AN EXPLORATION OF THE APPLICATION OF SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION THEORY TO THE ADULT FEMALE AT THE TIME OF A MARITAL SEPARATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is about the special problems a woman may have in assuming or reassuming her own individual characteristics when she separates from her husband. Although the relationship may have been conflictual, painful, and unfulfilling at times, it served to define some aspects of her self concept as a wife, mother and facilitator of the needs and aspirations of her husband and children. The sense of loss at the time of separation is not only one of connectedness to another but can also mean the loss of a fantasy of loving and being loved in perfect harmony, a loss of financial security, a loss of a significant role that was her life ambition, and a loss of self if she sought to achieve an identity through the marriage.

The focus of this study is on the separation-individuation process as it is experienced by adult women. Individuation is a developmental process that includes the growth of ego functions and the achieving of one's own characteristics. Throughout life the drive to continue to individuate, to expand the self image to meet life's demands and opportunities is present in each of us but not without the accompanying awareness of the feelings associated with loneliness.

Mahler's research on the infant separation-individuation process will be used as a conceptual model for my clinical investigation of the adult experience at the time of a marital separation.

Mahler (1975) states that separation-individuation, like any other psychic process, reverberates throughout the life cycle. "It is never finished; it remains always active; new phases of the life cycle see new derivatives of the earliest process at work" (p.3).

She refers to the psychological birth of the human infant as the separation-individuation process. It is the establishment of a sense of separateness from and relation to the world of reality with regard to the experience of one's own body and the primary love object.

Separation and individuation are conceptualized as two complementary developments. Separation consists of the child's emergence from a symbiotic fusion with the mother. It is an intrapsychic process that leads to self-object differentiation. Mother is perceived as separate from the self. Individuation consists of the achievement of individual characteristics and internal regulatory mechanisms. It centers around the child's developing self concept brought about by the expansion of autonomous ego functions.

I wish to emphasize that although I am applying Mahler's concepts, I am not inferring or suggesting that adult behavior can be reduced to childhood origins. Each individual has a separation theme that is played out and re-written several times over and never without the alternating theme of unity or connectedness. (Shor and Sanville [1978] state that the balancing of mutuality and autonomy is an essential aspect of adult love.) Individual variations are influenced not only by genetic factors and infantile experiences of separation but by progressive and repetitious experiences of separation during

childhood, adolescence and adulthood. At the time of a marital separation, the precarious balance between dependence and independence is challenged; earlier child behaviors and feelings may be reexperienced. The normal infant separation-individuation process requires developmental readiness on the part of the infant-toddler; I suggest a developmental readiness is an important component of adult separations. For the woman whose identity is defined by the interpersonal roles of daughter, wife and mother, divorce may be the first time that, in aloneness and failure, she confronts herself as a separate individual. Many authors maintain that a need for affiliation is dominant for women. Bardwick (1971) states:

> In the reality of current socialization and expectations, I regard women who are not motivated to achieve the affiliative role with husband and children as not normal. The psychological needs that evolve form the body, the internalization of cultural expectation as part of the self concept, and the pressure from parents and peers all converge to make marriage and children, love and nurturance, the most important of feminine psychological needs. When these needs are absent, denied or defended against, my clinical observation is that there is evidence for pathological levels of anxiety, a distorted sex identity, and a neurotic solution. (p. 162)

I believe mores are changing; not every woman needs to establish herself in an intimate relationship because her need to be loved is dominant. Many women, especially those that have experienced gratification through achievement in college or in a career are finding the traditional role insufficient for a feeling of self esteem. The traditional feminine image, in which a sense of identity is derived from an identification with a husband and children, is felt as inadequate. For some of these women divorce may be a progressive step

toward further individuation. In her need to experience herself as a separate, independent person, rather than John's wife and Mary's mother, a woman may seek a physical separation. When a couple cannot renegotiate their roles and mutual expectations at appropriate periods of change or when attempts to restructure the relationship fail, a woman may choose a separation in order to rescue herself from an impasse and become the person she wishes to be.

Women have in common their biological cycles and the events of their bodies but the individual meanings of these variables within a culture or social system affect each woman's behavior, attitudes and value system. Rather than grouping women as passive, masochistic, verbal, affiliative, nurturant, etc., inquiry should concentrate on intrasex variability and bring the focus back to the individual and the interaction of individual differences with situational variables. The question of which woman or group of women needs to be answered. Women differ on personality and behavioral characteristics such as aggression, dominance, creativity, self-esteem, etc. This is obvious but we need to know more about these individual differences and how they interact with other variables to produce attitudes and behavior. Williams (1977) states, "Instead of asking the question, What are women like shall we direct at least some of our attention to asking, What is she like? If we are careful about generalizing, we will create fewer myths and stereotypes as impediments to the inquiry of the future" (p. 404).

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to explore the separation-individuation process as it is experienced by adult women at the time of a physical separation from a marriage partner. The emphasis will be on individuation which "refers to the taking on of those characteristics that mark the person as a person in his own right" (Pine 1979, p. 226).

I will use Mahler's study of the separation-individuation process as a frame of reference. The rationale for this is based on two important points: (1) the mother-child relationship is considered to be a prototype for the marriage relationship. Freud (1931) made reference to the relationship between a woman and her mother. He observes that many women remain arrested in their original attachment to their mother, and the ambivalence inherent in the relationship can be transferred to the husband resulting in marital conflict. (2) The current interest in the developmental approach to both theory and technique in psychotherapy, prompts me to want to explore the applicability of Mahler's concepts on female adult individuation.

Several clinicians have reported on the usefulness of Mahler's model in clinical practice.

J. Fleming (1975) states:

> Mahler's observational methods have established a model for clinical investigation. She has given us a frame of reference for comparing observations of circumscribed experiences in the life of a child, such as separation, with similar experiences in subsequent periods of the life cycle. (p. 743)

Spira (1981) applies the perspective of psychoanalytic developmental

psychology to the dynamics of divorce. She states:

> Thus the therapeutic work with psychotherapy patients where divorce is an issue can have as its goal the development of a more stable identity not in sense of single or married but toward the achievement of separation-individuation (Mahler, et al., 1975) whatever the marital status. (p. 270)

In exploring the application of Mahler's model to the adult experience it is important to avoid over-extension of the concept. According to Pine (1979),

> The concept of separation-individuation, prominently associated with the work of Margaret Mahler, is in part, though by no means fully, endangered by two fates that endanger many new psychoanalytic concepts: over-extension and under-utilization. The over-extension is obvious in the flood of usages of the terms. The under-utilization is less obvious, because those who do not use the concept in their thinking simply do not use it, and we hear no further from them. (p.225)

Pine believes that the theoretical preference of the therapist colors the therapy and the clinician should be aware of the theoretical choices available in order to better understand the patient's experience.

Since I share in Pine's concern with the appropriate application of theoretical models to clinical practice one important aspect of this study will be an attempt to develop a suitable adult adaptation of Mahler's concepts to female adult individuation.

Significance of the Study

With the increasing rise in the number of couples who are terminating marriages through separation and divorce, more and more individuals are having to master many new and complicated tasks inherent

to the single life. The emotional and social consequences of separation are profound for both men and women. Many seek psychotherapy for help in coping with the internal and external stresses which frequently take place in a reduced support system. Although the termination of a marriage is a painful process it can be the impetus for an increased capacity to experience both separateness and togetherness.

Since one out of two marriages is ending in divorce it seems that defining the psychological issues and the spectrum of psychological needs and problems which confront this population is necessary and desirable. It is important to understand what can go right and what can go wrong during the process of adult separation-individuation in order to make the appropriate therapeutic interventions.

A review of personality research, especially psychoanalytically oriented research, indicates that basically masculine developmental models have been adapted to explain and interpret women and their behavior. Both Freud and Erikson, for example, developed basically male models and adapted them to the female by indicating differences from the male. The problem with this method is it focuses on women only in terms of their deviations from the model, a discriminative approach to the study of women.

Williams (1977) proposes that understanding women will develop from studying a number of behavioral determinants which include biology, socialization practices, life chances and personality. She stresses that the meanings of these determinants to women as a group and women as individuals should be the focus of research. Williams states:

> A commitment to the systematic study of female behavior implies that such a study is needed because of past neglect and/or because of the inadequacy of the existing body of theory and knowledge to produce understanding, and that women as a class have in common certain attributes, conditions and experiences which differentiate them from men and require that they be studied separately if their behavior is to be understood. (p.383)

This study focuses on the critical first few months of a separation from a marital partner when a woman is confronted with the complexities of the single life. It is an exploration of the woman's mood, defenses, attachments and personal development in order to better understand the emotional and behavioral aspects of an adult woman's individuation process.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the most difficult tasks in formulating this research project was to reduce the literature to a manageable but comprehensive review. After hours of deliberation, I was able to reduce the volumes of literature to four major areas: the current psychology of women, the work of Mahler and her co-workers on separation-individuation and the application of her theory to adult development, the theory of attachment and loss as presented by Bowlby and the studies on separation and divorce that presented sex related differences in the first few weeks of adjustment.

I have divided the literature on the psychology of women into three relevant areas: the psychoanalytic school, the bio-cultural school, in which I include the social influences, and the current popular books that are specific to the theme of separation.

My decision to review these areas was based on several factors. I chose the psychoanalytic school because of the focus on the intrapsychic process and direct influence on the work of Mahler. An understanding of psychoanalytic concepts is essential in comprehending the similarities and differences in the affects and behaviors of the women in the study as they re-experience the separation-individuation process in adult life.

The review of the bio-cultural or bio-social school is important because it is the major critic of the psychoanalytic school, and it

has utilized the findings of "hard" research to substantiate its orientation. Also, it is most influential in the feminist movement which is the focus of many of the popular books that are being read by women. Many of the writers of this school believe in the "no differences, other than those that are culturally and socially determined" theory. They tend to ignore intrapsychic and interpsychic processes or relegate them to the "fantasies" of the followers of Freud, whom they discredit. The concentration on "learned" behavior which can be "unlearned" may seem to have an element of denial as a defense against any feelings of helplessness or dependency, perhaps an over-reaction to the early writings on the psychology of women.

I felt it was important to review the current popular literature in order to be aware of the "marketplace" orientation since it usually reflects the public interest or a response to the current need in individuals or the social structure.

Psychoanalytic theory has had a tremendous impact on female psychology in our culture. There has been a great deal of critical discussion of the fundamental Freudian propositions that are very much a part of the traditional psychoanalytic school of thought. Unfortunately, many of Freud's ideas and theories about the psychosexual development of women have been misunderstood due to faulty translations and misinterpretations. There has been a tendency to confuse Freud's original ideas with those of his students and followers.

The emphasis in Freud's psychology of women is on the girl's failures and disappointments. The basic assumptions behind his ideas were: a girl is anatomically inferior; she turns to her father out of

anger and disappointment; she must give up the active masculine attitude and adopt a passive feminine one in order to achieve sexual maturity; female sexual development is circuitous and incomplete. These assumptions, as well as his cultural milieu, laid the groundwork for his thinking about the psychosexual development of women.

According to Freud, both the father and husband inherit the ambivalent aspects of the girl's attachment to the mother. Freud continued to maintain that every little girl and woman wants a penis and achieves it symbolically through motherhood, but the achievement is not accomplished without having to give up an active orientation for a passive one, and not without developing the feminine traits of masochism, dependency, envy, jealousy and inferiority.

Critical discussion of Freud's psychology of women began long before the recent feminist movement and biological research findings. His theory has been called culture-bound, phallocentric and biologically determined. His views on sexuality as a powerful drive striving for expression beginning at birth are being challenged. His assumption of psychological bisexuality has been disputed in recent studies on the male hormone testosterone and prenatal exposure to androgenic agents.

Schafer, in "Problems in Freud's Psychology of Women" (1974), focuses on specific problems in Freud's generalizations about the psychosexual development of women. He states that the confusion in Freud's theory between observation, definitions and value preferences has an unfortunate impact on his clinical findings. Specifically, Schafer concludes that Freud's estimates of a woman's superego

development reflect conventional patriarchal values; his neglect of pre-phallic development was prompted by his belief in a biological, evolutionary model and value system; and his lack of clarity in the use of terms has fostered misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Stoller in "Facts & Fancies: An exam of Freud's Concept of Bisexuality" (1973) expresses his view that the girl's primary identification with femininity is more stable than the boy's with masculinity due to the prolonged early bond with the mother which results in a core feminine identity for both sexes.

Numerous writers, including Mead, Horney, and Thompson, assert that Freud failed to account for the social and cultural factors that influence the little girl's experience in growing up in a male dominated society.

Horney (1924) and Thompson (1961) conceive penis envy as a secondary process, a symbolic expression of a woman's wish for some form of equality with men.

Bardwick (1971) states that Freud's postulate -- a woman's desire to participate in the real world is a wish to make up for her lack of a penis -- is a myth that illustrates the danger of generalizing from an abnormal population. Bardwick, who identifies herself as an anti-Freudian, continues:

> Our culture strongly emphasizes goals and behaviors that have been traditionally masculine, and self perceptions dependent upon achievement in the marketplace. There is an essential difference, however, between a wish for masculinity arising from penis envy, reinforced by cultural values and buttressed by the availability of traditionally masculine activities for defensive purposes, and a self-percept that, along with acceptance of oneself as feminine, desires the activities and successes that men achieve. A neurotic

> flight from womanhood implies penis envy in the adult woman; in the normal woman, pursuit of activities in the marketplace does not carry the same implication. Successful scholastic or occupational competition is a general cultural goal. It need not threaten one's feminine identity unless one is punished for striving or punished for succeeding. (p. 18)

It is clear that Freud's theory of feminine development has evoked considerable criticism. A society that has placed a premium on physical strength, independence, and aggression may exclude women from many positions. Perhaps, if our society were erased today, factors relevant to primitive sex differences might assert themselves. In any case, innate or not, a consideration of the psychology of women distinct from the psychology of men appears justifiable and necessary.

In psychoanalytic theory there are central concepts in the psycho-sexual development of women; they are the castration complex with its resultant penis envy, masochism, narcissism, and passivity. In order to understand women in this frame of reference it is imperative to know what the current thinking is on these basic concepts; in reviewing the literature I found several variations on each of the themes. I will present what seem to be the most prevalent views.

In the current literature there are basically four views on penis envy: it is a primary reaction to the actual or perceived superiority of the penis; it is a secondary reaction to a girl's anxiety about her own genitals, her fear of penetration, intrusion, etc.; it is a metaphor for all narcissistic injuries and issues of envy at all levels of development; it is a symptom reflecting disturbed object relations with a domineering mother where the girl wishes to avoid identification with the bad mother--a defensive shift from castrating to

castrated.

Penis envy, according to Freud, ushers in the positive Oedipus position for the little girl; it is an omnipresent force that exerts a crucial influence on the development of femininity. Those authors who disagree with Freud claim the girl develops narcissistic fears based on her feminine role, resulting in penis envy as a secondary formation.

Chassequet-Smirgel (1980) claims feelings of incompleteness are not related to the existence or nonexistence of a penis but originate in the primary relationship with the mother. The powerful mother, no matter how loving, has a dual image - witch and fairy. The little boy triumphs over her in his discovery of his penis, a narcissistic satisfaction that is reinforced by social and cultural practices. The little girl has no narcissistic virtue the mother does not possess; the result is penis envy. It derives from the relationship with the mother and results in the idealization of the father, the repression of the aggressive or anal-sadistic components of sexuality. This results in the idealization of sexuality; the aggressive element of incorporative impulses and achievement are repressed. According to this writer, through compromise formation the woman reverses contents and container. By turning the aggression against the self she develops masochistic tendencies, and restricts her sexual pleasure and other achievements, including intellectual activity.

Torok (Chassequet-Smirgel 1980) maintains that, although it is paradoxical, the penis itself is not involved in penis envy. She conceptualizes penis envy as a symptom of an unfulfilled desire to

remain connected to mother and achieve separateness and autonomy; it is the oath of fidelity to the maternal image.

Moulton (1970) states that mutilation fears precede knowledge of the penis and that, if the girl is satisfied with being a girl, primary penis envy, based on the awareness of something she does not have, is transitory. The satisfaction comes from her relationship with her parents. The factors that reinforce penis envy are: sibling rivalry, hostile dependency on the mother, a rejecting, remote father, and dread of becoming a woman.

Tyson (1982) suggests the awareness of the genital differences functions as a psychic organizer around which the little girl deals with rapprochement issues. If the relationship with mother is poor then penis envy as a developmental metaphor represents a general sense of worthlessness, inadequacy, damages, and deprivation.

Horney (1967) acknowledges an early penis envy, but claims it is the result of the girl's disappointment in the father. Later, she relates it to the male's envy of the woman's ability to bear children, "womb envy", but her final views stress the social and cultural factors that are inherent in a patriarchal society. Her cultural orientation is currently stressed by Miller (1973), as well as by many femininist writers and most socially inclined critics of Freud.

In my opinion, the most useful way to approach the application of the concept to clinical practice is presented in Grossman and Stewart (1976). They state,

> The important point for clinical and theoretical understanding of penis envy is that we need to resolve the false antithesis generated by the apparent disagreement. Penis

> envy and the denial of the vagina, early narcissistic injury and disappointment in object relations, are different facets of the same issues of normal and pathological development. The over emphasis of one facet or the other promotes the tendency to reductionism in clinical interpretation. (p. 205)

They discuss two cases in which the interpretation of penis envy offered a metaphor around which all of the patients' manifestations of envy could merge.

Current concepts of masochism use knowledge of the separation-individuation process, and the nature and structural consequences of early object relations, as well as the role of self and self esteem regulation and affect development.

Freud first introduced the concept as a perversion, but later affirmed a silent primary masochism (1921) based on the theory of life-and-death instinct. This established a concept of masochism that includes all pain and its equivalents that fulfill a need for suffering within the self.

Pain is a necessary aspect of separation-individuation. Developmentally, pain can serve in self-definition and is part of a gratifying accomplishment, it has an adaptive and defensive function as the child suffers through the developmental task of self-object differentiation.

An early painful but fulfilling experience with a mother can result in a pain and struggle orientation to objects, both in the outer world with real objects and in the inner world of object representations, without erotic manifestations. The pleasure is pre-genital and is in the gaining of control over the cruel, bad mother.

According to self-psychology, certain masochists suffer a deficit, or are extremely vulnerable in terms of self-cohesion. When the self feels endangered or enfeebled, the masochistic act is an attempt to fill the deficit through a fantasy of merger with an omnipotent self-object or by reminding the self of the existence of a body self, using the pain to counteract a feeling of deadness.

These concepts of masochism are distinct from sexual masochism, and arise from issues of the narcissistic self. Many authors relate masochism to narcissism in their premise that some individuals induce rejection in order to suffer nobly, in hypochondriasis, depression, paranoid systems and in normal object seeking where pain is a component.

Chassequet-Smirgel (1980) states that certain aspects of female masochism are related to a woman's identification with a part-object, that is being the other person's thing. A woman may offer herself as a replacement for the lost paternal penis, taken by the bad phallic mother, as a reparative wish and a reaction formation. In seeking to free herself from mother, she offers herself to father as a part object, protected from mother, loved by father and forever dependent. This prolonged Oedipal situation is safe; she does not replace mother but chooses to belong to a man rather than mother. She refuses to grow up and compete with mother.

Most authors agree that during the period immediately preceding the change of object, the little girl has an active, possessive orientation toward her mother and identifies with her father who is also a rival. The transition is out of anger and frustration; it is

facilitated by the development of feminine passive, masochistic drives. With the help of a masochistic move the girl develops the desire for penetration and a baby. This erotic dependency never ceases for some women.

The relationship between masochism and narcissism is apparent in object relations theory. Narcissism is the investment of self representations with libidinal cathexis; masochism is a fusion of aggressive and libidinal energies directed against the self representations.

A patient's narcissism is characterized by a gossamer feeling of omnipotence and an intense desire to form a symbiotic union with a powerful person. When the symbiotic partner fails in caring, rage and remorse result. The fear of retaliation for these destructive urges against the other turns the aggression against the self.

When masochistic, narcissistic pathology pre-dominates, the patient feels a deadened capacity to experience pleasure; she has an inability to derive or sustain satisfaction from relationships or work; the level of self-esteem alternates between grandiosity and humiliation; she feels envious, with an unshakable sense of being wronged and deprived, and has an infinite capacity for provocation in order to control the degree of injury inflicted by others.

Narcissism in self-psychology includes issues of self-fragmentation and self-cohesion; it is a separate line of development. Classical theory relates it to libidinal shifts in cathexis from object representations to self-representations; it is a single line of libidinal development, a necessary intermediate stage between autoerotism and object love.

Grunberger (Chassequet-Smirgel 1980) stresses the importance of narcissism in female sexuality. She considers it, like the id, ego, and super-ego, to be an organizing agent. She agrees with Freud that a woman wants to be valued in a narcissistic way, to be loved--her sexuality is oriented around this narcissistic need. Her uneasiness about being a woman, her psychosexual condition, and the form it takes in the unconscious; penis envy, masochism, and feminine guilt, all stem from the lack of narcissistic cathexis of her own instinctual needs. This failure comes from the ambivalent relationship with her mother, and the failure in getting the necessary narcissistic confirmation the little boy gets from her. When the girl's attempt to give it to herself fails, she becomes more dependent on her love objects; she looks to men for the narcissistic confirmation; she lives in and by love. The narcissistic element enters into all aspects of her life: sexuality, child rearing, her husband's accomplishments, and material things.

Both masochism and narcissism are seen by some theorists as functional or adaptive mechanisms. In the psychoanalytic model the woman is more masochistic because she needs the adaptive defense in order to deal with her sexual, reproductive, and role demands. Many female writers including Horney, Bardwick, and Person express the view that, as long as the woman's status is dependent, masochistic tendencies will be practiced as interpersonal coping devices. Person (in Strouse 1974) suggests that pain-dependent behavior can be a vehicle of power for the weak and that masochistic defenses can serve to ward off the fear of greater punishment from the outside. Contrary to the

early views expressed by Deutsch (1944) and Boneparte (1935), the current view is that masochism is a residue of unresolved infantile conflict. It is not essentially feminine nor a valuable aspect of the adult female character.

