Family rites of passage: a study of ritual and the school entry transition in five healthy families.

Edward L. Yeats
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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FAMILY RITES OF PASSAGE:
A STUDY OF RITUAL AND THE SCHOOL ENTRY TRANSITION
IN FIVE HEALTHY FAMILIES

A Dissertation Presented
By
EDWARD L. YEATS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 1979

Psychology Department
FAMILY RITES OF PASSAGE:
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Dedication

To the memory of
Paul David Schifman
August 3rd, 1945 to March 10th, 1978
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express gratitude to his advisor and chairperson of his dissertation committee, Dr. Dee G. Appley, for her consistent inspiration and commitment and to the members of the committee, Dr. Alvin Winder, Dr. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman and Dr. Richard Noland for their help in the form of ideas and support of the work. Sincere appreciation is expressed to the superintendent, principals and teachers who remain unnamed and especially to the five generous families who permitted me to share briefly in their lives.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife, Suzanne, who made it possible for this work to be one of creative pleasure, my friend Cartney James whose consultation at a crucial point of impass made the difference, and Sally Ives, who typed and edited the manuscript.
ABSTRACT

Family Rites of Passage:
A Study of Ritual and the School Entry Transition
in Five Healthy Families

May 1979
Edward L. Yeats, B.A., New York University
M.S., University of Massachusetts, Ph.D., University of Massachusetts
Directed by: Professor Dee G. Appley

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate, in an hypothesis generating, exploratory study, the place of ritual in the healthy family's accomplishment of its development. A family developmental transition—the school entry of the youngest child—was chosen. In consultation with the school system in a small New England community, five "healthy" families were selected and invited to participate. The families came from varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, but all were intact, first marriage families with no known mental health problems, no special needs, a good relationship with the school, and a youngest child who had made a healthy transition into first grade.

The methodology employed with each family involved a two-day period of participant observation by the investigator and a series of semi-structured, tape recorded interviews with the parents, each of the children and the family as a whole. The data are presented in the form of detailed case studies.

Analysis of the data from these five families suggests that family ritual, as distinguished from family routine, is characterized by two
Factors: *temporal specificity* and *quality of specialness*. Family rituals are broken down into two broad categories: *Family Binding Rituals* and *Family Life-Cycle Rituals*. Within each of these categories, several types of family rituals are defined.

A functional analysis of family rituals, based on ritual theory in anthropology and sociology as well as the systems theory concepts of *homeostasis* (Jackson, 1964) and *homeorhesis* (Waddington, 1957), is then elaborated. Ritual in the family is proposed to have four major functions: enrichment of the family life, maintenance of family structure, socialization, and the facilitation of developmental change. Both binding and life-cycle rituals serve enrichment and socialization functions. Family-binding rituals serve to reinstate or reaffirm the structural boundaries between family subsystems and between the family and the outside world. In this way family binding rituals are homeostatic and serve maintenance functions. Family life-cycle rituals are seen as symbolic enactments of change in family structure or confirmations of development, operating in the modes of permission, affirmation, and education. Family life-cycle rituals are thus shown to function to validate developmental change within the family, making it shared reality and providing a context for the expression of affect that accompanies such change. In this way family life-cycle rituals are homeorhetic in their function, facilitating the family's transition to an equilibrium at a higher level of differentiation.

These conceptual ideas are discussed in the light of current theory and research on family development. Factors in the family and in the school which may facilitate healthy school entry are considered.
The potential use of family ritual analysis as a diagnostic assessment tool and the prescription of rituals in family therapy in the clinical setting are discussed. Ideas for further research on the theoretical hypotheses generated by this study are explored.
"Ceremonies are the bond that holds the multitudes together, and if the bond be removed, those multitudes would fall into confusion."

--Hsun Tzu, Chinese Philosopher
3rd Century B.C.

(quoted in Radcliffe-Brown, 1952)
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INTRODUCTION

For some years now, there has been a trend in clinical practice away from an individual or child focus and towards a perspective which emphasizes the whole family system. With this change in the level of intervention, much conceptual work has also begun in which the focus has been on the family as a whole. Recent work on defining phases of family development (Duvall, 1971; Rodgers, 1964, 1965; Solomon, 1973) is complementary to the immensely valuable work on individual child development (e.g., Erikson, 1950, 1959) which has guided us in individual psychotherapy. With the focus on whole families, parents are no longer seen simply as players in the child's libidinal drama, and it has become clear that the process of individuation continues throughout the life-cycle for both parents and children.

Whether in the life-cycle of the individual or the life-cycle of the family as a whole, it is possible to identify a series of fairly predictable 'crises' with definable themes. In each of these crises, the identity of the individual or the family as a whole goes through a transition (e.g., married couple to family with an infant/spouse to parent; family with young children to family with kids in school/special family member to anonymous class member). This seems to be a quite stressful disintegration-reintegration process.

In earlier times and in more tightly-knit tribal cultures these transitions were affirmed and punctuated by the larger social system
through various rituals which are known to anthropologists as *rites of passage* (see Van Gennep, 1908). To be described in more detail later, these rituals served the purpose of clearly marking the meaning and social implications of developmental changes from birth to death. Along with powerful social affirmation of growth (and maintenance of power relationships between age and sex groups), these rituals provided a structure within which the expression of affect which accompanies family change could be accomplished.

In present day American culture it has, in large part, fallen to the family to affirm the development of its members. For many, the religious ceremonies and other social rites (e.g., graduations) which served as rites of passage in the past have become empty and anonymous, perhaps in correspondence with the progressive disintegration of ethnic community groups (Rapoport, 1963; Grotjahn, 1960). While this may be part of a cultural trend towards mobility and individualism, it may also be placing a great burden on the nuclear family to affirm and facilitate the developmental progress of its members. Perhaps from the creativity of families facing these issues and from experiments in alternative modes of community living, new rituals will emerge to fulfill the need for confirmation and clarity of identity:

The critical problems of becoming male and female, of relations within the family and of passing into old age are directly related to the devices which the society offers the individual to help him achieve the new adjustment. Somehow we seem to have forgotten this—or perhaps the ritual has become so completely individualistic that it is now found for many only in the privacy of the psychoanalyst's couch. . . . One dimension of mental illness may arise because an increasing number of individuals are forced to accomplish their tran-
The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate, in an exploratory way, the place of ritual in family life. In the following chapters I will present a conceptual framework for the study of the family as a developing system, which I will then apply to the concept of family ritual. Using data from participant observation and semi-structured interviews with five modern American families, I will propose a system of definitions and classifications of rituals in family life. This work will be grounded in theories of ritual in tribal culture which have emerged in anthropology and the study of primitive religion. An analysis of the functions of various types of ritual in these families and implications for further research and therapeutic intervention will be considered.

The families chosen for this study are 'healthy' (i.e., non-clinical) families whose youngest child had entered first grade shortly before the time of this research. Along with the study of ritual in these families will be an investigation of the phase of 'school entry of the youngest child' in family development.

As part of the ground work that must be laid for an analysis of family rituals, I will turn now to a discussion of the Rites of Passage in tribal cultures.
CHAPTER I
RITES OF PASSAGE

There are, of course, many types of ritual in tribal life. A full discussion of tribal rituals and their functions will be presented in a later chapter. In this brief introductory chapter, the focus is on those rituals which are specifically related to developmental change in the tribal setting: the rites of passage.

With the emerging interest and understanding of the importance of developmental transitions within the family comes a curiosity about how such transitions are accomplished in a 'healthy' system. Several writers have either theorized or presented data which suggest that most problems in life, especially those which bring family members into clinical settings, focus around a family developmental crisis (Minuchin, 1974; Haley, 1975; Hodley et al., 1974; Solomon, 1973). We are thus very interested in discovering what it is in the healthy accomplishment of development which permits the crisis to be resolved in a way which does not incapacitate family members. A look, first, at how developmental transitions are accomplished in tribal cultures may be helpful.

It is traditional in psychology to draw, when possible, on what we know of human history in an effort to gather implications for modern life. There are numerous examples, most coming out of the psychoanalytic literature, of studies of so-called 'primitive' peoples which shed light on the problems of modern life. Some of these are Freud's (1946)
study of the mythological history of the oedipus complex, Jung's researches into various mythological symbols and their universality (see 1959), Reik's (1964) work on the psychoanalytic interpretation of religious ritual, Bettelheim's (1954) study of the initiation rites of tribal cultures, and Erikson's (1964) work with the concept of psychohistory. Much of this literature (with the notable exception of Erikson) is focused on learning about the nature of individual neurosis from the study of 'primitive' peoples. The emphasis is on the tribal person as childlike, and his/her irrational beliefs and magical practices providing data about the neurotic mind.

