency were high, with no age or sex differences. This latter group did experience sadness or loneliness at times, but displayed no anger or hostility at their parents.

The 29 percent in the midrange of psychological health showed reasonably appropriate behavior most of the time; however, they also experienced unhappiness and anger at times, and showed diminished self-esteem. The final third of children and adolescents were dissatisfied and unhappy with their lives. Some suffered from moderate to severe depression, and 27 percent of the children reported periods of intense loneliness.

Wallerstein and Kelly were able to isolate certain

factors which seemed to account for successful adjustment. In a few cases, the divorce had allowed a child to escape a cruel and disturbed parent. Some children had a "strong personality to start with. As we followed the course of the children whom we had placed initially within the ranks of the very well adjusted, it appeared that two-thirds of these resilient, successful copers were still functioning very well five years later" (1980a, p. 71).

The most crucial factor reported was a stable and loving relationship with both parents, who each valued the child's involvement with the other parent, and who had a relatively conflict-free relationship with each other. "Overall, we found that 30 percent of the children had an emotionally nurturant relationship with their father five years after the marital separation, and that this sense of a continuing, close relationship was critical to the good adjustment of both boys and girls" (1980a, p. 71). The researchers concluded that even limited contact prevented the concern for total rejection and abandonment that children felt who had no contact; however, in many cases, even regular visitation did not seem to satisfy a yearning by the children for more contact.

Wallterstein and Kelly concluded that a divorced family is no more and no less happy than an intact family where the marriage is unhappy. Neither situation is congenial for children. They recommend that shared parental responsibility after divorce offers the best solution for

children.

> . . . the fact remains that the divorced family in which the burden falls entirely, or mostly, on one parent is more vulnerable to stress, has limited economic and psychological reserves, and lacks the supporting or buffering presence of the other adult to help meet the crises of life. (1980b, p. 308)

Joint Custody

Joint custody is described in many ways. O'Neil and Leonoff (1977) describe it simply as the "process of continuing the caring for and educating of children as the husband and wife re-establish themselves separately" (p. 29). Benedek and Benedek (1979) say three characteristics distinguish joint custody from traditional, or sole, custody.

> First there is an acknowledgement that both parents assume equal responsibility for the physical, emotional and moral development of the child. Second, there are shared rights and responsibilities for making decisions that directly affect the child. Third, the child lives with each of his or her parents a substantial amount of time. (p. 1540)

Many writers have mentioned the inadequacy of our current language in describing a post-divorce family structure. Ahrons (1979) has coined the term "binuclear family" which indicates a family system with two nuclear households whether or not the households have equal importance in the child's life experience. She conducted a research study of 41 divorced couples with court-awarded joint custody of their children. Her purpose was to explore the continuing relationship between divorced spouses who were parents.

Basing the research on a view of divorce "as a complex process which involves the reorganization and redefinition of the family rather than its dissolution," she searched for "new models of divorce familying, . . . models which might balance the prevailing view of divorce as family dissolution" (p. 512).

In her study, Ahrons found the relational styles of the spouses ranged from best friend to bitter enemy, but the majority were at a broad mid-point where their relationship was defined by their coparenting role. Most had established homes that included the children although a few still had a visiting relationship. Ahrons also found that the amount of time spent by the children in each household varied widely. In some arrangements, one parent was involved with the children a few hours biweekly, and in others, time was equally split. Some families had flexible arrangements, and others maintained quite rigid schedules which required minimal communication between the parents. In one family, each parent occupied one half of the same duplex.

Unlike the stereotype, Ahrons found that most parents maintained a post-divorce relationship which included both parenting and nonparenting aspects. Usually the nonparenting had to do with historical aspects of their relationship, particularly related to extended family. This occurred even when the couple had clearly severed the emotional as well as the physical aspect of their marriage. In this way, Ahrons suggests, these "resemble the relationships that frequently develop between extended kin who share

family and history in common" (p. 421).

Helping professionals have a tendency to view continuing involvement between a divorced man and woman with disapproval. The belief seems to be that if they can get along on a coparenting basis after the divorce, they should have worked things out and stayed married (Ricci, 1980). Ricci suggests that this is a deeply rooted myth about families which contributes to the blaming game. This game is tied into the "divorce is failure" attitude. Part of this scenario is the "all or nothing" trap which has one parent in and one parent out.

People usually begin a marriage and parenthood with a one-home and one-authority expectation. If they later separate or divorce, these parents may still try to live up to their pre-divorce ideas of how a family should be. Ricci says that:

> The family can retain all of the ideal elements, but arranged somewhat differently . . . the major changes are that first, the relationship between the man and woman has shifted from being both lovers and parents to the single focus of being parents; and second, that the united front of shared responsibility and authority has to be revised into a new and workable form. (1980, pp. 15-16)

Ahrons points out the paradox of society which bemoans the rising divorce rate and the implications for families, but "continues to view post-divorce ex-spousal bonding as pathological or 'quasi-pathological'" (p. 426).

Anne Juhasz (1979) describes the process of divorce as a severed strand, rather than a busted bond. The term

"busted bond" suggests a dramatic and violent shattering of a marriage relationship. She believes that the ideal, and often the reality, is that of a relationship where intact strands remain, even while others have broken under the strain in the relationship. In the case of parents, sexual, emotional and social strands may be severed, but the co-parenting one remains.

Bohannan (1971), in a novel way of describing a co-parenting family arrangement, called it a "bar-bell" household. It is composed of "a house on one end, an apartment on the other, joined by an automobile" (p. 287).

Since January 1, 1980, the California child custody law expects that divorcing parents consider the possibility of joint custody, reflecting the belief that a child should have continuing contact with both parents. As a result, a new profession has been born: that is, divorce mediator. This professional seeks to establish "that people can be empowered to negotiate their own divorce settlement outside of the legal system and in a non-adversarial way" (Haynes, 1981, p. xi). Rather than each going to a lawyer which usually means a win-lose outcome, the couple go together to a mediator who promotes a win-win outcome. Thus each person achieves positive gains while recognizing that the other partner has the right to also have gains. The spirit of cooperation is productive for their relationship in the future as they continue to co-parent (Haynes, 1981).

An important aspect of the divorce mediation is the

inclusion of the children at appropriate times in the process. Haynes believes that the distress of divorce is eased for children by helping them understand the divorce and by arranging adequate access to both parents. He encourages parents to share in joint legal custody. If parenting rights have been protected, and if children have adequate access to maintain parent-child ties, he does not believe that joint physical custody is always suitable or necessary.

A few authors have discussed two financial aspects of joint custody. Ahrons suggests that joint custody can be expensive since each parent is providing a household with extra clothing, toys, and space. She wonders if it is feasible in low income families. Stack (1976) thinks that the finances of joint custody are no more complicated than in sole custody. She suggests that "defaults on child support payments are less likely under shared custody agreements" (pp. 511-12).

Research on Joint Custody

For the most part, current literature on joint custody is based on personal reports and logical argument. Only two research projects directly examine joint custody as it affects each family member. One is an unpublished Doctoral Dissertation by Alice Abarbanel--a case study of four families completed in 1977. The other is an ongoing study of 24 joint custody families, began in 1978 by Susan

Steinman. Both studies were conducted in and around San Francisco.

Susan Steinman individually interviewed members of 24 joint custody families, which included a total of 32 children. These families had experienced joint custody for a range of two to nine years, and had originally chosen and implemented the arrangement on their own.

In this initial report, Steinman focused on the parental relationships, the actual physical arrangements, and the children's experiences. She has yet to publish a report discussing the parents' experiences in greater depth, the issue of remarriage, and a follow-up report on the families.

Steinman (1981) found that, despite some difficulties, the parents found the joint custody arrangement satisfactory. They felt it to be "congruent with their value system, life-style, and relationship with their children" (p. 413). For the children, the experience had some drawbacks, although most appreciated having access to both parents, and felt loved and wanted by both. About one-third felt "overburdened by the demands and requirements of maintaining a strong presence in two homes" (p. 414). Steinman states that it is not clear that the unhappiness of this group was caused by the joint custody arrangement; however, it definitely was a contributing factor.

Steinman suggests that the attitudes, values and behavior of the parents have major impact on the child's

adjustment.

> The cooperative and respectful relationship between the parents for the purpose of child rearing, and each parent's support of the child's relationship with the other parent, seemed to be more significant in helping the children adjust to the divorce than making sure that the time the children spent with each parent was precisely equal. (p. 414)

She cautions that joint custody is not a simple solution, nor is it appropriate for all divorcing families; however, it is a start towards breaking out of the traditional method of granting mother custody, and towards creating the family structure best suited for each individual family.

In 1977, as part of her doctoral dissertation, Alice Abarbanel completed an exploratory case study of four joint custody families. Hers was the first study which explored the impact on all family members of the post-divorce arrangement known as joint custody. In fact, this study seems to be the first using this systematic approach to examining the effect of any kind of post-divorce custody arrangement on all family members.

Abarbanel used four assumptions and counter assumptions as the focal points in the discussion of her results.

The Children

Assumption 1

> Joint Custody means two discontinuous environments. This discrepancy and the shifting created by the movement back and forth between two homes causes lack of continuity and instability.

Counter Assertion 1

When the discrepancy between the two different homes is minimal and handling of the shifting is done with cooperation and in a stable and predictable manner, the children will tend to do well.

Assumption 2

Children of divorce are said to lose one psychological parent in that the father becomes a visitor.

Counter Assertion 2

Children of joint custody get two everyday parents--a balanced experience with both parents that involves routine, frustration, as well as playful times. This will allow for the ambivalence that is necessary for growth.