Current views on narcissism are that Freud's association of female narcissism with the lack of a penis is incorrect. If the awareness of the anatomical differences between the sexes has such an impact on a woman, a narcissistic fragility existed prior to the discovery. The development and establishment of healthy narcissism depends on the early mother-child relationship and the separation-individuation process.

Freedman (1966) reports on the analysis of three women whose contempt for their husbands reflected their feelings about themselves as subaltern and their concepts of the female role as inferior. The defect in the executive aspects of ego-function was apparent in their half finished projects and tendency to depreciate anything they did. They described their husbands as dull, uninterested, and uninteresting. They chose husbands of inferior social background--competent but not outstanding professional men. All three felt deserted by fathers, left to the mercies of mothers. They formed close identifications with their mothers and feelings of inadequacy as women: "I am one, but a loser." They felt different, isolated and gained security from marriage, but paid for it by feeling stuck with someone less than desirable, but too passive and dependent to desert them. They dealt with the world through someone who was better equipped, stronger, to whom they were attached.

Symonds (1971) reports on three patients who developed phobias after marriage. Bright, achieving women prior to marriage, they became helpless, dependent, and phobic, with numerous psychosomatic complaints, after marriage. All grew up in families where they had to be competent, grow up too fast, and develop an illusion of strength. Marriage was an escape from the facade of strength, a haven to express dependency. They did not express their needs directly but expected them to be anticipated and raged when they were not, although they never complained openly. They expressed a fear-of-life syndrome, as seen in many people who cannot actualize their own growth and development and fear their growth will hurt others; therefore, it is easy for them to see themselves as too aggressive, castrating, etc.

The Freudian concept of female passivity is related to penis envy and the acceptance of the clitoris as an inadequate penis. Freud formulated his hypothesis of passivity to explain the turning from the mother to the father during the Oedipal period.

Feminist writers Friedan and Greer conclude that Freud applied feminine passivity to spheres of life beyond the sexual one, and his theories helped to produce the conservative trends in America between 1930 and 1960, which resulted in the reduced status of women economically and educationally. His theories tended to reinforce the cultural pressures on women to accept passivity and keep them oppressed and inactive until the recent feminist movement.

Both Freud and Deutsch used the term in many different contexts and that has created confusion and misunderstanding about the true meaning in psychoanalytic theory. However, since the recent

discoveries by Masters and Johnson on the function of the clitoris and the re-evaluation of penis envy, the question of female passivity appears to be an issue of the past. The consensus is that passivity in women has extensive cultural derivatives. Female sexual impulses are not passive in either their reproductive or pleasureful functions and, if a girl is pleased with her self as female, she will be active, outgoing, and achievement-oriented.

According to Person (1980), the expression of sexuality is crucial to autonomous personality development. The ability to produce orgasm at will, through masturbation, lends itself to a sense of self-sufficiency. A sense of autonomy may be developmentally linked to masturbation (p. 47). Person maintains the primary aim of the sex drive is object-seeking rather than pleasure-seeking; it is the primary vehicle for the expression of intimacy in our culture where many other physical demonstrations are prohibited. Sexuality is intertwined with object relations and may become the means of expressing love, hostility, or dependency. The function of female sexuality in personality development, its meaning and value to the individual, and the relationship between sexuality and the consolidation of identity are important considerations in the systematic study of female behavior.

In the psychology of women, the question of what it means to be a woman, the connotation of feminine and masculine, and the concept of gender-identity have received a great deal of attention. The two most extensive studies of early female sexual development, Money and Ehrhardt (1972) and Stoller (1968), have established that the last

half of the second year of life is critical to the securing of gender identity. The establishment of a feminine core identity begins with sex assignment at birth and is influenced by constitutional, psychological, and environmental factors.

Galenson and Roiphe (1976) agree with the timing of the Money and Erhardt findings but disagree about the factors responsible for this crucial phase of development. They indicate that the girl's early relationship with the mother, as well as her body experience, are important when, at age 16 to 18 months, she discovers the anatomical differences. It is at this fateful juncture, depending on her early experience and the availability of the father, that she may turn to him or remain ambivalently attached to the mother.

Macoby and Jacklin (1974) indicate that children learn through imitation although they do not limit their modeling behavior to models of the same sex. They acquire behavior patterns that have both masculine and feminine components but by age three or four their behavior becomes sex-typed. It is suggested that the distinction between acquisition and performance indicates that the actual performance of specific behaviors depends on a belief that the action is appropriate which is dependent on a level of cognitive development that can distinguish and evaluate acceptable sex role behavior.

Sex role preference is observed in children at age three and is well established by age five. An interesting phenomenon occurs around age seven and continues into adult life; that is, a large number of girls prefer the masculine role and express a high degree of ambivalence about an identification with the feminine role. This finding of

preference for the male role by both sexes has been widely replicated for age groups extending into adulthood. Results suggest that between 20% and 31% of adult women, compared to between 2.5 and 4% of adult men, recall a conscious desire to be the other sex. Several explanations for this finding have been proposed by the different psychological orientations. Psychoanalysts with a traditional view explain it by penis envy, psychologists and sociologists attribute it to sociocultural explanations of higher status and greater rewards for the male role. Another explanation is that girls are freer to display cross-sex preference.

Psychologists have attempted to explain the essence of masculine and feminine roles by describing behavioral characteristics which they have labeled expressive and instrumental. The expressive person is sensitive to others, solicitous and warm; the instrumental person is goal oriented and uses relationships to attain specific ends. The findings of studies that measure the strength of expressive and instrumental tendencies in girls support the idea that an identification with a father that models both behaviors facilitates healthy personality functioning. However, identification with a feminine mother develops expressive behaviors which result in behaviors that tend toward underachievement, passivity and living through others.

Sex typing and stereotyping are prevalent in all societies. The socialization process, formal and informal, prepares boys and girls for their adult roles. In our society, females are supposed to be unaggressive, attentive to their appearances, nurturant, and caring toward others. Males are expected to be physically and sexually

assertive, independent, competent and emotionally tough (Williams, 1977, p. 172).

Macoby and Jacklin (1974) find that differential socialization by parents does not occur, in spite of widely held assumptions to the contrary. Parents do not value aggression in either sex; they tend to inhibit aggressive responses in both sexes; and they behave similarly in their reactions to independence in the preschool years. Protective behavior towards girls starts around age seven and seems to be prompted by fears of sexual molestation. In our society, differences occur in the rearing of boys and girls in the area of greater coerciveness and less tolerance of deviations in the sex role prescriptions of little boys. A little girl is permitted to be a tomboy but a little boy must not manifest behaviors that are considered feminine.

Today, children are greatly influenced by the media and the school. A review of the major television shows designed for children indicates that women and girls are portrayed in traditional stereotypes. A study of popular books and school texts concludes that females are primarily presented as facilitators with an orientation toward service and glamour. Terms such as autonomy, assertiveness, competitiveness and initiative are associated with males whereas "conforming", "nurturant", "dependent", "passive", and "sensitive" have been stereotyped as feminine. Such usage tends to reinforce the relationship between socially valued characteristics and males, as well as reinforcing the avoidance of these behaviors in little girls who are encouraged to be 'feminine'.

The finding that women do not achieve their potential

intellectually or creatively is consistent in the literature on achievement. In the past few years researchers have paid attention to factors in socialization that act as deterrents to female achievement as well as discrimination and lack of opportunity. Since girls usually identify with their mothers, many of whom do not achieve outside the home, their role model is one whose commitment is to family and home responsibilities. If a girl chooses to pursue a career, she encounters difficulties with family demands and the remnants of sex discrimination, and sacrifices the social advantages which are reserved for conforming women.

The reconciliation of her achievement orientation with her interpersonal needs results in ambivalence and conflict. The resolution is frequently sought in marriage or affiliative relationships where her needs for positive response and affirmation of herself by others can be met. It has been suggested that the motive for avoiding success is a stable personality characteristic which develops early in life as part of the standards of sex role identity. It is a disposition of women to avoid behavior that will have negative consequences such as rejection or a threat to the feminine image.

Lebe (1982) proposes that the normal period for women to resolve their individuation is between the ages of 30 and 40. She defines individuation as the completion of the separation individuation process from the mother. It culminates in the ability to positively identify with the mother, the acceptance of femininity and the resolution of the Oedipus Complex.

Lebe states women tend to only partially separate from their

mothers by idealizing their father and other men. They remain dependent on the man's strength, support, achievement and power in a way that inhibits their own achievement. She views this as an incomplete resolution of the Oedipus Complex. It prevents women from competing with men out of fear of castrating them and out of fear of regression to the omnipotent pre-oedipal mother.

Galenson (1977) states that the divergent lines in the latter part of the second year results in differences in problems of fear of competition and self-esteem regulation in women. She believes that the discovery of castration is the turning point in a girl's development. Bardwich (1979) relates a woman's fear of success and achievement to the fear of never being close and loved by a man. From an analytic view the question is whether the woman's tendency toward affiliation and dependency is an adaptive response to cultural expectations or implicit in the pre-oedipal or oedipal period in the development of object relations.

Numerous research studies have focused on the differences between the sexes in physical, psychological and neurological development but the overall conclusion is that sex differences in social and affective behaviors and general intelligence have not been established. Environmental influences have been demonstrated in numerous areas of cognitive development. Significant among these findings is that cross sex identification facilitates achievement in girls. In studies on the specific traits of fearfulness, anxiety, dependency, nurturance, maternal behavior, and aggression, the findings are inconclusive. Environmental and social factors do affect behavior. However, the

complexities of individual differences in endowment and experience and the individual perceptions of the variables as they influence and interact result in the overall conclusion that individual differences within the sexes are as or more varied than differences between the sexes. The greatest problem in all of the research on sex differences is that of simplistic interpretations which reinforce stereotypes about both sexes and cause individuals to be treated differently on the basis of sex.

There are few empirical studies on sex-specific adjustment to the process of separation and divorce. Those that are reported have several weaknesses: failure to distinguish between pre-separation and post-separation periods, failure to distinguish between legal separation and divorce, and failure to specify the length of separation.

In "The Predicament of the Newly Separated" by Bloom and Hodges (1981), 153 volunteer subjects (89 of the subjects were women) separated eight weeks or less were interviewed and asked to identify the problem areas. Loneliness, self-blame, and sense of failure topped the list.

The conclusion of the study was: coherent differences in reactions to separation exist between males and females. The women in the study were more in favor of separation, expressed more general dissatisfaction about spouse and marriage, and more often took the initative to end their marriages (66%). These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that being married is more conducive to psychological well-being for men than women (Bernard 1972).

A further conclusion was that the early process of adjustment is

more difficult for men; within two months the women in the study had moved forward in their lives, made new friends, utilized support systems and were starting to gain a new sense of self.

Bloom and Caldwell (1981) report on four different studies that found the time period immediately after the physical separation is more difficult for men than women. Within two months the women have adjusted to the single life. While men are mourning the loss, women are entering into new experiences, learning about themselves, forming new friendships, and utilizing support systems. Since other studies indicate women have a more difficult time during the pre-separation period the finding could be due to a time differential in how men and women cope with separation anxiety.

Chiriboga (1982) reports the initial separation period is more stressful than any other time during the divorcing process. The underlying assumption is that divorce is a complex process that includes three stages: the separation, the transitional period of learning how to live a new life, and reestablishment in the social order. The major impact takes place at the time of separation before new social and psychological resources and supports are established. This finding is supported by Schaum (1980) in a doctoral dissertation. Kitson (1982) reports that women tend to be more positive about the termination of a marriage and express more dissatisfaction with their husbands and their role (In his study also, the divorce was more often initiated by the woman). Several studies, as well as this one, indicate marriage is more conducive to the physical and psychological well-being of men.

Kitson (1982) claims adjustment to divorce may be more difficult than to widowhood, based on the nature of the loss. In divorce, due to the escalating conflict and animosity, positive memories (which aid in the adjustment to the loss) are destroyed.

Part of the tie between separating couples is based on the intensity of emotions shared in establishing, maintaining, and breaking up the relationship. Ironically, the changes produced by the decision to separate may induce the need for the familiar and previously comforting attachment figure; the loss produces separation anxiety. Feelings of attachment are present for both parties, in different forms. The person who initiated the separation is likely to feel guilty, the spouse who is left may feel rejected and experience a severe blow to self-esteem.

Kitson found substantial members of divorced remain attached to their spouses. Males are more likely than females to remain attached. Confusion over attachment and dependency seems to be a problem in some of the studies on the impact of the divorce. Some authors treat them as the same. Kitson, however, defines attachment as being related to the psychological distress a person feels in adjusting to the single life because of the time-and-energy investment in the marriage partner.

Weiss (in Levinger and Moles, 1979) in a report of 150 recently separated couples who participated in a program called, "Seminars for the Separated" concludes that the emotional responses to separation frequently appear paradoxical, even to those experiencing them.

According to Weiss, the alternating depression and euphoria are

symptomatic of the ambivalence that make most separated couples uncomfortable with any resolution. Because they remain attached to each other and are at the same time angry with each other, the resultant ambivalence is one of the major problems in counseling the recently separated. Whatever they decide -- whether to reconcile or divorce -- will leave one set of feelings unsatisfied. "To summarize, there persists after the end of most marriages, whether the marriages have been happy or unhappy, whether their disruption has been sought or not, a sense of bonding to the spouse" (p. 204).

Weiss also maintains that a form of attachment may continue despite the availability of other relationships and despite absence of liking, admiration, or respect. The attachment resembles the attachment bond of children to parents described by Bowlby (1969). The tension in separation distress stems from rejection by the person whose accessibility had provided security. It seems to fade with time but is replaced by feelings of loneliness. Quarrels over property, money, and custody sometimes appear to have the aim of keeping the relationship alive through transfusions of hostility.

The paradoxical nature of the emotional responses may be indicative of the ongoing dialectic between unity and separateness which is being played out in the public and private arenas of separation and divorce.

In a doctoral dissertation on the impact of marital dissolution (1978) Dr. Joan Dasteel discusses the depression, unusual stress, and multiple concerns which are normal responses to the complex adjustments inherent in a marital separation. She reports on several

research findings that attest to the quality and quantity of the complex and divergent issues that flood the individual during divorce. She further states that the lack of knowledge about helping people cope with the emotional, legal, and psychological stages of divorce is unfortunate since more and more people will be dealing with the phenomena and may seek help to do so (p. 1).

One of the major psychological issues in the research she reviewed and in her own study was that men and women have to learn to view themselves as individuals capable of independent functioning. She states that many of the women in her study had not individuated earlier in their lives and, "like many women, particularly those who grew up before the period of 'women's liberation,' they had sought an identity through their husbands" (p. 99).

Dr. Dasteel's observations about the special issues of separation-individuation for women is congruent with my findings in reviewing the literature on the psychology of women and my experience in clinical practice. Women do tend to have different reactions to separation than do men, due to their overt and covert needs for affiliation. Although individual development for both men and women proceeds by means of affiliation, different methods of child rearing, cultural attitudes, and family patterns tend to foster separation and individuation in the male child and dependency and living through others in the female child. This state of affairs has been discussed and explained by numerous authors biologically, psychologically, socially, and culturally, but the conclusions are the same: women are more prone to define themselves through their relationships to

significant others.

J. Bardwick (1971) reports on the research of Douvan and Adelson on adolescence in which they interviewed 2005 girls aged 11-18. They found the girls focused on the interpersonal aspects of their future lives, on their roles as wives and mothers. The girl's identity is critically dependent upon the man she marries and the children she mothers. What the boy achieves through separation and autonomy, the girl achieves through intimate connections with others because her identity is defined through these attachments. These researchers found the most typical pattern of identity formation was that of the "unambivalent feminine girl" who remains tied to others and never achieves a strong sense of identity (p. 149). This allows her to become emotionally dependent on the man she marries and to adapt herself to the needs of the marriage relationship.

In a study on the impact of divorce on women, Wise (1980) utilizes Bowlby's four stages of mourning: denial, protest with goal of reattachment, despair or coming to terms with reality, and detachment with openness to new relationships. According to this author, all of the women (exact number unspecified) in the study were experiencing, one to four years after the separation, considerable psychological stress: depression, anger, low self esteem, vulnerability and preoccupation with loss, as well as fears of loneliness and aging, loss of status, financial insecurity, and of being incomplete without a husband. Parenting problems and reconciliation fantasies were also found.

Wise found that the prolonged, unresolved mourning seen in these

women was due to a failure in internalizing the strengths of the lost partner. Grief work was prevented by the intolerable guilt the subjects felt and their ambivalence about giving up the object and admitting the sadness. She concludes that, in a psychological sense, partial divorce is more descriptive of what takes place in marital separation of long term (ten to fourteen years), middle class marriages with children. She implies that when the separation is an attempt to handle unresolved issues from the past, it escalates the individual's problems and makes it impossible for the woman to detach herself emotionally from her partner.

These women overidentified with their mothers, whom they saw as victims of weak, abusive, authoritarian fathers. Wise proposes that several of the marriages were terminated out of an identification with the mother's position rather than out of a clear self-interest in personal growth. These findings indicate that different developmental issues can and will influence the individual woman's adjustment process.

The application of Mahler's separation-individuation theory to adult development has facilitated better understanding of our patient's immature and regressive needs; it has offered a framework to explore their preoedipal conflicts. Although not all therapists are comfortable with developmental concepts and their application to practice, Mahler's influence on psychoanalytic-developmental psychology cannot be denied.

In the past twenty years, Mahler has had a real impact on psychoanalytic thought. Separation-individuation as a hyphenated word

has become an established psychoanalytic concept. Her theory is a general psychoanalytic theory of early development with emphasis on the mother-child dyad; as a concept, separation-individuation refers to the development of object relations and the attainment of object constancy which is a continuing process.

From 5 to 36 months the child develops a specific libidinal attachment to the mother and a "recognition memory" of her; a capacity to remember her at a time of need is then acquired. This is followed by the ability to evoke the image of her during her absence, regardless of need. Later the capacity is developed to resolve the ambivalence and splitting that interferes with the functional use of memory. Toward the end of the third year, a stable maternal image is intrapsychically available which enables the child to function with relative autonomy.

During the developmental process, several transitional periods of disequilibrium arise as evidenced by the renewed fear of object loss. Mahler calls this developmental course the psychological birth of the human infant, the separation-individuation process.

> We refer to the psychological birth of the individual as the separation-individuation process: the establishment of a sense of separateness from, and relation to, a world of reality, particularly with regard to the experiences of one's own body and to the principal representative of the world as the infant experiences it, the primary love object. Like any intrapsychic process, this one reverberates throughout the life cycle. It is never finished; it remains always active; new phases of the life cycle see new derivatives of the earliest processes at work. But the principal psychological achievements of this process take place in the period from about the fourth or fifth month to the thirtieth or thirty-sixth month, a period we refer to as the separation-individuation phase. (p. 3)

Having studied the distorted process in psychotic children, Mahler and her co-workers turned their attention to the process in normal children in an attempt to discover the usual way of becoming a separate individual, the "hatching" from the symbiotic mother-infant unit. They conceived separation and individuation as two complimentary developments. Separation is described as the child's emergence from a symbiotic fusion with the mother, and individuation consists of the achievement of the child's assumption of his own individual characteristics. The process is divided into four subphases: 1. differentiation and the development of body image, 2. practicing, 3. rapprochement, and 4. the consolidation of individuality and the beginnings of emotional object constancy.

Mahler's work is an outgrowth of the psychoanalytic concepts of Hartmann, Anna Freud, Spitz, and Jacobson. Her emphasis on the pre-oedipal phases of development is similar to Freud's stress on the Oedipal phase.

"As we see it, much of our understanding of health and pathology may depend on developmental aspects, the most important of which, from our point of view, is the qualitative assessment of residues of the symbiotic as well as of the separation-individuation periods" (p. 227).

".....we believe, the infantile neurosis becomes manifestly visible at the oedipal period; but it may be shaped by the fate of the rapprochement crisis that precedes it" (p. 230).

The current controversy in psychoanalysis reflects the conflict between pre-oedipal and oedipal influences on pathology and the associated pre-oedipal and oedipal methods or techniques of treatment.

Since social work treatment methods are based on psychoanalytic concepts and persuasions, the treatment procedures are impacted by the present controversy. This is evidenced by the recent articles on the application of Mahler's theory on adult treatment. Whether or not the application is appropriate or aids in the better understanding of the patient's process is a question that needs to be explored. It would seem that, based on the therapist's interest, no period of development or of the individual patient's history should take precedence over another. The unfolding of the individual's affective experience where his/her early history is reconstructed should be guided only by the patient's emphasis on the meaning of the process from the beginning to the present time.

Applications of Mahler's developmental model to the Borderline Syndrome have been made by Mahler (1971), Kernberg (1976), Pine (1979), Rinsley (1980), Blanck and Blanck (1974) and others; but only a few authors have related it to marriage and divorce. Edward et al. (1981) and Katz (1981) have found it relevant to marital therapy and Spira (1981) utilizes it in the treatment of divorcing clients.

Edward (1981) applies Mahler's concepts to all transitional life experience including marriage. She maintains that the problems in the subphases of separation-individuation may impede marital adjustment in a number of ways. The over-evaluation of non-verbal attunement, insufficient self-object differentiation and attempts to compensate for previously missed object-related experiences through the marriage partner are examples of phase-specific failures which she discusses through case examples.

Katz (1981) states:

> If the nature of the mother-child dyad is such that there is a non-resolution of any struggle indigenous to a particular subphase then not only will that unresolved issue affect and be affected by later development but the mother-child dyad will become a prominent part of the child's internalized object structures. It is this internalized relationship which not only is influential in the selection of a mate but can become the identifying feature of the marital interactions. In other words, the subphase at which there is the greatest difficulty will produce an internalized object relationship which will become either reprojected or acted out within the confines of the marriage; it will be the focal point for the marital difficulty. (p. 201)

The obvious failure in this author's point of view is that all the developmental progressions between the mother-child experience and the present are not considered as significant. This is not Mahler's (1975) orientation; she maintains that separation-individuation is a process of developmental progressions that continue throughout life.

Spira (1981) applies the perspective of psychoanalytic developmental psychology to the dynamics of divorce. She states:

> Psychological growth occurs in stages, each of which involves the mastery of specific developmental tasks. The ability to resolve each phase of development depends upon the degree of success in mastering the tasks of the preceding phases. A divorce or marital separation must be seen as an event that is shaped for the patient by all his or her prior development, in other words, by the individual's unique psychic structure. At the same time, because divorce affects subsequent development in structuring, it is an opportunity for useful therapeutic intervention. (p. 259)

She offers several case examples that illustrate how the developmental impairments influence the divorce reactions.