In the description of tribal rites of passage which follows, the emphasis is placed on the functional and facilitative aspects of ritual in 'primitive' cultures. While some tribal rites seem brutal and even sadistic, I have been impressed with the psychological wisdom reflected in some of the rites of passage through which the tribe as a system facilitates and affirms the developmental progress of its members (both parents and children).

Among the great works produced in the sciences in the early part of this century is a small book by a French anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep, called The Rites of Passage (1908). This monograph details the rites of many tribal peoples with regard to developmental transitions.

Van Gennep begins his exploration of rites of passage with a description of the rites accompanying actual passage from one territory to another, and this becomes the analogue for transitions from one social world or status to another. Three types of rites of passage are per-
formed in tribal cultures, according to van Gennep, and these three types of ritual correspond to the three phases of a territorial passage. These are defined by van Gennep:

...I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, preliminal rites, those executed during the transitional stage liminal (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world post-liminal rites (p. 21).

The three types of rites will be referred to in this paper as rites of separation, transition and incorporation, respectively. Many examples are given of rites of each type. Rites of separation, which take place on or before departure, include sacrifices, cleansing (purification), leaving particular items behind, etc. With these acts the traveler embarks and makes clear his separation from the previous place.

Rites performed during the transitional stage are, in fact, frequently accompanied by an actual passing through a door or gate, under an arch, or between two branches or the parts of an object which has been halved. The transitional stage is one in which the traveler is between two worlds, and in 'semi-civilized' cultures this means literally in neutral territory between tribal boundaries (ordinarily deserts, marshes, or virgin forests where everyone has full rights to travel and hunt).

Rites of incorporation, which mark the traveler's union with a new place, include the offering of gifts and sacrifices to the appropriate deities, libations, a shared meal or pipe, blood exchanges, etc.

Van Gennep uses this three-part structure as a framework for a dis-
cussion of the rites of passage which mark developmental transitions in social status within the tribal group. By this analogy, he compares separation from the previous social role, the period of transition between identities, and incorporation into a new set of duties and relationships within the tribe with the three phases of passage between territories described above.

Rituals of the three types (separation, transition, incorporation) exist for developmental transitions at all phases of the life cycle from rites of separation and incorporation at birth (e.g., umbilical cord cutting rituals and naming) through childhood rites, initiation, marriage, funerals, etc. Not all transitions are accompanied by all three types of ritual. Some transitions are long in taking place, so there are different rites at different phases. A good example of this is the transition period between childhood and adolescence among the Bantu which is determined by physical signs--the loss of the first teeth and the growing of the second:

...Thus among the southern Bantu, for instance, the period from the first to the second teething includes: (1) rites preceding the appearance of the first tooth; (2) a transitional period between the first and the second set of teeth; (3) at the beginning of this transition the burning of the mat mother and child have used as a bed... (4) the period of instruction, in which the boy is taught that he must no longer sit with the women and is prevented from learning their secret language; he lives only with the boys who are of his age or older and even has to leave the hut when his father enters. During the interval between the cutting of the first and second sets of teeth, the child is not informed about sexual phenomena; when the second teeth begin to appear, he is systematically taught about them. Various magical operations are terminated at this time and only then is it permissible for him to work in the fields (p. 61).
Here, in an example which concerns a child at the age of children in this study, all three phases are present, although only two of the three types of rites (separation and incorporation) are mentioned. The burning of the sleeping mat by the mother must be seen as a rite of separation. Isolation among other boys of the same approximate age along with the prohibition of sexual learning give the appearance of a transitional period, although no specific transitional ceremonies are mentioned. Finally, the teaching of sexual knowledge and permission to work in the fields at the appearance of the second teeth are rites of incorporation.

An example of a rite of transition comes from the Chinese of Minhow, where there is a yearly rite to celebrate the passing of children from one age to the next. This rite, like numerous rites of transition reported by van Gennep, actually involves passing through a portal built specially for the occasion. At the age of 16, the child is supposed to come under the care of all of the gods, whereas s/he was previously looked after exclusively by the 'mother' deity. At this time the final passage through the door takes place in a ceremony called 'thanking the mother,' which marks the end of childhood. Here it would seem that a rite which was previously one of transition becomes a rite of separation.

Van Gennep's monograph is full of examples of rituals which correspond with various other developmental transitions. In all of these, although there is considerable variation in content, the process is the same one of separation from the previous role and set of relationships, transitional period of isolation, and final incorporation into a new
social identity. Van Gennep's three-phase breakdown seems to have some promise of application to modern development. Taking, for example, Kestenberg's (1970) general description of the complicated process of transition in the family:

In transition from one phase to the next, the child threatens the continuity of the parent's working ego.-----------------------------

----------In transforming himself and demanding that parents also change to suit the needs of his next developmental phase, the child seems to reject the parents. As a result, parents feel hurt and inadequate. They too become estranged from the child and, so to say, reject him.-----------------------------------

---Before they can erect a new, ego-syntonic, identity as parents, they must give up the Johnny they know to become acquainted with the new Johnny.-----------------------------

--------But once again the strange child loses his strangeness and becomes familiar again, the discontinuity of the relationship is bridged over and the period of alienation is passed (p. 292).

Clearly an established rite which prescribes rituals to punctuate this process and define it as part of the tribal reality can be seen as a functional, stress and anxiety reducing adaptation. Both parents and child are guided through the transition by the larger tribal system, as witnessed, for example, by the practices of the Masai in Kenya among whom:

...a boy cannot undergo circumcision or a girl clitoral excision, unless the father has performed a ceremony called 'passing over the fence' which signifies his acceptance of the status of an 'old man' (Van Gennep, p. 85).

In a tribal culture, where the family is a part of a larger, cohesive
group, it does not fall to the parents, as it does by and large in the modern nuclear family, to accomplish their own development as well as affirm the development of their offspring.

Several writers (Radcliffe-Brown, 1922; Chapple & Coon, 1942; Kimball, 1960) in anthropology have described rites of passage as homeostatic phenomena which are employed to restore equilibrium in a system (tribe) disturbed by the changes in social interaction which accompany the growth and development of its members. Here it might be valuable to suggest that, although clearly contributing to the maintenance of the tribe's structure and integrity, rites of passage may function not simply to return the system to a homeostatic setting but to establish a new equilibrium which incorporates the change. This kind of regulatory-growth process has been termed homeorhesis by Waddington (1957) and will be discussed in more detail below in the section on family system development.
CHAPTER II
A SYSTEMS THEORY OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

In order to begin to answer the question: "How does the family facilitate the growth of its members?" it seems useful to start with a brief exploration of the concept of development as it has emerged in life-science.

**Development: Orthogenetic and Epigenetic**

Development, literally 'unfolding' (Webster, 1973), has been described in two complementary ways by biological as well as psychological theorists. These are orthogenetic (see Werner, 1957) and epigenetic (Waddington, 1957; Erikson, 1959).

The orthogenetic principle, elaborated eloquently by Werner (1957), a developmental psychologist, from work with the development of visual percepts, breaks development into three phases. In the first phase the form is an undifferentiated global whole. Next, the parts are differentiated and elaborated. Then, the parts are integrated with the global form into a complete whole. This is a 'process' way of seeing development in a general sense.

The concept of epigenesis deals more specifically with the actual sequence of events in the developmental process. The concept was borrowed by biologists from geology in which it refers to formations and chemical changes which occur after original rock formations are established (van Nostrand, 1968). During the first half of the 20th century
when it was becoming clear that the theory of 'preformation' was inadequate to explain embryonic development, organismic biologists used the term epigenesis to describe "the emergence of new phenomena and properties not contained in miniature or preformed" in the process of development from a single cell to a complex organism (Harris, 1957). Epigenetic descriptions of development include the defining of stages which emerge as signposts in the process of transformation. Stages are never hard and fast, but rather fade together and build upon each other. Waddington (1957), Sinnott (1950), Selye (1956) and Holmes (1948) are among the biologists who have worked with these ideas.

Psychologists have in turn borrowed from biology the concept of epigenesis to describe the process of human development. Perhaps most noteworthy is the work of Erikson (1950, 1959, 1968), who has used an isomorphic analogy to embryonic development in his description of the stages of human growth. He defines the epigenetic principle thus:

Whenever we try to understand growth it is well to remember the epigenetic principle, which is derived from the growth of organisms in utero. Somewhat generalized, this principle states that anything that grows has a ground plan and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole (1959, p. 1).