The Parents

Assumption 1

Parents who make the joint custody choice are selfish and put their needs above those of the children.

Counter Assertion 1

Choosing joint custody is a lifestyle choice made by people with androgynous sex-role orientation. It is a choice made out of both parents' desire to be actively involved with the children, and out of the parents' decision that it is beneficial for the children.

Assumption 2

Parents in a joint custody arrangement are unable to separate in a healthy way, and use this arrangement, and by implication, their children, to stay together in some way.

Counter Assertion 2

Joint custody is a choice made by parents who think they can share the parent role after separation, while allowing themselves to separate in other ways. These parents are able to remain attached in ways that can aid in their parenting function without deterring them from proceeding with their own lives. (Abarbanel, 1977, pp. 271-281)

Abarbanel (1979) concluded that joint custody seemed to be working effectively for the four families in her study. She identified the following four factors which contributed to its success: "commitment to the arrangement; the parents' mutual support; flexible sharing of responsibility; and agreement on the implicit rules of the system" (p. 325). In clarification of the latter point, Abarbanel writes:

> To agree on the implicit rules means to work out mutual definitions of such issues as how much contact to have, both as parents and as people; how much to overlap the two households; what kind, how much, and how to share information; whether and how to give the other parent critical or positive feedback about his or her parenting. (p. 326)

Even with the above mentioned four factors, she found that physical arrangements can make joint custody difficult to arrange. Geographical proximity is necessary, particularly for school age children. The age, age range and number of children may be a problem. Abarbanel found that the teenager (there was only one in her study) became unhappy with moving back and forth and arranged to have one primary home base; however, he continued to feel equally welcome in both homes.

The parents varied in how much post-separation contact they had as parents and as people. They all found shared parenting to be a more complicated process than they believed a sole custody arrangement would have been. Abarbanel noted that each child had two psychological parents, and that all the children seemed to be adapted to

their living arrangements. Three of the families had lengthened the time spent with each parent to facilitate development of a normal routine.

Summary

Changing social conditions are affecting the fate of families in today's society. Families, and professionals helping families, are struggling with how best to adapt to these changes. Research on the divorcing family has been sporadic and scattered, with very little emphasis on the total family system.

Little is known about how divorce affects families, and disagreements exist among the people in the helping professions. For example, some believe that the framework used for understanding loss from death applies equally to understanding the dynamics of divorce. Others believe that use of the "death and dying" framework reinforces the idea of the child as a victim who is losing one parent. This attitude masks the potential for healthy change and continued involvement for both parents.

Some people subscribe to Goldstein, Freud and Solnit's belief in one psychological parent; however, whether current divorce research has focused on the parent, the child, or the whole family, results consistently show happier outcomes for all family members when both parents continue to have involvement with their children.

It is apparent from the literature, that options

exist for divorcing families who are planning for care of their children. In talking with legal and counselling professionals in Alberta, few seem to be aware of these options. Some parents are now arranging joint legal custody but very few have tried joint physical custody. To date, no research has been published in Alberta, or in Canada, on this topic. Obviously a need exists for an intensive look at how each family member experiences the joint custody situation.

In partial satisfaction of this need, and since the most suitable method for an in-depth examination of a family is the case study, that has been the method chosen for this research. The following chapter examines the validity and the advantages of the case study method, and describes how it was used with a joint custody family.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the design and conduct of this research, including a rationale for the use of the case study method.

Methodological Considerations

Several factors led to the use of a case study for this research. One is the scarcity of research on the subject of joint custody, and, indeed, a scarcity of divorce research which considers the viewpoint of the whole family. The testing of hypotheses requires the knowledge and understanding which has grown out of exploratory research. Our understanding of joint custody families is still at the exploratory stage.

A second factor suggesting the use of a case study is the philosophy of this researcher who believes that a family, including divorced family, is a group of people who exist in a social system which is greater than the sum of its parts. It has boundaries, subsystems, and unique methods of communication and problem solving. By looking at the whole system of the joint custody family, interrelated variables are more likely to emerge and greater

understanding is achieved than if certain elements were isolated and examined individually.

A third factor inviting use of a case study is the nature of the stated purposes of this study. These purposes require an indepth understanding of the current relationships among the family members. An understanding of how these relationships have evolved would facilitate this deeper understanding.

A fourth, and very pragmatic factor suggesting use of a case study, is the very small number of families in this city who meet the criteria of this study. A family structure becoming common in California is still rare here.

Weiss (1968) describes holistic research where the problem is the nature of the total system. In holistic research, the goal is not to test hypotheses, but to explore for a pattern or system in what is being studied. Rather than isolating elements from each other and then studying their relationships in an analytical manner, holistic research looks at the interactions in the whole system, knowing that any one variable is being affected by the actions and interactions of many other variables.

What Weiss calls holistic research is similar to the research method more commonly known as the case study. Dumont (1968) suggests that the case study can provide feeling tones of behavior which give a validity and a truth that is lost to social scientists who are doing large-scale surveys. These surveys are designed to be objective and free

of prejudice.

Shantz (1965) encourages a similar rationale. About case studies he says:

> They have the potential for presenting that individual in his full complexity; they do not require that the contextual and organizational properties of human behavior and experience be ignored or artificially eliminated. They are capable of yielding an overall picture of the naturally functioning person that can scarcely be obtained in any other way. (p. 68)

Although speaking of case studies with individuals, the above statement is equally true of case studies with families. Herzog and Sudia (1973) write of the importance of configurations as compared to discrete variables. They encourage the indepth study of families "as they function within their life setting {in order to provide} a continuing source of fresh clues to elements and processes not yet perceived or inaccurately perceived" (p. 212).

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) describe the case study researcher as correlating what she sees with what she hears from these persons who are in relationship to each other, to the whole situation, and to the researcher. The researcher assumes the reality to be complex, and therefore knows that her developed understanding of it is not necessarily "true" or "untrue." Rather her understanding is grounded in the information collected, and evaluation in relation to a framework and/or its usefulness in understanding the topic in question (in this case, joint custody).

Schantz (1965) suggests the use of the case study to challenge the validity of existing points of view, especially

when a certain theory has been used to explain all persons or situations without exception. Using this rationale, a case study of a joint custody family may be a way to investigate the usefulness of Goldstein, Freud and Solnit's "one psychological parent" theory (1973). Shantz states, "The purpose of challenging existing modes of thought is commonly combined with the purpose of presenting evidence for, or illustrations of, alternative theoretical positions" (p. 74).

Regarding the question of bias in case studies, Shantz recognizes that there will inevitably be bias; however, he believes that the critical question is whether the case study has been "employed appropriately in specific instances to the accomplishment of the purpose it serves best" (1965, p. 82). Schatzman and Strauss (1973) believe that field researchers are pragmatically concerned with those techniques which will yield the most meaningful information, and, while conceding awareness of their own selectivity of perception (and thus bias), they do not view "consensually validated" instruments as being free of similar biases.

Pilot Study

After the interview schedules had been adapted, a pilot study was conducted as a means of pretesting whether or not these particular schedules would elicit the information required to satisfy the purposes of this research.

The family chosen for the pilot study met all of the research criteria but one--their child was only two and one

half, and therefore not old enough to be interviewed. The parents, however, were very eager to take part since they felt they were forging a new life style with few guidelines to help them. These parents had been married only once and had been separated almost two years. The father now lives with a new female partner who has children of her own, and they have a baby several months old.

The children interviewed for the pilot study are from a different family and are not in a physical joint custody situation; however, although they live with their mother, they have close and regular contact with their father.

As a result of these pilot interviews, some adjustments were made in the content of the interview format, particularly the child's interview questions.

Locating Subjects

To locate suitable subjects for this study, the investigator contacted Family Service Agencies, Mental Health Professionals in private practice, and lawyers whose focus was on family law. Although these professionals agreed that many divorcing families are signing joint custody agreements, they pointed out that most of these families do not, in practice, have <u>physical</u> joint custody. The children continue, in the traditional manner, to live with one parent and visit the other. One lawyer commented that families with physical joint custody are in the vanguard of a new custom,

and families who have been trying it for more than a year are in the "super vanguard." In any case, locating a joint custody family which met the criteria of this study was a lengthy procedure.

Description of Subjects

The subjects interviewed for this study are a father, a mother, their daughter, the daughter's teacher, and a married couple who are friends of the family. All of the subjects in this study, including the teacher and friends interviewed, are middle class city dwellers, who were previously unknown to the investigator. The parents in the study, now separated almost three years, had not been married before and have not remarried, nor are they living with new partners. They have one twelve year old daughter who has been in this teacher's class for two years. The married couple have known the subjects for ten years and continue to be friends with both parents.

All the names used in this report are pseudonyms, and any identifying information has been disguised, without distorting the meaning for this research.

Procedure

The subject family was referred to the investigator by a lawyer, who had the consent of the family to do so. The investigator then phoned the mother who affirmed that

she, her former husband, and her daughter, were most willing to take part in the research.

Each family member was interviewed individually with each parent's interview lasting about two and one quarter hours, and the daughter's interview one and one half hours. The mother was interviewed initially, the father the following evening, and the daughter two evenings later. The friends' interview in their home the next week lasted approximately thirty minutes, as did the interview in the school with the teacher one week later. The parents signed appropriate consent forms (see Appendices A, B, C, D).

Each interview was tape recorded. The researcher listened to each tape making lengthy notes of each recording, including numerous direct quotations.

At the beginning of each interview, the investigator explained the purpose of the study. All subjects were reassured that they could decline to answer any question they found objectionable; however, at no time did anyone do this.