Prior to the mid-fifties, the prevalent view of the nature and origin of affectional bonds was based on drive theory. Bonds

developed as a result of the individual's discovery that, in order to reduce certain drives, another human being is necessary. This theory postulates two kinds of drives, primary (food and sex) and secondary (dependency); once a child can feed itself and control its body functions, he is expected to be independent. It is of interest to note that the current idea that masturbation fosters independence assumes this connection.

Bowlby (1969) developed his theory of attachment behavior by direct observation of children and observations of how other species respond to the presence or absence of the mother. As a body of theory it is concerned with the same range of phenomena as object relations theory and incorporates many psychoanalytic concepts.

According to Bowlby (1975), "Attachment theory is a way of conceptualizing the propensity of human beings to make strong affectual bonds to particular others and the many forms of emotional distress and disturbance, which include anxiety, anger and depression, to which unwilling separation and loss give rise." (p. 292)

"Attachment behavior is conceived as any form of behavior that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual, usually conceived as stronger and/or wiser." (p. 292)

The concept of dependence is distinct from attachment. Dependency is not specifically related to the maintenance of proximity; it is not directed toward a specific individual; it does not imply an enduring bond, nor is it necessarily associated with strong feelings; and no biological function is associated with it.

Bowlby (1973) states that the way a child responds to separation from the mother follows a typical sequence: protest, despair, and detachment. He treats these as phases of a single process. His formulation follows Freud's approach to the problem of the relationship of separation anxiety to mourning and defense. "Anxiety is the reaction to the danger of loss of the object, the pain of mourning is the reaction to the actual loss of the object and defenses protect the ego against the instinctual demands which threaten to overwhelm it and occur in the absence of the object" (p. 383).

Attachment behavior is an important part of our behavior store; in adults it is more evident when a person is distressed, ill, or afraid. The major purpose of attachment behavior is protection. It is a normal, healthy reaction to an unwilling separation from an attachment figure. Adult dependency is not viewed as undesirable or abnormal and attachments to loved persons are not interpreted as undesirable regressions or longings for oral dependency.

Bowlby claims patterns of attachment behavior are established during the first five years and they persist whether the prevailing mode is secure attachment, anxious attachment or some degree of detachment. Due to the human tendencies to displace, regress, and project the patterns of responses can become distorted, confused, and confusing to ourselves and others.

In this view, the reaction to the separation process is considered as "normal" for the individual based on his/her history of attachment figures. This orientation is very different from labeling behavior as a regression to an earlier developmental level, as

neurotic, borderline, or psychotic. The focus is on understanding the present experience without obscuring it with terms like separation anxiety, over-dependency or regressive phenomena. It recognizes the natural desire for an attachment figure and the emotional upheaval which is normal at the time of a loss. Several of the authors, including Weiss 1979, Kitson 1982 and Dasteel 1978, of the studies on separation and divorce refer to attachment theory.

In reviewing the popular books about women I found that certain recognizable themes recur. Although most of the authors are critical of Freud and psychoanalytic theories of the female personality, they refer to the same personal characteristics that Freud, Deutsch and many of the other early analysts describe: passivity, masochism, narcissism and dependency. Although the current writers use different terminology and stress the social and cultural factors which influence the psychology of women, they portray women as victims of the culture, social institutions, social values, men, parents and children.

I found a similiar orientation in the books written by women with a feminist view. For example, Bardwick (1971) is critical of Freud. In discussing his position on the psychosexual development of women, she asks, "How could this perverted point of view have evolved?" (p. 9) Yet in her conclusions she states that the qualities of passivity, dependence and lack of self esteem are the characteristics that differentiate women from men.

Typical of the popular books is Crazy Time-Surviving Divorce by Abigail Trafford. She describes divorce in terms that make it seem like a scene from a not so divine comedy, with half of the population

auditioning for the lead role. Encouragement is offered in phrases like, "The Chinese define stress as the balance between danger and opportunity. In our country, that's the definition of divorce" (p. 12).

I find terms like divorce flameouts, deadlock roles, confrontation scripts, emotional editing or Russuanoff's (1982) expressions; undependent, getting unfixated from men and the baiting game, tend to cloud the issues and feelings rather than clarify them. The "how to" approach that is presented by several of the authors has a similiar effect: affects and feelings are buried in a rubble of activities that are meant to facilitate a type of working through process.

I read My Mother/Myself several years ago and I was surprised by my reaction; in this second reading I became very aware of Friday's misuse of Mahler's concept of separation-individuation. She confuses the developmental stages, and uses the terminology in a manner that distorts the meaning of the entire intrapsychic process. For example, "As young girls we are trained to see our value in the partnerships we form to symbiose." (p. 36) In extending Mahler's concept to adult development, Friday ignores the essence of the theory, which is the developmental stage of the intrapsychic process. The concept loses its meaning and becomes a wish to be connected, which requires the mental ability to differentiate between the "I" and "not-I". Friday states, "Marriage is often seen as releasing the daughter from her symbiotic tie to her mother. In fact, it may be merely a switch to her husband. Now he must support her, supply her with life, make her feel good about herself" (p. 47).

She confuses Mahler's concept of refueling with attachment behavior and/or dependency, these are very different constructs, this is an example of fusing ideas and confusing meanings. I would think that a woman reading about herself as feeling incomplete alone, inadequate without a man, devalued outside marriage, defensive without children would react with anger, confusion, self doubt or self hate, but not with a deeper or more meaningful understanding of her self or her feelings.

Unfinished Business by Sharp (1980) is one of the more responsible books written for the "pop" market. Originally it was to be a study of depression in women, but was expanded to deal with the ever pressing issue of how women are guided by fear in their relationships due to their need for approval, love and validation. According to this author, women are in a fearful and rageful search for a caring parent and will trade sex, independence, values and anything else to find one. She says, "The wish to be cuddled in a maternal manner is felt to be to childish and to avoid embarrassment or shame, women convert it into longing to be held by a man as part of the adult activity of intercourse" (p. 37).

At least Sharp presents the feelings and experiences of individual women through the presentation of case studies that delineate some poignant observations about love, loss, and self feelings in terms of esteem, sexuality, aging and other significant issues in the lives of women. She avoids using cliches and abstractions which are prevalent in most of the popular books on the psychology of women.

The themes of dependency, passivity, low self esteem, needs for

affiliation and depression are common to most of these books that are written for women and by women. The paradox is that while the terms narcissism, masochism, penis envy and passivity are not acceptable to these writers, they nevertheless describe the same traits but in everyday language.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mahler (1975) refers to the psychological birth of the human infant as the separation-individuation process. It is the establishment of a sense of separateness from and relation to the world of reality with regard to the experience of one's own body and the primary love object as well as an intrapsychic differentiation of self and other. It is never finished; as the life cycle unfolds, we see derivatives of the earlier process at work.

The first separation-individuation process follows a normal autistic and symbiotic period. It involves the child's achievement of separate functioning in the presence of and with the emotional availability of the mother. The continuous threats of object loss, if experienced as minimal, facilitate the process but traumatic separations may result in development arrests.

Separation and individuation are conceptualized as two complementary developments. Separation consists of the child's emergence from a symbiotic fusion with the mother. It is an intrapsychic process that leads to self-object differentiation. Mother is perceived as separate from the self. Individuation consists of the achievement of individual characteristics and internal regulatory mechanisms. It centers around the child's developing self concept brought about by the expansion of autonomous ego functions. After appropriate negotiation of the normal autistic and symbiotic phases, the child enters

into the separation-individuation process, which is a series of four overlapping subphases.

Briefly, the four subphases are as follows:

1. Differentiation from four to five months on, the dawning awareness of separateness.
2. Practicing from 10 to 15 months, attention is directed toward new motor achievements seemingly to the near exclusion of the mother at times.
3. Rapprochement from 15 to 22 months when the increased awareness of separateness from the mother also increases the demand for her involvement.
4. Progress toward the attainment of libidinal object constancy from 22 to 36 months.

Several authors including Blanck and Blanck (1974) have made reference to the number of people with problems which have their origin in the symbiotic and separation-individuation phases and they describe how the recognition of the developmental origins can aid in the therapeutic process.

Mahler (1975) states that the separation-individuation process is never completed and continues throughout life. This study will focus on the process as it is experienced by adult women when prompted by an actual separation. Although the termination of a marriage is a painful and complicated process, it can be the impetus for a new beginning. In attaining a higher level of individuation a woman can achieve a better understanding of her needs for affiliation and autonomy; she can learn how to comfortably contribute to her own growth and

development as well as the growth and development of the significant people in her life.

R. Schafer (1972) cautions against developing theoretical concepts based on metaphors that are useful in communicating ideas and processes. He states that giving substance or structure to mental concepts like "self" and "identity" which are theoretical "ways of thinking about people" is not appropriate in the development of theoretical concepts (p. 52). I share Schafer's concern about the way theoretical constructs and developmental models are applied to clinical situations since it can result in misunderstanding, and efforts toward resolution of the internal conflict are aborted. Therefore, a central purpose of this study is to develop an appropriate model for adult female individuation which can be applied in the clinical situation with a separating or divorcing clientele.

I anticipate that the women in this study will talk about aspects of "self" that will reflect some of the themes described by Mahler's model of infant individuation. These themes, however, will have been influenced and modified by the many subsequent unions and separations that each of the women has experienced in her daily life. The women in this study will be interviewed according to a semi-structured format with regard to their perceptions of their internal and external experience of the marital separation process. The interview questions

will be organized using Mahler's nine orienting questions[1] as a guideline. The nine orienting questions are as follows:

1. Approach-distancing. What are the characteristic approach, distancing patterns in the mother-child pair? (Behavioral and intrapsychic approach distancing maneuvers were considered.)

2. Newly emerging ego functions. What is the child's attitude toward, and his use of, the newly emerging capacities? (Evenness of the capacity and the accompanying affect, and the mother's attitude toward it were considered.)

3. Preferred modalities. What are the child's preferred, avoided, and other idiosyncratic sensory, motor, vocal, or other behavioral modalities? (These are described with reference to expressive, exploratory, tension regulating, discharging, and coping behaviors. The mother's reaction was also noted.)

4. Distressing and pleasurable experiences. What are the more pleasurable and more distressing experiences at this time? (The affective responses to the experiences were described.)

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[1]In order to adapt the nine questions to adult events and reactions it is necessary to rephrase them from an adult perspective. There are three important points to consider: (1) With developmental progressions behavior becomes increasingly integrated, therefore, it would seem logical that the themes will overlap between the nine questions. (2) Since infants cannot articulate moods, pleasures, tensions, attitudes, etc., they must be observed to collect data, with adult subjects, based on the level of emotional, cognitive and verbal development; reflection and self report can be used to collect data regarding interior states and ego functions. (3) In describing and classifying the data attempts will be made to distinguish between representational and behavioral differentiations based on the descriptions of the actual situations and the corresponding affects experienced by the women.

5. Alertness. What is the characteristic state of the child's alertness? (Its level, maintenance, lability, and intensity.) The direction of attention was also noted, i.e. inward or outward toward body or body parts, toward mother or others, or inanimate objects.

6. Basic mood. What is the child's characteristic mood? (Mood indicators were facial expression, gestures, vocalization content and tone, body tones, and activity level.)

7. Tolerance of disruption. What is the child's tolerance of disruption or potential disruption from within and without? (Internal and external sources of pain, anxiety, and frustration were included.)

8. Mother, child similarities and differences in their behavior. How do the styles of functioning relate to each other?

9. Body and self. What are the behavior indicators of the child's developing awareness of body boundaries, differentiation, separateness, object constancy, and sense of self or "I-ness"?

In order to illustrate how I intend to analyze the data utilizing Mahler's nine questions, I offer two examples of the process. These examples are taken from my private practice.

1. Mahler describes the concept of re-fueling in the practicing subphase when the mother functions as "home base" where the infant can gain emotional re-fueling through physical contact. C., a young woman who had been separated from her husband for six months, described how she "needed" physical contact with him periodically "for no particular reason." She maintained that she felt a "longing" for being physically close to him even though she was dating and functioning fairly

well. The contact was initiated by her and always ended in a sexual relationship. I felt her need to maintain a periodic sexual contact was a behavioral manifestation of "re-fueling." It was intrapsychically prompted by her need to maintain a "connectedness" in the mental representations of self and other or to activate "self" feelings such as self as "need," self as "body," self as "lovable and desired," or self that could "come and go." The aim was not sexual pleasure or union, but an emotional experience that she described "like a feeling of self preservation." Applying Mahler's schema it could be seen as an approach behavior that functioned to activate her and facilitate her continuing individuation.

2. M., who after 15 years of marriage, initiated a separation based on her expressed feeling that she was being "stifled" in the relationship. She wanted to pursue a career in interior design which she had "given up" at the time of the marriage. She felt her husband "blocked" her desires to return to school, develop new intellectual interests, and become financially independent. She entered therapy several months after the separation, stating:

> I have discovered, it was not all him. There are times I enjoy school and my new friends, but at other times, I feel like I can't do it, I'm afraid, feel empty and alone. It is at these times I call him and he is so supportive and encouraging. I don't think I could be doing it without him, but I couldn't do it being married to him. It's crazy.

M.'s awareness of her own feelings of self doubt and about herself as "fearful" and "empty" helped her realize the ambivalence in her relationship to her husband. She needed him at times for support and reassurance, and yet needed to "be away" from him because of her

fear of being engulfed. Fortunately, he was a good rapprochement mother who was available to her. As M. was able to internalize his confidence in her and experience him as supportive, her representations of self and other were sufficiently altered as indicated by her expressed feeling that she no longer needed to call him for reassurance, but they did talk at times about the children without any animosity. As M. frequently stated, "I am constantly shocked, we can really talk to each other." This example illustrates the ambivalence described by Mahler in the rapprochement phase. As M. was able to internalize her husband's positive support, her feelings about her "self" were sufficiently changed so she could function more independently, continue to pursue her intellectual growth, and no longer had to defend against her fear of engulfment.

Mahler established four categories to describe the separation-individuation process from a psychoanalytic orientation. The four categories are: object relations, mood, libidinal and aggressive drive development and cognitive development.

These four categories will be used to classify and analyze the reported data. In this way a summary four point profile of a subject's experience can be described with reference to the emotional and behavioral processes that may occur in adult separation. For example, directional changes in object or aim, representational changes as indicated by revised thoughts, feelings and behaviors, and modifications or revisions of defense patterns may occur and present an individual profile of the individuation process that is useful to therapeutic intervention.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH DESIGN

The deductive and inductive methods are two ways to approach research. Deductive research proceeds from specific assumptions and deduces a hypothesis before the data is collected. The inductive approach in which the researcher immerses herself in an area of interest and lets the data suggest important variables and hypotheses is based on the assumption that there is some system and order to the event being studied. The order becomes clearer as the study proceeds. This was the method used by Freud, Piaget and Mahler, and it is the method used in this study.

The design of the research is based on an assumption that the initial process of knowing can be achieved by qualitative or ethnomethodological investigation (a case study approach). By not forcing data into the structures of preconceived theories or hypotheses, an exploratory study is possible that evolves theoretical understanding from the raw data provided by persons "in-the-situation."

Heineman (1981) argues that research questions should be selected because of their importance to the field and the method of research should be based on the logical relation to the data that is being collected and studied. In this investigation a model of infantile development is being applied to a new (adult) population in order to describe adult profiles of individuation. The information is exploratory and no hypotheses can be formulated from previous work; thus,

quantitative methods are not useful to the study.

Generating data through observation can help in the construction of models. An exploratory or descriptive study can provide intensive data from which categories can be constructed. As the categories are applied to the subjects' data, discovery of new concepts and revisions of old concepts are made possible.

Williams (1977) offers three suggestions for making personality research more meaningful and more extensive in scope: the longitudinal study, the use of informal "archival records," and willingness to listen to what subjects say about their experiences and what they mean to them. This third form of inquiry into subjective meanings involves naturalistic, ethnographic observation or interview, sensitivity to patterning of phenomena, and personal involvement of the investigator (p. 403).

This form of research concerns itself with the organization of personality within the individual. It assumes that the woman is able to bring her perceptions into focus and enable the researcher to make better inferences concerning the internal process and personality structure underlying her existential experience. Lewin (1979) states, "A system, a person or an organization, in crisis or undergoing change is especially informative. During change underlying structures are revealed, structures which may not be revealed during times of routine operation" (p. 287). This investigation focused on a small sample of women engaged in a recent crisis or change which was specifically related to separation. Such a method is believed to be capable of producing useful insights into the adult separation-individuation

process that are more sharply defined and articulate than if the woman was in a stable relationship.

Sampling

The accidental (volunteer) sample consisted of five women, separated from a marital partner within 24 weeks of the first scheduled interview. The women volunteered to participate in two three-hour interviews. They were made aware of the research project through a letter sent to several family law attorneys, to two companies which had employee assistance programs and to several therapists engaged in marriage counseling. (Appendix B)

The participants signed a consent form which made them aware of their participation in a research project. (Appendix C)

The subjects were adult women between the ages of 32 and 40. Three of the women were Jewish, one was Catholic, and one was Protestant. The duration of their marriages ranged from 6 to 17 years.

Two of the women had been graduated from high school, two were graduates from four-year colleges, and one was currently in graduate school. Four of them had two dependent children each and the fifth subject had one dependent child; the ages of the children ranged from 2 1/2 to 17 years. Family incomes of the subjects were all over twenty-five thousand dollars per year but, at the time of the interviews, none of the women had established what her income would be after the property settlement. Two of the women had filed divorce papers, one was in a divorce mediation process, and one had not yet initiated divorce proceedings. The length of the subjects'

separations from their spouses ranged from 17 to 23 weeks.

Although all of the women had some experience with a therapeutic process, none of them had more than six months of ongoing therapy. Three of the subjects had seen a marriage counselor with their husbands for a brief period--from one to eight visits--prior to the separation.

Methodology and Data Analysis

The researcher conducted two 3-hour semi-structured interviews with each of the five subjects. The interview questions were guided by an interview schedule that was constructed following five pre-test interviews. (Appendix A)

Pre-interview preparation took place at the time the subject was selected for the study. It included an introduction, an explanation of the purpose of the interview, how confidentiality and anonymity would be handled, and the scheduling of two three-hour appointment times approximately one week apart. The interview sessions were tape recorded. Following each session the researcher wrote process notes in order to document observations and the researcher's subjective responses. The units of of analysis were the five women, and their introspective and recalled reports of the inner and outer events of the first 24 weeks of marital separation. It is important to note that in Mahler's observational study of infants and mothers the questions were conceptualized in behavioral terms due to the nature of the study and the age of the subjects. In this study I did not directly observe the husband-wife interactions but analyzed and categorized the

wife's verbal reports of their interactions and her subjective responses to these events. The infant separation-individuation process is intrapsychic; the reports of the women reflected their perceptions of the actual interactions and events as well as their inner experiences.

The interviewing methods used by the interviewer during the sessions were to encourage communication without leading, concentrated listening, clarification of the presented material as it related to the separation-individuation process and attention to behavioral and speech patterns.

All subjects are identified by code names in order to protect their anonymity.

The methods of data collection and recording used were interview, audio tape recordings and process notes.

An attempt was made to organize the data from the individual interviews into four response categories (object relations, mood, libidinal and aggressive drive development, and cognitive development) in order to establish a summary four point profile of each subject's experience with reference to her emotional and behavioral processes at the time of marital separation. I found the reports of the women, which reflected their perceptions of the actual interactions and events as well as their inner experience of the separation could not be logically placed into discrete categories. It seemed arbitrary to describe an item of behavior or an experience without referring to the total array of behaviors and feelings experienced by the woman at any particular time period. At this stage of adult development it became clear that

the experience had an integrated quality; it was expressive of some central themes of the woman's life. This fact seemed to be of significance in explaining or analyzing the process.

In other words, the data collected required a different approach not only because cognitive, verbal and emotional development had reached a certain level but also because the adult personality had solidified and integrated to the point that the material studied was of a different nature than that studied by Mahler.

Development of the Research Interview Schedule

Mahler's nine orienting questions were used as a guideline in the development of the interview schedule. In order to adapt the nine questions to adult events and reactions it was necessary to rephrase them from an adult perspective. Three important points were considered in framing the questions. 1. Due to developmental progression, adult behavior becomes increasingly integrated. Therefore, it was expected that the themes would overlap in the nine questions. 2. Since infants cannot articulate moods, pleasures, tensions, attitudes, etc., in order to report on themselves, they must be observed. Adult subjects' reflection and self-reports can be used to collect data regarding interior states and ego functions. 3. In the description and classification of the data, an attempt was made to distinguish between representational and behavioral manifestations of the woman's experience based on her description of the actual situations and her corresponding affects. The original interview was pre-tested with three women who volunteered for the study. As a result of these

interviews the questions were refined and clarified. Some questions were eliminated because they tended to elicit information material unrelated to the general theme of the question. The final form of the interview schedule used with the study's five subjects can be seen in Appendix A.

After the final interview schedule was developed two more pre-test interviews were conducted, making a total of five pre-test interviews. Three of the women who took part in the instrument pre-testing did not fit all of the criteria that had been established for the subjects. Two of these women who failed to qualify for the formal study did not have a dependent child and one was not within the age range established by the sampling criteria.

The pre-test interviews were invaluable in establishing a valid interview schedule and conditioned the investigator to conduct more systematic and reliable interviews. Familiarity with the format and with unobtrusive management of the testing situation made it possible for the investigator to attend more to the woman's non-verbal and symbolic communication patterns.