Needless to say, Erikson's work with this perspective has been immensely helpful in the understanding of human development and its themes. Now, as the attention of psychology begins to focus on the family as a system, several writers have tried their hand at an application of this kind of epigenetic stage theory to map family development (Duvall, 1971; Rodgers, 1965; Solomon, 1973; Haley, 1975; Shapiro,
1977). These writers have succeeded at least in describing a sequence of phases of family life, based largely on the ages of the children. Some of the details of the extremely multivariated and complex interactions which form the crises of family life have begun to be explored (by Haley and Shapiro especially). Writers focusing on adult development (Gould, 1972, 1977; Kestenberg, 1970; Anthony & Benedek, 1970) have also helped in the understanding of development in families. Thus it is beginning to come into focus that development is indeed a family process (to borrow Shapiro's language), that the family is not simply a backdrop for the child's dramatic transformation, but that each phase is a time of crisis, change and growth for all family members. It is clearly an extremely difficult picture to draw (a three-dimensional moving picture). The use of concepts from systems theory and embryology can and have been helpful in conceptualizing this complex process of developmental transition.

The Use of Biological Analogy: Homeostasis

As we often gain insight from the study of human history, so psychologists are often interested in what there is to learn from the study of analogous organic processes in biology. Although analogy is only suggestive, biology may indeed provide isomorphic insight into psychological processes (Cannon, 1945; Von Bertalanffy, 1956, 1968; Yeats, 1977).

Psychologists, especially family theorists, have already borrowed Cannon's (1939) concept of homeostasis and used it well to describe some processes in the maintenance of the family system (Jackson, 1965; Watz-
lawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967; Ferriera, 1963). By their definition, the family is a rule-governed system which is maintained through negative feedback in response to deviations from the norms and rules of the system. As Jackson (1965) describes it:

Thus, if the norm in the family is that there be no disagreement, when trouble begins to brew, we might observe general uneasiness, a sudden tangentialization or change of topic, or even symptomatic behavior on the part of an identified patient, who may act out, talk crazy, or even become physically ill when family members begin to argue. The family is distracted and brought into coalition (frequently against the patient) and the norm holds until the next time (p. 13).

One way of looking at this mechanism, which has helped in understanding of the functioning of individual homeostasis, that is, ego defense mechanisms (Freud, 1936; Sullivan, 1953; Yeats, 1977), is to see that the key to the process is anxiety. Anxiety has been defined as a signal to the individual ego of the threat of disintegration (May, 1950). On the family level, if we see the family's rules and myths as being its ego-structure, deviation from the rules which provide the structure of reality must be perceived and responded to as a threat to the integrity of the system. Especially in a 'rigid' system, which must maintain equilibrium within a narrow homeostatic range, deviation can be threatening. Even the signs of 'positive' growth may be responded to with negative feedback, as noted, for example, by Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967).

**Homeostasis and Growth**

It is clear that homeostasis is a conservative process. Its function is to preserve a state of balance or dynamic equilibrium, and this
is accomplished through correcting deviations with negative feedback. Further, it appears that a system threatened with disintegration frequently responds with more rigid attempts at regulation—leading to greater constriction of the range of tolerance for deviation and thus greater instability. Examples of this include an authoritarian government threatened with insurrection, a variety of personality styles which become rigid under stress, or a family with rigid rules which must cope with major change.

Growth, in contrast to homeostasis, is characterized especially by deviations from the status quo. This implies a change in the state of the organism and it follows that there can be a conflict between regulatory (stasis) and developmental (change/growth) processes. This is illustrated in the Laing and Esterson (1964) example of the Fields, used by Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) to demonstrate feedback and homeostasis (p. 139). Here, a family which depends on rigid rules to maintain its structure responds to 'natural' developmental changes in a child as deviations to be corrected.

Individual defense mechanisms, which are also homeostatic (to prevent individual anxiety), can readily be seen as evolving in such a family context. Here change in one member threatens the unstable integrity of the larger family system. Corrections on a larger system level give rise to corresponding corrections within the individual, and growth is forsaken for what is unconsciously experienced by all as the survival of the family.

It would seem that organic systems will forego developmental growth for what is viewed on some level by the organism as survival. This is
seen in the examples above as the predominance of psychological homeostasis (defenses) over growth. Another example of this is the physical regression in lower animals described by Holmes (1948) in which physiological development can literally reverse itself (with the notable exception of the organs of reproduction) in times of great adversity.

The case can be made, however, that one of the characteristics of growth processes is equifinality (Russell, 1945; van Bertalanffy, 1956; Gray & Rizzo, 1969; Yeats, 1977), and that growth processes do not cease when inhibited by regulatory mechanisms. Rather, an unsteady equilibrium is maintained in which, at least on the psychological level, the force for growth seeks expression along other paths (dreams, neurotic symptoms, dysfunction in one family member, etc.). Seen this way, both homeostatic defenses and the problems which reflect the collision between homeostasis and growth are based in the adaptive potentials of the system (individual or family).

Homeostasis can be pictured as a circle while development is better pictured as a spiral. The 'setting' is constant in homeostasis, so the causal chain is aimed or directed toward the same value. In development, the setting is a progressively changing value. Several writers have offered concepts to deal with this more complicated 'regulated growth' process. Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) suggest the step-function, analogous to shifting gears in an automobile transmission as a way to conceive of changing setting values. Menninger (1963) has coined the term heterostasis, the progressive moving away from the status-quo, to describe this aspect of growth. Both of these highlight the need for a more complex concept which can describe regulated growth.
Waddington's work with processes in embryonic development (1957) seems particularly relevant here. He has worked quite specifically on understanding the biology of epigenetic development which is characterized by constantly changing and yet controlled and coordinated growth processes. Waddington found in this work that during the process of embryonic development different parts of the embryo tended, within certain limits of interference, to return to their developmental 'trajectory' in spite of interruptions or disturbances. He defined this tendency to return to path homeorhesis (rhesis = flow) and coined the term creode (Greek for 'fated path') to describe the particular trajectory of a developing organ system. It seems most appropriate, then, to use the term homeorhesis, which combines both the notion of changing setting values as well as self-correcting maintenance of the steady state, to describe the process of regulated change observed in development.

Differentiation and Integration

Waddington's work demonstrates that in development each organ system is a center of biological organization with its own equifinal trajectory as well as a part in the coordinated development of the whole embryo. Selye (1956), in part of his famous work on stress and disease, states that, during the process of differentiation each potential organ system is a teleologic center which has its own creodic path or telic aim. A higher telos or centralized control is exercised over the myriad of developing teleologic centers to coordinate the process of development. This integrative process Selye terms telic centralization (Selye, 1956). Correspondingly, the process of differentiation, in which lower
teleologic centers act, as it were, 'for their own good,' before centralization, is called **telic decentralization**. Bakan (1968) has further elaborated these concepts and applied them to psychological defense and disease.

The orthogenetic principle, proposed in developmental psychology by Werner (1957) seems quite applicable to this overall description of the processes of embryonic development. That is, that in all developmental processes change progresses from a state of globality (proliferation of undifferentiated cells), through the differentiation of parts (telic decentralization) to a complete, integrated whole (telic centralization). This is not to say that somehow once there is centralization development ceases. Rather, progressive differentiation and integration are ongoing throughout life.

We may hypothesize that these complicated, abstract concepts used to describe development in the embryo parallel processes observed in the development of families. Certainly in families (as well as individuals) the analogy to biological development fits in the sense that an ongoing process of differentiation and reintegration at higher levels of development can and has been described (Bowen, 1972; Borzormenyi-Nagy, 1965; Haley, 1975; Shapiro, 1977). For purposes of the analogy, each family member might be seen as analogous to a developing organ-system, who will unfold on his/her own epigenetic journey (creode) while still being part of the centrally coordinated and interdependent development of the family as a whole. Even in the crisis of adolescence, the differentiating member is not necessarily leaving the system, but moving to a different structural position. This way of viewing differentiation as
a regulated change process seems to do better justice to reality than Bowen's (1972) uni-dimensional scale of differentiation.