The interviews with the father, mother, and daughter were held in the mother's home, so that the first evening, before interviewing the mother, the researcher had also met the father and daughter. The daughter was also initially present the following evening before her father's interview began. This seemed to be an advantage in establishing rapport and trust between the child and the investigator. During the actual interview, only the subject and the interviewer were present in the room.

The original intention had been to interview each parent in his/her own home and to see the child in each home; however, the father had just returned from a month in Europe with his daughter. Prior to departing, he had given up his apartment, and given away or stored his furniture and belongings. At the time of the interviews, he had just found a two bedroom apartment a few blocks from his former wife's house, and planned to move soon. Meanwhile he was staying in the house with his daughter, his ex-wife and her two roommates.

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) suggest that "in field research, a refashioning of design must go on through most of the work" (p. 7). Originally, the researcher had anticipated interviewing grandparents or other extended family members; however, no immediate relatives of this family live in this province. Instead, both parents agreed that close friends whom they had known for ten years would be able to give an additional perspective. These friends, a married couple, were contacted by the mother and, when the researcher phoned, were most receptive to being interviewed.

The daughter's teacher was phoned initially by the investigator, and required only to see the signed consent (see Appendices E,F,G,H) to feel comfortable about being interviewed.

Instruments

The data for this study were obtained by means of indepth interviews. The interview designs were adapted from those used by Abarbanel (1977). Adaptations were based on the literature review of Chapter II and on the pilot interviews. In order to achieve the purposes of this research, the interview schedules were designed to provide a broad understanding of this family both pre- and post-separation: how had this couple been influenced by their families of origin, how had their marriage evolved, and how did all these factors contribute to their choosing joint custody?

Rather than formulating exact questions to be asked, the researcher followed a comprehensive outline which listed the information required from each person (see Appendices E - H). For the most part, information was elicited by the use of open ended questions. In many cases, the subjects expressed feelings or volunteered information, before it was solicited. These spontaneous expressions were important in allowing the subject to express her/his point of view without the bias which could be created by the wording of the investigator's questions. Such a style of interviewing also allows the introduction of topics which may not even have been on the original list.

As suggested by Schatzman and Strauss (1973), subjects were encouraged to give specific examples to increase the researcher's understanding. The overall format corresponds with the description Richardson, Dahrenwend, and

Klein (1965) give of non-schedule, standardized interviews.

Because the daughter is a very articulate twelve year old, her interview was conducted in a way similar to her parents. If younger children had been involved, the investigator would have used other means of communication, such as drawing, painting, or clay modelling.

Operational Definitions

Joint Legal Custody. Both parents, after separation or divorce, share the authority to make major decisions in their child's or children's lives. The child or children may live primarily with one parent.

Joint Physical Custody. After separation or divorce, the child or children have two homes, so that they live part of the time with mother, and part of the time with father. The division of time is not necessarily 50/50.

Joint Custody. In this study, the term joint custody is used to mean joint physical custody unless otherwise indicated.

Family System. A family is a social system which is more than the sum of its parts and more powerful than any individual in it. Any action by one person affects every other member of the family.

Analysis of Data

In reference to qualitative data, Becker (1958) observes that "analysis is carried on sequentially, important parts of the analysis being made while the researcher is still gathering his data" (p. 653). Schatzman and Strauss (1973) also believe that the analytic process goes on throughout the entire research, and that the data themselves can suggest the most suitable method for reporting the findings and making meaning from them.

For this study, information has been summarized into a comprehensive case description. The assertions, used by Aberbanel (1977) have been modified and used for discussion. The experience of this joint custody family has been compared to the findings of Abarbanel (1977) and Steinman (1981). Information given in the interviews has also been assessed in terms of the stated purposes of this research.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter documents the experience of a joint custody family as told by mother, father, child, family friends, and the child's teacher. The parents are Lynne and Craig, their daughter is Jo. Their friends are Anne and Ron, and the teacher is Mr. Anderson.

The Parents

General Description

Lynne is a slim vivacious and attractive 32 year old woman. She has an air of self-possession and seemed comfortable with the idea of being interviewed.

Lynne owns the big old two storey house in which she lives and where she, Craig and Jo had lived before separation. It is located on a quiet suburban street with easy access to the downtown section of a city of half a million population. The inside of the house had been considerably altered and modernized by a previous owner. A spacious open feeling prevails, with comfortable furniture and many plants. The upstairs contains four bedrooms, one each for Lynne, Jo and their two roommates. The household also contains two hamsters who live in cages in Jo's bedroom and a large

friendly cat.

From the time she started living in this house on her own, Lynne has had two roommates. Sometimes they have been men but currently they are both young women. They share expenses and household chores, but also seem like family members. During the time of the interviews, the investigator met both of the current roommates, and observed a congeniality among all the members of the household.

Craig is a quiet handsome man who looks younger than his age of 35. Since he and Lynne separated, he has lived in rented apartments. At the time of the interview, he was temporarily staying in Lynne's house, but had just located a two-bedroom apartment to which he was soon moving. Thus, the interview was conducted in Lynne's living room with the occasional interruption, such as one of the roommates looking for her glasses or Jo looking for a pencil.

Craig spoke quietly and carefully, although he did not refuse to respond to any of the questions asked. At the beginning, he suggested, "You'll probably have to prompt me quite a bit. I'm not very talkative."

The first evening when the investigator arrived for Lynne's interview, she, Craig, Jo, and one of the roommates had just finished supper. The atmo e seemed very comfortable and relaxed as we all chatte asually and arranged for private space for the interview. The following evening before Craig's interview, only Jo and one roommate were initially present. Two evenings later, only Jo and one

roommate were home. Always the other members of the household either left the house or went upstairs to their rooms to provide privacy for the interviews.

Background: Education, Work, and Marriage

Lynne

When she was two, Lynne moved to Canada from England with her parents and her two older sisters. Her oldest sister is a step-sister since her mother's first husband was killed in the war. Lynne grew up in a moderately sized western Canadian city where she attended an Anglican church until age 13 or 14. She attended school until Grade 10. After quitting school, Lynne worked as a chambermaid, and waitress, then left home at age 18, and from 18 to 20 "bummed across Canada."

At age 20, Lynne was with her boyfriend living in a large eastern Canadian city. It was there that Jo was born. Choosing not to marry Jo's father, Lynne returned to live with her parents. Shortly after, she met and married Craig. At this time, Jo was fourteen months old. Almost immediately Craig was transferred to the city where they all currently live.

Lynne states that, although she is glad now that she had her, at the time Jo was born, she was very frightened. From the beginning of their relationship, Craig has accepted Jo, and has always seemed like her real father. About five

years ago, Craig officially adopted her.

About her homelife with her parents, Lynne states that her mother was the disciplinarian and she was Daddy's girl. "I manipulated him, and, as an adult, I've had to look at that behavior with other men." Her parents were affectionate--"lots of touchy stuff," and, in their own way, not interfering and "quite wonderful." Lynne describes her father as out-going and her mother as a homebody. Although her mother worked outside the home at various times, it was always with the idea of quitting as soon as possible. Her father was a blue collar worker with no ambitions to advance to management positions.

Lynne says, "I wasn't a bad teen, but I was trying to discover my independence." She is grateful that her parents did not make her feel guilty for leaving home at 18, and accepted her back with Jo two years later.

Craig

Craig grew up in the same city as Lynne, the oldest of four children (three boys and one girl). When he was 13, and his youngest brother a few months old, his mother suffered a lingering death from cancer. His father wanted to keep the children together, and, with the help of housekeepers and relatives, managed to do so. Craig now questions whether this was a good idea or whether each sibling should have gone to a different relative to live permanently. His father was away working on the railroad three or four days per week, and Craig found the housekeepers easy to

manipulate. His youngest brother got into a lot of trouble, only his sister got an education past Grade 12, and Craig himself started hanging around older teenagers. He graduated from high school at age 22, having spent two years in each grade of high school, because of his heavy involvement in a rock band.

Until his mother died, Craig said he was a strict Roman Catholic of French heritage, who attended church daily and was "pretty sheltered." About his mother he says:

> She held all the family together, my brothers and sisters and my Dad's side . . . . After she died everyone scattered. She was sort of the nucleus of the whole thing.

Thus, for his first 13 years, Craig grew up surrounded by his mother's affection and by the warmth of numerous relatives. He says that besides looking after her children, his mother frequently entertained relatives, belonged to "all the ladies groups" and kept his father's drinking under control.

Craig states that his father was not very talkative and didn't show his emotions. Two years after his wife's death, his father married a woman who had one child--a son older than Craig. The marriage lasted one month, and Craig's dad has never mentioned it since. Craig says, "I know he loves me, but he doesn't show it." Of his two parents, Craig says his father has had the biggest impact on him "in trying not to be like him." Craig said he had developed a big shell around himself, but with Lynne's influence, became more able to display affection.

Table 1

Demographic Data

Name	Age[a]	Education	Religion	Ethnic Origin	Current Income
Lynne	32	Community College Diploma	Anglican (non attending)	English	over $20,000.00
Craig	35	Grade 12	Roman Catholic	French Canadian	approx. $20,000.00

Note: [a]In May, 1982.

Marriage

Lynne was a customer in a store where Craig was working. They were married within six months of meeting and were immediately transferred by Craig's company to their present city of residence.