In rephrasing Mahler's nine orienting questions and testing them out in the five pre-test interviews, two important points seemed to emerge: (1) The interview material did not fit into Mahler's four categories (object relations, mood, libidinal and aggressive drive development, and cognitive development). These categories were to be utilized to organize the data into a four-point profile of each of the subjects. The assumption that adult behavior was integrated to the point where themes would overlap also indicated that discrete

categories were not descriptive of the intrapsychic functioning of adults. In other words, the self and object representations of the adult are made up of a complex mixture of the self and object in relationship to each other and the corresponding affects. These are not fixed but reflect upon the person in the present situation and include past experience and future expectations. That is to say, a woman's representation of her husband is colored by her feelings about herself, her past experience of him, her present relationship with him, and her future expectations of the relationship, as well as by certain predispositions which are built up through other object relations--a complexity that was not developed in the toddler in Mahler's study. There, mood reflected the mother's comings and goings, self and object representations were not established, complex thinking processes were not developed, and the drives were focused on the mother-infant unit. (2) The interview material seemed to fall into two phases: (i) The first phase was the initial twelve to fifteen weeks of separation in which the woman was focused on reuniting with her husband and (ii) the second phase, in which she was focused on herself and her thrust was toward self-understanding, self-development, and self-dependency.

In consideration of these two points I reexamined the categories and extended the 16 week separation time limit to 24 weeks, in order to gain more information about the time period during which the women were focused on their self development. After these changes were made the interviews were conducted according to the proposed format.

CHAPTER V

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Observational research has many data collection advantages because it allows the researcher to become immersed in real life situations. However, since both the researcher and the subject are being influenced by each other, it can also lead to complicated and subtle biases in the information being provided. One of the major problems, of course, is that the participant-observer (the researcher) may over identify with the subjects. Although following an interview schedule provides a structure, it does not eliminate the face-to-face impact and possible influence of transference and counter-transference phenomena.

In this study, I was careful to define my role. I explained that I was conducting a research project on how adult women deal with issues around separation. That is, I told the subjects who I was and described my general purposes, my safeguards to maintain confidentiality, and my general plans as they could affect the participants. I did not offer any personal information about myself or my marital status. Nevertheless, it was clear that the women made certain assumptions about me, some of which were based on real observations: I do not wear a wedding ring; my office is located in what is considered a "high-rent" neighborhood; and my physical appearance suggests a successful, professional woman who is making it in the real world.

These as well as other observations and assumptions by the

subjects might have influenced their reactions during the interview.

There are two major areas that are significant in evaluating the findings of this study in terms of the possible transference aspects. The first is the sex of the researcher and second, the subject's interpretation of the researcher's interest in the topic being studied.

Freud, in his paper on "Female Sexuality" (1931), noted that pre-Oedipal attachments of women to their mothers seemed to emerge more clearly with female analysts. Moreover, many writers have pointed out that a woman's identification with her mother is an important issue in a woman's development. Every woman has to be able to objectively evaluate her mother as a woman. Only after a period of closeness and a period of evaluation can she separate from her and experience a reworking of the separation conflict.

Clinicians are aware that the requests by women for female therapists have increased recently. It has been established that, in the crisis treatment of women concerning rape, abortion, or physical abuse, women feel a more immediate rapport with women therapists. Consciously, women may choose to see a woman with the expectation that they will receive greater understanding and support in their strivings towards self-dependence. Also, women may wish that the woman professional will function as a role model and they may also harbor unconscious wishes for care and dependency or for an opportunity to rework their relationships with their mothers. The gender of the therapist may be of more significance in identification and in marital and sexual problems, all of which were aspects of the present study.

The second significant factor in the research outcome is the fact that I, as a professional woman, chose to study women and separation with an interest in a possible positive outcome, that is, further individual development of the self in women. If these values or orientations were picked up by the subjects, it would seem logical that it could lead to positive transference and positive identification, as well as increased hopefulness in terms of their present predicament. This positive effect on the patient would have a short-term or, at best, a time-limited effect based on an immediate rapport, but it may have influenced the content of the second interviews. The change in the frequency of positive self-references could be attributed to relationship and transference factors. The possibilities for negative transference reactions based on envy, predetermined attitudes about women and their roles, and reactivation of dependency wishes and conflicts must also be considered as factors that may have influenced the subjects' responses in the interviews.

Although, in the study, there were no specific comments that referred to a direct gender relatedness, there were references to the researcher that indicate transference elements. Following are some examples:

1. Miriam, in the second interview stated, "I find it easy to talk with you, maybe because you are a professional it is easier to trust you, but my husband was a professional and I don't trust him."

2. Jean frequently asked my opinions about numerous issues during the interviews, including how she should approach her husband, whether or not I would agree with certain authors she had read dealing

with issues about separation, and appropriate attitudes about dating. She also expressed concern about her "helpfulness" in the research project.

3. Sally, a graduate student, had chosen "special" men but, in the second interview, expressed a desire for "just plain men who can express emotion." One of her comments was: "I see myself as more normal, never have felt that way before. I'm allowing myself to be normal, like you and everyone else, not so bad and not so great. I think I have a lot to go through but I feel some stability."

Although women have been viewed as more patient, sensitive, nurturant, and intuitive, it would seem logical that the women in the study would also have viewed me as independent, confident, an achiever, and as having acquired a degree of individuality that would categorize me as androgynous rather than typically "feminine." With this view of me during the time of the interviews--which took place during Phase II--it is possible, as life experiences affect the value systems, and the women's desire for individuation and the exposure to me as a model overlapped, this may have promoted the emphasis on the thrust toward individuation. For example, a sense of greater optimism and thus a stronger sense of individual potential could have emerged in the second interview due to identification and association with the investigator rather than due to an inherent process of individuation.

The importance of the observation is in terms of the overall effect on the research project and whether or not the phases would have emerged at that particular time without the intervening variable of the interviews.

Psychoanalytical and other clinical writings deal with the impact of the clinician's gender and even actual qualities on the course and outcome of psychotherapy. The effects seem to depend on many factors, including the type of therapy, its goal, the patient's developmental level, the early relationship with the parents, and the nature of object relationships and specific conflictual areas, as well as the therapist's sensitivity and value system regarding gender issues, and awareness of transference and counter-transference issues. With the advent of feminism, more women are choosing to specify a preference for a woman therapist. Female therapists are seen as better able empathically to understand women and their particular problems. Although there are several paradoxes in the problem of the impact of the therapist's gender on treatment outcome, therapist gender does matter and definitely makes a difference in both transference and counter-transference issues. Current research has not been definitive enough to clearly define the biases that remain but, nevertheless, I feel that more attention to gender issues in both research and clinical work will lead to greater sensitivity and objectivity in the exploration of the effect of gender on issues related to achievement, life choices, and individuation in women.

Appraisal of Orienting Questions

In appraising the functions of the nine orienting questions used in the interviews it is useful to evaluate each of them separately even though during the actual interview the themes tended to overlap or sometimes reappear in a little different form.

1. Approach Distancing

Mahler based this question in behavioral and bodily terms and related it to separation. The question in the adult form focused on the awareness of the impact of the separation, the acceptance of the separation and the influences the separation had on the individuation process.

Approach distancing patterns in Phase One were to reunite with the husband and to blot out the reality of the breakup. In Phase Two the focus was on the reasons for the breakup, discussions about what was lacking in the marriage, financial arrangements, and child arrangements, not as an excuse to get together but with a reality-based problem solving focus which facilitated the woman's wish to function independently.

2. Newly Emerging Ego Functions

Mahler based this question on an interest in the natural development of those capacities which are the basis from which any individuated person must grow. In the adult, this question relates to the maintenance of the ego functions at the time of crisis and the influences on regressions and progressions. In Phase One, the emphasis was on denial or disclaiming of the narcissistic injuries, and on avoiding anxiety, guilt and shame. In Phase Two, the emphasis was on repairing the self-image and on the development of new social, intellectual, and physical skills.

3. Preferred Modalities

Mahler's interest was in the child's individuation from the mother, as well as in the child's identification and internalization processes with the mother. In adult women, this question related to individuation in terms of the ability to maintain coping, problem solving, expressive, and exploratory modalities when under stress. In Phase One, the women tended to continue to maintain a dependency on their husbands or parents. None of the women developed a dependency on alcohol, drugs, or food. In Phase Two, there was a value placed on self-dependency and on utilizing experts for information but not for direction or decision making. This question brought out that all of the women ranked financial matters as their primary concern.

4. Distressing and Pleasurable Experiences

Mahler's purpose was to assess the degree to which the awareness of separateness from mother affected the child's functioning in each of the phases. In the adult form, this question brought out the women's ability to maintain a capacity for pleasure and to differentiate what she did to pleasure others in order to gain acceptance or avoid displeasure. It also showed that all of the women feared their husbands' power. In Phase One, the focus was on the fear of being alone, being labeled as "single" or alienated, and not having a sense of self without the role of "wife and mother." In Phase Two, the focus was on discovering new friends, new ways of relating, and new experiences. Concerns were about the future in financial terms and about being a single parent.

5. Alertness

Mahler focused on the degree of alertness and the focus of attention as a phase specific. The adult women interviewed in this study focused on the degree of their depression, their ability to depend on the self, their level of self-confidence, and on defensive maneuvers. In Phase One, most of the women engaged in denial and avoidance and fluctuated between depression and hyperactivity. Their attention was directed toward the husband and his activities and there was a wish to reunite. In Phase Two, they were focused on the self and on attempts to understand their roles in the marriage and the breakup out of concern that they would repeat the same behaviors and make the same mistakes. The focus was on mastering the situation in order to avoid pain.

6. Basic Mood

According to Mahler, mood is the most general indicator of the state of the child's relationship to the self and the world. Each phase has an appropriate mood. Mood in the adult is related to self-thoughts and feelings and to thoughts and feelings about others and the world; however, it is governed by the superego. Since the superego can morally condemn or praise the self, it raises and lowers self-esteem. The activation of early conflicts at the time of crisis seems to find expression in the woman's confusion about herself and the world and in the vacillations in her self-esteem. In Phase One, all of the women described feelings associated with depression, helplessness, low self-esteem, confusion about themselves and others, and a

lack of confidence in the future. In Phase Two, the emphasis was on expressions of anger and the building of self-esteem. It is of significance that, although all of the women stated they felt generally less helpless, all of them felt helpless in relationship to their husbands. This was based on financial dependency but also on a general feeling that the husband was more powerful in some way and, therefore, was not experiencing the degree of pain and stress the women were.

7. Tolerance of Disruption

According to Mahler this question focuses on problems of individuation, that is, the developed capacities to delay, displace, control, and re-equilibriate, and the use of mother as auxiliary ego for retaining homeostasis. In the adult, it relates to the mastery or lack of mastery of the instinctual drives, and the development of functional or dysfunctional discharge patterns. These are issues that relate to adult individuation. This question was the only one of the nine that focused on Phase Two. The women talked about their strengths and weaknesses with the emphasis on their strengths. The answers did not have a phase-oriented quality but seemed to remain the same. For example, the tendency to somatize was emphasized, but not as a phase phenomenon. The ability to meet emergencies was also not phase-related. All of the women felt they met emergencies adequately but needed support after they had dealt with the emergency.

All of the women expressed difficulties in the effective expression of aggression and anger and most of them felt they needed to

become more "independent." It is the investigator's impression that, since they were not thinking in terms of individuation during Phase One, they did not relate this question to the experience in the first twelve to fifteen weeks.

8. Husband/wife, Mother/child Similarities and Differences

According to Mahler, this question (in combination with question three), relates to the child's individual style of functioning in relation to the mother. In the adult women, it focused on the adjustive or adaptive ability to relate to the husband under stressful circumstances. Since individuation is not differentness but rather stability of individual functioning, this seems to have more to do with adaptive "mutual cueing." In Phase One, the emphasis was on agreement--giving in or somehow avoiding any emphasis on differences. The women expressed the feeling that the separation was easier for the husband in the first phase. In Phase Two, the differences were brought out by the women. They wanted to discuss the problems in the marriage and in the separation. Yet all of the women felt they had to discuss the differences in a tactful way or in a way that would not create animosity because they feared their husband's power; if he became angry and vindictive, she would become his victim.

9. Body and Self

Mahler focused on behavior indicators of the child's developing sense of separateness as well as a sense of "I-ness."

In the adult women, the question focused on issues of self-esteem and self-confidence. In Phase One, there was a focus on low self-

esteem and other depressive symptoms and there was little body awareness or concern. The emphasis was on the other and on an avoidance of recognition of an "I" other than the "I that was experiencing hurt or pain." In Phase Two, the focus was on the self, on evaluating the self and improving the self, and on the expression of the woman's good feelings about herself because she had discovered her strengths. She was aware of herself as stronger and more capable than she had thought she was. Two of the women expressed the feeling that they had lost themselves in the marriage and were in the process of rediscovering themselves. All of the women expressed a renewed interest in their physical appearance which prompted them to take exercise and yoga classes, and to make both major and minor changes in their overall physical appearance.

Presentation of the Individual Cases

Sally

Although Sally was a perceptive and articulate woman, all through her adult life she had played out the role of a confused, dependent little girl who needed a lifeline. The separation from her husband appears to have increased her resentment of her mother whom she saw as unavailable, unnurturing, and rejecting. She felt that her mother was more concerned with being a businesswoman--with selling Sally's house--than with being supportive of her during the trying time of the separation.

Sally also displayed a great deal of confusion about her own and

others' roles and did not fully differentiate between her mother, sister, and husband. She perceived her mother as never having wanted her and both her husband and sister as wanting her dependent on them but resenting or envying her and becoming angry with her because she was dependent. She expressed ambivalence and anxiety about achieving a balance between dependence and self-dependence and fought the urge to let someone else, including her 13-year old son, take care of her.

Background

At the time of our first interview, Sally, an attractive, somewhat overweight woman of 40, had been separated from her husband for 17 weeks. It was her second marriage and had lasted for seven years. She has two children from her first marriage, boys aged 17 and 13. The older son lives with his father in another state, the younger, Jimmy, with her. In 1974, about the time she met her present husband, she had returned to school and is now in a graduate program. Her husband also has two children from a previous marriage, daughters aged 30 and 26.

When asked to briefly describe her marriage and the reasons for the separation, Sally first talked about her accomplishments in school, as if she needed my approval of her successes before discussing her failed marriage. Then she abruptly asked, "Do you want to know about my marriage?"

She described both her husbands as unemotional but "outstanding in some way." Her second husband, Dick, 15 years her senior, was "exciting, handsome, financially successful, fun." But she also saw him as controlling, unaware of his feelings, and demanding. "He runs his

marriage like he runs his business," was how she expressed it. "I was a branch office that didn't work." She described herself as a totally dependent person--relying first on her father, then on her husband, and later on Dick. She admitted that she hated the process of growing up.

According to Sally the decision to separate was mutual. She maintained that from the beginning of the marriage Dick was looking for a way out. "He needs a doggy-door in every relationship," she said, "except with his daughter (the 30-year old). He's married to her." On Sally's part, the desire for a separation was based on a "need to do my own thing." She insisted that Dick and she liked each other but said they "thought differently." "That probably had a lot to do with the separation," she added, "that and inappropriate step-children."

Phase I

During the first three-and-a-half months of separation Sally maintained frequent contact with her husband. There were two or three phone calls a day, most of them initiated by her. They also saw each other often. During the first few weeks their contacts were fairly amicable. A lot of their discussions were about her son's Bar Mitzvah which Sally was planning and Dick involved in. They spent the weekend of the Bar Mitzvah together without undue stress but Sally emphasized that there was "no sex." She attributed their mutual need to stay involved with each other to practical matters: details about the sale of the house and their other financial affairs had to be discussed. However, she admitted that, although she wanted the separation, she

went through a period of questioning her decision. This manifested itself in daydreams about returning to marriage and Dick. She also dreamed about him, recalling one dream in which he had three wives. She stated that she used "a lot of denial" during that period and did not actually accept the separation until the 15th week when Dick took another woman away for a weekend. She described her behavior as "childish but not childlike."

During the second month they moved from the reasonably cooperative pre-Bar Mitzvah period into one marked by anger and ambivalence. They fought a lot, mostly over money and the sale of the house. But Sally's underlying motive in maintaining contact with Dick appears to have been a wish for connection--an unexpressed "I need you." A significant development in the third month was that Sally began to see Dick as physically small. "I was actually experiencing him as getting smaller," she said. "Other people had seen him as a rather small man but I hadn't." Her feelings toward him were ambivalent. She wanted the "good parts" of the marriage back but, at the same time, she began to see his behavior as ugly. She came to realize that she could not change Dick and questioned whether she liked the man he was. She called him a "blackmailer" in reference to what she perceived as his unfairness over money matters.

In the third month of the separation Sally also had confrontations with her mother and sister. She accused her mother of "never being there." Her perception of the early relationship with her mother was that "she didn't care. She turned me over to my father and he took me places. He accepted it; she resented it." It is of interest to note

that Sally also used the phrase "turned me over" in reference to Dick's having sent her to a "woman-hating attorney" to draw up a pre-nuptial agreement. That feeling of being pushed aside--turned over to someone else--was a theme throughout the interviews. She felt that her mother, her sister, and Dick were never there for her when she needed them--at least, not in the way she needed them.

She described her sister, who is two years older than she, as "a CPA, successful, dynamic." Sally's childhood relationship with her sister appears to have been marked to some degree by sibling jealousy. She said that she and her sister were "truly inseparable--grew up like twins. She was pretty, bright, put-together. I was the little sister." However, during the early weeks of the separation according to Sally their relationship was extremely close until the recent conflict. She stated that her sister was good to her but "bossy." She felt that her sister's anger was prompted by envy because Sally was taken care of which, Sally said, "isn't true. It just appears that way."

In answer to a question about her mood pattern during this phase Sally described herself as being nervous at first and undergoing a period when she overextended herself to keep occupied. Later, she became angry and resentful and frequently wondered, "Jesus Christ, what am I doing?" But she continued to function. About the 13th week she became "terribly depressed" and started to work out on the swim team because, as she said, "activity always dispels my depression."

I noted her continued ambivalence, her increased awareness of her dependent posture, and her fluctuating mood--within minutes she would express bitterness, self-satisfaction, anger, and elation.

Her ambivalence was evident from her contradictory statements about her husband's feelings for her: "He loved me a lot;" "Dick never actually loved me;" "I was always looking for reassurance of his love but never got it;" and "I know he loved me, but we couldn't live together." She referred often to wanting out of the marriage, but during the first weeks of the separation she also said she wanted to "not live together, but not a divorce." Her conflict is expressive of the similar conflict experienced by a child during the rapprochement phase. And, although she insisted that she made her own decisions, she also revealed some ambivalence in this area. She explained that she and Dick had agreed not to use an attorney at that stage but she had gone to one, "not to negotiate, just to hire somebody, to ..." On the other hand, she was angry at Dick for going to an attorney with a list she had drawn up of what she wanted in the property settlement. "Now I know I can't trust him" she said. "So I'll have to use an attorney."

From various statements of Sally's it also became evident that she had felt isolated in the marriage. She described herself as having been married because she "went through a ceremony, but it wasn't two people sharing." She also claimed that, although she had been married, she had been single in some ways and that--again the ambivalence--"I didn't do that much on my own, but I did do things on my own. I don't know. I haven't figured it all out yet." She characterized both her husbands as "what I chose, unemotional men who weren't there for me." On another occasion she stated that Dick had helped her to grow up, travel, go to school, invest her money and she felt that she had also

helped him to develop in some areas. Nevertheless, the impression I got was that they had "refueled" each other during the marriage and that many of their conflicts arose when one was unwilling to meet the needs of the other.

Sally experienced and expressed a great deal of anger. She described her reaction to Dick's taking another woman away for a weekend: "It blew me away," she said. "Not that he would take someone away--I knew he'd do that. But I was angry that he was there for someone else." Many of their conflicts were over money. Sally expressed anger at Dick for having cut her living allowance although he was continuing to maintain the house and pay all household expenses as he had throughout the marriage. She was also angry with him because he wanted her to repay him for her graduate school costs from the proceeds of the sale of the house. She termed that "unfair" but said she would not fight him because "I need his support."

Phase II

Since my two interviews with Sally were conducted during the 17th and 18th weeks of her separation I was able to observe for myself her condition during the second phase. I found it interesting that, especially in the second interview, she referred repeatedly to her dependency and her efforts to achieve self-dependence. Indeed, she used the words "dependent," "independent," and "depend" numerous times in different contexts. She told me that her husband had called her twice during the previous week and she described him as her "lifeline." "I called him twice also," she said. "I'm totally dependent on him,"

adding, "he has money." She also admitted that she sometimes acted dependent with Dick, asking for his advice when she had already decided what she was going to do. She told me she still had to fight herself "not to let him take care of me." At this time she was also severing relationships with friends and she perceived that as a positive step, explaining, "I don't need people so much." She felt that breaking up relationships wasn't all related to the separation. "It has been happening over the last two years. Sometimes I wonder if it's because I want to depend on Dick." In the coming months, she said, she would "depend" on school and her tight schedule to maintain her equilibrium and commented that she was preparing herself to be "financially independent" when the alimony stopped in about two years.

On occasion, she showed flashes of insight. Speaking of her husband she said, "He thinks he created me. He let all his children grow up--I grew up and it was all over." At other times she expressed satisfaction with herself for becoming independent. At one point she referred to herself as "a dependent person soon to be happily independent." She told me that her son was going to visit his father and she had planned a trip to Hawaii, the first on her own. "Dick is helping me but I am doing it," she said. "I'm so proud of myself." However, it is noteworthy that she was returning to a hotel where Dick and she had stayed two years before. This obviously affected her emotionally and she acknowledged, "I probably couldn't have talked with you about this three weeks ago. I would have sat here and cried."

In Sally's case, 15 weeks after the separation appears to have been the turning point. She seemed to become more aware of her need to

become self-dependent and, although she still displayed signs of bitterness, some of it was directed against herself especially for the way she had always gone along with Dick's suggestions in the past. She resented the pre-nuptial agreement that he had made her draw up. "He turned me over totally to the attorney and walked away and I had to put that bloody, cutthroat agreement together." She considered the agreement the most destructive thing in their marriage and she never got over it. "But I signed it. It was what I felt I deserved. 'Sign and lose 20 lbs.--conditions of marriage.' I did it." Another time she had lost 30 lbs. "for Dick, because it was an order given." She now saw that as "crazy, not taking charge." She described Dick as "a great eating companion" who loved her thin but "he wasn't thin--he's not in as good shape as I am."