**Developmental Impasse: Defensive and Creative Solutions**

When an individual or a family comes into a mental health clinic, one of the first assessment questions the clinician might well bear in mind is: "What is the developmental impasse behind this difficulty?" Often the question is a characterological one, in which the client is seen as continuing to struggle with themes (trust, control, jealousy, etc.) from early childhood, usually being replayed within the framework of a current developmental crisis. In families, the problems presented are thought usually to reflect the stress of a current developmental crisis, as demonstrated by Hodley et al. (1974). Some of the themes salient for families at different phases of development have been mapped by Solomon (1973) and Haley (1975). It seems clear that there is a continuum of difficulty among families in coping with the excitement and the upheaval of these changes. No family is without some points of difficulty, so the thoughts to follow have relevance to understanding 'healthy' as well as troubled families.

Earlier it was stated that anxiety has been defined as a homeostatic signal of threat to the integrity of the system. If, as I suggest here, anxiety is thought of as a signal of telic decentralization, and if telic decentralization characterizes the differentiation aspect of developmental process, we can expect (and confirm from experience) that growth is accompanied by anxiety. Now, if homeostatic defenses come into play in response to all anxiety (including growth anxiety) this
surely sheds some light on the psychoanalytic notion of resistance.

Thus it seems that there can be an antagonism between homeostasis and developmental change. Stated another way, there is a tendency for safety to take precedence over growth (Holmes, 1948; Maslow, 1968). Yet, it is also evident that there is a certain persistent, equifinal tendency toward growth. When developmental and homeostatic forces collide, this tendency is expressed in symbolic form in symptomatic behavior and dreams.

In other words, developmental growth is, by its nature, threatening in that it involves the dissolution of the unity of the system (identity of the individual(s); rules and myths of the family). If the identity or structure is already tenuous, and being rigidly maintained, developmental change may be experienced as profoundly threatening. Thus, the ability to tolerate a moderate degree of disintegration and the anxiety associated with it is necessary for the developmental process to continue.

Several writers have discussed, in terms of individual dynamics, the idea that the psychological symptom is best seen as an adaptive attempt at resolving an unfinished emotional situation (Perls, 1947; Angyal, 1965; Yeats, 1975). The symptom can be seen as the symbolic expression of the unfinished developmental task—an expression of developmental forces in collision with homeostatic defenses which prevent the anxiety associated with growth. This is seen in the neurotic orchestration of repetitive relationships as well as in various hysterical and compulsive symptoms. In the family context, the identified patient may be seen as 'saying analogically what cannot be said digitally' (Watz-
lawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967). Seen this way, the symptom or symptomatic member is the key to the healthy resolution of the developmental impasse rather than the problem to be eradicated.

While homeostatic mechanisms are essential to the maintenance of the family as a system, it seems that in this situation homeostatic processes lead to greater distress. What is needed is recalibration— the step function or homeorhetic change of setting described earlier. In the following section I will try to show that there are family life-cycle rituals which, like tribal rites of passage, may provide the structure for homeorhetic recalibration, and which may be seen as one way the family can respond creatively to developmental impasse.
CHAPTER III

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON FAMILY RITUAL

A detailed analysis of the types and functions of rituals in the modern family, based on the data from the five families in this study, is the major contribution of this dissertation. A discussion of the method and reviews of the literature on school entry and the family and the types and functions of tribal ritual must, of course, precede the data-based analysis. The following 'preliminary thoughts' are presented as an orientation and introduction to the concept of family ritual as it will be elaborated later, as well as a review of what literature already exists on the topic.

Analogic and Digital Modes of Communication

Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) describe in some detail these two levels of communication, corresponding to the relationship and content parts of a message, respectively. They describe the digital mode as based upon the use of arbitrary symbols as names for things, as compared with the analogic, in which the symbols are like the things they represent. Thus a word is a digital representation of a thing while a picture would be an analogic representation. In digital communication, complex logical operations are possible as compared with the analogic, which includes 'virtually all non-verbal communication,' and in which there are no symbols for logical operations. In the analogic mode there is no way to say 'not', 'if-then', or 'either-or', for example, there-
fore leaving much room for interpretation of behavior. Examples of the ambiguity of analogic communication would include the multiple meanings that a smile, laugh, tears, or silence may convey depending upon the context of the behavior.

Further, within human communication, Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) connect the analogic mode with the Freudian notion of primary process thinking, in which "the laws of logic--above all the law of contradiction--do not hold for processes of the id" (Freud, 1933, p. 104). This, the most basic mode of thought, is the mode of symptoms and dreams, as well as symbolic invocations of relationship. The logical, digital mode corresponds to Freud's notion of secondary process, which is associated with the reality principle of the ego.

Ritual is defined in this context as an integration or meeting of these two modes. For example, Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson discuss a ritual which formed between a man and a porpoise:

We have observed a very interesting communication pattern for the establishment of trust relationships between humans and bottle-nosed porpoises. While this may be a ritual developed 'privately' by only two of the animals, it still provides an excellent example for the analogic communication of 'not.' The animals had obviously concluded that the hand is one of the most important and vulnerable parts of the human body. Each would seek to establish contact with a stranger by taking the human's hand into his mouth and gently squeezing it between his jaws, which have sharp teeth and are powerful enough to bite the hand off cleanly. If the human would submit to this, the dolphin seemed to accept it as a message of complete trust. His next move was to reciprocate by placing the forward ventral portion of his body (his most vulnerable part, roughly equivalent in location to the human throat) upon the human's hand, leg or foot, thereby signaling his trust in the friendly intentions of the human. This procedure is, however, obviously fraught with possible misinterpretation at every step...
As the dolphin example suggests, ritual may be the intermediary process between analogic and digital communication, simulating the message material but in a repetitive and stylized manner that hangs between analogue and symbol (1967, 103-104).

Thus ritual, like myth and art, may be seen as arising out of the interface between primary and secondary processes—between consciousness and the unconscious.

Two Types of Family Ritual

I propose that at least two types of ritual occur in families. These are 1) regular ritualistic practices which are family-binding, such as eating meals together, holiday celebrations, regular activities between members; and 2) growth-affirming life-cycle rituals, such as birthday celebrations, ritualized changes in family binding rituals, ceremonies to commemorate changes in member status, etc.

Family Binding Rituals

This first category, far more frequent, apparently, than life-cycle rituals, corresponds to the homeostatic aspect of family functioning. These regular, ritualized practices repeat to all family members the reality of the family in which they live and the proper place they hold in the structure of the family (cf. the custom of serving of food at dinner to the oldest child first noted by Dreyer and Dreyer, 1973). The omission of these rituals can cause considerable distress, especially when children are young (Bossard & Boll, 1950). These practices tend to take on a rigid, almost sacred quality of rightness, and seem to increase in frequency with family size and socio-economic status (Bossard
& Boll, 1950). Family-binding rituals may arise as a solution to a problem in the family and may thus be seen as functioning homeostatically. Bossard and Boll (1950) provide an example of this:

When David came home from the office, he liked to romp with the children after dinner. It was the only chance he had all day to see them. This privilege could not be denied, but it excited the children before bedtime and created a family crisis every night. David got tired and wanted to hear the news; the children were peevish and noisy and did not want to go to bed; and I (their mother) was at my wits end to keep family peace. One night I decided to read to the children if they got into bed quickly. The next night they asked if I would read a story if they would get to bed quickly. From that time on, until the last baby went to school, there was no question about what happened in our house at bedtime. The children had their romp with David; they were eager to go upstairs afterward; David heard his news broadcast in peace and quiet before I got downstairs again; and the every-evening quarrel was ironed out to everyone's satisfaction. But from a simple experiment in reading one night, we ended up with a ritual, a full-fledged ritual with a time and a place, a determined type of reading material, and with many little observances and rules and regulations that we collected as time went on (p. 144).

It is easy to see how a family with developmental difficulties might try to hold on to ritualized practices (dressing and grooming children, regular family outings, holiday celebrations, etc.) when they are actually a hindrance to the developmental progress of family members. Just like the tendency to orderliness in individual personality, which can be dysfunctional in the form of compulsive rituals, family-binding rituals, while based in the need for order in the developing family, may come to serve the family's need to avoid the anxiety associated with developmental change.
Life-Cycle Rituals

These practices, which I suggest as analogous in function to the rites of passage in tribal culture, may be defined as acts which punctuate and affirm developmental change in the family. They may be seen as corresponding to the *homeorhetic* aspect of family functioning, in that the rite redefines the status of family members, changing the norms and rules of the family according to the developmental progress of its members. Life-cycle rituals may correspond to ceremonies in the larger society which confer new status on family members as, for example, in one family in which each child was given a suitcase as a gift upon graduation from high school. They are, however, family rituals, as compared with the social 'rites of passage' described by Breitner (1977) as experiences in adolescence which anticipate the child's leaving home (i.e., getting a driver's license, having a steady girl or boy friend, and getting a job). Family rituals which affirm the meaning of these social events (e.g., conferring of new family chauffeur responsibilities or a family celebration to congratulate the new job holder) might be seen as corresponding family life-cycle rituals.