At first they lived in an apartment outside the city. Craig was earning $3.50 per hour, Lynne was collecting unemployment insurance and they had no car. Lynne found herself feeling depressed and unhappy. In four months she got a job in a retail store and they moved into a one bedroom apartment in the city. About this time, Craig's young brother (then age 14 and in trouble with the law) came to live with them. They moved to a three bedroom apartment far out in the west end, and then finally back to a rented house in the city core.

Craig says that about a year after marriage he started to feel trapped. "I wanted to get out but I wasn't brave enough to leave. Actually I left for a week once, but I was pretty lonely." Lynne says, "A long time later, Craig told me that he was freaking out about married responsibilities."

Craig says, "I can control my emotions--probably too well. It's hard for anyone to tell how I'm feeling. If I get very angry, I can't speak." Lynne is much more talkative and expressive of her emotions. She says, "It was an up and down marriage, but it wasn't violent." Acknowledging

problems, they went together to a psychiatrist who used hypnosis to help them get in touch with their feelings, and who gave them some techniques for keeping a relationship alive. This was followed by a period which they both mentioned as being good. Craig said, "We started getting along together" and Lynne commented, "For a few years, we were a good match."

For three years, they lived in a group home as foster parents. Craig's brother was still with them. During this time, Lynne started to attend a Community College part-time. Jo was in kindergarten and Craig had opened his own store. Lynne says, "Later I found out that he was threatened by my going back to school, and I understood that I had wanted to be more a part of his stores."

During the time they lived in the group home, Lynne started to experience an undefined restlessness. She started reading about feminist issues and discussing these issues with a female friend. She states she had fallen into the female model set by her mother, but feminism heightened her awareness, and she wanted things to change.

Of this period, Craig says:

> It was okay with me that she went to school. She met new friends there, I didn't pay much attention and we started going our separate ways. I was in my own store and except for a few close friends we still have, we had separate friends . . . . She wanted more freedom which I was willing to give her - if it was mine to give.

To a question regarding the quality of their family life, Craig responds, "It seemed perfect to me. It was just

the way I wanted it." He was bewildered when Lynne told him that their marriage wasn't the way she wanted it. Although he found that hard to accept, he also acknowledged that she had tried to do it his way. Lynne says, "When I wanted change, he tried, but it was too late."

At this stage, they would sit for hours, each stating a viewpoint but "unable to get it to mesh." They decided they didn't have the energy to work on their relationship, and Lynne said she wanted to leave; however, she put off doing so until Craig sat her down and insisted that she make up her mind to stay or go. Craig says, "Otherwise it would have carried on for months until we really didn't like each other." They both agree that they split up before things got too destructive.

Separation

Lynne and Jo moved out in September, moved back at Christmas, moved out again in February, and in May, Lynne and Craig had a legal separation drawn up by a lawyer who was a mutual friend. In June, Craig moved to an apartment and Lynne moved into the house. Lynne says the separation agreement was simple, "Craig takes the business, I take the house, his car is his, mine is mine, and we'll have joint custody."

During this time, they saw a counsellor once jointly with no benefit. After the return at Christmas, Lynne was convinced that she must be crazy, "I had everything but I

didn't love my husband." She went to see a psychiatrist who supported her decision to leave so, "I left the next day."

Telling Jo

Following an agreement that they would separate, Lynne had taken a month long motor trip of several thousand miles. Although they had agreed to wait until her return to talk to Jo, Craig told her before Lynne came back. This upset Lynne who was worried that Jo would be angry at her. They both stressed to Jo that it was not her fault, and, although they both think that she hoped for a long time that they would get back together, Craig and Lynne believe that Jo did not blame herself.

Lynne made her a part of the changes; for example, she took Jo along to go apartment hunting. Lynne recalls that Jo seemed upset at first, and then depressed. She also frankly states, "I can't say I clued into all her feelings because I was sort of caught up in my own." Jo had a temporary drop in her grades, followed by a transfer into the gifted program. About this time, the regular routine of one week with each parent was being established.

Both parents mentioned an occasional time when Jo had stomach-aches and wanted to stay home from school. She had some sleep disturbances because of nightmares. Craig recalls that she had a time of depression with some "bitchy" periods. Lynne recalls that she had a pervasive sadness for a while and then showed some general rebelliousness

manifested as "snarkiness."

Because of her concern that Jo might be angry at her, Lynne and Jo went to a psychologist. He didn't think that there was a problem. Overall Lynne feels that "Jo adjusted quite well and our problems were few."

Establishment of Joint Custody

Initially, Lynne and Jo moved to an apartment and Craig saw Jo on a visiting parent basis. None of them liked this arrangement and by the time they worked out their separation agreement, Jo started rotating about a week in each parent's home. Craig is adamant that he could never be a "weekend" father.

Craig has moved several times since he and Lynne separated, and has not always lived in Jo's school district. Their arrangement has been that he drives Jo to school, and she returns to her mother's after school to do her homework. Then Craig picks her up there when he leaves work. When Jo was younger, she spent Thursday nights at Lynne's because Craig's store was open late, and he would have been picking Jo up later than her school night bedtime. Now, he is moving a few blocks from her school, so Jo will go straight to his apartment after school.

Regarding vacations, they have alternated Christmas so that one year Jo spends Christmas Eve and half of Christmas day with one parent, and the rest of Christmas Day and Boxing Day with the other. Other holidays have not needed

any special arrangement. In the summer, Jo sometimes goes on vacations with her mother, and usually spends some time at a camp and some time in another city with her maternal grandparents.

Craig has taken few vacations, until this spring when he spend a month in Europe. This trip seems to have been a highlight for both of them. Craig wanted to see more museums than Jo did, and he wasn't able to go out at night quite the same; however, he had hoped, and indeed experienced, that he and Jo "got a little closer together." Jo did experience some homesickness for her mother.

When asked about transition times when Jo goes to the other parent's house, both parents mentioned that when she was younger they experienced a feeling of loneliness when she first left. Neither has noticed anything in her. Lynne says, "When I see her walk through that door on a Thursday and I know she's going to be mine for a week, she gets my feet back down on the ground. Often I don't cook when she's not around."

Craig says that Jo was initially very careful of what she said around him in relation to Lynne's life. "She didn't have to be, I wasn't that sensitive." Eventually they talked about it, and Jo stopped being so guarded. Craig feels that Jo is still more open with her mother than with him, "maybe a holdover from when she was trying to protect me."

Co-parenting

Both parents mentioned that Jo had initially tried to play one against the other. For example, she said to Lynne, "When I'm with Dad, I don't have to go grocery shopping." However, she did not try this for long, partly because Lynne and Craig maintained such open communication.

Before they separated, Lynne said, "We didn't talk about parenting. We just did it but Craig was more of a softie." Now they have "tightened up" in that they discuss more often how they are disciplining. Craig says, "I won't let Jo do something if I know her mother doesn't approve of it. If I think I may be treading on thin ice, or if something seems to be bothering Jo, I discuss it with Lynne."

Lynne says, "If I notice something askew with Jo, I phone and ask Craig. We might consult about her schoolwork, but there isn't much now that she's older."

Lynne considers that Craig and Jo are very close. She thinks that Craig is just as loving and caring as he ever was, but now has to take more responsibility in parenting than he used to. She also feels that Jo does not talk as openly to Craig as to her; however, they do talk more than they used to, and Jo accepts Craig as he is.

Craig thinks that, as a parent, Lynne has been "pretty consistent." Although she may lose her temper occasionally, she's more relaxed than she used to be. After spending a week at Lynne's house, Craig states that he doesn't see much difference between the two households.

"There are very few rules either place." He perceives Jo and Lynne's relationship as very good, close and loving with no jealousy or competition.

Regarding Jo's expenses, major expenditures such as camp and school expenses are shared. Jo uses the family allowance cheque for her clothes. She does not get an allowance but has started to do some babysitting. Craig pays her one dollar per hour to work in his store on Saturdays. Sometime, when she doesn't go to the store, he pays her for cleaning his apartment. Lynne's roommates also pay Jo for doing some of their household chores. Both parents can claim Jo on their income tax.

Jo has never been seriously ill, but if she was, Lynne thinks she would probably stay with her because Craig has only a skeleton staff in his stores, and cannot easily be away.

Both Lynne and Craig perceive themselves as good parents, while wondering if they should spend more time with Jo; however, each one thinks that the time they have with her is quality time. Each values the freedom this arrangement gives them. Lynne says that as a full time parent she'd be more tired. Craig says, "I've got my cake and can eat it too, but if she ever lived with me full time, I'd get used to it."

Craig's House

Craig says that he and Jo spend a lot of time reading. Jo helps with the cooking and with cleaning up the apartment. On Sunday they sometimes attend a Catholic church together, sometimes go swimming, and often go visiting friends. He includes her in his social life, and she often plays with the children of his girlfriends. He says he has had a lot of short term relationships and he wonders about the impact of this on Jo. He thinks that she would like him to get married again, and he admits that he would like that too.

He has a few friends, mostly from before his divorce. He is not close to his family and has not kept in touch with Lynne's family although he thinks he could have. One of his brothers didn't think joint custody was a good idea, but Craig says, "he has a child he never sees," an idea intolerable to Craig. He does not recall any books that were helpful but he did read one or two articles on joint custody in popular magazines.

Craig continues to be busily occupied with two retail stores which he owns. He also expresses a dissatisfaction with a life oriented "all for the bucks." He believes our quality of life in North America has deteriorated and feels concerned that for society as a whole, "life seems to be in the fast lane."

Lynne's House

Lynne says that she is bringing Jo up in an environment which she thinks is healthy. "Anything is open for discussion and Jo doesn't seem to hesitate. If she wants to talk about something, she asks." Lynne says that she and her roommates are all feminists, and she values Jo having this exposure. She says that Jo relates well to all of them. "The roommates are very good. If she's getting out of hand, they let her know."