Although Sally said in the second interview that she felt good and expected that mood would last, she admitted that most of her relationships with others were unsatisfactory. The situation with her mother had not improved. At that time she was angry with her mother for treating Jimmy, her son, the way she had treated Sally. "She babies him but is constantly picking on him--what she did to me. I can't stand it." She had decided that she couldn't deal with her mother and never had been able to. "My relationship with her is terrible, devoid of common sense, hysterical." When asked if she depended on her mother, she replied, "No! God, no! She's not a mother--she's a real estate woman." That was a reference to her mother's selling Sally's house in the middle of her "busy-ness" before the Bar Mitzvah which Sally had resented but went through with "not to humiliate" her mother. But it

stirred up all her old feelings about their relationship.

At that time there was also a crisis in her relationship with her sister as they had not resolved their previous conflict. They had fought because she felt her sister was not supportive enough of Sally's new attitude. "The more I separated and grew, the angrier she became." But her sister had called her the night before our interview, saying she needed Sally and wanted to have lunch with her. Sally was ambivalent, not sure if she was ready to work on a relationship on a different level with her sister but felt she would come to terms with that and it would be all right. She expressed no interest in men during this period but hoped later to meet a "nice, plain man--but I'm not ready yet." She described her pattern of seducing men "who can't be emotional" and said she had no desire to be with someone like that.

She perceived her relationship with her son, Jimmy, as the most important in her life. She described him as "a carbon copy of me, plus something I didn't have." She recognized that in some ways he was representative of the son she doesn't see--the 17-year old who lives with his father. She admitted that perhaps Jimmy was too important to her, repeating the words she had used about Dick; that she had to fight not to let him take care of her.

She stated that, during the two to four weeks before our second interview, she had begun to see herself as "more normal," no longer "the dumb little sister." I'm allowing myself to be normal," she explained, "like you and everybody else. Not so bad, not so great. I think I have a lot to go through, but I feel some stability. I'm O.K. with me, feeling more confident, less connected to others. It's

fabulous."

Helen

Helen's struggle with her desires for autonomy and affiliation are illustrative of the experience of many women. She experienced the pain of feeling completely cut off and alone. She is struggling to achieve a level of independence that one hopes will lead to a balance between the capacity for intimacy and autonomy that all human beings seem to be searching for in their relationship to themselves and others.

Background

39-year old Helen is an attractive woman who seemed to be uncomfortable with her appearance and admitted that she did not pay enough attention to things like clothes and makeup. At the time of the first interview she had been separated from her husband for nineteen weeks after a marriage of seventeen years. It was her first marriage, her husband's second. They were married in New York but had moved to California several years before when her husband wanted to leave New York because of business problems. They have two children: a son, aged 16, who is living with his father at present, and a daughter, aged 13. During the interviews, Helen impressed me as struggling to be sincere and honest in expressing her feelings although she said she felt "exposed" talking about personal matters.

She described herself as having been too passive in the marriage, adding, "It wasn't a good marriage from the beginning, but better than my parents had. In that respect, good." She said that, prior to the

separation, there were no discussions about separations or divorce but she felt both of them had thought about it at times. Her husband asked that she file for divorce and she complied. However, apparently they both had been aware of problems in the marriage because several months before they separated they went to a marriage counselor. She said that during the third or fourth session the counselor asked her, "Don't you have anything better to offer the relationship?" and they stopped seeing him after that.

Helen's husband is in his early 40s. She said that, before their marriage, she wasn't very interested in him but that his attention was good for her "ego-wise." She characterized him as "aggressive" and said he had pursued her until she had married him. "That was a pattern in the marriage. He'd initiate something, I would get involved, he'd withdraw, then I would stop." She described him as attractive but not sexually appealing to her and said that, during their seventeen years of marriage, he wanted sex "daily" but that was way too much for me."

Helen felt that she and her husband bonded in a negative sense and that he is "an angry man" with a tendency to communicate only angry or negative feelings. She noted that he would never discuss important things with her. She found him "authoritative" but felt he had softened in the past few months and said she sometimes wondered if she had fostered "his angry side." She also described him as ambitious, not very sociable, and not really involved with family matters. He had been very critical of her, she felt, but after the separation realized that his criticism was what motivated her to function. "I have a tendency to be lazy at times now that he isn't criticizing me and telling

me what to do," she explained. She said he had been conscientious about making the support payments and that even though she had less money now she didn't mind--material things were more important to her husband than to her: "I'm a survivor, I won't starve."

Phase I

During the first three-and-a-half months of the separation, Helen said, her husband contacted her when he was "hurting or feeling guilty" and she always gave him support at those times. She described how he wanted to tell her about his affair with the other woman and said, "I had to share painful things that weren't good--had to share his guilt. He didn't want to give up what I gave him but he wanted her sex, too. I didn't want to give my approval and was angry that he'd ask for it."

She described her only attempt to contact him with a great deal of emotion. It had occurred a few days after he left her. "I called him," she said. "He didn't answer, so I went over to be with him, to kiss and make up. He wasn't there. I only did it once. It was very traumatic--I couldn't reach him." She continued telling how after she got home she felt "awful." "I wasn't able to get to him and felt empty, helpless, frustrated, and angry," she said. "I was desperate from anger. He wasn't there and I was always there for him. He wanted, I was always there. One time in my life and he wasn't there." This incident, in my opinion, was significant because it released Helen's angry, frustrated feelings which she had repressed throughout the marriage. She said she became openly angry and vindictive and

that she felt guilty about those feelings, but that her thoughts, dreams, and daydreams were filled with a desire to hurt him and "to get even."

During the period after this occurred she continued to respond to her husband whenever he contacted her and to try to give him the acceptance and forgiveness he seemed to need. "But," she said, "I couldn't do it. I was angry, hurt and vindictive. I could do it for a while, be nice, understanding but I couldn't maintain it. I'd explode." These feelings seemed to trigger a fear that she would not be able to control her rage: "It was frightening. I didn't know how far I would go with it."

At that point she started to blame herself for the failure of the marriage. In her words, "When my mother died, a little over two years ago, I changed. It was the first step--I started thinking about me. I saw her life and I thought, 'I don't want to go through life like she did, a victim, powerless all her life. I don't want that, but I'm trapped.'" She felt she shouldn't have let her marriage reach the point of separation but had never thought her husband would actually leave her. She said it was painful and that she felt "dumb to be so trusting" and that she should have known...

She stated that "everything began to change as I began to make changes. But now when I think about it, I say, 'Well, he had an affair and I think I should have ... could have ... It's really like, if I really wanted what I said, then why did I do this or that?' If I was really sincere then I would have made it (the marriage) work."

It would appear that Helen's guilt and self-blame at that time

served many functions. It internalized her anger where it was familiar and contained in a depression and reinforced certain early fears of achieving. This is a fear many women have as a consequence of a fear of competition with mother and reinforced by early conditioning toward affiliation.

Helen described a period in the early weeks of separation where she barely functioned. "I didn't take care of myself, the house, or the children. I was angry and I didn't feel clean about it. It wasn't me. I was driven to it, different--I actually wasn't feeling different but acting different--yelling, screaming, vicious. I believe what happened was I felt that in some ways it felt good to stand up." But she asked herself, "What's the point in standing up to something that doesn't matter any more?" And she went on, "The thing I also realized was I'd get openly angry, he'd catch it, I'd have to deal with him--it would always come back to me. He's somehow more powerful." Shortly after that realization--that it didn't matter any more--Helen withdrew from her husband. "I didn't want to see him," she said. "I would get annoyed when he would contact me. I still cut his hair, but I resented it."

This change in Helen's attitude started to take place about the 14th week and represented a turning point for her. She noted that at this time she no longer felt compelled to keep busy as she had before. She said she began to realize that there were advantages to not being married. "I wasn't regimented. I could let things go if I wanted and I began to ask, 'What is it?' and not to blame myself so much."

Helen didn't talk much about what her relationship with her mother

had been like and she described her family as having a "closeness" but it appears to be of a casual, non-committal nature. When she asked her sister for help immediately after the separation, she said her sister resented it. "I thought she would respond to me, it was a mind blower." Helen continued, "People resent being asked and it is painful for me to know when someone is forced to give to me. It's to the point of being ridiculous. Kids don't want to do something, I do it. Attorney says make him do this or that and I can't."

She noted that when she was growing up, her role in the family was to do chores, and her sister took care of the other children. "Guess I'm doing that now. Same thing. I'm more interested in doing things, than in mothering, myself or the children. My sister has made the better marriage."

Phase II

The progress that Helen had begun to make in the fourteenth week continued in the second phase. About the fifteenth week she started to attend lectures on self-development and yoga and she devoted more time and energy to her volunteer work which she said she enjoyed. She described her feelings as "I've got to get through this or I'll fear being back there. I became obsessed with getting through it. Once I get there nothing can hurt me--I'm determined to get through this." It was interesting to note how her focus had changed from being centered on her husband and wanting a reunion with him to concentrating on her own needs and the preservation of self. In the sixteenth week, she stopped cutting her husband's hair.

When asked who she turned to for support, Helen said she relied on her daughter, to a degree, on her house which gave her a feeling of stability, and: "My family is there but I don't use them. I'm my own major support system now." She said she didn't share experiences with many people and "that's why this (the interview) is hard. I feel isolated sometimes, not lonely but not part of it, especially when I'm with people I don't know. Talking to you has made me realize that couples make me feel alone and I'm on a different wavelength from most singles." But she went on to say that rejection hurt her more than being alone. "I felt it, that one time when I tried to contact him, like hopeless. It reminds me I didn't get anything and helps me not to do it again."

Talking about her marriage Helen said she couldn't explain it but she knew that what she had wanted was improvement, not divorce. In the last interview she made some comments about dependency that seemed to me to reflect a growth process indicative of her increasing individuation. "I'm still dependent in some ways. Dependency, the having to be in the position where someone has to give me something they don't want to give me, that's a hurt. I need to know now, need to be sure that I can support myself. I'm learning to be my major support system right now. There has been a shift in the past few weeks. I feel a different kind of tension now but not to take care of things for him, I lost an image of myself, like not here, more of a role, mother, wife. Struggling last two years to develop an image, roles taken away, blank, I wasn't in touch with myself. Now I have confusion, strengths can be weaknesses and weaknesses can be strengths, but I don't depend on the

roles."

It is interesting to note that her expressed concerns about her children were: "My son is independent and he doesn't seem to care about people" and "My daughter, I know she cares but I worry about her. So helpless, so dependent, like me. She won't even feed herself. I've been like that. I think our daughters learn from us."

Helen told me this was her fist time living on her own. She had moved from her father's and mother's home to marriage. And she admitted that she often worried and wondered about the future and asked herself, "Who will I wind up with or will I be alone?" She felt that her chances of a successful relationship with a man were doubtful, now that her "fantasies have been shattered" but felt she could be happy alone: "That's what I feel I want, to learn how to be alone. If there's a positive future, that's it." She also said that, although in her daydreams she sometimes relives the past with her husband, "It's a way of settling things now, not of wanting to go back."

When her husband asked her if she would come back during the 18th week of the separation, Helen responded that she felt it was either too late or too early. "I need to finish the divorce in order to establish a new pattern between us, I need to know that I have a stability of my own."

Helen's move into phase two has been an extremely painful process. At the time of the interviews she was still having periods of depression but her focus was clearly on understanding herself. She seemed to be acutely aware of her conflict between intimacy and separateness.

Miriam

Miriam appeared confident, justified in her anger at her husband, and sincere in her concern for her two-and-a-half year old son (as the result of a joint custody agreement reached just before the second interview, the child was to divide his time between Miriam and her husband--three months with her, then three weeks with him.) But underneath Miriam's self-assured surface one could perceive a frightened, unsure, self-critical woman who had basic doubts about herself as a person, a woman, and a mother.

She maintained that she had "lost" herself in the marriage, but what emerged in the interviews was that she had hoped to define herself through marriage and motherhood and felt she had failed. Miriam's early identification with her mother as a fagile, mentally unstable, and emotionally unpredictable woman was an underlying concern which pushed Miriam to attempt to repair the damaged self-image by being "good" and becoming the perfect wife and mother. Her struggle immediately after the separation was to try to mend the then twice-damaged image.

Background

Miriam is a petite, striking 29-year old woman. Although she has a teaching credential, she said that before her marriage she had worked as a hairdesser in another state. She had met her husband, a 33-year old physician, when he was visiting relatives shortly after his second wife had been murdered, leaving him with an infant son. He also had a daughter from his first marriage, which had ended in divorce, but he

had little or no contact with her. Miriam described her first impressions of her husband as a "handsome, thoughtful, kind man and a good father." According to her they had a whirlwind, three-month courtship. "We didn't know each other," she said. "I was needy; he was Prince Charming--everything I wanted."

At the time of the first interview, Miriam had been separated from her husband, Bob, for two weeks. However, they had been living in different areas of the house for sixteen weeks, from about one month after she had found out he was having an affair with one of his female employees. Miriam said that, when he would not fire the woman, she refused to have any sexual contact with him and he moved into a downstairs bedroom. However, she carried on with her other duties--managing the house, cooking, etc. They continued to have dinner together but, otherwise, there was no semblance of a marriage. It was at this time that she decided to file for divorce and, once the decision was made, she filed immediately. "I told him before we were married," she said, "that if he ever cheated on me, was with another woman, I would leave." From this statement it appears that, prior to the marriage (which lasted for six years) Miriam had some real concerns about herself and her capacity to maintain a loving, intimate relationship with a man.

Miriam described her marriage as having been marked by sexual problems from the beginning. She said she knew something was wrong on the honeymoon. "He wanted me to lust for him and I didn't." She had hoped, she said, that her sexuality would be aroused because he 'accepted' her, but that had not occurred. "I love him, but I

couldn't get the feeling," she said. She attributed her lack of sexual response to her feeling that he "wasn't there," wasn't her friend. She stated that she had come to realize that "if you don't have someone you can trust, you don't have anything."

In her account of the marriage, Miriam repeatedly referred to how hard she "had tried" and it became obvious that she had attempted to compensate in other ways for their sexual incompatibility. She said she loved him and his child and had been willing "to leave family, friends, and my job and move to California." During the first six months in California, according to her, she had been depressed but then they bought a house, which seemed to keep her occupied. However, although she continued to try to please her husband, she felt guilty because she couldn't please him sexually. She redoubled her efforts to excel in other areas, such as cooking, and always made herself available when he needed her. She even helped out by cleaning his office which she admitted was "crazy" because she had a housekeeper at home. But the sexual pressure was always there.

Her husband continued to express his frustration. "It got so I couldn't do anything right," she said. "But I tried. I lost myself, couldn't make a decision. He destroyed me." She felt she had been doing all right and taking care of herself before she was married but now she felt like "a zero." She said that is what her husband had called her, "a frigid and rigid zero." She added that her mother had also called her rigid and said, "I guess I am rigid in some ways, but I tried." However, according to her, although there were problems in the marriage she would have continued to try and felt it would have

worked out if he had not had the affair. "My worst fears were realized," she said. "I warned him and he didn't care. He wouldn't fire her."

Phase I

Although the actual separation had taken place only two weeks before the first interview, Miriam had filed for divorce approximately sixteen weeks earlier. Therefore, the first phase will be considered to be from the time they separated physically from each other, although remaining in the same house. Apparently, even though he lived in the house, he was only there sporadically and he continued his relationship with his girlfriend. And, despite the fact that she filed for divorce, Miriam continued to be obsessed with her guilt over not being "what he wanted" and with his affair. She said that, during the marriage, she had been aware that her husband had other brief sexual encounters but that she felt threatened by his present relationship because he seemed more committed to it. According to her, "I was obsessed with his affair. I kept asking, 'Why? How could he?' I needed to know all about it to make it real. I couldn't believe he could be with her and me."

The first two or three weeks of separation were marked by a great deal of denial on Miriam's part. At first, she tried to deny the existence of the affair, then she needed to deny its significance which she did by discrediting the woman and her husband's sexual attitudes. When she could no longer deny she went through a period--about a month after they decided to separate--when she blamed herself and dwelt on

her failures in the marriage. She said she was extremely upset at this time, played tennis four or five times a week, and kept busy in order not to have to think. She felt that everyone blamed her for the difficulties--her parents and his family. She said she felt embarrassed and that she isolated herself. Then she went to see a psychiatrist "to try to resolve the difficulties" and, according to her, her husband agreed to go with her. Miriam said the phychiatrist told her to get a divorce and she filed "immediately."

At this time, Miriam said, she felt like "a nothing" and she had fantasies about cutting off her husband's penis. She was concerned about how her parents, especially her mother, would react to the divorce. "My mother depended on my father," she explained. "She thinks a woman needs a husband. She's not strong, has had two breakdowns. Sometimes, through this, I wondered if I would break down." She described her husband as having "rescued" her, offering marriage, security, children. "I knew I wouldn't have to work any more," she said. "Mother thought it was ideal. It was important that I better myself in marriage."

It appeared that Miriam had hoped to repair a rather poor self-image through her marriage. Thus, the failure to live up to her husband's expectations--and the feeling that she had been replaced--resulted in reactions of outrage, self-devaluation, shame, and humiliation. The injuries to her self-esteem which, on a deeper level, could be interpreted as symbolic of castration or exposure of the castrated genitalia, reflected back on the original injury which she associated with, and blamed on, her mother. She seemed to be making a

concentrated effort to repair the damage to her self-esteem through her alternating attacks on her husband and the marriage, by her attempts to repair it, and by a compensatory investment in her face and body--she said she was dressing "more sexy."

Miriam recounted two significant incidents in the marriage which she described as "real turning points." First, her husband's lack of interest in his son. "He didn't pay any attention to the baby," she said. "I thought he wanted it. Mother and Father noticed it." Even more significant was the fact that, after the baby's birth, her husband had a vasectomy, without telling her ahead of time. "I cried and my mother cried," she said. "I felt cheated that he could do that, never give me a chance." She interpreted these actions as indicators that she could not trust him and that he did not care about her. She said she had accepted everything he said or wanted up to this point in the marriage, but she could not accept everything any more. She felt his demands were excessive. As an example, Miriam said that, after the baby was born, she felt "nonsexual." "I've read that's true of lots of women," she went on, "But my husband felt there was something wrong with me--that I was a big zero."

Towards the end of the first phase, Miriam's efforts were directed toward getting her husband back. This changed when her parents came out to California to be with her and give her their support. "They stopped blaming me and started blaming him," she said. That was when he physically moved out of the house and Miriam decided she would obtain the Court's permission to return to the state where she had lived before: "to be with my parents and friends and in my old job

again." It would seem that the "adequate mirroring" of her parents, especially her mother, gave her the impetus to disengage herself from the marriage and her husband.

Phase II

Miriam's interviews took place about two to three weeks after she started focusing her energies on getting things in order in preparation for her departure. She immediately got a Court date to settle the necessary custody issues. As she recounted her experience in Court, she focused on her fear of her husband's power. She felt she had not handled the situation well and her husband "had charmed the mediator into complete agreement with him." She said she felt his power is real because "he does whatever he wants and gets away with it, because he is good-looking and a doctor."

According to Miriam, she now thinks that during the first couple of months of the separation she was "hysterical." "I used to think I would end up in a psycho ward," she said. "It was hard, but work and tennis helped. I appeared strong on the outside but... Then, when mother came for a two-week visit, it helped. We did things together. It felt safer. I could talk to her but I also had to appear strong so she wouldn't fall apart." Miriam said she felt that she is acting in a rational, appropriate manner now. "It isn't that I feel powerless at this point," she said, "but I fear his power. I fear what he could do." However, this has not deterred her from proceeding with her plans to leave. She received support in these efforts from her parents, her psychiatrist, her attorney, and an ex-boyfriend.

At the second interview, Miriam told of an incident that had occurred the night before. She had had an emergency with her housekeeper and felt she had handled it adequately by herself after her husband refused to help. She was obviously pleased that she had been able to take care of it and seemed to have gained some inner feeling that she could handle this incident without her mother's or husband's help. "It was hard, but I managed."

In reference to her present efforts to resolve legal matters and leave California, she said, "He's surprised that I'm going through with it, surprised I haven't fallen apart. He doesn't want the divorce but won't fight it." This knowledge that she can act against his wishes, in spite of her fear of his power, also seems to give her some inner strength. In some ways, Miriam showed that she has gained some insight into her conflicts. She indicated that she had depended on an ex-boyfriend's support during the previous few months, but said, "Now that I'm free, I'm pulling away from him. I'm scared, afraid he wants to take care of me." She explained that she was "afraid of him sexually" and that she felt she could have "flings" now but still feared that she would fail in a long-term relationship. "I'm vulnerable right now, she said. "Could go into a relationship because I'm afraid to face things alone. I'd cling, let him do it--I don't have myself to lose."

Miriam described the change from the first phase to the second as "at first, all I thought about was, 'What is he doing? Who is he with?'--it was all about him. After my mother came, I could try to enjoy myself. I was able to leave and think about getting out of here." She felt she had learned that, "when I'd get anxious, I had to

do something. Now I can say, 'settle down.' Now I try to think about it." To me, this seemed to be tied to her fears of "breaking down" and indicates that she has developed some inner strength. She has more of a feeling of inner control and is in tune with her developing capacity to depend on herself.

Miriam's concluding statement poignantly indicates this. "I'm happy that I proved to myself... that I went through all this hell. My biggest fear was that my husband would be unfaithful to me. He did it to me and I'm still here. I lived through it and I'm still alive and in control. I feel like I don't have to do anything crazy, don't have to hurt him. I think I feel much more in control of myself." These remarks indicate that, although her attempts at reparation failed, she had sufficiently repaired herself over the previous few weeks to be able to return to home base and try again, with some additional developmental strengths that may make her next attempt less painful and more rewarding. A better relationship with her mother is already in progress.

Jean

It appears that through her marriage relationship Jean had achieved a temporary refuge from the struggle for identity. In order to resolve certain narcissistic problems and maintain a degree of self-esteem, she played out a stereotypical role of wife and mother. Although her reliance on stylized visual modes of self-presentation appeared normal and functional for fifteen years, it became apparent that the foundation of the relationship with her husband was weakened

by the lack of intimacy and autonomy that was underneath the pseudo-together union.

Background

Jean, a bright, attractive thirty-three-year old woman, had been married for fifteen years and has two children, a son of eleven and a daughter of eight. At the time of the first interview they had been separated for twenty-three weeks. Jean described her marriage as "ideal," saying that she and her husband never argued and "I was happy--at least, I thought I was. Then, one night, he just turned off the TV and said, 'I'm leaving. I don't love you.' He packed his things and was gone in twenty minutes. I was devastated." She characterized him as a good father and husband, saying: "We did everything together. We talked about everything. I couldn't believe he was gone."