Life-cycle rituals may also serve to affirm the physical development of the children. A family might, for example, have a special doorway on which a mark is made to measure each child's height on the day of his/her birthday each year. Other examples of life-cycle rituals include visits from the tooth fairy; ceremonial changes in bed-time and allowance; the conferring of privileges such as using a knife at the dinner table, dating, wearing make-up or earrings, access to the family car, etc., when these changes are marked by the family as 'special' (see
criteria, p. 50).

Life-cycle rituals may make very clear the growth of children in relation to parents as an example from Bossard and Boll (1950) illustrates:

When I was a kid, I used to borrow my father's ties once in a while, and felt very grown up wearing them. But now that I work after school and go out on dates, I have more new ties than he does. So we have a little family custom that makes everyone laugh. Every time I get a new tie, I take my oldest, most shot one, off my tie rack and put in on Dad's. He always notices my new one—so he looks for the one I left for him. Then, next morning, he puts it on and comes down to breakfast with his chest all swelled out: "See my 'new' tie?" and all the family roars (p. 147).

Clearly, life-cycle rituals in the modern American family are not nearly as structured, elaborate, or prescribed as the three-part rites of passage described by van Gennep. They do exist, however, and seem to serve the purpose of facilitating the establishment of new sets of rules for changing family roles. They can be seen as providing a progressively more differentiated structure or organization (homeorhetic equilibrium) as a resolution of the disruption of identities and interpersonal expectations which accompanies developmental change. Seen this way, their presence is likely to reflect a creative response to the stress of development. Symbolic (analogic) expression is given to the changes occurring in family life, but in a consensually validated form as compared with the more autistic analogic symbolism of symptomatic behavior.

When developmental change is affirmed with a life-cycle ritual, the reality and meaning of the change is permitted into the conscious-
ness of all members, not isolated and responded to with negative feedback. Homeostatic flexibility (i.e., tolerance for anxiety) is necessary, then, for the formation of life-cycle rituals, and their presence can be seen as reflective of family health.

Thus, two basic types of family rituals are suggested along with some preliminary thoughts about the meaning of rituals in the family. Examples of rituals of both types, a system of classifications within each type and an analysis of their functions in family development comprise the primary focus of this study of five families. Each of the families selected has a youngest child who was starting first grade at the time of this research. Therefore, a look at the literature on school entry seems the next appropriate step.
The decision to study a particular transition in family development instead of attempting a broader exploration of ritual in the family life-cycle was based in the belief that a present, active family transition is more likely to yield valid and exciting data than an historical study or a more superficial cross-sectional examination of families at different phases of development. Clearly, the most powerful approach would be a longitudinal one in which a number of families were followed through the life-cycle. Practical considerations obviously preclude this as a viable approach, at least at the current time. I see this study as an exploratory, hypothesis-generating undertaking, concerned with defining what family rituals are and speculating about their functions in family life. Before an hypothesis testing study is appropriate, observation and exploration are necessary to provide basic definitions and suggest possible 'causal' relationships.

There are several reasons for the choice of 'the youngest entering school' as the particular family transition on which to focus. By 'entering school' in our present-day culture (which can include day care and nursery school and kindergarten), I am referring to beginning full-time school attendance, which for most children starts with first grade. This particular transition, and the particular point within it, is chosen because, unlike earlier phases of differentiation and individual-
tion, this change in the child's social life involves a very practical change in the day-to-day life of her/his parents. As the child enters full-day school and the new autonomy of social life, parents, especially the mother in the more traditional family, experience a corresponding change from more nearly constant care-giving to the phase which has been termed "part-time parenthood" (Anthony & Benedek, 1970; Klein & Ross, 1958). For the child, this move into social life comes at the age (6-7) which is said by psychoanalytic writers to be the time of the resolution of the oedipal phase and the point of transition into latency (Erikson, 1950; Kestenberg, 1970).

This point in the child's life is one in which s/he accomplishes the first actualized separation from the family. For the parents, especially the mother, the youngest starting full-day school also makes salient the issue of separation in terms of the gradual growing away of children, especially as this transition foreshadows the children's actual leave-taking from home.

Choosing the point at which the youngest enters school as the focus of this study underlines the conceptual framework which views the family as a whole and its development as analogous in some ways to the development of any organism. The last child's entry into school pinpoints the family as a whole at a point of transition in the developmental schemas of at least two theorists. For Duvall (1971) the family moves from 'family with pre-schoolers' to 'family with school children,' and she details new family developmental tasks corresponding to the new phase:

1. Providing for children's activity and parents' privacy.
2. Keeping financially solvent.
3. Cooperating to get things done.
4. Continuing to satisfy each other as married partners.
5. Effectively utilizing family communication systems.
6. Feeling close to relatives in the larger family.
7. Tying in with life outside the family.

Solomon's (1973) analysis reflects more of the ideas of modern family systems thinking. His schema would place the family at the point of transition between the phase of 'childbearing' and 'individuation.' The important tasks of sex-role socialization, parents continuing to confront their own parents in themselves and choose their own identities and ways of being parents, preparing for the 'empty nest,' etc. are among the themes which should be included to fill out Duvall's portrayal of this phase of family development.

Most studies involving families at this point in development have focused on the symptomatic child, most frequently with the label of 'school phobia' (cf., Waldfogel et al., 1957; Messer, 1964). The dynamics of 'school phobia' are described as harking back to Freud's classic case of Little Hans (1956). There has been a progressive advance in conceptualization, however, which is evident in the gradual move from a focus on the pathological child, through a brief period when the mother was treated as the problem, followed by the realization that there was a 'separation problem' between mother and child which was 'interactional,' to a more recent understanding of the importance of the triangle of the parents' relationship in interaction with the needs of the child. In this connection it is noteworthy that Little Hans' parents were divorced a few years after his phobias received Freud's attention (Anthony...
Messer (1964) is quite deliberate in presenting 'school phobia' as a family problem, and, as such, treats the family as a whole. He points to a mutual ambivalence and collusion between mother and child to avoid separation. The presence of the father in therapy is most important, according to Messer, since the 'school phobia' is resolved as the parents begin to resolve conflicts in the marital relationship.

One article which centers on this phase of family life for 'normal' families is a report of a six-session support group for parents of children beginning kindergarten (Klein & Ross, 1958). They provide a nice description of the way parents worked through a sense of loss of the child, briefly mistrusting the teacher and criticizing her/him, gradually beginning to feel a sense of excitement and pride about changes in their child's behavior. The only ritual associated with these events, from the account of the authors, was the initial visit to school with the child to meet the teacher, unless the parents' attendance at the support group is to be viewed as a social rite of passage of a sort for them.

Whether there are clinical problems in a family or not, it would seem that this transition in the family's development is an important one, in some ways foreshadowing the 'empty nest' to come some years later. Parents are likely to confront parts of themselves and their relationship that have been dormant for a number of years as the demands of pre-schoolers for their time and energy are reduced. Mothers, at least in 'traditional' households, face a change in identity and perhaps a re-entry into the social world somewhat analogous to the entry of the
child.

When, among the Bantu, the mother secretly takes into the bush and burns the mat she has slept on with her child, and the six-year-old is dramatically separated from the women and children and, after tutelage, permitted to work in the fields, the change and new role expectations for parent and child are marked most concretely. One wonders what devices, if any, does the family in this culture have to punctuate and mark in a concrete, symbolic way the changes which accompany this developmental transition? Perhaps with observation of and cooperation from several such families we can begin to answer this question.
CHAPTER V
THE METHOD

The purpose of this study is to collect data on the types of family rituals, especially those which may be related to the school entry of the youngest child. Since family rituals in this heterogeneous culture are likely to be idiosyncratic, the purpose of this study is to discover and define what form, if any, they take—that is, to prepare the ground for a more detailed, operational study of these phenomena. Accordingly, the approach of this research is that of evolving a structure from rather than imposing a structure on the data. A combination of methods, including naturalistic participant observation and semi-structured interviews were employed. These methods, as applied to the five (5) families who participated in this project, will be described and a discussion of the process of sample selection and 'system entry' will follow.

