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School of Graduate Studies

CHANGE IN SELECTED SENSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL
AREAS OF THE ONLY CHILD WHEN A
SIBLING IS BORN

by

Eveline H. Loewe

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in the Field of Nursing

July, 1961

60389

I certify that I have read this thesis and that
in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and
quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of
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CHAPTER I

DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The past few years a trend has developed in the clinical area of mother and infant nursing toward seeking to assist in meeting the needs of all the family during the reproductive cycle.¹

For many years the main objectives of nursing care in this area were centered, almost completely, in the birth process. Mortality rates were gradually reduced as the somatic aspects of birth were studied and improved. Many nurses are currently hoping to improve the care of mothers and infants further by placing emphasis also on the psychosomatic aspects of reproduction.

This trend toward considering the psychosomatic as well as the somatic in planning nursing activities has influenced

¹Practical Approach to Trends in Maternity and Newborn Nursing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1953), p. 45.

all areas of nursing. One nurse writes:

It is the responsibility of nurses to investigate, isolate, identify and apply the basic principles of behavioral sciences as well as the physical sciences for the performance of therapeutic activities for the health and welfare of the patient and the prevention of illness.²

The nurse involved in mother and infant care must often use the basic principles of behavioral sciences as well as of physical sciences in guiding families. She frequently develops a unique, intimate relationship with the mother, and shares the problems of the family. The nurse's understanding, knowledge and advice are of valuable assistance in helping reproduction and the birth of a new baby to be a meaningful and pleasant experience for every member of the family.

In order to give this assistance the nurse needs to understand changes which may result in the family from reproduction. One of the members of many families is the child. What changes occur in his sensitive psychological areas at the time a sibling is born? This study endeavors to find out more about these changes in the children of one locality.

² Harriet M. Coston, "Myocardial Infarction: The Stages of Recovery and Nursing Care," Nursing Research, 9:178, Fall, 1960.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this investigation was to see if, through the use of story projective fables, data could be obtained about the changes in selected sensitive psychological areas of the only child when a sibling is born.

Setting of the Study

Fifty children were selected from families living in a community rapidly changing from agriculture to industry. The economic level of the families was approximately equal because the fathers were employed as skilled workmen. The children were able to speak English, were under six years of age, and had no known deformity. Each was the only child of an intact family, with the parents living together, who anticipated the arrival of a baby.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following initial assumptions:

- (1) There are significant changes in selected sensitive psychological areas of an only child when a sibling is born and these can be identified and measured.
- (2) The children selected did not have trauma which would influence their answers to the tests.

Plan of Study

The method of study included the following steps: (1) a review of previous and related studies for orientation to the area and finding out what previous research had been completed, (2) the telling of story projective fables, which tested the selected sensitive psychological areas, to fifty children soon before and six weeks after the birth of a sibling to determine the differences in the responses in these areas, (The Despert Fables were used for this study. See Appendix.), (3) the statistical analysis of the difference in the responses for each area, and (4) making suggestions for the implementation of the findings in mother and infant nursing.

Limitations

This investigation is a pilot study of a small population in one locality. Further study needs to be done previous to generalization from the collected data.

The age of the population, because of the test utilized, had to begin with children who were old enough to talk. This leaves a younger age group, whom research would suggest might be affected even more.³

³M. Sewell, "Two Studies in Sibling Rivalry: I. Some Causes of Jealousy in Young Children," Smith College Studies in Social Work, 1:20, September, 1930.

The projective fables used have been studied with older age groups by Peixotto.⁴ Her findings with young elementary school children were used to interpret the responses of the children in this investigation. Further study of the use of the story projective fables with preschool children is needed.

Definitions of Terms Used

Mother and infant nursing. Mother and infant nursing or maternity nursing is the nursing care needed by the woman before, during and following pregnancy with consideration of her membership in the family. This really includes all members of the family unit.⁵

Reproductive cycle. Reproductive cycle refers to the time before, during and following pregnancy during which medical assistance is an important advantage in the preservation of health.⁶

⁴Helen E. Peixotto, "Popular Responses for the Despert Fables," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 13:73, January, 1957; and Helen E. Peixotto, "Reliability of the Despert Fables, A Story Completion Projective Test for Children," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 12:75, January, 1956.

⁵Leonard M. Kimmel, "Providing Complete Maternity Care," Nursing World, 132:83, February, 1958.

⁶M. Edward Davis and Catherine E. Sheckler, Obstetrics for Nurses (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1957), p. 104.

Sensitive psychological areas. Sensitive psychological areas in this study pertain to the selected psychodynamics of parental rejection, sibling rivalry, dependence and aggression hostility.

Story projective fables. Story projective fables are situations presented to stimulate conversation by the child so that he will unknowingly betray his feelings and ideas. They are simple so that the child can see himself in the situation and interpret it in the light of his personality.⁷

Psychodynamic. Psychodynamic refers to the change and development of psychological processes.⁸

⁷Ralph B. Winn (ed.), Encyclopedia of Child Guidance (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1943), p. 328.

⁸James Mark Baldwin (ed.), Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology (New York: Peter Smith, 1940), II, 382.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Discussions of jealousy in the child and factors that increase jealousy in children of our culture are found in all child psychology textbooks. A number of studies have been made of behavior indicating jealousy in children at various age levels, but research about the child's feelings at the actual time the sibling is born into the home is more difficult to find.

Jealousy in the Child

Jealousy in the child is based on his need for his mother and her need for him. Usually by the time he reaches two he is having some emotional conflicts due to jealousy over his replaceability in his mother's affection.¹

Two social stimuli pose as threats to the child's position in the mother's affection. One is the arrival of a new baby, and the other is the parent of the opposite sex. As the boy grows, his relationship with his mother changes from

¹Herman Vollmer, "Jealousy in Children," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 16:660, October, 1946.

that of a dependent baby to that of a boy imitating his father and wishing to be appreciated by the mother as a member of the opposite sex. All children begin, at this preschool age, to imitate their parents of the same sex with the desire to be acceptable to the parent of the opposite sex as a love partner. When they are not, they feel anger toward one parent and jealousy toward the other.²

Jealousy was found by Sewell to be closely related to dependency.³ Children at the preschool age are beginning to identify with the parent of the same sex but their dependency needs remain strong at this age. Loss of support is painful to the more dependent and they react with strong jealousy.

Jealousy produces tension which may create a number of reactions such as aggression, hostility, identification with the rival, withdrawal, repression, masochism and sublimation. These reactions are woven together and rarely occur alone.⁴

Passing jealousy was declared normal by Foster. He stated that the little child craves attention and when a younger sibling arrives, he concluded that, if this love is shared and the older

²Anna Freud and Dorothy T. Burlingham, War and Children (New York: Medical War Books, 1943), p. 56.

³M. Sewell, "Two Studies in Sibling Rivalry: I. Some Causes of Jealousy in Young Children," Smith College Studies in Social Work, 1:20, September, 1930.