Jean and her thirty-five-year old husband, Bill, had grown up together. Her mother was his godmother and as children they had played in the crib together. "We grew up together," she said, "went to the same college and started dating. We got married two years later." Bill's parents were divorced when he was eleven years old and his father had left for Europe immediately. Just recently, Bill had begun to see his father on a regular basis after years of estrangement. Jean seemed to resent the relationship between father and son and believed it contributed to the breakup of her marriage.

Phase I

Jean described herself as being "in shock" for the first month of the separation. She called her father back East and, between her mother who lives a couple of blocks away from Jean, and her father who flew out immediately, "everything was taken care of." "I was devastated," Jean said. "I couldn't function. My Dad would insist I get up and go to the store with him--I would forget what I went for. I was helpless, lay in bed, cried, wrote letters to Bill, called him at least once a day, begging him to come back. He never called. He wouldn't say my name. It was like I didn't exist, like he didn't want me to. I just wanted to sleep, not think. I loved him, my childhood sweetheart; we didn't need anyone else."

When asked about her parents, Jean said they had been divorced the year before her separation. She described their marriage and her childhood as "happy." She said that the family was close and that she and her sister had a close relationship.

In the beginning, according to Jean, she felt that the separation wasn't really happening, that it was some kind of joke. "I couldn't make myself believe it," she said. "You know, I didn't even know for a whole year that he was with someone else. None of it made any sense to me at all." She said it was like her parents, that she hadn't been able to believe it when they separated. "I was never close to Dad," she continued, "but when he came here to help me I found he wasn't so remote. We got closer and so did my parents. They started dating each other ... maybe they'll get back together." She described her relationship with her mother as always close and said now they are "best

friends" and share their dating experiences. It was her mother who took Jean to a singles lecture on "Letting go" at the end of the first month of the separation. "Mother literally took me there," Jean said. "She practically dressed me. I was totally preoccupied with getting Bill back and she insisted I had to start getting out." Jean told of meeting a man at the group that evening and said she felt encouraged after meeting other people who were going through the same things. "I slowly began to take an interest in being a mother again," she went on, "and went shopping with my mother. I had lost about fifteen pounds and I was amazed--I really looked good. That man called me every week and, finally, after about three weeks I went out with him. I found it was good to talk to him. I told him the truth, 'My husband left me.' Mother says I don't have to tell people that, but I feel that I do."

Jean described her role in the marriage as "little Susie Homemaker," saying, "I became a great cook, terrific housekeeper, decorator, companion. I even took a six-month secretarial course so I could help him in his business." In fact, she had a college degree and a teaching credential and she said her husband described her as "a full-time student with no ambition." "But he really liked it," she added, "that I was always there for him."

According to Jean, after the first month of the separation she began to question why, not because she wanted to understand herself or the relationship better, but because she felt that if she knew what was missing she could supply it and her husband would return. I found it interesting that she did not dwell on his affair or the other woman, but dismissed it as an indication of her husband's "40's syndrome."

She said she looked for answers in books and by discussing her situation with her dates. She had joined several singles groups: "to meet people who had a similar experience, so I could find out what had gone wrong."

Jean was open about her need to be in control of situations and her frustration over not being able to control her husband at this time. It was clear that all of her efforts were directed towards bringing her world back together. She seemed to need to recreate her illusion in order to regain a sense of herself, not as separate or different, but as a reconstruction of what had existed. She could no longer deny reality but she felt that, with determination and purpose, she could rebuild her life just as it had been--safe, comfortable, consistent, and unconflicted.

It was clear that Jean was getting a great deal of narcissistic gratification, as well as information, from her dating. She said, "I was shocked to discover that men liked me. I found them everywhere. I had never dated before--I was a virgin when I got married, totally inexperienced." It appears that this was a turning point for Jean. The discoveries about her attractiveness and her social contacts turned the focus towards a concentrated effort to evaluate her husband's "complete and total change." Her level of self-esteem appeared to have increased to the point where she could think in terms of differences and no longer needed to idealize her husband. Her reevaluation resulted in her appraising her husband's situation as a "repetition of his early experience as a child" and his wish to reunite with his father as a need "to undo the damage that had happened to him as a

child." Jean felt that this explained how he could change from a responsible, reliable, caring husband and father to a "total flake--uncaring, irresponsible, and undependable." This fortified Jean's image of herself as a good wife and mother. "I was a good wife and mother," she insisted. "I have all the responsibility now. I can get angry at him for being so cold, uncaring, and callous--he has made a 180-degree change." Although Jean's evaluation of the situation showed some insight, it was a continuation of her avoidance of dealing with herself. It seems that once she had found "a reason" outside herself she could relax and begin to take pleasure in dating, in going to the beach with her children, and in managing the house and children. "I began to feel or sense that I have always been capable," she said, "and that I just don't want to be Susie Homemaker, but I want a career." It seems to me that, in her devaluation of her husband, Jean reevaluated her own role and she began to feel more confident as the focus changed from reunion to self-discovery.

Phase II

About the fifteenth week of the separation Jean had a sexual encounter with a man she was dating. Reflecting on the experience, she said, "It wasn't great sex, but it was important because it was what I wanted to do, perhaps out of curiosity. I wondered what it would be like with someone other than Bill." She said that she felt all right about it and didn't feel guilty. "I'm not sure that it means I'm not still old-fashioned in my ideas," she continued. "I still don't want to sleep with everyone, but it was nice, tender. Can you imagine?

God, have I changed!"

This incident seemed to have a special significance for Jean, a kind of symbolic "breaking of the bond" with Bill. Following this, her sleep pattern improved. She had been struggling with insomnia since the separation. Perhaps her ability to sleep now was a sign that she was no longer waiting for Bill to come home or it may have indicated that her anxiety about being alone was reduced. About this time she began to pay more attention to her appearance. She bought some "sexier" clothes and began to enjoy her new image. "I am slim," she said, "and more attractive than I have ever been in my entire life."

Jean said she was spending a great deal of time with her mother, shopping and talking and being mutually supportive. She told me that, since she was a better cook than her mother, she would cater dinners for her--to impress her mother's dates--and her mother would reciprocate by baby-sitting for her. Jean discontinued her frantic dating--she had been going out on dates about five nights a week--and became more selective about how and with whom she spent her time.

In the twenty-third week of the separation, at the time of the second interview, she said she was actively exploring career and job options. Although she had realized she would have to work, up until this time, she had depended on Bill and her father, who gave her a monthly allowance, to support her. Jean reflected, "I'm still looking for happiness. Part of it is being with a man, communicating and sharing with a man. I've spent hours talking to some of my dates," she said, "about marriage, problems of being single, personal experiences--it's amazing the things we talk about. I think I have read every book

published on women, men, and divorce. At first, it was to find out how I could get him back. I still remember the night he told me, like yesterday. Yet I have changed so much; I have gone through so much."

Jean said that "going places alone" and dealing with her husband about financial and parenting issues were the most difficult areas for her at this time and the only ones where she had to depend on Bill.

Around the fifth week of the separation she had contacted an attorney to get a date in Reconciliation Court. The Court date came up about the 20th week. Jean said she debated whether to go or not because she felt certain neither of them wanted reconciliation. But she went because she felt the Court would force her husband to assume financial and parenting responsibilities. "I thought they would support me in making Bill spend more time with the children," she explained, "and in being consistent in financial support. But it was the worst experience I've ever had, the woman treated me awful, she sided with Bill. I got so mad I walked out. Bill was shocked. Other than that, it accomplished nothing."

Jean expressed her fear that her husband "could just walk away again" and that she would be left with all the responsibilities. She said she felt helpless in influencing him and that, in the marriage, she had control in many areas but felt now that, if she couldn't control him in some way he would not assume his responsibilities as a father. She admitted that she avoided confronting him directly because of her fears that "he will become angry and flee," but she denied that there was any element of not letting go in her need to control. She also indicated that she resented the fact that, when he disappointed

the children, she had to live with the repercussions of his behavior. She felt he was free of her influence but, because of the children, she was stuck with his presence or lack of it.

During the interviews, control was a recurring theme--control not only of Bill, but of the children and her dates also. She expressed concern about being a single parent, especially when the children reached adolescence. "Now I can monitor them," she said, "but what about later when they become teenagers?" and "I frequently meet my dates away from the house because then I feel in control; I can come and go when I want." During both of the interviews Jean would frequently ask, "Am I being helpful?" or say, "If I talk too much, stop me" and make other remarks related to control. She also tried to direct the interview by asking my opinion, by attempting to get into discussions about books we both had read, or by asking how the other women had responded to the questions.

Although Jean's developing sense of self appears to have been prompted by the separation, her progress from the first to the sixth month was greatly facilitated by the regression, by her parents' acceptance of the regression, and by their empathetic modes of supporting her over the entire twenty-three weeks. Her experience has been both painful and exciting and this is clear from the way she summarized it in the last interview: "At first, it felt like I didn't exist because he didn't want me to. I asked myself, 'Why? Why does he block me out of his mind?' I decided it was him; he's mixed up. Now I think divorced people are mixed up--who leaves whom and why? That's the question and it isn't easy to answer. It is a major crisis--maybe

worse than death. I have to question myself. Sometimes I'm loaded with self-doubt, concerned about a second marriage and a second divorce. I hope in my own way, to find a way to be my own person."

Carol

Carol grew up in a Catholic home where the traditional view of marriage and the woman's role as "wife and mother" was stressed. From a very early age Carol, the second of six children, mothered her younger brothers and sisters. She described herself as capable, the decision-maker in the marriage, and "the stronger and more intelligent of the two." She indicated that she played the role of wife and mother in an efficient, self-directed manner, with little sharing or communication with her husband. She carried these responsibilities, as well as her job responsbilities, while denying many of her own feelings and needs, as well as any problems that existed in the marriage.

She seemed to be guided by a strong sense of responsibility, of right and wrong, and "shoulds" and "have-to's" that left little room for the expression of her dependency needs. At the time of the separation from her husband Carol felt she was well-prepared and, in fact, had two weeks of feeling relieved and happy. Then she experienced a depression that exposed her to the stifled emotions and to all the unpleasant and undesirable feelings she had thus far escaped through denial, repression, and, perhaps, some projection.

Background

Carol, an attractive, stylishly-dressed, thirty-eight-year old woman, presents herself in a relaxed, confident manner. She works as a secretary in a counseling firm. Her husband, Jim, is a blue-collar worker. They have been married for thirteen years and have two daughters, aged eleven and seven. At the time of the first interview Carol and Jim had been separated for about twenty weeks. However, since they were living within a couple of blocks of each other, there was frequent contact, mostly centered around the children.

Carol said she was "on the rebound" when she met her husband who was in the service at the time. They "dated" for several years but the relationship was maintained through letters and phone calls and they saw each other infrequently. They became engaged when he was ordered overseas and were married two months later. At Carol's insistence, the marriage took place in a Catholic church, although her husband had always been anti-Catholic. The demands made on him by her religion reinforced his anti-Catholic feelings which persisted throughout the marriage. She eventually stopped practicing her religion but the children continued to attend Catholic schools. Carol said these religious conflicts were never discussed: she would make the decisions and he would go along.

Carol's pattern of denying the existence of problems in the marriage became obvious as she recounted two incidents. She said she was "shocked" when she discovered, in the eighth year of their marriage, that her husband was an alcoholic. "I knew he drank," she explained, "but never thought it was serious. I ignored it or excused it." He

has been a recovered alcoholic for four years. According to Carol, he excluded her from the problem and she was relieved that he did. "I was glad he considered it a private problem," she said. "I was embarassed to admit there was a problem in my house."

She said that, during his recovery, her husband met a woman who "would listen to him." According to Carol, she had suspected there was someone else but had ignored it for some time. "I felt it wasn't serious," she said, "just someone who made him laugh." Finally, she asked him about it and, at her insistence, he ended the relationship. She stated she was "immobilized" when she learned he was unfaithful to her. "I was concerned with what people, my parents would think," she admitted. She said he had made some mention of a divorce but it was never really discussed. She felt the reason they did not separate at that time was because of their strained financial circumstances. "We went on that way for three years," she told me. "I was too afraid to bring it up. I think now he would have said, 'I want out,' and I would have said, 'I don't know what's wrong'--'I'm a real denier."

While nothing was ever discussed between Carol and her husband, she said she sought the help of two different therapists at that time. She tried to discuss her problems with them and hoped they would tell her "how to get it together, make the marriage work." But she felt that they did not give her any answers or hope and she discontinued the therapy after a couple of visits. Meanwhile, her husband withdrew more and more until, finally, he told her he was preparing to leave, saying that all he needed to work out was leaving his seven-year-old daughter. "They were very close," Carol said. "I worried about it sometimes."

According to Carol, she was ready to accept the divorce then and they started to make preparations. First, they decided to wait until after the holidays. Then they carefully planned for the separation--when to tell the children, family, friends and placing the house up for sale. "It was like we had a mutual goal," she said, "divorce, and we maintained the facade and went about it as planned. Everything worked out well, the house was sold and there were no fights, arguments, or even hurt feelings." The children were told that "nothing had really changed, just two houses. Jim got an apartment a couple of blocks away. It was rather fun for the children; nothing really changed." According to Carol, during the first two weeks of the separation she was busy decorating the house she had rented. She and her husband helped each other move into their separate residences, went shopping for furniture together, and cooperatively took care of the details of the physical separation. But they did not discuss their feelings about the decision to divorce.

Phase I

Carol said that, during the third week of the separation, "all of a sudden it hit me. I was obsessed about failure, low self-esteem. If he didn't want me, I thought, 'who would?'" She felt her husband was having an easy time--dating and having fun--and she was being responsible. She said she resented his freedom and seeming ability to take care of himself. She indicated that she began to "panic" over the fear that he would not assume financial responsibility for the children. "I went to a divorce seminar and gave him a figure I would need for the

kids," she said. "He agreed, but then the payments didn't come. I should have protected myself but I didn't want to bring up anger. It was a symbol of the marriage: he not responsible and me covering." "I wanted to kill him," she went on. "I had such low self-esteem I couldn't function. Get up every morning and go to bed at night sick to my stomach. One good thing, I lost about twenty-five pounds, throwing up."

Carol stated that her wish to "get back together" kept her from expressing anger, dissatisfaction, or any other unpleasant feelings. He continued to call her and see her, usually about arrangements for the children. "I knew everything about him," she said, "who he was with, where he was going. He wanted to be 'honest.' I didn't want to know, just wanted to be left alone for a while. Yet, I always responded to his calls and requests."

She felt she was a failure in her parents' eyes. Although her father and mother did not directly discuss the divorce with her, she sensed that they were hurt, disappointed, and did not approve. "Dad didn't say anything and helped by fixing things around the house," she said. "Mother prayed." Carol said she did not share her hurt, anger, and disappointment with her family except for "one talk with my older sister. I feel closest to her. She is married and they work on it. I felt the difference, but she was understanding."

Carol described how she dwelled on her husband for the first four months of separation. "I wanted to call him, to drive past his apartment, but I tried to control it," she said. "I said to myself, 'You're above that.'" She bought a book about "Letting go" and said it was

helpful "but not enough." She described her ambivalent feelings--her need to let go and her wish to get back together. "I would read the book and think, 'That fits.' Then I wouldn't pick it up again for days. I was feeling rejected; he was having fun. It angered me--the bright new person he was. It wasn't the real person, I knew that, but yet I felt everyone would blame me, think I was wrong. I wanted to be with him ... everything would be all right." She said she continued to feel depressed and became concerned because it was affecting her work. She thought about going to see a therapist.

At this time, about the end of the third month, Carol and her husband had a sexual encounter which she said she enjoyed although it frightened her. According to her, "Jim asked me if I wanted sex. I didn't want to but I wanted to be with him--it was a symbol of reunity. Afterwords, it was difficult emotionally. I couldn't handle it." The next time, she said, she walked into his apartment and, when she saw her wall-hangings and other possessions, she "realized he had other people there." "I had visions of other people looking at me," she continued, "and I couldn't handle it. I got sick to my stomach and went home." She said that when she got home she wrote him a letter explaining she couldn't deal with the situation: "I realized I was in trouble. I needed help." At this point, she went to a therapist. "It helped just talking about things," she said. "But I didn't feel I deserved understanding."

She began to explore her feelings about the marriage and the separation. With the help of the therapist she became aware of her anger, envy, self-blame, and tendency to deny. She said she also

realized there were basic differences between her husband and herself and questioned whether "we should be together." "We never had a marriage," she explained, "never had sharing and closeness." Somewhere between the twelfth and sixteenth weeks she said she began to feel there was no hope for a reconciliation and that she could accept it. "But I felt rejected. I realized I had felt a kind of ownership, jealousy about him, sharing him with other people. I suddenly felt, 'I don't want that person, serious problems weren't worked out; he won't change. There must be someone out there that I can share with, even share the hurt and pain.'" At this time Carol's therapist told her she needed to "get back into the life stream." Carol said it was hard: "I felt unattractive and fearful of rejection, but I started concentrating on changing me. The therapy was really helpful."

Phase II

The beginning of the second phase was marked by a change in Carol. "I felt I wanted to get on with my life," she said. She had grown up in this area and, at that time, she started to contact old school friends. She also planned a trip to Hawaii and river raft and water-skiing trips with her children. Although she was fearful of doing things as a single person, she found she enjoyed the freedom of doing what she wanted. She said she extended herself and made contacts at work with other single people and that she found them "open, willing to talk about their feelings." She found that it helped to know other people had gone through the same thing. She also began to get a different view of relationships with men. "I talked with one man who

enjoyed rug-hooking," she told me. "It was a reverse situation. His wife didn't appreciate his rugs, but he didn't stop like I did. When my husband didn't appreciate whatever I did, I would stop."

This made her see men in a different light. She realized they could do "feminine" things and enjoy them. At this time, Carol also began to get in touch with her angry feelings because her husband had never shared things like that with her. She said she resented the fact that he had never expressed any gratitude for her efforts to decorate the house and fix up the yard. "This may be ridiculous," she said, "but I feel he benefited financially when we sold the house and I think he's angry that I expect gratitude or appreciation." She also became aware of her anger "about the unfairness" in his taking for granted that she would handle things. "Everything was left for me," she explained. "School problems, dentist and doctor appointments, everything. It was a continuation of the marriage. I realized that I was always looking for gratitude because I was dependable. Maybe I assume responsibility for that reason. I know I'm apologetic when I ask for help. I have never learned to ask."

I felt that, at this point, Carol was beginning to take responsibility for herself and that she was feeling less of a victim and was slowly coming to realize that she could be an active force in directing her own life. Although she continued to have difficulty in confronting her husband or asking for his help with the children, she was focusing on the problem as hers and she recognized it as her inability to express her needs or wants. As she talked about her family she recalled her feeling that her mother "never should have had children." "She

turned the babies over to me," Carol said, "and I took care of them. It was fun to dress them up--I liked it, having the babies to take care of." It would appear that Carol's denial of dependency needs started very early in her life and she substituted nurturing for the wish to be nurtured. I wondered how Carol as "the little mother" viewed herself in relationship to her parents. She gave no clues to any Oedipal conflicts apart from her denial of any special relationship with either parent. According to her, the family was not close; the parents taught responsibility and, if she failed, she felt guilty. It seems there was no communication about feelings within the family, "just directions or rules about responsibility." Since Carol felt closest to her oldest sister, I assume she got her early mothering from her. At least, she expressed a feeling that her sister was capable of understanding and empathy at the time of her separation--a connection that is not felt with the other family members.

Although Carol continued to see her husband, her contacts with him were not influenced by the wish to reunite. She began to express dissatisfaction at his intrusions into her life, such as phone calls at work and his storing his camper and boat on her property. "At least he knows how I feel," she said. "That I'm a separate person." When he mentioned to her an interest in getting back together she was able to tell him that she felt it was for the wrong reasons. "I felt it was out of guilt over the children," she said. "I told him the relationship between us was lacking in sharing and being able to talk. I said I wanted to discuss things now so that I would understand what had gone wrong and not make the same mistakes again. I told him I felt there

were basic differences that indicated that we shouldn't be married to each other." Carol indicated that she could never go back to him, that she had a new awareness of what a relationship could be like, and that she wanted to remarry in the future but only after she had had time to work on her inability to communicate her anger and to express herself "without always needing approval."

"I feel a calmness now, not a depression," she summed up. "Things are going well. I'm going out now; that's part of the difference, but not all of it. I know I have some things to work out. Religion is a problem--I know I want some kind of religion but I don't know what. Out of six kids, only one attends church. There's something to be said there. We are all questioning it. I know it bothers my folks." And she repeated, "Dad doesn't say anything and she (mother) prays." "I'm not happy about some of the man-made rules," she continued. "I question all of it. That's something I will have to deal with."

I was impressed by Carol's openness about this in the interview. To me, religion is so tied in with the development in a Catholic home that I feel her questioning is a strong indication of her thrust towards continuing individuation. That, along with her ability to express her thoughts and feelings to her husband and her assessment of her wants and needs are all indicative of continuing self-dependence.

Summary of Findings

1. Psychological complexities perceived in the adult cannot be adequately explained by a straightforward extrapolation from child development. Due to the cumulative layers of personality organization

the women's moods, object relations, drive development and cognitive functions did not fit into Mahler's four categories.

2. Analysis of the data indicated that during the first 24 weeks of separation there are two distinct phases. Phase one, the first 12 to 16 weeks, is characterized by the wish to re-unite. Phase two immediately follows phase one and is characterized by a period of renewed individuation.

3. The significance of phase specificity indicates that the women consciously, preconsciously and unconsciously prompted and perpetuated situations based on developmental issues and the level of cognitive maturity that predominated at the time.

4. The separation from the husband permitted a sensitive and dramatic reworking of the separation conflict, especially the individuation process.

5. The separation provided the opportunity to seek a healthier resolution of Oedipal issues.

6. All of the women in the study ranked financial matters as their primary concern.

7. Each of the women in the study expressed fear of her husband's "power," and feelings of helplessness in her relationship to him.