Jo has her own room where she does what she likes. She has several friends in her mother's neighbourhood, and they will now be accessible to her father's apartment; Lynne says they have no typical weekend activities. "Whatever happens, happens."

Lynne has had two close relationships with men, but has none now. She says that Jo was "burned off by one of them being here on the weekend so much, but she felt comfortable saying so." She has two close female friends and also friends of many years standing who have remained friends with both her and Craig. Her parents, although initially distressed, are now supportive, as are her two sisters.

When asked if books had been helpful, Lynne said, "Not really, because my whole self-awareness trip came in through my schooling so I had, by that time, the ability to tune into my own feelings." She has not been involved in any groups related to divorce or parenting, but has taken part in feminist organizations. She currently has a very

challenging and satisfying position as head of a specialized employment agency.

Craig and Lynne Now

Lynne says, "I wasn't content with letting seven years of my life go by and never talk to this man again. Even when I knew I was leaving, I wanted to salvage a relationship." She says that she enjoys Craig's company now because she doesn't feel responsible for him as she did when they were married. She considers him a very intelligent and sensitive man with whom she enjoys talking about books, his trip, shows and also feminist issues. She knows that he doesn't say nasty things about her.

Craig says that at first after they separated, he did not want to see Lynne, but later, in six months to a year, they became good friends. He says, "I was still physically attracted to her but that seems to have gone." He likes the separate lives they lead while still retaining good communication and some connection.

Jo As Her Parents Describe Her Now

Both Lynne and Craig mentioned that Jo sometimes seems too sensitive. When she gets angry or frustrated she gets argumentative and then cries. Craig is sometimes uncertain if her crying is genuine or if she is trying to get her own way. Lynne assures her that it's okay to cry and it's okay to be angry. Jo sometimes withdraws but never for long.

Lynne says, "If you don't get a kiss goodnight, you know she's bummed off, but she's okay by morning. She doesn't hold grudges."

Craig has noticed that she is sensitive about friendships, but feels that is typical of a twelve year old girl. He has noticed that she seems to accept his girlfriends better than her mother's boyfriends.

Lynne and Craig take turns attending school functions. Jo is in an enriched French immersion program. Her only difficulty has been in Math and she will be attending summer school to upgrade her math skills.

Craig made a comment about Jo's maturity:

> Being an only child, I think she's grown up faster than other children--she's more mature. She's always been a little adult and has always been treated like one. That concerns me once in a while. I hope she hasn't missed anything.

Lynne says that Jo knows that she's being brought up in a feminist environment. Lynne believes that in a traditional home the attitudes towards the kids is "Do as I say" and the children are viewed as possessions and extensions of their mothers. They are talked down to and are far too protected.

Craig is concerned that Lynne is "a little too militant about making Jo aware of her rights--of feminist issues. She carries it a little bit too far." He also concedes that most of it is okay but he is uncomfortable with anything carried to extremes.

Lynne and Craig's Reflections on Joint Custody

Both Lynne and Craig express satisfaction with their current arrangement. Lynne says, "It's wonderful, the way to go. I would have no problem recommending it to anyone if they were both good parents." She says that she sees it going on for a long time "because it's working so well for us."

Craig says that he experienced a great deal of anxiety once when Lynne applied for a job in another city. He states, "At that point I would have tried to fight her because we had already signed the agreement and, if she wanted to move away, that was her tough luck." Lynne says that she had applied for the job on a spontaneous impulse, and was relieved when she did not get it.

Neither parent perceives that Jo is experiencing any loyalty conflict, but Craig is emphatic that the parents need to be able to get along or "it's too hard on the kids. Children can't be used as a tool to get at the other person." He thinks it possible that the changing environment might affect some children but does not see adverse effects on Jo; however, he has purposefully moved into the area near her school so that Jo can be near her friends.

When asked what advice he would give divorcing friends, Craig said, "If thinking of joint custody, stress communication between parents, and make sure the child knows she's loved by both." To the same question, Lynne replied,

"Seriously consider joint custody and be supportive of each other."

Neither has experienced any blatant criticism of their joint custody arrangement. Mostly people have been curious and some have been very supportive.

Both Lynne and Craig described their ideal situation for raising children. Lynne would want co-parenting, whether married or divorced:

> . . . equal responsibility for children right from cooking their little suppers to putting them into their little beds, and--open communication--and a lot of physicalness (touching) --and respect and trust for those kids.

Craig thinks the ideal way is "the old way" with the complete family: grandparents, uncles and aunts. He thinks "children get a sense of continuity, a lot of support, a lot of love, from more than just their parents." He would like to marry again, and possibly have a child.

Jo's Biological Father

Lynne has not seen or had contact with Jo's real father since they parted when Jo was a few months old. When Jo was six, Lynne told her about him. That night, Jo cried in bed, saying she wanted to live with her real Dad. Lynne explained that they would not be happy with him, and, other than a few questions since, Jo never mentions him. Lynne has promised to help her look for him when she's 18, if she's interested. Lynne says that when she told Jo about her real Dad, Craig was really sweating, "but

was okay once he realized that it hadn't changed anything." Craig says he has no obligations now to Jo looking for her biological father.

The Child

General Description

Jo is a tall, slim, attractive twelve year old girl with short blonde curly hair. She is friendly and poised, and seemed to enjoy the interview. She answered the questions in a thoughtful and candid way.

Jo likes the age she is now, partly because she thinks she is still young enough to be pampered. The thing she dislikes most in life is being forced into something: "When I'm forced, I clam up." She also dislikes math, and "fighting with friends." Her favourite things are horses, popcorn, movies and baseball.

Jo and the Divorce

Jo said that she only thought that the divorce was her fault for about ten minutes at the beginning. In describing why her parents separated, Jo said that her parents had changed over the years and they just couldn't get along anymore. She seldom heard them arguing but felt hurt when they did. She added, "I was scared because they were arguing over dumb things."

Jo said she had been an avid radio talk show

listener and "used to hear about kids going to court--and the judge asks them who they'd rather live with and I was really scared because I didn't want to say that at all--that's so mean." Jo thinks children should only choose which parent to live with if they really hate one of their parents, or if one parent is abusing them mentally or physically. Otherwise, there is a burden for the children of hurting one of their parents.

When asked about what was most helpful for her, Jo said:

> Realizing that they had made their decision and both loved me no matter what happens, and that there really wasn't that much I could do about it, and knowing that I'd only see my Dad once in a while, cause that's what you read in books. It was sort of like that for a while, and then I started spending weekends, and then weeks.

She said that for a year or two she fantasized about bringing her parents together again. For example, she thought she might break her arm and get her parents to meet in the hospital. She also used to stand inside the mushroom rings in the grass and wish that her Mom and Dad would get back together. Then one day she said to herself, "Mom's dating, Dad's dating, and they're both so happy now--this is sort of dumb," so she stopped. Now she says that she is satisfied to know they are great friends.

When asked what she calls home, she said that it depends who she is talking to and whose house she's in, but she considers both places home. She enjoys the noise and bustle at her mother's house where there are two roommates, and she appreciates the quiet at her father's where they

sometimes talk a lot, and sometimes sit quietly and read. When asked what she likes best about having two houses, Jo replied:

> It's sort of like leading two different lives. At Mom's I'm Jo the Loud One and the Pest on our roommates, and then I come to Dad's and I'm Jo the Quiet One.

She says she is many different persons; for example, Jo the Quiet Gentle One who feels sorry for a sick animal, and Jo the Mean One "who gets resentful to mean teachers."

Jo says that if she ever wanted to change her living arrangements, they would all sit down and talk about it. She feels free to talk to either parent about anything, "except I save my questions about sex for Mom."

When asked if she ever got mad at one parent and said she wanted to go to her other parent's, Jo replied, "No that would be really mean, the rottenest thing, but sometimes I'd think it in my mind."

However, when she wants something, she asks both parents, "that way I have more of a chance of getting it. If I want a rabbit, I know for sure not to ask my Mom." She says there is nothing that she'd change about her living arrangements, and, at first, she said there's nothing she'd change about her Mom. Then she amended her answer by saying, "I'd change her mind about not getting a dog." The only change she'd make in her Dad is changing his mind about not buying a house. When asked about her Dad moving so often, she replied, "It doesn't really bother me. It's sort of neat."

Jo said she's never had any trouble making people understand about her living arrangements. They usually say, "Oh, that's neat," and they say, "You like that, right?" and I say, "Yeah."

When asked what she's afraid of, Jo replied:

> I'm afraid of getting into a relationship when I'm an adult because I've seen so many that don't work. It seems risky--pain on both halves and in the middle because there was a lot of pain for me. When I think of divorce, I think of my parents first. I figure there was more pain for them. I know I can still see both of them and I still get their love.

Jo recalled that she and her mother were fighting a lot after the separation. They went to a psychologist and Jo began to understand that she was blaming her mother for the divorce, which she decided was "dumb." Now she and her mother seldom fight. In a discussion about feminism and sexism, Jo stated that she thinks her mother is different with her because of her feminist outlook. Jo thinks that "she's more into letting me believe what I want to believe--but she'd probably be furious if I said I wanted to be a housewife!"

Jo doesn't believe that there is any way to make divorce fair or easy but:

> Fair or unfair, it's got to happen. If you're really not getting along, it's dumb to stay together, cause then you're going to end up hating each other. I think making kids hear fights is worse than the divorce.