⁴Vollmer, op. cit., p. 661.

child does not find the new brother or sister something that deprives him completely of mother's love, he will not have difficulty.⁵

Jealousy is part of the maturing experiences of a child. He should not have to hide it.⁶

Many notable investigations of jealousy expressed in sibling rivalry have been completed by Levy. He found that the feelings of the child could be studied through play if it were organized enough to produce a controlled situation, yet flexible enough to allow a variety of behavior. The meaning of the behavior was then determined by a study of the purposeful activity. In play situations constructed to reveal sibling rivalry, the response of the older child to another mother-child combination was almost always hostile and revealed an urge to destroy by biting, crushing or tearing. Even at the three or four-year-old level certain inhibitions were also seen which allowed only partial release of hostility, which were based on the fear of the consequences. A child almost always followed the hostile act with self-redeeming behavior.⁷

⁵S. Foster, "A Study of the Personality Makeup and Social Setting of Fifty Jealous Children," Mental Hygiene, 11:77, January, 1927.

⁶Vollmer, op. cit., p. 669.

⁷D. M. Levy, "Hostile Patterns in Sibling Rivalry Experiments," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 6:233, April, 1936.

Once the hostile act had been completed, the behavior of the older child toward the younger tended to improve.⁸

Levy and several others also investigated jealousy and sibling rivalry in more primitive cultures. Even though the pattern of the sibling rivalry acts varied with the child, Levy concluded that the aggressive response to the new baby was so typical that it must be a common feature of family life.⁹ Levy began studying the universality of the phenomenon of sibling rivalry by extending his observations to more primitive groups. He found that when the sibling experience was depicted to the older child through dolls with the nursing doll baby at the mother doll's breast, sibling rivalry was as real to the primitive child as to the American child. He included in his studies primitive cultures of both patriarchal and matriarchal groups. After these studies Levy suggested that sibling rivalry was a universal experience whenever a mother had more than one child.¹⁰

While Levy considered the arrival of a new baby as a very good example of a frustrating situation in which hostility may

⁸Ibid.

⁹D. M. Levy, "The Hostile Act," Psychological Review, 48:358, July, 1941.

¹⁰D. M. Levy, "Sibling Rivalry Studies in Children of Primitive Groups," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 9:214, January, 1939.

¹¹D. M. Levy, "The Hostile Act," loc. cit.

develop,¹¹ Henry and Henry questioned the existence of hostility in the older child alone, and investigated the flow of hostility in two Pilaga families in order to find out if the younger sibling were as resentful as the older. They concluded that rivalry for the mother was expressed by all the children and that the rivalry was symmetrical and reciprocal.¹²

Henry reported sibling jealousy among the Hopi children to be very potent, yet indirect. He attributed this indirection to parental pressures.¹³

Some cultures seem to provide for the reduction of feeling among siblings through symbolism. Paul observed a ceremony in a Guatemalen Indian Village in which, to avert the death of the newborn, the Village of San Pedro killed a chicken by beating it against the back of an older child. The older child was then served the chicken with a warning to keep from eating his little brother or sister. Paul considered this a release from pressure

¹¹D. M. Levy, "The Hostile Act," loc. cit.

¹²J. Henry and Z. Henry, "Symmetrical and Reciprocal Hostility in Sibling Rivalry," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 12:26, April, 1942.

¹³William E. Henry, "Thermatic Appreception Technique in the Study of Culture-personality Relations," Genetic Psychological Monographs, 35:66, February, 1947.

by symbolic expression in a social system that emphasizes respect for authority.¹⁴

Mead, after studies of different primitive cultures, approved of symbolism in rearing children and especially in sibling relationships. She asked that more study be made of different child-rearing practices, including our own, for comparative study. She concluded that more symbolic practices in child-rearing tend to produce adults who are more creative. Mead suggested that long transitional periods with the gradual separation of the child from parents, found in some primitive cultures, allows or makes possible layers of integration in the child which are optimal.¹⁵

Jealousy appears in our own culture and in most primitive cultures investigated. Apparently the major causative factor is the ominous meaning the birth of a sibling conveys to the child.

Factors Which Influence Jealousy in the Child of our Culture

Probably one of the most important causative factors of jealousy in the child is brought out in a study by Baldwin. He found in rating forty-six mothers at the Fels Research Institute

¹⁴Benjamin D. Paul, "Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalen Indian Village," American Anthropologist, 52:218, April-June, 1950.

¹⁵Margaret Mead, "Age, Patterning and Personality Development," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 17:240, April, 1947.

a significant change in the child-centeredness of the mother during pregnancy and an even greater and more permanent change after the pregnancy.¹⁶ This change of interest in the mother is a real loss to the child and cannot be softened by telling the child beforehand that this will happen.

Gottmoller noted whether the jealous and non-jealous children she studied had been prepared for the birth of the sibling and their subsequent relationship to him. Statistically no such relationship could be shown. The children who showed sibling rivalry and those who adjusted readily to the sibling were about equal in relation to preparation. She identified a much closer connection between parent's relationships with the child and the child's ability to adjust. If the parents were affectionate toward the child and treated him with understanding the child usually seemed able to adjust to the new sibling. On the other hand, Gottmoller stated that maladjusted and rejecting parents can go through the motions of preparing the child and yet give the child nothing of what he needs. She strongly emphasized the importance of a warm parent-child relationship.¹⁷

¹⁶ Alfred L. Baldwin, "Changes in Parent Behavior During Pregnancy," Child Development, 18:29,39, March to December, 1947.

¹⁷ Ruth Gottmoller, "The Sibling Relationship of a Group of Young Children," Nervous Child, 2:277, April, 1943.

Sewell, in her comparison of thirty-nine jealous and thirty-one non-jealous children, found that the mere fact that a child was told a baby was to be born was not a determining factor in the sibling relationship. She did find, along with other factors, that an overprotective mother, negative father and marital discord in the home were closely correlated with both jealousy and inconsistent discipline.¹⁸

In a study of sibling relationships, Koch found that most older siblings had developed a great deal of tension. She attributed this mainly to the feelings of displacement connected with the arrival of a younger sibling. Koch goes on to suggest that, after having held family attention, this loss of status as well as having many other hopes thwarted, is enough to lead to hostility which usually cannot be expressed. Parents create an environment favorable to the development of tension by continuously cautioning the older sibling to be gentle and careful with the baby.¹⁹

¹⁸M. Sewell, "Two Studies in Sibling Rivalry: I. Some Causes of Jealousy in Young Children," Smith College Studies in Social Work, 1:13, September, 1930.

¹⁹Helen L. Koch, "Some Personality Correlates of Sex, Sibling Position and the Sex of Sibling among Five- and Six-Year-Old Children," Genetic Psychology Monographs, 52:32, August, 1955.

Liss claimed that in a search for emotional causes of disturbances in children, the major emphasis had to be put on the parents.²⁰

Hilgard suggested that the mother's childhood rivalries persist in her mind and that when she has children who are potential rivals that old feelings she had which were not worked through, bother her and she identifies with one of her children and plays a part in reacting the old pattern of her childhood. Hilgard went on to call attention to the fact that there is transmission of personality characteristics from one generation to another and suggested play therapy or an environment where a child is free to express resentment so that the problem will not be carried to the next generation.²¹

Among the parents of jealous and non-jealous children, Ross identified attitudes of maternal-over-protection in approximately equal proportions, but found the jealous group most often had nagging mothers.²²

Parents, themselves, apparently play the most important role in determining how the young child perceives the sibling.