8. All of the women felt that the first phase of the separation was easier for their husbands.

9. Eight of the nine interview questions elicited phase specific material. The question relating to tolerance of disruption (#7) was not phase specific.

The major limitations of this study are inherent in the choice of

studying a very small sample of women, and the sample was volunteer rather than random or selected. The findings of the study, therefore, can be seen as suggestive, providing possible directions for further clinical and empirical investigations.

Although this exploratory study does not offer any clear-cut answers or certain guides for making clinical interpretations, it does provide the impetus to evaluate theoretical constructions in terms of their applicability to clinical practice. It also emphasizes the importance of viewing the client as a totality, a unique person with a past, present, and a future, who is intentionally and directedly working on particular issues that are in the self-experience at a given time. In a period of crisis, the first need is to recreate a feeling of self-cohesiveness and self-constancy and, then, to utilize the self to regain the lost gratifications, through the pursuit of more satisfactory sources of satisfaction and pleasure.

This study led to the appreciation and awareness that the maintenance of external supplies for refueling and self-sustaining narcissism is an essential factor in both the physical and emotional spheres. We look to others for many reasons but they are essential in the development of the self, to facilitate self-discovery and self-learning. The extent to which each of the women could look at her feelings, be aware of and sensitive to her inner experience, live with her feelings, and grow in the process was directly related to early developmental issues as modified by the constant reworking as each new experience offered new opportunities for further growth.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In adapting Mahler's theory of infant development to the adult experience of separation it was thought that it would be valuable to isolate the impairments and progressions in ego functions, mood fluctuations, alterations in libidinal and aggressive drive development, and changes in cognitive functions. It was assumed that growth, as well as regressions, would occur, which could lead to the enrichment of the self and the expansion of the capacities for coping and that these new levels of functioning would be indicative of a new level of individuation.

However, the analysis of the data contradicts the premise that adult functioning can be understood in terms of theoretical constructs, such as ego capacities and drive development. In infancy, behaviors are discrete enough to be isolated but, in the adult, the boundaries are obscured by the application and reapplication, and the integration and reintegration, of experience. An understanding of the adult experience of separation is facilitated by conceptualizing the totality of the individual experience. Although any particular self-experience may momentarily be focused on by the woman, it is always within the context of her total life process from birth to the present. Thus, due to the complexities of the adult's object relations, the adult manifestation of an oral orientation is a more difficult phenomenon to unravel than the infant's. To a pre-verbal infant,

emptiness is experienced as a somatic sensation of hunger. To an adult, emptiness may be consciously felt as a lack of enthusiasm and a lack of commitment to goals or relationships. Unconsciously, it might stem from feelings of deprivation, castration, excessive projection of one's feelings to another, extreme repression, and feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Each new encounter with separation alters the existing experience or its internal representation.

In order to maintain a concern with the woman's psychical reality and unconscious fantasizing, it must be remembered that what is perceived on the outside as identical behaviors may mean quite different things to different women at different times. Individual meanings are related to personal histories and these are dependent upon the way the child experiences the individual personalities and behaviors of the child's caretakers; they are socially patterned according to the family structure and to prevalent social attitudes and are organized around and by the innate capacities of the individual. People, or what they think and feel, are influenced by the outside but this influence is modified by or perceived through introjections, projections, associations, distortions, fantasies, and the individual's other intrapsychic defenses and functions. By the time we are adults, the meanings of behavior are individualized, organized, synthesized, and integrated.

Furthermore, due to their psychological and cognitive development, adults have the capacity to reactivate their organizational potential and to reconstitute self-concepts and, although the previously developed and established capacity for self-and-object

constancy may have an unstable quality at the time of stress, instability is different from the absence of a mental state. The adult, even under stress, is able to call on the experienced knowledge of the constancy of the self and others under different circumstances--a knowledge that is not available to the infant prior to the establishment of object-and-self constancy.

Unconsciously, the inner worlds developed during childhood affect the external experience of the adult and give it meaning. They affect the kinds of situations in which people place themselves, as well as the feelings and behaviors that are situationally manifested. Adults recreate aspects of their early relationships, especially if there are areas that are unresolved or repressed. Each of us is in search of the good symbiotic mother--the symbol of the perfect dual-unity stage of infancy when "oneness" with the mother was blissful and engulfing. The wish we all have--to recreate, but without engulfment, that unique memory of intimacy--is the universal, unconscious yearning for oneness and separateness. Balancing unity and autonomy, not achieving independence, is the essence of the life struggle within and between ourselves. In the life cycle, there are inherent difficulties in the progression towards autonomy, in the capacity to bear aloneness, and in the struggle to be a unique self. Each of the women in the study, whether her separation was chosen or imposed, was involved in this struggle. Their stories have some similarities but there are also significant individual differences. Each of them was involved in a personal crisis, with the attendant collapse of certain defensive and adaptive patterns. Her progress depended on the maintenance of a

degree of personal equilibrium as she moved between periods of regression and progression. Some of the women may seem to have been preoccupied with individuation, and others with affiliation in their marriage, but each of them indicated an awareness of the desire to discover new modes of relating to the self and others.

Discussion of Individual Cases

1. Sally's difficulty in negotiating the separation from her husband appears to reflect a problem in the incomplete separation-individuation from her mother. Several developmental conflicts are manifested in her marriage. It appears the marriage was a threat to a precariously established differentiation of self from a maternal identification. Her role in the marital family meant a renewed identification with her mother which created the problem not of leaving mother but of being mother. This represented a threat to Sally's negative self-identification which was based on "I'm nothing like you (mother)." Sally protected herself from the constellation of threatening identifications linked with mother by avoiding intimacy and the performance of the traditional female role.

Lebe (1982) defines women's individuation as the completion of the separation-individuation process culminating in the ability to positively identify with their mothers and accept their femininity, thereby resolving the Oedipus complex. Lebe also claims that women only partially separate from mother by idealizing their fathers and other men. They remain dependent on a man's strength, support, achievement, and power in a way that inhibits their own sources of

assertiveness and creative expression. Sally's tendency to idealize her father, husband, and son and the negative identification with her mother indicate a partial failure in the separation-individuation process.

In Sally's perception of her mother's giving her to her father and her mother's anger that he accepted her there is an obvious reference to a threatening Oedipal situation. As part of the attempted resolution of the Oedipal complex, gender definition typically involves a struggle against the identification with the parent of the opposite sex. Schafer (1983) maintains that, when a girl struggles against a same sex identification as well, she is engaged in an attempt to invent herself entirely which results in self-deception and personal disharmony.

Friedman (1980) states that the loving bond between a mother and daughter is essential for adult female development. The mother must facilitate the process of separation through encouragement. "As we listen to women, daughters all, however diverse their problems, their struggles to be independent and successful in their roles as women ultimately become focused around their relationship with mother" (p. 92). Friedman links fear of success to difficulties in separation-individuation. It is her belief that women who manifest classical Oedipal wishes and guilt begin to reflect a feeling that selfhood is a disloyal act.

In looking at Sally's situation from a developmental point of view there appears to be a reworking of the relationship with her mother. Sally seems to reaffirm a familiar dilemma: how to find a

consistent and supportive mother figure, one who will support her developmental thrust and yet be there at times of need or when contact is essential to the daughter. This is how Mahler describes the good rapprochement mother. Sally's marked ambivalence would indicate she has some rapprochement-like conflicts but with an important developmental difference, that is, her established sense of self and others as differentiated, separate, and different individuals. Pine (1979) refers to the necessity of not confusing pathology of the undifferentiated and differentiated other in clinical practice. The latter allows for interpretation while the former, an earlier developmental failure, indicates a need to reexperience a primary object bond.

It appears that in the first years of this marriage Sally underwent a phase during which she developed herself intellectually and her husband supported and encouraged her in this endeavor. This role seemed to be comfortable for him since he could meet the demands on him without being threatened by intimacy. At the same time, it would appear that, as Sally began to feel confident in her achievements and closer to reaching her intellectual goals, she began to fear that he would remove his support, feel threatened by her independence, and withdraw from her. Her need at this time appeared to be for a "good rapprochement" mother substitute who would be there when she needed him but would not interfere with her developmental pursuits.

Several issues are revealed in Sally's retelling of her separation experience. There are oral overtones in her definition of her eating problem and constant battle to lose twenty or thirty pounds. Her description of David as "a great eating partner" indicates, I

think, a good feeling of closeness with a mother figure, a feeling which she consciously denies and unconsciously desires. Her definition of self as "totally dependent" and her insistence on autonomy indicate a developmental conflict that is clearly expressed in her desire to separate yet remain married.

Sally's problems in her relationship to her mother, husbands, sister, and sons reflect wish taboo conflicts of the Oedipal phase, achievement conflicts of the phallic stage, and the ambivalence that is typical of the rapprochement phase of separation-individuation, as well as issues centering around gratification and control. Although the expressed ambivalence and feelings of not having significant others available to her in the ways she needs them are themes that recur throughout the interviews these are not truly reflective of the rapprochement phase as described by Mahler. The difference lies in the fact that, from the beginning of Sally's relationship with her present husband she was aware of his separateness, she had no "still maintained delusion of parental omnipotence," and there was no expressed panic at the awareness that he was gone--the essence of the infant's experience. The interviews with Sally illustrate a phenomenon that I believe is manifested frequently in therapy, that is, regression in the service of progression which may indicate that, at times of stress, each of us returns to conflicts associated with earlier stress periods and have the opportunity to rework them so that we may better negotiate the present unknown situation.

The progress of Sally's struggle appears to indicate that she is actively engaged in establishing a separate sense of self from mother

as well as from husband. Her struggle is multi-faceted and, although one can observe issues relevant to specific phases of her developmental history, to focus on one phase would be an injustice to her as an evolving, integrated, self-determined individual who is in the process of continuing individuation.

2. The incident when Helen could not reach her husband appeared to trigger her depressive themes: her present and past losses, her destructiveness and helplessness. Her feelings of deprivation and resentment opened the door to the now hated aspects of herself as helpless and incapable. The woman's dual role at the time of separation is highlighted in this experience, a reexperiencing of her role as the separated child and her role as mother of the separated child. Perhaps this was the reason for her fear of hurting her husband which necessitated her making herself available to him whenever he needed her. During the marriage she was unable to ventilate her feelings to her husband. Perhaps this was an expression of her need to protect him and indicates that she was fearful that, under the surface of authority and strength, he had a fragility. Thus, she needed to protect him from her rage and take the misery upon herself.

Horney (1950) describes the dependent woman as being caught between her compulsive efforts to be compliant, lovable, and self-effacing and her healthy needs for growth and self-expression. Helen, who had been an adjunct of her husband for years, was in conflict over her movements towards achievement and independence. Several authors link woman's fear of achievement to the fear of loss of affiliation. Friedman (1980) sees a link between the fear of success and

difficulties in separation-individuation. She claims that some women are afraid that the achievement of the self may be seen as a disloyal act and could result in being isolated and alone because the link with mother is severed. The rapprochement crisis, as described by Mahler, is the fear that the move away from mother means the loss of the supportive, needed relationship. It is noteworthy that, reflecting on the mother-daughter relationship, Smith and Smith (1981) focus on the necessity to revisit the relationship in order to explore one's identity and reexamine one's roles, especially at time of passage. They relate this to a continuing rapprochement process. Bardwick (1979) expresses the view that a woman's fear of success ultimately is the fear of never being close to, and loved by, a man. Hoffman (1974) claims that women fear success because they fear the affiliative loss. Since they are brought up protected and are not encouraged to achieve an identity separate from their mothers', they do not develop confidence in their ability to cope independently and, thus, they retain infantile fears of abandonment. Whether real or imagined, Helen seems to have felt that her efforts to practice new forms of living and being were not supported by her husband. She linked her move toward individuation after her mother's death with her husband's anger and his affair. Whether this was real or Helen's perception of reality, the effect served to reinforce a fear of dependency.

Helen's statement: "He's somehow more powerful" reflects not only her angry envy of the male but also her feelings about herself whom she sees as always being in the subordinate position. The feeling, whether socially or psychologically induced, that being

subordinate is an aspect of having been born female certainly influenced Helen's attitudes and behavior both consciously and unconsciously. Schafer (1983) suggests that attachment to suffering and danger may unconsciously represent a way to remain emotionally tied to the mother of infancy. "Sometimes it is a way to be identified with her as a sick, suffering, castrated creature in her relationship with the powerful phallic father. It may be that the analysand does not want to give up this tie or this identification because, however consciously painful it is, it once was the whole world and the matrix of a developing self. Thus, it served as a guarantee of survival, continuity, or pleasure" (p. 72). Lewis (1978) offers a similar view in his revised exploration of the negative therapeutic reaction. He states that failures in the practicing and rapprochement sub-phases of the separation-individuation process which are prompted by the child's marked ambivalence toward a depressed, non-nurturing mother results in attachment to painful affects, including dread, longing, fear of self-disclosure, ridicule and shame. These painful affects are representative of the object tie to the mother, and the loss of the painful affects is equivalent to losing the mother and a state of helpless dependence.

At times Helen seemed to demand reassurance that she was satisfying rather than needy, nurturing rather than dependent. Yet, at other times she resented being in the role of satisfier or nurturer. Her ambivalence seems to reflect an inner conflict, a fear of being like mother, a disavowal of any identification with her. This struggle against identification can lead to emptiness and depression.

People are object-seeking, searching for relationships with others, not just for gratification of needs but to build an integrated identity. Helen is involved in resolving the conflict within herself. She has been engaged in a very painful process as she swings from one end of the continuum, dependency, to the opposite end, counterdependency. Helen, however, shows an awareness that neither extreme is the solution and indicates that she will continue to seek the balance between aloneness and togetherness.

3. Miriam's report of her separation illustrates many aspects of human development. One is how a reparative attempt will fail when a person chooses a course requiring a level of development that is beyond his or her capacity. Miriam's difficulties may be looked at from several theoretical points of view. She seems to fit into the psychoanalytic description, offered by Deutsch (1944), of the masochistic, passive, and narcissistic woman who suffers from her awareness of the anatomical differences between the sexes. It would appear that Miriam's developmental thrust from the disappointment and loss (castration) to an acceptance of her penis-less body and the wish for a child follows Deutsch's description of "normal psychosexual development." The assumption is that the traumatic discovery of sexual differences leaves the little girl with a feeling that she has an inadequate organ for phallic-phase genital urges. This prompts her to inhibit her active (phallic phase) strivings and turn them on herself which results in passivity and masochistic tendencies. These tendencies are countered in the healthy woman by narcissism. Miriam, however, appears to have reached the phallic phase without adequate

separation from her mother and, therefore, her phallic strivings are not reconciled with her dependent, pre-Oedipal longings. Her striving to resolve the conflict is indicated in many ways: her decision to work as a hairdresser even though she had completed college and had a teaching credential; her attitude towards sex, not actively wanting it, but accepting it as forced upon her; and her excessive submissiveness to her husband in other areas.

A more recent view is that narcissistic pathology is related to the degree of vulnerability of the self-representation and that any mental act has a narcissistic function--the maintenance or restoration of vulnerable aspects of the self-representation. Taking this view, Miriam's penis envy, masochistic tendencies, feelings of shame, outrage, vanity, et al., may be perceived, not as related to genital trauma, but in terms of describing aspects of the vulnerability and development of her self-representation.

The effect of the early mother-daughter relationship on subsequent narcissistic developments has been stressed by many authors, including the "self" psychologists. Miriam's attempt to repair that early mother-daughter relationship through her marriage was clearly illustrated throughout the interviews. It would seem that the failure was inevitable because she was engaged in attempting to make repairs that were developmentally inappropriate to the requirements of an intimate relationship which includes marriage and children. But, from her frame of reference, it could hardly be called a failure since it achieved what she had set out to do: to start to repair the deficits in her early relationship with her mother. It would appear that she

is continuing the process in a more knowledgeable and purposeful way, starting with her return to home base. I feel that, through her experience of mothering, she obtained gratification that strengthened her self-feelings as a capable, caring, and responsible woman.

Miriam's precocious independence from her mother, precipitated by rage at and disappointment in her mother, interfered with her differentiation from mother. This appears to have been an important factor in her choice of a husband--the male she could idealize, powerful and giving, with whom she could share his imagined omnipotence and his achievements. Miriam's disappointment in her attempt to repair the early relationship with her mother through marriage was experienced painfully through a series of events which began early in the marriage when she felt "lusted for" but not loved, then by her narcissistic injury at her husband's rejection of the boy-child she had hoped to share with him, and by his vasectomy. This injury (the vasectomy) was shared with her mother and seemed to represent a turning point in the mother-daughter relationship. That was when Miriam felt her mother stopped idealizing Miriam's husband and began to be more supportive of her, rather than blaming her for the problems of the marriage.

Although, on the surface, Miriam's attempts to repair may appear abortive, she seems to have accomplished certain important changes. Through the birth of her child she appeared to obtain the needed reassurance that she was satisfying, not needy, and nurturing, not dependent. Her relationship with her mother, which she described as "never good," was beginning to improve. She experienced her mother's support and concern for her, not as a dependent person who needed to

be "married," that is, "taken care of at any cost," but as a person who had value in her own right. Miriam's disavowal of any identification with her mother, a struggle based on fear of being like mother--damaged, helpless, and fragile--apparently was being repaired in the beginnings of a new relationship with her mother. Friedman (1980) states that a loving bond between a mother and daughter is essential for adult female development. She describes the bond as being based on a common identity that is different from dependency. The relationship can be mutually gratifying and supportive. Differences do not necessitate the breaking of the bond and the connection with each other.

4. Jean's capacity to see her world the way she wanted to appears to be a combination of denial and repression. Jacobson (1971) states that denial, like repression, may oppose the recognition of the external fact but also the affective impact of the external fact. Freud (1900) refers to the "ostrich policy" in the normal mental life of adults. As both child and adult, Jean appeared to rid herself of any unpleasant perceptions of the outside world, as well as of any and all unpleasant feelings. She seems to have submerged herself in the roles of wife and mother as a defense against getting in touch with her true libidinal and aggressive nature, as well as the true nature of her husband and children. Her failure to recognize differences indicates some unresolved issues concerning the pre-Oedipal mother. In the interviews, this was brought out in her idealization of her mother, father, and husband and in her description of herself as needing to be "super wife and mom."

Waites (1982) states, "Although women may envy male status and authority, it is mixed with relief. Through her marriage relationship, a woman can avoid the competition struggles a man must engage in in order to establish himself. Her stereotype female role offers a temporary refuge from the struggle for identity" (p. 37). Waites further contends that both inhibition of aggression and over-reliance on stylized visual modes of self-presentation are sometimes interpreted as responses to female castration.

Jean's expressed feelings of helplessness, her concerns with issues of control, and her fears of expressing anger would indicate that she may have some unresolved issues about penis envy and castration. While I was listening to Jean, I was reminded of Miller's (1976) comments on conflict. According to Miller, in the typical dominant-subordinate male-female relationship, the nature of the conflict seems to hinge on the degree to which the woman does or does not accept the man's conception of her. If she accepts his outlook, she will not recognize that there is a conflict of interest or needs; she will assume that her needs will be fulfilled if she accepts a position oriented to his primacy and service to his needs. Miller states that, depending on certain circumstances and considerable luck, this assumption works. However, according to Miller, these relationships are full of deception and manipulation as well as of obvious reciprocal condensation. The women, although highly skillful, tend to hide their skills and ambitions; they opt for the "Susie Homemaker" role (p. 14).

Jean appeared to have had the "ideal" marriage. Bill was involved in successfully advancing his career; she was involved in

developing her role as wife and mother, successfully fusing affiliation and achievement awards. They had established mutual goals about when to have children, buy a house, and start a new business and everything was going on schedule. Jean felt she was happy, her husband was content, and the children were doing well. Benedek (1959) states that, in order for a woman to share in a man's "magic omnipotence," she must have total acceptance of the man and his superiority and must have trust that he is willing and able to take care of her. The husband seems to gain gratification from his role for a while but, eventually, reality affects both parties. He cannot accept the burden of being the omnipotent parent and she cannot overlook certain of his failings. Frequently, it is the husband who, out of fear that his mistakes and weaknesses will be exposed, interferes with the course. This seems to be a description of some of the factors that precipitated Jean and Bill's separation, but underneath this explanation lies the normal oscillations between dependency and independence--clinging and searching, that is the basic conflict of human existence. It would seem that Jean and Bill drifted apart in the concerted effort to maintain the perfect illusion of family life. It is not surprising then that, at the time of the separation, Jean went into "shock." The imbalance between her ego ideal and the self-experience was not anticipated or interpsychically prepared for and it would seem that all the underpinnings of her self-concept had collapsed.

Jean's Phase I "helplessness" seemed to be indicative of the need for a mirroring dyadic relationship in order to maintain a narcissistic well-being. In Phase II, the helplessness was partially based on

concerns over real financial and parenting issues, but to some degree there were vestiges of penis envy, penis awe, and castration anxiety. Her husband, like her mother, seems to have functioned as an auxiliary ego in certain areas. This would explain Jean's severe regression in the first month and the importance of the mirroring function of her parents, especially her mother, in activating her organizational potential and reconstituting her self-concept.

Fleming (1975) notes that individuation appears to be accompanied by changes in the ego ideal and a loosening of the superego. Indications of these changes are evident in Jean's expressed ability to question herself and her values in Phase II. Her changing relationship with her mother, her willingness to nurture (a role reversal), and the acceptance of the competition between them without fear of retaliation or rejection, along with the acceptance of her father as available and supportive, indicate a reworking of Oedipal issues. Although Jean experienced a severe regression in the first month of separation, the basis of the regression has to be recognized as different from a developmental arrest in ego capacities and functions per se. She, like the other women in the study, is involved in a reevaluation of the sense of self, or identity. For all of the women, there were periods of over-cathexis of the object world, loss of self-esteem, feelings of depersonalization, depression, and fears of loss of self. There were also periods of over-cathexis of self with the attendant growth of self-esteem, elation, fears of over-stimulation, and loss of control. Jean's highs and lows may appear more extreme than those of the other women in the study but, like all the other

women, she is actively engaged in a period of renewed individuation.