When asked by the investigator what she would do with three wishes, Jo initially said, "Horse, horse, horse," and then added, "Good marks which I get except for math, and peace for the world."

Teacher's Interview

Jo has been a student of Mr. Anderson for two years. He considers her one of his most mature and well adjusted students. He says, "I have a good relationship with her because she approaches problems from a very common-sense point of view, and is able to see two sides to any issue." He believes her ability to understand the view of someone else is exceptional for her age.

Academically, she debates, argues and writes well. She responds well to a challenge "and is just a very fine student to have." Her only academic problem is Math. Because she is in an enrichment program, being near the bottom of the class in Math means she is actually an average Math student, not a poor one.

Mr. Anderson has noticed areas of change and growth over the two years, but cannot tell if they have to do with adjustment to her home life or are just normal growth and development. Her attention span has increased, and she is not argumentative as in the past.

Mr. Anderson says:

> Two years ago, if she disliked someone, it was very obvious to everyone around her. She often went out of her way not to be nice. That has changed. She's one of my grown-up students. There's no pettiness about her.

Mr. Anderson notices that if she is treated as a young child, she will resent it; however, if she is treated as a 12 year old with expectations of responsibility, accountability, and decision making, she will respond

positively. He notices that she may occasionally have one or two days when she seems quiet and reflective, with perhaps some sadness. He says, "It usually means that she's working something out, and I only notice it because she's usually such a happy, bubbly person."

Regarding joint custody, Mr. Anderson has seen no negative effects of it on Jo, and believes that the advantages are tremendous. He has noticed that she has a more balanced perspective than his students who live with only one parent, manifested by her ability to relate well to both male and female teachers, and by her not idealizing one parent, as some children tend to do to the visiting parent. He has also observed that a number of students look to Jo as a model for a way of relating to adults and to parents.

Mr. Anderson suspects that Jo took part in some of the decision making when her parents made the joint custody arrangements. He says, "This must contribute to the mature way in which she attacks problems. She's seen her parents sit down with a really serious problem and work something out." He thinks that joint custody works out really well for Jo, and suspects that the traditional way of having only visits with one parent would not be enough for her.

Interview with Friends, Anne and Ron

Anne and Ron have been friends with Lynne and Craig for ten years, and have continued their friendship since Lynne and Craig separated. They describe it as a close

friendship where they trust each other and confide in each other. Since the separation, they have seen Craig more frequently than Lynne.

Their initial reaction to joint custody was "bouncy, bouncy, bouncy--how can there be any of the stability or consistency necessary for developing emotional security?" Their observation has been that Jo seems to have adjusted well. They believe that she feels free to express her feelings to both parents, and that she is a particularly mature child "who can handle a lot of things." Anne believes that Jo's maturity is an important factor in her being able to handle the divergent lifestyles in two homes. Neither of them has noticed any serious effects or radical changes in Jo, and they agree that anything they might observe would have more to do with the fact that Jo's parents are rather unique personalities than with joint custody.

Ron wonders if Lynne is nurturing an excessive amount of independence in Jo, and Anne wonders if Craig's frequent moves have an unsettling effect on Jo; however, they see no evidence of negative effects. They agree that both parents need her and want her and that "it is one thing that is stable within their own lives."

When queried regarding what makes it successful, Ron says, "Communication and willingness to compromise." Anne says a joint custody agreement needs input from all parties, including the children, and there needs to be provision for change. She can see no better alternative

for Lynne, Craig and Jo. Her only future concern would be if either Lynne or Craig wanted to leave the city or the province. Ron says, "Their arrangement seems to attest to the fact that joint custody can be successful in terms of all three parties, but for each family, you need to assess and be open."

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter includes a discussion of the information obtained from the interviews. Previous research reported in the literature review is compared to findings from the present research. Conclusions are drawn in terms of the purposes of the study. Limitations of this present research are discussed, as are ideas for future research and implications for counsellors.

During the interviews, and later during transcription of the tapes and the writing of Chapter IV, this researcher was aware of an almost "too good to be true" aspect of this family; however, the sincerity, openness, and honesty of the subjects during the interviews cannot be doubted. If these interviews had been conducted two, or two and one half years ago, the overall picture would not have been as smooth. The current relationships have evolved over time.

Assumptions and Counter Assumptions

As mentioned in Chapter II, Abarbanel used four assumptions and counter-assumptions as a focal point for discussion of the results of her case studies. The investigator has made minor modifications in these assertions, and

information from this current research will be compared to them. Findings from Abarbanel (1977) and Steinman (1981) will also be included.

The Children

Assumption 1

Joint custody means two discontinuous environments. This discrepancy and the shifting created by the movement back and forth between two homes causes lack of continuity and instability.

Counter Assertion 1

When the discrepancy between the two different homes is minimal and the handling of the situation is done with cooperation and in a stable and predictable manner, the children will tend to do well.

It is apparent that some aspects of Jo's situation are stable and others are more flexible. Jo does indeed have two different homes, and she moves from one to the other every Thursday. Her mother's house has been the same for three years. In it, Jo has her own room plus a cat and two hamsters; however, this home also has two roommates who have changed over the years.

Jo's home with her father has been a series of apartments where she has not always had her own bedroom. His apartment has not always been close to her school, and thus her friends; however, the environment with him is consistent in that no other people share their accommodation. Both parents have worked up to a business or career position which provides an economic stability with more degrees of freedom than many divorced families experience.

Jo herself seems to value the differences in her two homes. She happily reported in the interview her awareness that she is a different person in different situations. In her mother's house, she is Jo the Loud One, and "the Pest on the roommates," and in her father's house she is Jo, the Quiet One.

As for rules and discipline, little difference seems to exist between the two homes. Craig commented that, after a few days of staying in Lynne's house, he was aware of this fact. Both parents spoke of how they consult with each other when Jo seems to have a problem or when one of them is uncertain about something related to her.

Jo herself spoke confidently about how they could all sit down and talk about any problems. The investigator noticed the similarity of information given by each family member concerning their current family structure and its evolution. This appears to be the result of the open communication among all of them.

There are differences in Jo's two homes; however, both of her parents treat Jo with love and respect, and include her gladly in their lives. They also treat each other with respect. Jo herself expressed appreciation that her parents are such "great friends." This researcher believes that the respect shown by the family for each other is the key issue in the success of joint custody for them.

In discussion of this first assumption, Abarbanel, in her study of four families, found that discrepancy was minor in two of the families, and the children were doing

well. In a third family, the discrepancy in the two households was more apparent; however, the child was doing well. The fourth family was the only one which had more than one child. They had three, one of whom was a teenager. At the time of the study, the two younger children were doing better than pre-separation, but the teenager felt that living in two homes disrupted his life and interfered in his friendships. Abarbanel felt that his age, plus the fact that this family has three children may have been contributing factors to his feeling unsettled. He later arranged to have one primary home, while maintaining close ties with both parents.

In her study, in which there were 32 children from 24 families, with an age range of four and a half to five years, Steinman reported that most of the children appeared able to adapt to each household with a minimum of conflict and confusion. A few children whose parents had major difficulties in values or philosophy were troubled by this conflict. Steinman reported that the ability of most of the children to maintain clarity about complex schedules was most impressive; however, about 25 percent of the children did experience confusion and anxiety about their schedules. Half of these were four and five year old girls, and half were seven to nine year old boys.

The Children

Assumption 2

Children of divorce are said to lose one psychological parent in that the father becomes a visitor.

Counter Assertion 2

Children of joint custody get two everyday parents--a balanced experience with both parents that involves routine, frustration, as well as playful times.

By living a week with each parent, Jo has an opportunity to have a realistic living experience with each of them. She experiences limit-setting as well as shared fun activities with each parent. Neither parent has become the "good" one or the "mean" one. She has both a male and female role model, and the opportunity to see both her parents as multifaceted people with whom she is intimately involved. She also is free to have contact with the parent on his or her "off week," a fact which surely adds to a sense of continuity.

Abarbanel reported similar results. Each child in her study had a realistic living experience with both parents. All the parents encouraged their children to have a positive and realistic relationship with both parents.

Steinman also found that the children in her study had two "psychological parents." She noted that they expected and received nurturing, discipline, and guidance from both parents.

The Parents

Assumption 1

Parents who make the joint custody choice are selfish and put their needs above those of the children.

Counter Assertion 1

Joint custody is a choice made out of both parents' desire to be actively involved with the children, and out of the parents' decision that it is beneficial for the children.

The family structure of which Jo, Lynne and Craig are a part appears to have evolved out of the needs and values of all three people. Lynne believes that, whether married or divorced, parents need to share equally in all aspects of child-rearing. She has a satisfyi[redacted]eer and does not rely on her role as mother to be the major source of her self-esteem. Thus it is easy for her to share the parent role.

Craig lost his mother through death when he was 13. He experienced the difficulties of growing up in a home with only one parent, and thus values the importance of two parents in a child's life. He would not be satisfied to be only a weekend or visiting father; however, he also appreciates Lynne as a good parent and values her on behalf of Jo.

Jo's biggest fear at the time of the initial separation had been that she would have to choose one parent, and that she would lose the other parent. Her greatest satisfaction now is that she still has both parents, and that they are still good friends.

Jo appears to bring a stability to the lives of both Lynne and Craig. Both have careers in which they can get deeply immersed; however, having Jo in their lives seems to bring a balance which is healthy. Both have been concerned about the effect on Jo of moving back and forth, but neither note any ill effects. All three family members seem to have spent considerable thought and discussion in working out the best situation for all of them. All consider that the situation is also open for discussion about change.