²⁰Edward Liss, "Coercion as a Factor in Sibling Rivalry," Nervous Child, 5:250, July, 1946.

²¹Josephine R. Hilgard, "Sibling Rivalry and Social Heredity," Psychiatry, 14:375, November, 1951.

²²B. M. Ross, "Some Traits Associated with Sibling Jealousy in Problem Children," Smith College Studies in Social Work, 1:376, June, 1931.

Other factors in our culture which tend to influence sibling rivalry have been identified in several studies.

Koch pointed to the two-to-four-year spacing as a very stressful one. She goes on to say that, with the first born, having a sibling may be a very stimulating but also a very security threatening experience.²³ Sewell found that there was more jealousy among siblings when there was an age difference of eighteen to forty-two months.²⁴ Levy recognized responses other than hostility in the older child. He identified in children eight years or older, especially girls, a desire to possess the baby. The new baby may call forth a highly maternal attitude in which hostility is greatly reduced.²⁵

Ross, in an attempt to determine whether or not there were certain traits associated with sibling jealousy in problem children, reached the following conclusions: Jealousy is more frequent among girls three-to-four years of age, children less than six years old, smaller families and first born.²⁶

²³Koch, op. cit., p. 41.

²⁴Sewell, op. cit., p. 20.

²⁵D. M. Levy, "Hostile Patterns in Sibling Rivalry Experiments," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 6:233, April, 1936.

²⁶Ross, op. cit., p. 371

Sewell found that approximately half of her children were jealous. This jealousy seemed related to differences in age among the siblings, number of siblings, intelligence of the siblings, economic status and, as before cited, the parent-child relationship and consistency of discipline.²⁷

Apparently the mother changes toward the child during pregnancy and even more permanently at the time a sibling is born. This child is aware of this and has just reason to view the arrival of a sibling with alarm. The most important factor to the child during this change is the parents and the way they relate to him.

It becomes even more difficult for the child if he is eighteen to forty-two months older than the sibling, is under six years of age, is the member of a small family and has had an anxious young mother, a nagging mother, a negative father or inconsistent discipline.

The Reactions of Two Children to the Birth of a Sibling

Two case studies were found which were concerned with the child at the time a sibling is born. One study was completed by the parents of a child while they were graduate students in the Department of Psychology at the University of Chicago. They wished to find out how a child reacts when a

²⁷Sewell, loc. cit.

sibling is born. To answer this question they observed their little daughter for several months after her brother was born.²⁸ The other study was reported by Aarons, a child psychiatrist, and concerned a four-year-old boy who developed anxiety of psychopathological proportions within six weeks after the birth of a sister.²⁹

The graduate students, while studying their daughter's reactions to a sibling, made a number of observations. All changes in their child's behavior, attributable to the presence of the sibling, were noted for several months.³⁰

During the time the child sought to adjust to this important change in her environment, she used a great variety of behavior which at times she changed quickly. The child actively sought attention, withdrew to comfort herself, utilized the world of play or fantasy and expressed hostility verbally as well as physically toward her parents and sibling. She tried, at least once, the role of a baby, her father, her mother, mother of her own baby, mother of her sibling, mother's helper and big sister. The role of mother's helper, punctuated with

²⁸"Ambivalence in First Reactions to a Sibling," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 44:541, October, 1949.

²⁹Alexander Z. Aarons, "Effect of the Birth of a Sister on a Boy in His Fourth Year," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 22:372,

³⁰"Ambivalence in First Reactions to a Sibling," loc. cit.

expressions of annoyance and disturbance, eventually won out. The child's expressions of aggression usually followed some frustration introduced by the parents. She gradually, however, developed a closer relationship with her mother than she had before the sibling arrived.³¹

As the weeks went by the behavior directly attributable to the presence of the sibling diminished, and, on the whole, the day to day behavior of the child, even though many ambivalent reactions were expressed seemed to be much the same as it had been previously.³²

Two approaches were found to be helpful by the parents of the child. The first was helping the child make her identification with the mother in times of stress through such suggestions as the wearing of mother and daughter clothes or going for a walk with a baby carriage and doll. The second was accepting the child's expressions of hostility toward other members of the family and helping her to express these hostilities verbally.³³

Dr. Aarons, on the other hand, presented the case of a four-year-old boy brought to him by the child's desperate mother six weeks after the birth of a sister. The boy would not stop holding his penis while he was awake.³⁴

³¹Ibid., p. 547.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Aarons, op. cit., p. 373.

This child had always been an active, happy and healthy child. The pregnancy and impending birth were discussed with him. No symptoms were noticed before the mother went to the hospital for the birth of the sibling. While the mother was in the hospital the child wet his pants in front of other children when they teased him because he had a sister. When the baby first entered the home he seemed pleased, and was frequently observed fondling the baby. However, he began to refuse to close the fly on his pants and would play with his toys with one hand and hold his penis with the other.³⁵

Dr. Aarons treated the boy three times a week for nine months and the child gradually overcame his pathological fear of castration. This castration fear may not have been due to the birth of a sibling, but due to the fact that the sibling was a girl. However, as the child overcame his fear of castration, he acquired courage to express destructive anger at the mother and the baby. He was reported especially violent toward the mother. He actively sought, at this time, a closer association with the father. Dr. Aarons stated that much of his resentment toward his mother and sister remained when therapy was ended.³⁶

In discussing his case, Dr. Aarons pointed out how difficult it is to assess the psychological effect that the birth

³⁵Ibid., p. 380.

³⁶Ibid., p. 372.

of a sibling has in the life of a child. He stated that this case was direct evidence that such an event could precipitate a great amount of anxiety,³⁷

Both of these children showed considerable change with the birth of a sibling. One apparently was helped by a psychiatrist and the other by her parents.

Summary

Jealousy in young children is a normal reaction to the threat of the loss of maternal affection. This is usually initiated and increased by the birth of a sibling or the parent of the opposite sex. Jealousy produces tension which may be manifested in a variety of reactions which occur with increased intensity when the child perceives that his parental relationship is threatened.

Jealousy of a sibling appears to be more strong and painful in young dependent children and to gradually lessen as the child reaches middle childhood when he is apt to view a new sibling with a paternal attitude and reduced hostility.

It has been found previously to be more difficult for the child, also, if he is the first born, is intelligent, is a girl with a sister, belongs to a small family, belongs to a poverty stricken family, belongs to a family with faulty parent-child relationships and belongs to a family with inconsistent discipline.

³⁷Ibid.

Mothers do change in child-centeredness during pregnancy and even more permanently toward the child at birth of a sibling. This is a real loss for the young child. During this period of change the child needs a reliable and consistent parent-child relationship and an environment in which he can express himself.

Two case studies of the reactions of children at the birth of a sibling revealed in both children a pronounced change of behavior. One was helped by a psychiatrist and the other by his parents.