5. Carol's experience at the time of the actual separation from her husband is reminiscent of the premature differentiation from her mother. There is a pseudo-maturity in both instances: in her "little Mother" role as a child and in the two-week period of elation immediately following the separation. It would appear that her positive feelings about herself were built on her ability to function in the roles of good daughter, good wife, and good mother--feelings which started with an early failure in adequate mirroring by her own mother, a mirroring which is essential in the development of self-esteem. In defining herself in terms of role performance, it seems that she was guided by rules which required a performance level that was impossible for her to achieve. This resulted in feelings of failure and guilt, both of which were reinforced by a rather harsh and rigid superego, as indicated by her comment, "We were brought up by directions and rules about responsibility. If I didn't follow the rules, I felt guilty." Indications of this early attitude in the present are manifested in her statement, "I tried to keep my job unaffected. I felt the pressure to be a super-person who could handle anything. When the job was affected I felt I was letting the boss down. He expected the same of me as I did." Her early role of "little mother" must have given her some feelings of specialness, that is, as needed or valued based on her function in the family. As I listened to Carol, I found myself wondering how it would have differed if she had been raised in a family that did not have the sexual repression of her devout Catholic home--an orientation that fostered isolation, detachment, and denial

as sanctioned defenses.

Carol seems to have brought her early-acquired attitudes into the marriage in what would seem to be a counterdependent manner, that is, requiring little help or support from her husband who appeared to respond in a complementary manner. Her depression at the time of the separation is indicative of anxiety over her awareness of separateness, that is, of self-other differentiation. Although her statement about feelings of ownership might be interpreted as indicating a lack of differentiation, this does not seem to be supported by other material. I feel it reflects more a feeling of entitlement. This view is supported by her expressed feeling that she deserves gratitude and appreciation--an indication of awareness of differentiation and a clear "I-thou" conceptualization.

As Carol described her childhood and adolescence and as I reflected on her description of her marriage, I was reminded of a case described by Edward (1981) in the later phase of treatment. Edward depicted her case as borderline and the first and middle phases of treatment were involved with early deficits that are not applicable to Carol. However, the later phase of treatment, which dealt with issues of entitlement, feelings of inadequacy, and the conflict between the wish to be taken care of and the fear that this would confirm her feelings that she was needy and dependent, seemed to apply to Carol. According to Edward, the patient had constructed a false self due to a premature differentiation from her mother which Edward connects with a propensity towards depression and the tendency to remain self-involved rather than in tune with the external situation and others. It seems

to me that Carol's lack of awareness of what was taking place in the marriage was very much involved with maintaining a role expectation which was guided by "How It Should Be." This was engendered by the fact that she had no role model for mothering since, as she remembered it, she had acted as mother from as early as five years of age. She explained her inability to express anger as "I hated all the noise and confusion in the house, all the kids and messiness. I just wanted it quiet, no confusion." I wondered if Carol was not describing her own confusion and internal messiness as a child and her need to deny both her connection to her parents and her aggressive feelings toward them.

Carol's depression also indicates an awareness of the loss of a loved one toward whom she had a great deal of ambivalence which she had been able to deny through most of the marriage. When they decided to separate, her gastro-intestinal symptoms in the morning and at bed-time indicate that she could no longer ward off her feelings through detachment and denial. Her dreams were indicative of her anger that he was enjoying his seeming ease of separation, that he was always with someone and not attending to her.

Mahler describes the depressive affect of the toddler as the result of an aggressive conflict in the rapprochement phase, a conflict created by the lack of understanding and acceptance by the mother which follows the elation of the practicing phase. It is the result of the loss of the narcissistic equilibrium and a response to frustration. The conflict is that the frustration results in feelings of rage and hostile attempts to gain the desired gratification. When gratification cannot be obtained, the self-image is tinged with

failure, resulting in feelings of low self-esteem and helplessness.

Carol's period of depression can be understood in these terms. the effective mirroring of the therapist, who was also consistently available, helped her turn the aggression outward. This resulted in her becoming more active in directing her energies toward getting certain of her needs and desires met. She was able to utilize her aggression to fulfil some self needs rather than to respond to others' needs which resulted in anger, disappointment, and frustration when she was not appreciated.

There are many indications of Carol's increasing individuation, as well as an expressed awareness that she can be fulfilled in a mutually sharing relationship. Her questioning of her religious values and beliefs, which she had so rigidly held to at the time of her marriage, is one of the most striking indications of her progression towards an individuated self.

A Discussion of the Phases

The phases are based on certain clusters of behavioral and emotional responses which were reflected in the woman's mood, object orientation, defenses, and cognitive awareness of the situation. They are not related to phase-specific maturation of mental apparatus, as Mahler's sub-phases are, but are indicative of certain psychological and cognitive processes with a goal-directed orientation.

1. Phase I: The Wish For Reunion

The first phase appeared as a longing for a familiar schema which had served to make sense of earlier life situations; an attempt to guard against an accurate appraisal of reality because of the feared losses. During the initial period of the separation, there were three basic categories of felt loss: 1. The loss of basic supplies, emotional and material. The felt loss of the source of these supplies resulted in the fear of abandonment. 2. The loss of a protective and safe place for exploration. The felt loss of the aim resulted in feelings of being alone, of possible isolation. 3. The loss of the opportunities to exchange and communicate with another. The felt loss of the object resulted in feelings of isolation, rejection and low self-esteem.

As the awareness of these losses surfaced, the accompanying emotional pain seemed to regenerate and mobilize the libidinal forces. This, in turn, prompted longings to regain the lost gratifications. Each of the women seemed to develop a system to help her establish patterns for coping with the infantile dangers that were recreated by the separation. The differentiation of the self from the object was a narcissistic shock that was unconsciously felt by some of the women as self-annihilation, especially by those women who defined themselves in terms of "roles." The immediate needs were to reestablish self-cohesiveness and self-consistency and to master the anxiety generated by the awareness of the real and imagined deprivations. Since the husband was the source of the supplies, the protector, and loved object (past and present)--in other words, the means of gratification--the

goal was to reestablish the relationship with him. This was attempted by "clinging" physically and emotionally, by evasion--a withdrawal by the woman from her affective state through sleep, daydreaming, and depersonalization--or by active mastery, specific directed attempts to reunite.

During this period, there was complete denial of the possibilities of potential substitute gratifications. Eventually, after several abortive attempts at reality testing, there was a gradual renunciation of the wishful fantasies and the libido was directed towards new pursuits (Phase II). In the first phase, four of the women experienced guilt that was openly expressed. For some, it was a defense against helplessness--by assuming accountability they could alleviate the helpless feeling; for others, it resulted from the inability to empathize with the self; and, for still others, it reflected an Oedipal conflict--the inability to compete with mother. The woman who did not experience guilt seemed to fear not living up to mother's expectations, real or internalized, of disappointing her and experiencing her anger and possible withdrawal or punitive recriminations. Eventually, the deprivation and resentment exposed the hated, helpless, incapable aspects of the self and, in reaction to the frustration, feelings of depression ensued--feelings which expressed the intrapsychic conflict between the narcissistic goals and the ego's ability to gratify them. A woman who unconsciously believes herself to be castrated and has a phallic image of herself is bound to find evidence for her inferiority in any failure and to react to it with depression. As the women were able to make a more realistic evaluation of the situation, self-esteem

was restored. At the time of the separation, the possibilities for an imbalance between the ego-ideal and the self-experience which leads to lowered self-esteem are countless. It is not surprising that penis envy and castration anxiety are prominent features of the first phase. However, envy can lead to mourning and awareness of "what I wish I had" can be the means of giving up the lost object and can provide the impetus to get on with one's life--a movement into Phase II.

In sum, Phase I was marked by the continued attachment to the husband which was indicated by denial, disbelief, preoccupation with the husband and his situation, guilt, shame, depression, and anger. The women seemed to follow Bowlby's (1973) first three steps: denial, protest, and despair. The fourth step becomes evident in the second phase.

2. Phase II: Self Development

As the women sorted out the past from the present, and the imagined from the actual, the sense of danger was diminished and they were able to open up possibilities for action. However, the developmental progressions did not proceed without transient regressions. As the women began to disidentify with their husbands, the present continued to interact with the past. But, through selective identifications, they were able to dilute their dependence on their husbands and utilize their energies to make new social, work, and family connections. As the women began to question Why? in order to better understand themselves, they developed new modes of conceiving themselves and others. They began to recognize, appreciate, and perform certain acts

of self-empathy and of understanding others. This led to a reevaluation of the marriage relationship, the original expectations, and the past and present relationships with their mothers.

Phase II appeared to be at the opposite end of the continuum of dependency and autonomy. Rather than deal with separation issues, the women began to deal with a sense of separateness, moving out on their own in the face of the loss of a needed relationship. As they progressed through the evaluation process, they discovered a greater need to learn to depend on themselves. Self-realization, achievement, and self-dependence began to surface as new goals.

The women manifested many behaviors that are indicative of the rapprochement sub-phase: temper outbursts, demandingness, coerciveness, and periodic episodes of anxiety. Mahler's research suggests that the rapprochement sub-phase is a crucial period for working through both the self-object differentiation and the reintegration and subjective self-object differentiation and reintegration. In Mahler's developmental progressions numerous identifications are involved, beginning with the primary identification with the symbiotic mother where the subjective awareness, self-absorption, and the experience of merger and bliss originate. Later, the identification with the mother of separation results in the capacity to be alone, in the development of objective self-awareness, and in the ability to love as an autonomous person. Although the conflicts and resolutions of the rapprochement sub-phase appear parallel to the central dynamics of the women, the analogies are based on overt behaviors. They are not representative of the internal changes that are characteristic of the toddler.

These differences are what establishes the meaning of adult individuation which is not a duplication or application of the early subphase.

Lebe (1982) defines female adult individuation as the completion of the separation-individuation process from the mother which culminates in the ability to positively identify with the mother, to accept femininity, and resolve the Oedipus complex. She believes the normal period for a woman to individuate is when she has achieved on her own and has established a sufficient distance from the pre-Oedipal mother to evaluate her objectively. It is Lebe's thought that this takes place between thirty and forty years of age.

For women who, through the conscious and unconscious messages from their mothers, are raised to be "good wives," it is difficult to be assertive, to take initiative, and be independent and self-directed. As pointed out in the case summaries, when women struggle to be successful and independent in their roles, the ultimate focus is on their relationship with their mothers. They fear that selfhood may be interpreted as a disloyal act which will be met with anger, retaliation, and withdrawal.

The findings in this study indicate that, at the time of a marital separation, a woman is faced with many issues. Among them are certain "real" problems, one of which for all of the women in the study, was financial. Although these women were educated or trained to participate in the work world, only one of them was employed full-time.

The choice of playing the traditional role in a marriage may be

made for many reasons but, whatever the reason, this role does provide a refuge from the male world of competition and achievement and offers a temporary reprieve from the struggle for identity. In making the choice, however, certain tensions and strains are generated. The form they take depends on the internal development of the marital partners and the external conditions and circumstances that impact the marriage.

Ornston (1978) states that, through projective identification, couples create complementary roles so that one can comply with and react to the demands of the other. A kind of individuation is achieved through becoming like the other and, at the same time, maintaining a compatible difference. He gives as examples the "glowing audience" and the "astute caretaker." It would seem that there are elements of this type of adaptation in all of the marriages studied. It is an especially compatible adjustment for the woman who is directed by the need to define herself through an affiliative relationship. Marriage seems to be a logical choice for women. It provides the opportunity for affiliation and for practicing the adult feminine roles of wife and mother. The breakdown in this type of marriage comes about when one of the partners is no longer willing to make up for what is individually lacking through a complementary relationship. The disillusion, disappointment, and actual or fantasized injustices result in the further breakdown of the relational ties. After a period of blissful "togetherness," the strivings for independence arise in one or both of the partners. They both perceive themselves as suppressed in the relationship and determine that separation is the only viable solution. Although this solution is painful and tragic--physical

separation is not the means of achieving the balance between intimacy and autonomy--it can represent a move towards something rather than away from someone.

Mahler feels the infant experience of separation-individuation is unique. It is a major organization of behavioral and interpsychic life and developmental achievement that has at its base a new sense of separateness. Unresolved issues and conflicts over separation and separateness can be reactivated or remain marginally active at any stage of life. Each new experience has a history--an affective, cognitive, and perceptual framework which has been built and established during the life course. The infant experience is one of developing the initial structure. As new additions are added and reworked, they are not as original or dramatic as the base that supports them. The infant is organized around the mother: it is a one-time experience, the foundation for later experiences. The existing structure may be changed, modified, or influenced, but never recreated. The adult experience is not a psychological birth or rebirth, but a reorganization of intrapsychic life and its behavioral manifestations, a destructuring of one's view of self and the situation.

Problems of individuation are tied to early unstable experiences of separateness and unstable attachment, and the attendant fears of merging and loss of oneness or object relatedness. The rapprochement phase of separation-individuation is the first experience of the awareness of separateness and togetherness. It is the nucleus of the contradictory longing for merging and striving for separateness--a prototype of later experience. Its value in later development is in

its uniqueness, the beginning of the development of true object relations.

Implications for Further Study

The analysis of the data indicates that, during the first twenty-four weeks of separation, there were two distinct phases. During the first twelve to sixteen weeks the women experienced a desire to reunite with their husbands. This phase was followed by a period in which self-exploration and self-development appeared as the primary concern or thrust. Many explanations can be offered as possible partial causes or propensities for the emergence of these phases. In crisis theory, it is commonly accepted that specific phases emerge or develop which eventually result in the resolution of the particular crisis situation. Although Bowlby is known for his attachment theory rather than crisis intervention, his four phases are an example of this phenomena. Another explanation is that people are pleasure seeking and, when specific goal-directed behaviors do not achieve the desired affect, then alternative actions are formulated and executed. Still another explanation is that, at the time of separation, in order to reestablish some form of intrapsychic equilibrium and establish a form of situational equanimity, the human dilemma between autonomy and togetherness is acted out on the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious levels. Many other explanations can also be offered, all of which may be beneficial in explaining what the individual is attempting to achieve during the initial stage of separation. It is my impression that each of the women in the study was acting in a

continuous and coherent manner in order to integrate and synthesize her situation so that she might reorganize it into a meaningful, comprehensive context which would be accessible to her in defining some later situation.

The purpose of the phases might be explained as attempts to resolve the question: "How can I live comfortably both with myself and with another?" that is, finding a balance between oneness and separateness. The nuances, distinctions, complications and meanings of the resolution or partial resolution of the problem is reflected in the current divorce rate and the attempts to redefine marriage or committed relationships. I believe further research would be helpful in clarifying what it is that both men and women are looking for in their relationships with each other.

Since all of the women in the study agreed that financial concerns are a major source of worry at the time of separation, I feel research in this area could help clarify what is the basis for this concern. Is it that, due to self and social issues, women fear a lack of earning capacity or is it a result of feelings of entitlement because they have opted for a traditional marriage?

The significance of phase specificity indicates that the women consciously, preconsciously, and unconsciously prompted and perpetuated situations based on developmental issues that predominated at the time. Does this imply that women utilize the marriage relationship to resolve early developmental issues, both pre-Oedipal and Oedipal, and what impact does this have on the husband, wife, and family relationships? Lebe (1982) proposes that, due to the early

dependent relationships with their mothers, women do not individuate until they are between thirty and forty years old. She is implying that, for women both pre-Oedipal and Oedipal issues are very much a part of the marriage relationship. This prompts the question: What are the implications of this delayed individuation in terms of women's roles as wives and mothers?

All of the women in the study indicated some concern with power issues in relation to their husbands. Although, at times, this was connected to financial issues, it was also related to the husbands' positions in the community, to their feeling of freedom from responsibility (since the men were away from the family situation) and to a vague, undefined sense that the husbands had certain means of control over the situation that the women could not define or conceptualize but could only react to with fear or with deceptive behavior.

A study of the addition of the instrumental role to a woman's already developed expressive role in terms of her feelings about herself and her requirements for a heterosexual relationship could shed some light on issues of power, dominant-subordinate relationships, control and potency.

A longitudinal study of women who are recently separated to observe the fluctuations in their strivings toward oneness and separateness might help in the clarification of clinical issues which are related to the development of the self. (Like the assumption of separate lines of development for narcissism and object love, or one developmental line which oscillates between the central focus on the self or other.)

Finally, my experience in conducting this study resulted in the realization that women want to talk about their experience with other women and that it is beneficial for them to do so. A study of transference phenomena between a woman therapist and a woman client at the time of separation would help to identify the transference aspects and offer a direction for the utilization of the transference in clinical practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The interview will be guided by the following format which is an adaptation of Mahler's nine questions.

1. Approach Distancing

What are the characteristic approach distancing patterns of the marital pair?

Interview Questions

Tell me about your contacts with your husband since the separation.

Who initiates them?

How do you gain his attention and involvement?

Do you dream or daydream about the marriage or your husband?

Are there any outstanding themes? Repetitive themes?

Do you have a mental picture of your husband? Has it changed?

Do you find you want or need to share your experiences with him?

Are you concerned with what he is doing and how he is handling the separation?

How do you find out about him and what he's doing?

2. Newly emerging ego functions

What new abilities has she developed since the separation?

Interview questions

How are you dealing with the separation in terms of living as a single woman, single parent?

Have you developed new interests, hobbies, skills?

Decision making patterns.

Do you turn to others for advice or help? Who do you depend on and under what circumstances? Do you feel you can influence your situation? Do you sometimes feel helpless?

3. Preferred modalities

What are her tension regulating, discharging and coping behaviors?

Interview questions

Tell me about the kinds of pressures you feel?

How do you handle them? Do you solve problems yourself or seek advice? Who do you ask? Under what circumstances?

Have you found you depend on food, drugs, alcohol or other people at times or under certain stressful situations? Has this changed since the separation?

4. Distressing and pleasurable experiences

What distressing and pleasurable events is she experiencing?

Interview questions

What do you find pleasurable at this time? Distressful?

Do you find that you have the same capacity to enjoy friends? Activities?

5. Alertness

Does she feel pre-occupied, depressed, disinterested, hyperalert, over excited or withdrawn?

Interview questions

Do you feel involved with friends? Activities?

What is your sleep pattern? Has it changed?

Has your energy level changed?

Has your eating pattern changed?

Do you daydream? Is there a theme or something that seems to pre-occupy you most of the time? Some of the time?

Do you feel you think mostly about yourself, your marriage, husband or other things? (attention directed inward or outward)

Note: Interview activity.

6. Basic mood

How would she describe her characteristic mood at this time?

Interview questions

How would you describe how you feel most of the time?

Can you anticipate when you are going to experience anxious feelings? What is it that you feel that lets you know a situation might be stressful?

Do you have mood swings? What prompts them?

Note: Interview activity.

7. Tolerance of disruption

What are her abilities to control, delay, displace discharge?

Interview questions

How do you handle the unexpected? Conflict? Emergencies?

How much do you depend on others during these times?

Have you had illnesses since the separation? How did you deal with them?

8. Husband and wife similarities and differences

What are the similarities and differences that she feels are significant in how they are handling the community responsibilities?

Interview questions

Tell me about how you and your husband are handling the separation?

What are your present patterns of relating to each other? How is it different? How do you deal with differences?

How has the separation changed family patterns? Social patterns? Individual patterns?

9. Body and self

What are the behavioral and verbal indicators that she has a sense of self or "I-ness"? What are concerns about her body, self, image?

Interview questions

What are some of the things that you like about yourself?

What would you like to change?

What is preventing you from doing it?

Have you made some changes in your appearance? What prompted the change?

Do you worry about what other people think? Has that changed?

Are you redefining your goals? Roles?

Is your view of yourself changing? How?

How do you view others? Has that changed?

Appendix B

A cover letter and the following enclosure were sent to family law attorneys, two companies with employee assistance programs and several therapists engaged in marital counseling.

WANTED

WOMEN TO VOLUNTEER FOR A RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE IMPACT OF SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

CRITERIA

BETWEEN TWENTY-ONE AND FORTY YEARS OF AGE

MARRIED FIVE YEARS OR MORE AT THE TIME OF SEPARATION

MOTHER OF ONE OR MORE DEPENDENT CHILDREN

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

NO HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS OR LONG TERM OUTPATIENT TREATMENT

SEPARATED WITHIN SIXTEEN WEEKS OF THE FIRST INTERVIEW

NO HISTORY OF PRIOR SEPARATIONS

INCOME OF $25,000 A YEAR OR MORE

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

THE RESEARCH PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO EXPLORE IN DEPTH THE IMPACT OF SEPARATION AFTER A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP. THE VOLUNTEERS WILL PARTICIPATE IN TWO THREE HOUR INTERVIEWS WITH A LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER. THE FOCUS OF THE INTERVIEWS WILL BE ON THE INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE IN TERMS OF BEHAVIOR PATTERNS, COPING MECHANISMS, ADJUSTMENT PROCESSES AND THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS A WOMAN MAY HAVE IN ADJUSTING TO THE SINGLE LIFE. PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION WILL INCLUDE AN EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEWS, HOW CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY WILL BE HANDLED, AND THE SCHEDULING OF TWO THREE HOUR APPOINTMENT TIMES APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK APART.

AN ADDITIONAL HOUR WILL BE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEWS IN ORDER FOR THE PARTICIPANTS TO OBTAIN A CONSULTATION ON PARTICULAR ISSUES RELATED TO SEPARATION AND DIVORCE.

CONTACT

JOYCE DESHLER LCSW (213) 906-8673

Appendix C

INSTITUTE FOR CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK

Informed Consent Form
(Sample)

I, _____, hereby willingly consent
(human subject)

to participate in the _____ research project
(name of study)

of _____ of ICSW.
(principal investigator's name)

I understand the procedures to be as follows:*

I am aware of the following potential risks involved in the study:*

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I understand that this study may be published and my anonymity will be protected unless I give my written consent to such disclosure.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

WITNESS:

_____

*To be filled in by the subject in his or her own writing if he or she is defined to be "at risk."

Summary Chart of Sample

Summary of Sample

Subject	Age	Duration of Marriage	Separation Time 1st Interview	Separation Time 2nd Interview
1 (S)	40	7 yrs	17 weeks	18 1/2 weeks
2 (H)	39	17 yrs	19 weeks	20 weeks
3 (M)	29	6 yrs	18 1/2 weeks	20 weeks
4 (J)	33	15 yrs	23 weeks	24 weeks
5 (C)	38	13 yrs	20 1/2 weeks	21 1/2 weeks