Participant Observation

This method has resulted in numerous valuable contributions in several areas of social science, including such works as Pathways to Madness (Henry, 1965), Five Families (Lewis, 1956), and Asylums (Goffman, 1961). It has long been an extremely useful tool in sociology and anthropology, the value of which has been slower to become recognized in psychology (Hillem & Raush, 1963). In this study, participant-observation has a dual purpose: 1) to provide an extended opportunity to establish a trusting rapport with the family; and 2) to provide observa-
tional data about the family's way of life. Thus, the participant observation was meant to establish a relationship with family members which would facilitate openness and comfort in the interviews conducted later as well as provide a data base for interview questions.

In each of the five (5) families involved in the study there were two days of participant observation—one weekend day and one week day. The weekend day was agreed on in the initial meeting as the more "family-oriented" day of the weekend (Sunday in all but one case). On the chosen day I would arrive at the time in the morning when the first person woke up and remain with the family through the day and evening until after the children had gone to sleep that night. Similarly, on the agreed-upon week day (which in most cases was a Monday), I would arrive as the family woke up and remain until everyone was off to school, work, etc. I would return that afternoon shortly before the first child came home from school and remain through the evening until after the children had gone to bed.

During the participant observation, I would occasionally jot down notes on the activities, rituals, relationships in the family. I would be practically helpful wherever possible (shelling beans, helping with the dishes, bringing in wood, etc.) and generally tried to be a relaxed participant in the family. I felt free to play with the children or converse with the parents as it seemed appropriate, and I participated in any outings or other activities in which the family engaged in (e.g., ice fishing, winter carnival activities, community meal). I conceived my role as that of a quiet uncle (after the fashion of Jules Henry (1965)) and I described my intended role in those terms to the families.
In particular, I tried to intervene in the typical routine of the family as little as possible, maintaining what I assessed to be the parents' rules and limits with the children and requesting, from the start, that no special plans be made, meals served, or behavior be exhibited on account of my presence. In general it seemed that, after a few hours of tension during the weekend day, the families relaxed and behaved much as they would on a typical day.

**Interviews**

The second phase of the data collection involved interviews with the various family members. These were tape recorded. The first such interview, which actually took place late in the afternoon of the weekday observation, was of the youngest and the mother. In this interview the first day of school and issues of separation for the mother and child were explored. Attention was also paid to any life-cycle rituals surrounding school entry. Next, each of the brothers and sisters of the youngest were interviewed usually in age-descending order. These interviews covered such topics as the siblings' views on the youngest starting first grade, recollections of starting school themselves, how one can tell one is growing up in the family, what problems there are in the family, their parents' relationship, and, if old enough to understand the concept, a discussion of the rituals in the family.

Next, I interviewed the youngest with crayons and paper after the method of Robert Coles (1967). As the child drew pictures, I would ask about his/her thoughts about school, recollections of the first day of school, thoughts about the family members and her/himself.
An hour and a half interview with the parents as a couple covered their meeting and early life together, aspects of their relationship, their philosophy of child rearing, and a detailed discussion of the rituals and celebrations in the family and their origins.

Finally an interview was held with the whole family present, in which many of the same questions were asked of the family as a whole and an attempt was made to explore the attitudes of family members to the rituals in the family. This was also an opportunity for me to share, in appropriate ways, my impressions of the family and thank the family for their cooperation in participating.

The number of hours of interviews for each family varied from 8 to 10, depending upon the number of children in the family.
CHAPTER VI
THE TASK OF SYSTEM ENTRY

A study such as this requires relatively intimate involvement with a small number of families. Problems of access to information about families, selection of families that fit the criteria for participation, gaining initial entre into the family and the actual 'joining' involved in doing the data collection all have to be carefully negotiated. System entry, then, refers to the somewhat delicate process of entering a community, a school system, a school, a family's life space, and, if the process is successful, being allowed 'into' the family. The process has some similarities to Minuchin's (1974) concept of joining in family therapy, in that the investigator engages in a constant assessment of and accommodation to the structural rules of the system (community, school system, family). One fundamental difference, however, is that, unlike the psychologist's role in family therapy or school consultation, as a researcher s/he is not being approached for help but requesting it. Perhaps the most analogous role is that of the anthropologist studying a foreign culture, who must accommodate to the system, join and study it (disengage) at the same time, but intervention or change is not part of the contract.

During this whole careful process of entry one must also be constantly (but hopefully not paralyzingly) aware of the "Heisenberg" effects of each action taken. How the recruiting of families for a re-
search project is accomplished will be reflected in the types of families which ultimately participate and the quality of the research relationship which develops with each family. Certainly one would expect there to be differences (although it is pure speculation on what dimensions) between families who respond to a newspaper ad, for example, and families referred through a local church organization. Further, the referral or first contact person(s) and whom they represent to the family will doubtless affect how the investigator is viewed at first, whether a family chooses to participate, and how they present themselves to the researcher.

In this project the logical source of families whose last child was a first grader was a school. Also, it was hoped that the endorsement of a school system would encourage families to agree to participate. On the other hand, while the school's endorsement might be a help, to the degree that the school system may mean social authority and evaluation to families, a connection with the school system could be seen as a drawback. Indeed, for some parents the school might even be a symbol of the very separation and individuation 'crisis' I sought to investigate. Elements in the structure of the study, then, including the promise that details of the families' lives would be confidential to the school and that I had no further dealings with the school after being given the names of families to call, were designed, in part, to avoid my being seen as a representative of the school.

So the task of entry, in this study, was a complicated one with a number of factors of considerable importance, the most fundamental being, of course, entering the families. The first system entry, however,
would have to be of a school system.

School System Entry

A first attempt at school system entry through a personal contact with a first-grade teacher in a small nearby community was abortive. Although the teachers and principal in the school I approached were quite willing, the project was vetoed by the superintendent of schools. My next attempt was in a larger community. This time I approached the superintendent of schools first, armed with the endorsement of a prominent local pediatrician and some written material (see Appendix I) which had been requested by the first school system before the project was rejected.

This second school system was a 'supervisory union' which included schools from a New England town (population approximately 15,000) and several small surrounding rural villages. There are, altogether, seven elementary schools in the supervisory union. After looking at the written materials I presented and a brief discussion, the superintendent approved the project, explaining that each principal would have the autonomous right to decide whether or not to cooperate.

When contacted, each of the seven principals expressed willingness to cooperate. Only five of the schools actually became involved in providing families (three from the larger town and two rural schools). Three of these yielded families who agreed to participate (two in-town schools, one rural school). The cooperation of both the principal and first grade teacher(s) in each school was enlisted in the process of family selection.
Family Selection

In each of the five schools which provided families for the study, a meeting was held with the principal and first grade teacher(s). In each school some time was spent introducing myself and explaining the study to the principal before I met with the teacher(s). In three of the schools, the principal was also present at the meeting with the teachers, in two he was not. In the school which provided the most families (3) the meeting with the principal and the teacher was actually held in the first-grade classroom of the small country school at the start of the day, and each of the first-graders from that class whose families I worked with remembered my visit to the class.

In the meeting with the principal, I explained in detail the study and enumerated the criteria for family selection. Families selected were to have the following characteristics:

1. Youngest child in first grade this year.
2. Intact (both parents present, first marriage).
3. Good relationship with the school.
4. No special needs (e.g., speech or reading problems, behavior problems, physical handicaps, etc.).
5. A healthy transition (by the school's assessment) into first grade.

Knowledge about other children from the family was also used by the principal and first-grade teacher in consultation to select families which fit these criteria. I emphasized that intellectual ability, socio-economic status or family lifestyle were not intended to be the basis of selection.

The process of selection in each school involved the principal and teacher(s) going through the list of families in the school and consult-
ing with each other about the suitability and potential willingness of each family to participate. It would seem that this method of selection provided a remarkably broad spectrum of families—that the families selected were not just a reflection of some narrow definition of health. Socio-economic status, sex-role combinations and life style varied considerably, as will become evident in the case studies.

The First Contact--The Principal

My original plan was to depend on the first grade teacher to make an initial contact to the family, or, if it was impossible to get that much cooperation, I would make the first contact myself in the form of a letter and a follow-up phone call. The first principal I met with, however, came up with a much better idea which suited both his and my needs perfectly, and this procedure was followed throughout the rest of the study.