A certain amount of jealousy and sibling rivalry are expected among children of our culture. Does it begin initially when the first sibling is born? What are the changes in the sensitive psychological areas of a child when a sibling is born?

CHAPTER III

SOURCES OF DATA

Data which revealed changes in the selected sensitive psychological areas of the child when his first sibling entered the home were obtained from story projective fables. Several of the fables were used together to form brief tests for the areas of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependency and aggression/hostility. A number of other reactions may occur but these are the ones it is possible to look for with the story projective fables used. The fables were told to the children before, and six weeks after the new baby entered the home and the children's responses were analyzed to determine the significance of the difference in the responses for each area.

Finding the Children

Fifty children were selected from families in the Santa Clara Valley, a rich agricultural community with rapidly increasing industrial activities. The economic level of the families was approximately the same because the fathers were employed as skilled workmen in industry. These children were old enough to talk, were English speaking, were under six years of age, and had no known deformity. Each was the only child of an intact

family, where the parents were living together, who anticipated the arrival of a baby in the near future.

The child was selected for study when his first sibling was born because several previous studies concluded that the oldest child has the most to lose by sharing with a sibling and the greatest problems in this area.¹

The ages of the children ranged between three and six. The children needed to be of an age where they were able to respond verbally and yet not old enough to have reached the age where they might have more of a paternal attitude toward the sibling with the threat from the arrival of the new sibling automatically reduced.²

The children selected did not have any obvious deformity or history of experiences which might tend to distort responses to the projective stories. Parents were questioned about physical deformities, long illnesses or hospitalizations of the child, and any long separation from either parent. It is possible, or even expected, that emotional trauma from divorce, death of a

¹M. Sewell, "Two Studies in Sibling Rivalry: I. Some Causes of Jealousy in Young Children," Smith College Studies in Social Work, 1:21, September, 1930; Helen L. Koch, "Attitudes of Young Children Toward Their Peers as Related to Certain Characteristics of Their Siblings," Psychological Monographs, 70:41, 1956; and B. M. Ross, "Some Traits Associated With Sibling Jealousy in Problem Children," Smith College Studies in Social Work, 1:376, June, 1931.

²D. M. Levy, "Hostile Patterns in Sibling Rivalry Experiments," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 6:233, April, 1936.

parent and separation of parents would bias the normal responses of the children to the fables.

The ability of the children to speak English was essential for their participation in the study. Verbal communication was required for completion of the story projective fables in the test used. This criterion also eliminated dominantly foreign families living in the area who appeared to retain most of their foreign cultural patterns.

The children were located through prenatal records sent to a community hospital by staff obstetricians and general practitioners, after permission was obtained from the physician involved.

When interviewing the parent initially, the investigator introduced herself by name, informing the parent of the subject of her project and the reason why it was being done, as well as stating that she had learned that they anticipated the arrival of a new baby in the near future and perhaps would be eligible to participate in the project if they were interested. The investigator then asked the parent to mention the project to the wife or husband and an attempt was made to set a time to talk with the family further when both parents were at home.

During the interview with the parents in their home the project was described in detail with simplification. The purpose of the study, the method to be used, and academic

purpose of the study were considered. Criteria for the selection of the children were given with a brief explanation of each. The information gained in this first interview was used, at the time, to decide with the parents whether or not the child would be eligible for the project. During this interview with the parents, the investigator, when the child was present, smiled at him at intervals, and asked him to participate in the conversation at appropriate intervals. Before leaving the child, if the parents approved, he was promised a visit at another time in which he would be told some interesting stories.

Most of the parents contacted appeared interested in finding out if their own child would change and wished to have their child participate.

The Test Used

The story projective fables used for studying the children before and six weeks after their first sibling entered the home were obtained from the Fine Revision of the Despert Fables.³ Several fables were used together to test the sensitive psychological areas of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependency and aggression/hostility.

³Ruben Fine, "Use of Despert Fables, (Revised Form) in Diagnostic Work With Children," Rorschach Research Exchange and Journal of Projective Technique, 12:118, 1948.

These projective fables had their origin in Europe from Dus, who used them to identify neurotic traits in children. They continue to be known in Europe as the Dus Fables.⁴ However, they were translated into English by J. Louise Despert and published by her in this country in 1940. She used them at that time in a study of stuttering children to find sensitive areas.⁵ These fables are commonly known in this country as the Despert Fables.⁶

Later Ruben Fine, in his study of asthmatic children, lengthened and revised the Despert Fables. Fine considered that more refinement of these projective fables is needed, but states that even now the results from them are so consistent with findings from other sources that they appear to have some validity. He goes on to point out that the Despert Fables seem particularly useful for throwing light on the interpersonal relationships of children.⁷ They are currently being used for this purpose in clinics such as the Speech Clinic at the University of Redlands.

⁴Helen E. Peixotto, "Popular Responses for the Despert Fables," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 13:74, January, 1957.

⁵J. Louise Despert, "Psychosomatic Study of Fifty Stuttering Children," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 16:101, January, 1946.

⁶Fine, loc. cit.

⁷Ibid.

Peixotto has evaluated the Despert Fables in two studies. In the first she tested the reliability of these projective fables,⁸ and in the second she studied popular responses to them.⁹

In her investigation of the reliability of the Despert Fables, Peixotto asked whether these projective fables would elicit the same information from a child on successive administrations. Peixotto used a test-retest method with a time interval of six weeks between testings.¹⁰ Her population was composed of 177 Catholic elementary school children in grades three to eight which she divided into age groups for the testings because of the influence of developmental changes from middle childhood to early adolescence. The overall reliability of each fable was determined, as well as the reliability of each fable for every age group. Peixotto reports some fables are more reliable for certain age groups than others. She found also that the younger children give a more reliable test than older children. Peixotto suggests that this point makes

⁸Helen E. Peixotto, "Reliability of the Despert Fables, A Story Completion Test for Children," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 12:75, January, 1956.

⁹Peixotto, "Popular Responses for the Despert Fables," loc. cit.

¹⁰Peixotto, "Reliability of the Despert Fables, A Story Completion Test for Children," loc. cit.

the Despert Fables a particularly useful test because it can be used with children as young as three or maybe even younger.¹¹

She goes on to say that:

It is well known that a child's first response to pictures is description. . . . Between three and four years of age description is the developmentally normal type of response to pictures. . . . The story technique therefore has certain advantages over the more common thematic tests which use pictures for stimuli. In the fables the child completes a story and thus reflects the psychodynamic material and feelings relevant to a situation such as a story portrays.¹²

In her second study she attempted to find normative data for the Despert Fables in order to be able, in conjunction with her former study, to suggest groups of fables appropriate for different age groups, thus shortening the test but still retaining all of the pertinent stimuli.¹³ Fine had previously suggested the usefulness of exploring the Fables in this way. He had combined some of the fables to form brief tests for dependency and hostility in his study of the difference between asthmatics and their non-asthmatic siblings.¹⁴

Peixotto administered the test to all the students in one Catholic elementary school with the subjects ranging in

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Peixotto, "Popular Responses to the Despert Fables," op. cit., p. 74.