Abarbanel also reported that joint custody parents in her study were not selfishly putting their own needs first, but had put a lot of time and thought into balancing everyone's needs. Although all the parents felt that the children benefitted from active contact with each parent, all were ambivalent about the children having to move back and forth.

In her study, Steinman found that all the parents displayed a commitment to joint custody and a devotion to their children. Often, maintaining the arrangement meant personal sacrifice; however, they placed strong moral and psychological value on providing two parents for their children, and perceived the other parent as essential to their child's development.

The Parents

Assumption 2

Parents in a joint custody arrangement are unable to separate in a healthy way and use this arrangement and by implication, their children, to stay together in some way.

Counter Assertion 2

Joint custody is a choice made by parents who think they can share the parenting role after separation, while allowing themselves to separate in other ways. These parents are able to remain attached in ways that can aid in their parenting function without detering from proceeding with their own lives.

Our society does not have models for co-parenting after a separation or divorce; therefore, what can be considered a healthy separation, which does not "use" the children but still provides shared parenting, is not clearly understood.

Craig and Lynne clearly share a parenting role. They also share a friendship which Jo values. She does not seem to be "used" by them in their relationship, and all three seem comfortable together. The act of Craig living for a short period in Lynne's house seemed to create no strain, a fact which seems exceptional for a divorced family. They both lead separate lives socially. Lynne does not meet Craig's female friends, but Craig has met, and even become friends with, Lynne's male friends.

Craig and Lynne's primary reason for their arrangement is co-parenting; however, they also value maintaining contact with someone who was once such an intimate part of one another's life. This fact does not appear to be impeding on each creating a separate life.

The parents in Abarbanel's study question whether shared parenting causes them to remain attached in a detrimental way. They do experience that co-parenting does make it more complicated to separate; however, they all also

believe that they are beginning to lead separate lives while still maintaining a parental link.

Steinman did not report directly on this aspect, but did mention that the co-parenting seemed to reduce the sense of loss and disruption of the parents, and allowed them to reorganize their lives gradually.

Relating Results to Stated Purpose

The stated purpose of this research was to determine from the perspective of the child, of the mother, and of the father:

1. Factors which contribute to making joint custody a healthy alternative;
2. Factors which contribute to making joint custody an undesirable alternative; and
3. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of a joint custody agreement.

For Craig, Lynne, and Jo, joint custody appear to be a healthy alternative. Factors which make it such are:

1. Economic and geographic stability;
2. The way in which each parent values and respects the other parent, on his or her own behalf, as well as on the child's behalf;
3. The clear communication among all three family members;
4. The willingness of each person to be flexible within a constant and stable schedule;
5. The establishment by Lynne and Craig of a healthy

separation of their former husband-wife role from their ongoing parental role;

6. The continued support of each other as parents; and
7. The establishment by Lynne and Craig of many other roles besides parental so that neither is dependent on the parental role for his or her sense of self-esteem.

One action at the very beginning set the stage for a positive experience as joint custody parents; that is, they went together to a lawyer, a mutual friend whom they both trusted and, with her help, drew up a custody agreement and property settlement. No adversary climate was created. That they could agree on a 50-50 split with little disagreement is quite unusual for a divorcing couple.

In Lynne, Craig, and Jo's family structure, there appear to be no factors making it an unhealthy alternative; however, both parents mentioned factors which could be unhealthy. Craig stressed that the parents have to trust each other and must communicate with each other. Lynne believes that co-parenting requires each to be supportive of the other.

Advantages of joint custody for Lynne, Craig and Jo are numerous. Some of these are:

1. Jo has a realistic day-to-day type of relationship with both parents. Both parents provide nurturing and discipline.
2. No one has had to experience the sense of loss and loneliness which often occurs in traditional single

parent custody--no one has had to be the "loser";

3. Lynne and Craig provide back-up and support for each other;
4. Jo has both parents to be role models; and
5. Jo has learned a healthy model for dealing with conflict of change; that is, sitting down together to discuss a viable solution.

Disadvantages of joint custody for this family are few. To maintain it, Craig and Lynne must live within close geographical proximity. Although Craig is now moving into the same neighbourhood, he has not always lived close to Jo's school. One wonders if Jo would have more extracurricular activities if both parents had been near her school. She mentioned that she may now have a paper route.

Limitations

The number of divorced or separated families in Edmonton who have established a joint physical custody arrangement appears to be quite small. It is difficult to know whether the family who took part in this study comprises a representative sample; therefore, this case cannot be said to be representative of joint custody families. Replication is necessary before general statements can be made.

In fact, certain data from Larson's study, Family Patterns and Services in Edmonton (1979), demonstrate Craig and Lynne to be atypical of single-parent families. In Alberta, 54 percent of lone-parent family household heads

did not finish high school. Craig completed Grade 12, and Lynne has post-secondary education.

Seventy-five percent of single-parent families have incomes of less than $9,000.00 (1976 data). Both Craig and Lynne earn more than twice as much as this figure. Male-parent families in Alberta had 2.8 persons, and female-parent families had 2.9 members. Craig and Jo, and Lynne and Jo would be categorized as a family of 2 but, in fact, their family structure does not fit into the usual categories of data collectors.

Separation or divorce with subsequent establishment of joint custody is an ongoing process. In this study, the initial marital separation took place three years ago, so that many events reported in the interviews were reconstructed from memory. In addition, the data have all been interpreted by the researcher, and thus contains her biases.

After the interview with Anne and Ron, they asked about the possibility of seeing the completed research. The researcher assumed then that they could. Later, in a phone call, Craig also asked to see it. The idea of seeing it seemed to occur after the interviews; therefore, it is to be hoped that the interviews had not altered their responses or the researcher's mode of questioning.

Further Research

Very little research has been done which truly contributes to understanding what the best interests of the child are in custody decisions. More knowledge is needed about the process of divorce, as well as about custody options. Research must be done without the bias that anything that isn't a nuclear family arrangement is pathological.

Not only should functional joint custody situations be examined, but examining those that have not worked would help isolate the variables which need to be considered. Demographic data of the number and characteristics of joint custody families would provide a context for further case studies. Longitudinal research would reveal the effect of co-parenting on children at different developmental stages, and the long-term effects on children in a joint custody arrangement. Remarriage of one or both partners is certain to have an effect on joint custody, and this also needs to be studied.

To study a joint custody family from a comprehensive systems approach, it would be important to interview the whole family together. What are the boundaries, the implicit rules, the subsystems, the methods of communication in a joint custody family?

Joint custody is not the only option for a post-divorce family structure. Further research would identify other healthy family structures, and would help identify which families are most suited to which structures.

Implications for Counselling

The counselling which divorcing families receive is usually dependent on the counsellor's personal beliefs. If a counsellor believes in the sanctity of traditional motherhood and of the nuclear family, he or she will be unlikely to value new family forms which include shared parenting. Any counsellors who do value co-parenting are caught with their clients in a social and legal system which does not encourage new and innovative family structures.

Mediation counsellors who work with the whole family (rather than with one parent) have a unique opportunity to help the family work out a divorce contract which settles issues related to both property and children. This contract can be taken into court, and the whole divorce achieved without the destructive adversary process created when each partner has a lawyer fighting for his or her rights. Such a counsellor would be a skilled therapist who is knowledgeable about the law. His goal is to create a win-win situation for each family member, and to help the family feel in control of their divorce process.

People in a divorce situation are usually in pain. Counsellors need to be conscious of validating the worth of people in this situation, their self-esteem, and their right to maintain some control over the type of family structure which they will create--one that will consider each person's needs.

Although this family is in many ways atypical of

divorcing families, they do model ideal characteristics. They show that it can be done. Qualities of this family are summarized below, and may be used by counsellors in two ways: (a) as criteria to determine whether their divorcing clients should try joint custody; or (b) as a model towards which a divorcing couple could strive.

It is important to note that some of these characteristics have evolved over time since the initial separation. Not all of these characteristics are necessary for success, but perhaps understanding them may lead counsellors and families to consider other viable, and healthy options. Certainly, many of the California families did not have such a friendly relationship as Lynne and Craig.

All family members treat each other with respect. Neither parent depends on the parenting role as his or her single source of self-esteem. The family structure is stable, but flexible, and can be openly discussed.

All family members are able to talk about their feelings.

The parents have valued developing a friendship, but only did so after a few months of limited contact following the separation.

The mother is a feminist who values equal role sharing by parents.

The father has been able to understand, accept, and value the feminist ideas of equality. He applies these ideas, not only within the joint custody situation, but also within other relationships.

The father particularly values family life, and the extended family idea.

They trust each other as parents, providing back-up and support to each other.

There is only one child, who is intelligent, very mature for her age, and adaptable. She enjoys the different "persons" she can become in her two homes.

Both parents have economic stability and have been able to maintain geographic proximity.

Both parents have worked hard to prevent their child's being caught in the middle of their anger.

People who were mutual friends before the divorce continue to be friends with both afterwards.

Conclusion

For the family in this research, joint custody seems to be a healthy and satisfying arrangement for both parents and child. Goldstein, Freud and Solnit's (1973) belief that a child needs one psychological parent is not supported by this case study. Since no other research has been published in Canada on this topic, an informed judgement cannot be made about how typical Lynne, Craig and Jo are of joint custody families in Canada. As pointed out earlier, they do seem to be comparable to many of the California families in the studies by Abarbanel (1977) and Steinman (1981).

Whether an exceptional case or not, Craig, Lynne and Jo do illustrate clearly that even after divorce a new and healthy family structure can be established.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT OF PARENTS

Parent's Consent

I, _____ voluntarily consent to participate in an interview with Beth Cunningham, a graduate student in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Educational Psychology Department, University of Alberta. I understand that the information I provide will be used for a Master's thesis and will be treated as confidential.