When he had completed the selection of potential families for the study, the principal would call the prospective family(s), briefly introduce the study, give his endorsement and ask the family's permission for him to give me their name. He would stress that there was no obligation, that I would be contacting them only to explain the project further and discuss the possibility of their participating. Several of the principals asked parents to discuss the idea with each other before a decision was made whether to permit me to contact them.

This method of making contact with the families seemed an ideal solution to several problems. First, it relieved the principal and the school of any ethical problems of confidentiality since the initial call
was, in fact, a request to permit the family's name to be given out. Second, it provided for me a powerful endorsement and a personal introduction from an authority figure in the community, and this was a tremendous help in enlisting the families' cooperation. At the same time, since it was stressed that the principal and the school would not have access to confidential details of the family's private life, potential complications resulting from the authority status of the principal or being identified as a representative of the school system were, I believe, avoided. Since the community in which this study was done is small enough that in most cases parents with several older children and principals have known each other for some time, the personal endorsement of the principal is likely to have contributed to the success rate in enlisting families' participation.

**Initial Contact—Investigator**

After making the initial call to each family and securing their permission to be contacted by me, the principal would provide me with the name and basic information about the prospective family. This information included the family's address and phone number, names and ages of the children and, when known, parents' occupations. In some cases the principal also provided me with his impressions of how receptive the family might be to the study and what concerns they might have.

In my first phone contact with each prospective family, I took some care to underscore that there was no obligation to participate. I first introduced myself, mentioning that I understood the principal of the elementary school had spoken with them about me and my research project.
I offered to explain the study briefly on the phone, responded to questions and, if they still sounded interested, asked if I might meet with them to discuss it further, again with no obligation. No attempt was made to pressure any family to participate or to question a decision not to participate. I did make an effort to be sure that the family understood what I was requesting before making a decision.

Of the families contacted by phone who met the criteria, 7 out of 13 declined the initial meeting. Among those who chose not to become involved, stated reasons varied from 'we decided we are not interested', to 'we are too busy and it would take too much time', to 'we are a private family and would be uncomfortable being observed.'

The Initial Meeting

It was felt that entry into a family should be a slow, carefully maneuvered process, not in the sense of manipulation, but in the sense of respect for the families' boundaries. At each step I made clear my wish to hear about any misgivings family members might have. I tried to encourage the expression of what might be uncomfortable for them about the project. In most cases the major concern was the participant observation or a sense that I would be evaluating their psychological adjustment or health. Often, airing these concerns made family members more comfortable. In fact, while some concerns were expressed by each family I visited, only one declined to participate after actually meeting with me.

The initial meeting accomplished several tasks. First, it was an opportunity to meet the parents. Aside from one family (Chase) with
whom the initial meeting took place at the father's professional office, this initial meeting took place at the home and thus provided an opportunity to see the family's life space. Second, it was at this meeting (in one family (Hastings) two meetings were necessary) that we agreed officially to a research contract and signed a document (Appendix II) which stated our mutual rights and obligations. Finally, after discussion and a decision to participate, this time was used for gathering basic family history information using the Basic Information Form (Appendix III) as a guide. I also asked each couple to describe typical weekend and week days for the family. Before the meeting ended a date was set for the weekend day of participant observation.

In taking some history of the family, I gathered basic information about the ages and sexes of family members, date of marriage, where they had lived before, the status and residence of grandparents, the composition of each spouse's family of origin, occupation and work history, etc. In this way I became familiar with the important relationships in the extended family, got to know the parents and their relationship a little bit and became familiar enough with the family and its habits to be able, for the most part, to follow what was going on during the participant observation.

In two families (Chase, Levy) this first meeting took place with the parents alone, and I returned some afternoon after school to meet the children before the first day of participant observation. In two others, Roberts and Clark, I met the children during the first part of the interview and then continued with the parents after they had gone to bed. I met with the Hastings couple on two afternoons about a week
apart and was there when the kids came home from school both times. I made a point of meeting each member before beginning the participant observation.

Note: Family names and first names of family members in this and all other sections of this dissertation are fictitious. Fictitious names have been used to protect the identity of family members, and selected to convey the flavor of the actual family and first names.
Ritual, Rite, Custom, and Ceremony in Anthropology

The term ritual in the anthropological literature is comparable, perhaps, to the term anxiety in the literature of psychology. It is a fundamental concept, frequently referred to but without a consensually agreed upon definition. In general, a ritual in anthropology is an act which is prescribed, rigid, and repetitive (Gluckman, 1962; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Homans, 1941). At first the concept referred quite specifically to religious practices. A ritual was seen as an act intended to control (pacify or enhance) supernatural forces, which could be composed of any combination of thirteen "minimal categories of religious behavior":

- Prayer: addressing the supernatural.
- Music: dancing, singing, and playing instruments.
- Physical exercise: the physical manipulation of psychological state.
- Exhortation: addressing another human being.
- Reciting the code: mythology, morality, belief system.
- Simulation: imitation of animals or things.
- Mana: touching things.
- Taboo: not touching things.
- Feasts: eating and drinking.
- Sacrifice: immolation, offerings, and fees.
- Congregation: processions, meetings and convocations.
- Inspiration; and
- Symbolism: manufacture and use of symbolic objects (from Wallace, 1966).

Three other terms are used in conjunction with, and at times inter-
changeably with, the term ritual in anthropological writings. These are rite, custom and ceremony. Ritual, in a general sense, may consist of a series of rites, but in essence both rite and ritual refer to the same stereotyped, repetitive behavior. Customs are more appropriately defined as social habits—repetitive behavior which is neither highly stylized and nor necessarily sacred or religious in nature. Thus it may be customary, for example, for a given group to eat a particular food. If the way in which the particular food is prepared and served, and the specific occasion for its eating are prescribed, or the mythical reason for eating the food is recited over the meal, the practice becomes ritual.

Ceremony is typically prescribed. There are rituals which are not ceremonies (e.g., silent prayer), and there is some disagreement among anthropologists as to whether all ceremony may be considered ritual. This argument centers on the question of whether secular ceremonies (e.g., installation ceremonies for officers of a secular organization) can be classified as ritual. That is, must all ritual be religious in nature and tied to a relationship with supernatural forces, or can social acts which are prescribed, rigid and repetitive be classified under the rubric of ritual?

Along with the trend toward functional analysis of social phenomena in anthropology has come a gradual deemphasis on religious or mystical purpose as a criteria for viewing a social act as a ritual. Gluckman (1962), Wilson (1957) and Evans-Pritchard (1937) maintain that ritual in anthropology must be seen as "referring to mystical notions"; other anthropologists including Goody (1961) and Wallace (1966) and sociologists
Bossard and Boll (1950) disagree. They hold, as Wallace states, that "although ritual is the primary phenomenon of religion, the ritual process itself requires no supernatural belief" (p. 233).

A similar gradual transition in meaning has taken place for the concept of myth, which might now be defined as 'cultural belief system', whereas earlier anthropologists would surely have seen myth as strictly systems of religious beliefs. This seems a necessary process if social science is to apply ideas about the function of such phenomena as ritual and myth in maintaining and transforming social structure in more secular, modern social settings. Ferriera (1963) has fruitfully applied a non-religious concept of myth to the analysis of maintenance functions in the family. It is crucial to the application of the concept of ritual to the study of the modern family, given its largely secular nature, to base the definition of ritual on the pattern of behavior and its function rather than on its religious or mystical nature.

Before a terminology and scheme of classifications for ritual which can be fruitfully applied to the modern family is presented, it is appropriate first to examine some anthropological classifications of ritual, based largely on data from the study of primitive religion.

Classifications of Rituals in Anthropology

Turner (1969) and Wallace (1966) have described the most fundamental categorization of rituals in anthropology as the dualistic typology of calendrical and critical rites. Calendrical rites "occur in a regular schedule, and the occasion for their performance is always some event in the natural cycle--day and night, the waxing and waning of the
moon, the seasons," etc. (Wallace, p. 70). Critical rites, also called life-crisis rites or non-calendrical rites, are those in which the ritual marks a crisis in the life of the individual or the group. Rites of passage, as described earlier, fall into this category, as do magical rites of a communal sort which are performed, for example, when the whole tribe goes to war or to reverse the effects of a drought, famine, plague, etc. Thus critical rites may involve an individual, an age-group, or the entire tribe, while calendrical rites are typically communal in nature. This time-based classification seems more useful than the earlier categorization of rituals into magical and religious types (Malinowski, 1948; Durkheim, 1915; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952).