¹⁴Fine, loc. cit.

age from six to fourteen. The respondents were separated by sexes and divided into younger, middle and older age groups on the basis of grade level. From her work she was able to list fables appropriate for various age groups as well as a superficial interpretation of the popular responses to the fables for each group with an indication of the validity of the fables used as she suggests.¹⁵

Since no work apparently has been published evaluating the fables with preschool children, both the fables and interpretation published by Peixotto for younger elementary school children were used with the children in this study. More normative study of the responses to the fables by preschool children is needed.

Peixotto, in interpreting responses to the fables has combined some of the psychodynamics. She lists parental rejection/sibling rivalry together stating that they are so closely related that they should come under the more general topic of parental rejection. She also lists aggression/hostility together.¹⁶ This same pattern has been followed in reporting the findings in this study.

¹⁵Peixotto, loc. cit.

¹⁶Peixotto, op. cit., pp. 74-6.

The following fables were used to test the sensitive psychological areas of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependency, and aggression/hostility: (See Appendix)

Fables three, six and twenty were combined to test for parental rejection/sibling rivalry. These fables were listed by Peixotto as adequately reliable and valid for her younger elementary school children.¹⁷

Fables eleven and seventeen were combined to test dependency. These fables were reported adequately reliable for younger elementary school children by Peixotto.¹⁸ Apparently eleven is a test for dependency, however, Peixotto states that seventeen may test for independence instead of dependence because such a large number of her subjects responded with dependent answers.¹⁹

Fables sixteen and eighteen were combined to test for aggression/hostility. These fables, also, were reported adequately reliable for the younger elementary school children by Peixotto.²⁰ Fable sixteen appears to test for aggression/hostility, but Peixotto states that since such a variety of

¹⁷Peixotto, "Reliability of the Despert Fables, A Story Completion Test for Children," op. cit., p. 76; Peixotto, "Popular Responses for the Despert Fables," op. cit., p. 76.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Peixotto, "Reliability of the Despert Fables, A Story Completion Test for Children," loc. cit.

answers were obtained for fable eighteen, she felt that the psychodynamic tested by it was vague.²¹ In spite of the questionableness of its validity, fable eighteen was included in this study. When the responses were scored, all answers were considered as not showing aggression/hostility except those in which a harmful physical experience was indicated for the mother or mother and baby combination. When used in this way, with this preschool group, the fable appears to have some validity.

Telling the Children the Fables

A specific time was planned with the parents for interviewing the child. The hour most often used was one after a period of sleep for the child. At the beginning of the interview the investigator talked briefly with the mother asking her how things were going in order for the child to see that the mother and the investigator were friends. After this, the investigator sat down in an area where it was possible for the child to come and sit also. The child was told that the investigator wished to tell him some stories. He was asked if he liked stories. When the child was ready he would come and sit by the investigator to hear the stories. Some children would come right away and took great interest in the undertaking. Others

²¹Peixotto, "Popular Responses for the Despert Fables," op. cit., p. 78.

would play around a little while first, but in no case longer than twenty minutes. The mothers of some of the children presented a problem because they wanted to put their child beside the investigator and make him listen to the fables in spite of previous conversation in which it was agreed to let the child proceed at his own pace.

Once the stories were started the children seemed to take them quite seriously and answer thoughtfully. The recording of responses was done after each fable with the simple explanation that it would be a good thing to write this down.

The first test was given to the child as close as possible to the birth of the sibling. The second was administered approximately six weeks after the sibling entered the home. The test was given six weeks after the baby arrived because in both of the case studies published the child revealed definite changes within this period.²² The reliability of the test used had also been established on a time interval of six weeks.²³

The respondents were not segregated according to sex because the fables on castration complex and oedipus complex were not used. The popular responses for fable eighteen differed

²²Alexander Z. Aarons, "Effect of the Birth of a Sister on a Boy in His Fourth Year," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 22:372, July, 1953; and "Ambivalence in First Reactions to a Sibling," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 44:541, October, 1949.

²³Peixotto, "Reliability of the Despert Fables, A Story Completion Test for Children," loc. cit.

some with the sex of the respondent unless the psychodynamic of aggression/hostility was revealed. These popular responses for fable eighteen were scored as normal responses.²⁴

Summary

The fifty children used to study change in the selected sensitive psychological areas of the only child at the birth of a sibling were chosen from families living in the Santa Clara Valley, a rich agricultural community caught in a rapid change toward industrialization. Criteria used in selecting the children limited the subjects to those who were old enough to talk, English speaking, under the age of six years and having no known deformity. Each was the only child of an intact family who anticipated the birth of a baby.

The children were located from the prenatal records sent to a community hospital by staff obstetricians and general practitioners.

The change in selected sensitive psychological areas of the only child was determined by using fables from the Fine Revision of the Despert Fables to form brief tests for the psychodynamics of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependence, and aggression/hostility. Peixotto's work among her younger elementary school children was used as a basis for selecting

²⁴Peixotto, "Popular Responses for the Despert Fables," loc. cit.

and interpreting the fables used for this preschool group, although more normative data is needed for use of these fables with children in this age group.

All of the fables used were considered adequately reliable for younger elementary school children by Peixotto. She considered fables three, six, eleven, sixteen and twenty to be valid tests of the psychodynamic indicated in previous work. Peixotto questions the validity of fable seventeen mildly and fable eighteen greatly. These fables were both used in this study, because, with the method of scoring, they appeared to have some validity.

The first tests were given to the children soon before the birth of the baby and the second tests six weeks afterwards. The children appeared to enjoy the tests and to respond to them quite seriously.

The responses were recorded for scoring and analysis during the interviews with the children with the explanation that it would be good to write this down for the future.

CHAPTER IV

TREATMENT OF THE FINDINGS

The data obtained on change in selected sensitive psychological areas of the only child when a sibling is born was obtained from interpreting and analyzing the responses of the children to brief tests before and six weeks after the birth of the sibling. These brief tests were formed by using combinations of several fables from the Fine Revision of the Despert Fables to determine the presence of the psychodynamics of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependence, and aggression/hostility. Judgments were based on the work by Peixotto with young elementary school children.¹

Scoring the Fables

Fables three, six and twenty were used for parental rejection/sibling rivalry test items.

Fable three. In a field there is a mommy sheep and her little lamb. The little lamb bounces around all day near his (her) mommy. Every night his (her) mommy gives him (her) some good warm milk, which he (she) likes very much. But he (she) can already eat grass. One day his (her)

¹Helen E. Peixotto, "Popular Responses for the Despert Fables," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 13:73, January, 1957.

mommy says to him (her): "you don't need milk any more; you go and eat some nice fresh grass." What do you suppose the little lamb is going to do?²

Responses of "eat grass" were scored as not revealing the psychodynamic. Responses of "want milk," "like milk," "get milk," "get sick," and "hurt mommy" were all scored as revealing it.³

Fable six. On a farm there is a little baby calf and his (her) mommy the cow. The calf plays all day with his (her) mommy. Whenever he (she) asks for it his (her) mommy gives him (her) some good warm milk. But he (she) is old enough to eat grass. One day the farmer brings the mommy a teeny weeny little calf who is very hungry. But mommy does not have enough milk for two, so she says to the bigger calf: "I haven't enough milk for two, you are bigger, you go and eat some nice fresh grass." What do you think the calf is going to do?⁴

Again, responses of "eat grass" were scored as not revealing this psychodynamic. Responses of "want milk," "like milk," "get rid of the little one," "have the farmer take it back," "get a better mommy," and "starve," were all scored as revealing it.⁵

Fable twenty. In a country far, far away a daddy and a mommy and their two children are living. There is so little food that they are all hungry. Daddy and mommy think that they will have to send one child away; but they love the older (child) and they love the younger (child) and they talk and talk about what to do. What do you suppose they will do?⁶

²Ruben Fine, "Use of Despert Fables, (Revised Form) in Diagnostic Work with Children," Rorschach Research Exchange and Journal of Projective Technique, 11:106, 1948.