Date _____ Signed _____

Witness _____

APPENDIX B

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR CHILD

Parental Consent for Child

We, _____ and _____ the parents of _____, give permission for our child to participate in an interview with Beth Cunningham, a graduate student in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Educational Psychology Department, University of Alberta. We understand that the information she provides will be used for a Master's thesis and will be treated as confidential.

Date _____ Signed _____

Signed _____

Witness _____

APPENDIX C

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FOR TEACHER

Release of Information for Teacher

We, _____ and _____,
the parents of _____, give permission for her teacher to provide information to Beth Cunningham. Beth will ask about her general adjustment, and will ask for an opinion about the impact of joint custody on her school behavior. We understand that the information she provides will be used for a Master's thesis and will be treated as confidential.

Date _____ Signed _____

Signed _____

Witness _____

APPENDIX D

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FOR FRIENDS

Release of Information for Friends

We, _____ and _____, the parents of _____, give permission for our friends, _____ to provide information about us to Beth Cunningham. We understand that the information they provide will be used for a Master's thesis and will be treated as confidential.

Date _____ Signed _____

Signed _____

Witness _____

APPENDIX E

PARENT'S INTERVIEW

PARENT'S INTERVIEW

I Background

(a) Age
Religion
Work history including aspirations
Impact of parenting on work decisions

(b) Parent's marital status
Religion of parents
Parent's occupation
Childhood family constellation

(c) Parental death, divorce or remarriage - impact on you as a child
How you were parented
Opinion of parents' marriage

II Current Legal and Economic Arrangements

(a) Nature of these arrangements

(b) Current thinking and feelings about decisions in this area

(c) Legal custody threats? Anxieties?

(d) Arrangements and disagreements with ex-spouse in this area

III Nature of Joint Custody Arrangements

(a) Current schedule and its evolution, flexibility, e.g. vacations, sickness

(b) Transition times--how done and difficulties. What are the transition times like for parent and for children?

(c) Future plans--ideas about geographical location

IV Marital History

(a) History of relationship with ex-spouse: how many years, how met, early years, etc.

(b) Quality of pre-separation family life and marital tensions. Style of expressing conflict. Opinions about your marriage and reasons for problems.

(c) Decision to separate--whose was it, why, when, reactions.

(d) Relationship of children to parental conflict. Arguing and fighting in front of children? Children's reaction? Are children involved in any ongoing conflicts?

V Parenting History

(a) Pre-separation--decision to have children, ideas about parenting, nature of parenting responsibilities, sharing of parenting responsibilities.

(b) Post-separation--quality of life now, perception of self as parent, difficulties and advantages to joint custody parenting, comparison to full-time single parents. Description of daily life as a parent, e.g. typical week and weekend day.

VI Parental Relationship

(a) Kind of contact with ex-spouse as a parent--criticism, feedback. What, if anything, do you talk about with regard to the children? How are arrangements handled? Decisions.

(b) Perception and opinion of ex-spouse as a parent both now and in the past. Description of differences and similarities between parenting styles and households.

(c) Quality of children's relationship to other parent. Competition and jealousy. Differences pre-separation and now.

VII Personal Relationship with Ex-spouse

(a) Description of this relationship from time of separation to the present. What kind and how much contact as friend, lover, family? Do you argue? What, if anything, do you talk about besides children?

(b) Overall evaluation of nature of relationship. What would be your ideal relationship with ex-spouse?

VIII Other Partners and Support Systems

(a) Social life. New committed relationships and their impact on relationship to ex-spouse and on the children. Openness of discussing this area with ex-spouse and children. Children's reactions to dates, lovers, new partners.

(b) Friendship and family networks--support, criticism.

(c) Any use of other support networks, like Single Parent's Resource Centers, schools, etc.

(d) Books which have been helpful.

IX General Opinions of Joint Custody

(a) Overall reflections--pos. and neg.

(b) Ideal living arrangements for raising children, and for raising children of divorce. Advice to newly separating parents. What makes joint custody work?

(c) Reactions to criticism of joint custody:
- children's shifting environment
- loyalty conflicts for children
- selfishness of parents
- opinions of legal and mental health professionals

X The Children

(a) General opinion of child's adjustments and personality. Ask for strengths as well as areas of potential problems. Probe for any fears, phobias (water, dark, fire, doctors, animals, robbers, kidnappers, injury). How does child express anger? Probe for specific behaviors (like hitting, verbal expression, calling names, crying, sulking and withdrawing, doing spiteful things).

(b) Child's reactions and understanding of separation--immediate and long term. How and what did you tell your child about separation at time of separation and now. Does child spontaneously ask about it now--expressing anger, reconciliation fantasies?

(c) Observations of change in child's behavior at time of separation and the present--use guide after parents think of any changes by themselves.

- Stealing
- Truancy
- Enuresis

Encopresis
Excessive lying
School tardiness
Physical fighting and peers
Running away
Psychosomatic complaints
Sexual acting out
Accident prone
Physical illness
Sleeping disturbances
Suspiciousness
Excessive manipulativeness
Hyperactivity
General rebelliousness
Unusual aggression toward siblings
Pervasive sadness

(d) Agreements and disagreements with ex-spouse about childrearing attitudes and behavior, about child's general adjustment and personality, about child-rearing decisions.

(e) Reflections. How to determine what is best for child and what is best for parent. General parenting concerns unrelated to custodial arrangements.

XII Summary

(a) Feedback about interviews.

(b) Other issues not covered.

APPENDIX F

CHILD'S INTERVIEW

CHILD'S INTERVIEW

I General Questions

(a) Age
Religion
Grade
School - subjects, teachers

(b) Who is your best friend? What would he/she say about you?

(c) What do you like to do? Favorite things to play? What would you do if you could do anything you wanted? What do you like to do least?

(d) Suppose you could be a baby again, what would you like? What do babies get that big kids don't?

(e) Suppose you could be grown-up? What do grown-ups get that children don't?

(f) How do you know when something is fair?

(g) What do you think kids your age are afraid of? Don't like? Get mad at?

II Family Questions

(a) Where do you live? Who do you live with or how do you describe where you live?

(b) Who is in your family? Where do they live? What do you like best about (name each one). If you could change one thing about that person, what would you change?

(c) Do you have a room? Tell me about it. What do you like best about it? If you could change it in one way, how would you do it? Tell me about your plans for your room in your Dad's new apartment.
What's the best thing about having two rooms? If you could change one thing about having two rooms, what would it be?

(d) Tell me about a day with each parent.

(e) What do you get mad at your Mom (and Dad) about?

(f) How has it been having your Dad staying here?

(q) How was it travelling with your Dad in Europe?

TT Divorce Questions

(a) What is a divorce?
Why do people get divorced?
Why did your parents divorce?
What about other friends whose parents divorced?

(b) After separation or divorce, children's lives are different. How? Is yours?
What way is different that you like, and what way that you don't like?

(c) Should children choose who to live with?

(d) Sometimes parents argue. Do yours? What do you do, say, think, want to do? (before and after separation)

(e) Do you wish your parents live together? Have you ever tried to make them?

(f) What would you tell a friend whose parents were getting divorced?

(g) Will you get married?
Will you have children?
Will you get divorced?

If you did, how would you and your husband decide to live and take care of the children?

(h) Do you remember when your Mom and Dad lived together? Separated? What did you want to say? Do?

(i) How do you feel about your parents' new relationships?

(j) Do you think divorce is fair to children? What would make it fair?

(k) Do you feel free to discuss anything with your Dad? With your Mom?

(l) Your Mom told me that Craig adopted you. How do you feel about having two fathers?

(m) What is feminism?

IV Advice to Other Children

(a) What would you tell other kids--esp. young kids--whose parents are divorcing.

e.g. What if she/he wakes up in the middle of the night and wants the other parent?
What if she/he is mad at Dad? Mom?
What if she/he wants to live with only 1 parent?
What if she/he wants a toy at the other house?
What if she/he gets mixed up about which house to go to?

V If you could have three wishes come true right now, what would they be?

APPENDIX G

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

1. How long has teacher known child?
2. Does teacher know the family?
3. General characterization of child by the teacher--including changes over time.
4. Child's general ability to concentrate in class.
5. Child's general level of academic performance.
6. Extent child is learning up to capacity--any specific learning problems?
7. Is child a behavior or management problem? In class? On playground? Any specific behaviors reported such as truancy, lying, stealing, physical fighting?
8. Is child normally active or hyperactive in school?
9. Observations about child's mood--e.g. does child seem anxious, tense, sad, depressed, happy, withdrawn?
10. Child's general relationship with teacher? Is child needy of attention? Helpful? Compliant? Argumentative?
11. Child's general relationship with classmates?
12. Teacher's general attitude toward child as inferred by investigator.
13. Teacher's awareness of the home situation and comments on the joint custody situation.
14. Teacher's general attitude toward children of divorce.

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: FRIENDS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: FRIENDS

1. How long have you known this family?
2. Rating of friendship, i.e. close, casual.
   I am interested in joint custody from your viewpoint.
3. Advantages?
4. Disadvantages?
5. What contributes to its success?
6. What contributes to its being unsuccessful?
7. Comment on child before, during divorce and year after.
   Now?
8. What about mother makes it work?
9. What about father makes it work?
10. What about child makes it work?
11. Comment on happiness of mother. Father. Child.
12. Any concerns for future?
13. Any better alternatives?