³Peixotto, op. cit., p. 76. ⁴Fine, op. cit., p. 107.

⁵Peixotto, loc. cit.

Responses of "nothing," "can't tell," "don't know," "all go hungry," "pray," and "the older one," were all recorded as not revealing this psychodynamic. Responses of sending the younger child away were scored as revealing it.⁷

Each response indicating parental rejection/sibling rivalry was scored as 1 and each response not indicating it was scored as 0. The maximum score for each child in one interview was 3 and the minimum 0. (Tables I and II.)

Tables eleven and seventeen were used for the dependency test items.

Fable eleven. One afternoon a boy (girl) comes home from school. The neighbor lady tells him (her) that his (her) mommy has gone away for a while with daddy; she does not know when mommy will come back. What do you suppose he (she) does?⁸

Responses of "play," "watch T.V.," and going to some friend's or neighbor's house were scored as not revealing this psychodynamic. Responses of "want mommy," "look for mommy," "is alone," "is afraid," and "goes to sleep," were all scored as revealing it.⁹

Fable seventeen. A boy (girl) has made a very pretty drawing with crayons. His (her) mommy asks him (her) to give it to her. Do you think he (she) is going to give it to her.¹⁰

⁷Peixotto, op. cit., p. 78.

⁸Fine, op. cit., p. 107.

⁹Peixotto, op. cit., p. 77.

¹⁰Fine, loc. cit.

TABLE I

DATA OBTAINED FROM CHILDREN WITH SELECTED PROJECTIVE
STORIES FROM THE FINE REVISION OF DESPERT'S FABLES
BEFORE THE BIRTH OF THEIR FIRST SIBLING

Child	Sensitive psychological area			Parental rejection/ sibling rivalry	Dependency			Hostility/ aggression		
	Fable III	Fable VI	Fable XX	Total	Fable XI	Fable XVII	Total	Fable XVI	Fable XVIII	Total
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
6	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0
10	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
16	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	2
17	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2
18	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1

TABLE I (continued)

Child	Sensitive psychological area				Parental rejection/ sibling rivalry			Dependency			Hostility/ aggression		
	Fable III	Fable VI	Fable XX	Total	Fable XI	Fable XVII	Total	Fable XVI	Fable XVIII	Total			
26	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2			
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
29	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2			
30	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
31	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
33	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
34	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0			
35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
37	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2			
38	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2			
39	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
40	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
41	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	2			
42	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2			
43	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
44	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
45	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
48	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
50	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0			

NOTE: Responses which indicated the psychodynamic were scored as 1. The responses which did not indicate the psychodynamic were scored as 0.

TABLE II (continued)

Child	Sensitive psychological area				Parental rejection/ sibling rivalry			Dependency			Hostility/ aggression	
	Fable III	Fable VI	Fable XX	Total	Fable XI	Fable XVII	Total	Fable XVI	Fable XVIII	Total		
26	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2		
27	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2		
28	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	0	0	0		
29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
30	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	2		
31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
32	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2		
33	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0		
34	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	2		
35	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2		
36	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2		
37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
39	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0		
40	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1		
41	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2		
42	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	0	1	1		
43	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0		
44	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0		
45	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1		
46	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2		
47	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0		
48	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2		
49	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2		
50	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	2		

NOTE: Responses which indicated the psychodynamic were scored as 1. The responses which did not indicate the psychodynamic were scored as 0.

Responses of "no," "don't know," "can't tell," "tear it," and giving it to another person were scored as not revealing this psychodynamic. Responses of "yes" were scored as revealing it.¹¹

The maximum score for each child in dependency was 2 and the minimum was 0. (Tables I and II.)

Fables sixteen and eighteen were used for the aggression/hostility test items.

Fable sixteen. Teacher calls a boy (girl) to the front of the room one day. She tells him (her) that he (she) must go home right away because something terrible has happened. What do you suppose has happened?¹²

Responses of danger and damage to self or any other persons beside the mother and sibling were scored as not revealing this psychodynamic. Responses indicating physical harm for the mother or sibling were scored as revealing it.¹³

Fable eighteen. One morning a boy (girl) wakes up very tired, and he (she) says: "Oh, what a bad dream I had!" What do you suppose he (she) has dreamed?¹⁴

Responses indicating danger or damage to self or persons other than the mother or the new sibling after its arrival were scored as not revealing this psychodynamic. Responses which

¹¹Peixotto, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹²Fine, *loc. cit.*

¹³Peixotto, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴Fine, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

indicated physical harm for the mother or sibling were scored as revealing it.¹⁵

The maximum score for each child in the items testing aggression/hostility was 2 and the minimum was 0. (Tables I and II.)

Analysis of the Findings

The significance of changes in selected sensitive psychological areas of the older child when a sibling is born was found by determining if the psychodynamics of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependency or aggression/hostility were indicated by the responses to the story projective fables. If the psychodynamic appeared to be present, judgment being based on the work by Peixotto with young elementary school children, a score of 1 was given for each fable. If the psychodynamic did not appear to be present a score of 0 was given. These scores were added together for each child in each area and the score before the baby was born was paired with the score six weeks after the birth of the baby to find the mean difference of each. From this mean difference the significance of difference was obtained with the t score.

The mean difference of the sensitive psychological area of parental rejection/sibling rivalry was 1.04, the sigma 1.34,

¹⁵Peixotto, op. cit., p. 77.

the standard error 0.189 and the t score 5.49. This t score is significant at the 1 per cent level. The change increase in parental rejection/sibling rivalry is highly significant. (Table III.)

The mean difference of the sensitive psychological area of dependency was 0.64, the sigma 1.304, the standard error 0.184, and the t score 3.48. This t score is significant at the 1 per cent level. The increase in dependency is highly significant. (Table III.) Many more responses indicating dependency were given both before and after the birth of the sibling than responses indicating the other sensitive psychological areas tested, but the significance of the change in this area appears to be similar to the other areas tested. (Tables I and II.)

The mean difference of the sensitive psychological area of aggression/hostility was 0.60, the sigma 1.26, the standard error 0.178 and the t score 3.37. This t score is significant at the 1 per cent level. The increase in aggression/hostility is highly significant. (Table III.)

The change in the selected sensitive psychological areas examined was found highly significant at the 1 per cent level in each area. This probably indicates that the change, since other variables were apparently held constant, could

TABLE III

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHILDREN BEFORE AND SIX WEEKS AFTER THEIR FIRST SIBLING
 ON BRIEF TESTS OF THE SELECTED SENSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL AREAS OF PARENTAL
 REJECTION/SIBLING RIVALRY, DEPENDENCY AND AGGRESSION/HOSTILITY
 DERIVED FROM THE FINE REVISION OF DESPERT'S FABLES

Selected sensitive psychological area	N	Mean Increase	Sigma	Standard error	t score	Level of significance
Parental rejection/ sibling rivalry	50	1.04	1.34	0.189	5.49	1 per cent
Dependency	50	0.64	1.304	0.184	3.48	1 per cent
Aggression/ hostility	50	0.60	1.26	0.178	3.37	1 per cent

not have occurred by chance but was caused by the variable, the birth of a sibling.

Several of the subjects revealed the psychodynamic in the first test but not in the retest. This failure to reveal the psychodynamic after the birth of the sibling may have been due to withdrawal or a limited response for some unknown reason. (Tables I and II.)

Summary

The children's responses to the Despert Fables were interpreted to find out if the psychodynamic were present in the selected sensitive psychological areas. If the psychodynamic appeared to be present, judgment being based on the work by Peixotto with young elementary school children, a score of 1 was given for each fable. If the psychodynamic did not appear to be present a score of 0 was given. These scores were added together for each child in each area and the score before the birth of the baby was paired with the score six weeks after the birth of the baby to find any change in the occurrence of the psychodynamic. The mean difference of the paired responses for each area was then determined and from this, using the t score, the significance of change was obtained. The increase in three sensitive psychological areas of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependence and aggression/hostility was found highly significant at the 1 per cent level.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

The past few years a trend has developed in the clinical area of mother and infant nursing toward seeking to assist in meeting the needs of all the family during the reproductive cycle. The nurse often develops an intimate relationship with the mother and shares the problems of the family. The nurse needs to understand the changes reproduction brings about in the family in order to help the birth of a baby to be a meaningful and pleasant experience for every member of the family. One member of many families is the child. How does he change when a sibling is born?

Literature indicates that jealousy in young children is a normal reaction to the threat of the loss of maternal affection. Jealousy produces tension which may be manifested in a variety of reactions which occur with increased intensity when a child perceives that his parental relationship is threatened.

Jealousy of a sibling appears to be more strong and painful in young dependent children and to gradually lessen as the child reaches middle childhood when he is apt to view a new sibling with more of a paternal attitude and reduced hostility.

Mothers change in child-centeredness during pregnancy and even more permanently toward the child at the birth of a sibling. This change of interest in the mother is a real loss for a young child. Preparing the child for this loss is very little consolation. Two case studies of a child's reactions at the birth of a sibling reveal a pronounced change of behavior in both children. One was helped by the parents and the other by a psychiatrist.

Literature also indicates that jealousy in young children may begin with the birth of the sibling but research about the child's feelings at this time is difficult to find.

The purpose of this investigation was to see if, through the use of story projective fables, data could be obtained about the changes in selected sensitive psychological areas of the only child when a sibling is born.

The basic assumptions of the investigation stated: There are significant changes in the selected sensitive psychological areas of the only child when a sibling is born and these can be identified and measured. Children could be selected for study who had not suffered previous trauma which would bias their responses to the story projective fables.

Projective stories from the Fine Revision of the Despert Fables were used to form brief tests of the sensitive psychological areas of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependency

and aggression/hostility. These tests were given, both before and six weeks after the birth of a sibling, to fifty children from families in the Santa Clara Valley. Criteria used in selecting the children limited the subjects to those who were old enough to talk, English speaking, under the age of six years and having no known deformity. Each was the only child of an intact family who anticipated the birth of a baby. The economic level of the families was about the same, fathers being employed as skilled workmen in industry.

The children's responses to the story projective fables were studied for the presence or absence of the psychodynamic representing the selected sensitive psychological area, judgment being based on the work of Peixotto with young elementary school children. If the psychodynamic were present a score of 1 was given for the projective story and if not a score of 0. The scores were added together for the projective stories of each test or psychodynamic for every child and the score before the birth of the sibling was paired with the score after the birth of the baby to find the mean difference of the paired responses for each test or psychodynamic. From the mean differences the significance of difference was obtained by using the t score.

The increase in all three psychodynamics or selected sensitive psychological areas was highly significant at the 1 per cent level. This increase in the presence of all three

psychodynamics, as determined through the use of story projective fables, was probably not caused by chance, but, since other variables were held constant, by the birth of the sibling. This suggests that children do change at the birth of a sibling and that this change can be measured.

Recommendations

Many parents have the idea, from reading about jealousy, that the older child should be prepared for the arrival of the new baby. Often notification of the impending event is all that is done to help the child during this great change in his environment.

The nurse in a doctor's office, a clinic, or a public health service is in a position where she may be able to guide parents' thinking toward planning for the older child when a new baby is brought into the home. If the parents are encouraged to watch their older child, with tenderness, in order to find out how he changes and what he feels and the parents discuss these observations with the nurse, insight may be gained through discussion and plans may form clearly without obvious direction.

Generally, as brought out by previous research, there are three very important ways for parents to help a child when a sibling enters the home. These are by having a warm and consistent parent-child relationship, by maintaining an

environment in which the child is able to express himself, and by helping the child make some identification with the parent of the same sex.

Some parents may need specific guidance from the nurse which would help them understand and develop these three important ways to assist their child at the birth of a sibling. Material on these topics is available in literature, however, brief examples of specific suggestions follow:

Warm parent-child relationships can be encouraged by having the parents try to feel what the child feels, and at times of stress, put this into words for the child; by having the parents set a certain time for the child each day which is the child's time alone with the parent; by encouraging the parents to share warm body contacts with the child; and by having the parents give recognition for accomplishments of the child.

An environment in which the child can express himself also involves setting limits for the child in the environment. Encourage parents to plan to accept all verbal expressions of the child in the home, even if these expressions hurt. When the child attempts to express his feelings verbally in public, the parents should ask the child to wait and tell them how he feels later at home. No child should be allowed to hurt another member of the family physically or to destroy property. The

parents need to understand how to redirect this type of action by giving the child a doll and telling the child to pretend the doll is the person he is angry with and to show how he feels about that bad person with the doll. Expression of feeling by the child can also be redirected through finger painting, building with clay, pounding activities and play acting.

Identification with the parent of the same sex can be nurtured by having parents suggest play activities to the child which simulate the real life activities of that parent, and by having the parent and child wear mother and daughter dresses or father and son shirts. It is usually easier for the girl to be with the mother and imitate her than it is for the boy to learn the ways of his father.

Additional research is needed in all areas of sibling relationships. Many of the most notable studies of sibling rivalry, used today, were completed on a small population and done twenty or thirty years ago.

One area in which research is difficult to find is the older child's feelings at the time a sibling is born. This study examined only three psychodynamics in fifty children ranging between three and six years of age. The feelings of children younger than three, whom research would suggest might be affected even more, need study. The reactions of children in different environments to the birth of a sibling need study

and comparison. How does the child who has been exposed to trauma such as chronic illness, physical deformity or separation from one parent react to the birth of a sibling? Does the child from a broken home react more to the birth of a sibling? The reactions of children from different cultural groups need study and comparison. Further study of the influence of sex on the child's reactions toward the birth of a sibling remains to be completed.

Measurement of the preschool child's reactions needs further investigation. Different tests should be studied and compared. New tests which investigate a range of reactions might give more insight into the child's feelings at the time a sibling enters the home.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

FINE REVISION OF THE DESPERT FABLES

Fable one. A daddy and a mommy bird, and their little birdie are asleep in a nest on the branch of a tree. All of a sudden a big wind blows; it shakes the tree and the nest falls on the ground. The three birds awaken all of a sudden. The daddy flies quickly to one pine tree, and mommy to another pine tree. The little bird knows how to fly. What is the little bird going to do?

Fable two. Daddy and mommy are celebrating the day when they were married. They love each other and they have arranged a beautiful party. During the party, the boy (girl) gets up and goes all by himself (herself) to the end of the garden. Why do you suppose he (she) did this?

Fable three. In a field there is a mommy sheep and her little lamb. The little lamb bounces around all day near his (her) mommy. Every night his (her) mommy gives him (her) some good warm milk, which he (she) likes very much. But he (she) can already eat grass. One day his (her) mommy says to him (her): "You don't need milk any more; you go and eat some nice fresh grass." What do you think the little lamb is going to do?

Fable four. A little bear has a very, very nice dream. He (she) dreams he (she) can become anything he (she) wants to. He (she) can become big and strong like his (her) papa, or just a little bit stronger like his (her) older brother, or nice and kind like his (her) mommy, or little and weak like his (her) baby brother. What do you suppose he (she) is going to become?

Fable five. A dog goes crazy and bites his (her) daddy and his (her) mommy and all his (her) brothers and sisters. Who gets hurt the most?¹

¹Ruben Fine, "Use of Despert Fables (Revised Form) in Diagnostic Work with Children," Rorschach Research Exchange and Journal of Projective Techniques, 12:106, 1948.

Fable six. On a farm there is a little baby calf and his (her) mommy the cow. The calf plays all day with his (her) mommy. Whenever he (she) asks for it his (her) mommy gives him (her) some good warm milk. But he (she) is old enough to eat grass. One day the farmer brings the mommy a teeny weeny little calf who is very hungry. But mommy does not have enough milk for two, so she says to the bigger calf: "I haven't enough milk for two; you, you are bigger, you go and eat some nice fresh grass." What do you think the calf is going to do?

Fable seven. One day a little boy (girl) was walking in the woods. A fairy came up to him (her) and said: "Make a wish; you can have anything you like." What wish do you suppose he (she) makes?

Fable eight. Somebody in the family took a train and went far, far away, and will never come back. Who is it?

Fable nine. A child says softly to himself (herself): "Oh, I'm afraid!" What do you suppose he (she) is afraid of?

Fable ten. A boy (girl) has a little elephant which he (she) likes very much, and which is very pretty with his long trunk. One day when he (she) comes back from school, he (she) comes into his (her) room and finds that his (her) elephant has changed. How do you suppose it has changed?

Fable eleven. One afternoon a boy (girl) comes home from school. The neighbor lady tells him (her) that his (her) mommy has gone away for a while with daddy; he (she) does not know when mommy will come back. What do you suppose he (she) does?

Fable twelve. A family of deer is running in the woods. Suddenly a hunter comes along and shoots and kills one of them, but the others don't get hurt. Who do you suppose is killed?

Fable thirteen. A boy (girl) wakes up one morning very happy, and says: "Oh, what a wonderful dream I had!" What do you suppose he (she) has dreamed?

Fable fourteen. A boy (girl) has made something with clay--a tower--which he (she) thinks is very, very pretty. What is he (she) going to do with it?

Fable fifteen. A boy (girl) and his mommy (her daddy) went for a nice walk in the park all by themselves. They had a lot of fun together. When he (she) comes home the boy (girl) finds that daddy (mommy) is angry. Why is he (she) angry?

Fable sixteen. Teacher calls a boy (girl) to the front of the room one day. She tells him (her) that he (she) must go home right away because something terrible has happened. What do you suppose has happened?

Fable seventeen. A boy (girl) has made a very pretty drawing with crayons. His (her) mommy asks him (her) to give it to her. Do you think he (she) is going to give it to her?²

Fable eighteen. One morning a boy (girl) wakes up very tired, and he (she) says: "Oh, what a bad dream I had!" What do you suppose he (she) has dreamed?

Fable nineteen. A boy (girl) comes back from school and his (her) mommy tells him (her): "Don't begin your homework right away, I have something to tell you." What do you suppose the mommy is going to tell him (her)?

Fable twenty. In a country far, far away a daddy and a mommy and their two children are living. There is so little food that they are all hungry. Daddy and mommy think that they will have to send one child away; but they love the older (child) and they love the younger (child) and they talk and talk about what to do. What do you suppose they will do?³

²Ibid., p. 107.

³Ibid., p. 108.

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CHANGE IN SELECTED SENSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL
AREAS OF THE ONLY CHILD WHEN A
SIBLING IS BORN

by
Eveline H. Loewe

An Abstract of a Thesis
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Science
in the Field of Nursing

July, 1961

ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken to see if, through the use of story projective fables, data could be obtained about the change in selected sensitive psychological areas of an only child when a sibling is born.

Projective stories from the Fine Revision of the Despert Fables were used to form brief tests of the sensitive psychological areas of parental rejection/sibling rivalry, dependency and aggression/hostility. These tests were given, both before and six weeks after the birth of a sibling, to fifty children from families in the Santa Clara Valley. Criteria used in selecting the children limited the subjects to those who were old enough to talk, English speaking, under the age of six years and having no known deformity. Each was the only child of an intact family who anticipated the birth of a baby. The economic level of the families was about the same since the fathers were employed as skilled workmen in industry.

The children's responses to the story projective fables were studied for the presence or absence of the psychodynamic representing the selected sensitive psychological area, judgment being based on the work of Peixotto with young elementary school children. If the psychodynamic were present a score of 1 was

given for the projective story and if not a score of 0. The scores were added together for the projective stories of each test or psychodynamic for every child and the score before the birth of the sibling was paired with the score after the birth of the baby to find the mean difference of the paired responses for each test or psychodynamic. From the mean difference the significance of difference was obtained by using the t score.

The increase in all three psychodynamics or selected sensitive psychological areas was highly significant and at the 1 per cent level. This increase in the presence of all three psychodynamics, as determined through the use of story projective fables, was probably not caused by chance, but, since many other variables were held constant, by the birth of the sibling. This would suggest that children do change at the birth of a sibling and that this change can be measured.

Nurses are in a position to initiate and nurture parents' interest in helping their child during this great change in his environment and in himself. Nurses should assist parents in finding out how their older child feels and in utilizing factors indicated by research to assist the child with his feelings at this time.

Additional research about the feelings and adjustment of a child at the birth of a sibling is needed.