A more detailed categorization of rituals, based upon the function of the ritual act rather than simply the factor of temporal occurrence, is provided by Wallace (1966). He proposes five types of ritual: rituals of technology, therapy, ideology, salvation and revitalization. He sees ritual as the essential behavior of religion and thus proposes these five categories as the categories of religious behavior.

Rituals of technology, according to Wallace, are intentional religious acts aimed at the control of nature. These include rites of intensification (Chapple and Coon, 1942) which are structurally similar to rites of passage but are meant to affect fertility, crop yield, availability of game, etc. Magical rituals of divination (prophecy) and of protection from and prevention of evil and misfortune (superstition) are also included among rituals of technology.

Rituals of therapy are those rituals which involve treatment and cure of illness. A corresponding group of practices which Wallace calls
anti-therapy includes various forms of witchcraft, and sorcery.

Rituals of ideology 'may be said to have as their aim social control in the cybernetic sense.' That is, to instruct, direct and program individuals as they enter upon new tasks or roles, and thus function to maintain social structure. These include rites of passage which mark developmental transitions in individual life cycle, social rites of intensification which are intended to maintain 'the general value-tonus' of the community, taboos and courtesies in social interaction, and rituals of rebellion, in which members of the community behave in ways opposite to the rules and norms that are most rigidly enforced at other times.

Rituals of salvation are those religious practices which are aimed at achieving changes in identity (becoming a shaman, possession) or facilitating mystical experiences. Also included in this category are rituals of expiation--confession, penance and good works.

Finally, rituals of revitalization are whole-tribe or cultural events of spiritual transformation or cultural upheaval and healing in which there is a reorganization and revitalization around a transformed set of beliefs and ritual practices (e.g., messianic cultural movements).

This categorization subsumes all of the rituals which come under the time-based classifications of calendrical and critical. Rituals of technology, therapy and ideology appear to contain both types. Rituals of salvation and rituals of revitalization seem to be critical rituals, although rituals of revitalization are based in a third time frame, that is, the 'life cycle' of a culture.

Variants of rituals of technology, rituals of ideology and rituals
of salvation are present in the data on rituals in the lives of the five modern American families whose case studies will follow this chapter. Nearly all of the family rituals to be presented fall under the category of rituals of ideology.

"Level of Ritualization" in Tribal and Family Contexts

If the data of this study are a true reflection of the modern family, it is clear that we will not likely find any elaborate three-stage rites of passage or similarly complex and highly stereotyped rituals. Ritualizations in the modern family, by comparison to tribal rites, are more mini-rituals—non-religious, semi-structured events which are analogous to tribal rites in form and function, but not comparable in intensity, religiousity, rigidity or duration. This leads to the simple, but important, acknowledgement that what we will call ritual in family life would probably be judged inadequate to fit the classical anthropological definition of ritual.

Several differences between the modern family as a social unit and the tribe seem to account for the profound difference in 'level of ritualization.'

A primary factor is simple group size, an aspect of which is the absence in the family of groups of adults. Another factor is the relative segregation of roles in modern industrialized society. As Gluckman (1962) has explained, "...if one followed the development of rituals from the tribal stage to the modern industrialized stage, there is first a decline and then a drop in the ritualization of social relations" (p. 25). He goes on to present the thesis that in a subsistence economy...
each social relation serves manifold purposes: "A man plays a host of roles, as several kinds of productive worker, as consumer, as teacher and pupil, as worshipper, in close association with the people whom he calls father and son and brother, wife and sister" (p. 27). Since, "in small-scale society, every issue may be at once a domestic, an economic and a political crisis," rituals to govern change and maintain the social structure are more necessary and prevalent than in modern culture.

Furthermore, as compared with the kind of historical continuity over generations that characterizes tribal culture, the family as a living unit has a relatively brief period of integration, the duration of which is frequently shorter than the life-cycle of a single member.

It is clear, then, that Wallace's classification scheme is based on the study of tribal and other religious groups which differ in a number of important ways from the family. Thus, while his categories provide a valuable base from which to apply the concept of ritual to the modern family, a set of categories more specific to the family as a social system is necessary. This study is, in part, an attempt to provide such a system of classifications, grounded in data gathered in the field through participant-observation and interviews.

Criteria for Family Rituals

The reader may have already noticed a parallel between calendrical and critical rituals in anthropology on the one hand and the two types of family rituals (family-binding and life-cycle) described earlier on the other. Binding rituals correspond more easily to the anthropological definition of ritual as repetitve, rigid and prescribed. Life-
cycle rituals, while corresponding in function to one category of critical rituals, the rites of passage, are not so easily reconciled with the strict anthropological definition of ritual presented earlier. The main reason for this is that these practices in the family may not be repeated, given the length of the family cycle as compared with the tribe. Thus family 'markings of development' are also less likely to become rigid and prescribed. Yet it seems appropriate to report them as rituals nonetheless, since they are functionally analogous to rites of passage.

Two characteristics distinguish family rituals from the events which form the routine of family life—temporal specificity and quality of specialness. Temporal specificity may be based in calendrical time (daily, weekly, seasonally, etc.) for family binding rituals, or in life-cycle time for life-cycle rituals. Temporal specificity in life-cycle time means that the ritual must be tied to either calendar-based life-cycle events (birthdays, graduations, etc.) or developmental events that are not tied to any specific date but have a specific place in life-cycle time (e.g., a family party and gifts on the occasion of leaving home).

Quality of specialness is a criteria more dependent on the researcher's judgment in defining what is and what is not a family ritual. It is difficult to eliminate altogether the qualitative factor of judgment in differentiating between family routine and family ritual. Quality of specialness is that quality which makes an event in the already regular and repetitive family routine stand out as a ritual. Aspects of this quality include ceremony, formality, greater structure,
other change of details, the subjective importance of the event to family members, and a negative response of family members to omission. In a sense, these are indices of emphasis, of the amount of emotional focus and investment placed in the event, of its meaning and significance. An example may help to clarify.

While most families have dinner on Sunday, Sunday dinner in some families may be distinguished as a ritual. The event in either case is temporally specific. A family may have a fairly structured dinner routine (not specific to Sunday) complete with seating arrangements and serving order, cooking, tablesetting, serving and dishwashing chores. All of these aspects of dinner are elements of routine. What qualities of specialness would distinguish a family ritual in this context?

A special menu, perhaps, or lit candles, a special tablecloth or dishes, more strict attendance rules, special dress expectations, the saying of grace, meaningful changes in the preparation and serving routine (e.g., the older children cook and serve mother first as a reverse of the ordinary), etc. might make Sunday dinner stand out as a ritual. When asked by an outsider (researcher), family members might agree that Sunday dinner was 'special', looked forward to, etc. There might be comments and possibly complaints in the family should the event be skipped or some of the elements omitted. Of course, not all of the aspects of specialness (ceremony, formality, structure, change of detail, subjective importance and response to omission) are necessary for a family event to stand out as special, and there are varying degrees of 'specialness.' At the least, the subjective report of an event as special (subjective importance) will be required as a necessary criterion for a
routinized, temporally specific event to be considered a family ritual.

**Classifications of Family Ritual**

The two primary classes of rituals in family life have already been presented and described as family-binding rituals and life-cycle rituals. Their correspondence to calendrical rituals and critical rituals respectively in anthropology has been pointed out. Within each of these two categories, several types of ritual practices can be defined on the basis of the data of this study. This typology is presented as a data-grounded scheme of classification which is no more exhaustive than the data on which it is based. That is to say, these categories are not presented as exhaustive. There may be (and probably are) more types of family rituals than have shown up in this study.

**Family-binding Rituals**

Along with family routine (which will be described for each family in each case study) these practices are the behavior which maintains the family as a social structure. Under the heading of binding rituals we can distinguish among: couple rituals, special family activities, celebrations, and two categories of problem-solving rituals: ritualized routine and family institutions.

**Couple rituals** are regular events in the life of a couple which seem to have a valuable function in the maintenance of the couple's relationship as spouses and as a separate sub-system in the family. Sitting down to coffee and a chat each day when the husband comes home from work (Clark family) is an example of such a ritual. A couple ritual, such as a regular and special shopping trip to the city with specific
stops (Levy), can evolve into a family ritual as the children grow old enough to come along. The distinguishing characteristic of couple rituals is their focus on the couple as separate from the rest of the family. Thus they are set apart in a separate category even though they may be examples of celebration, special activities, or problem-solving.

**Special family activities** occur on a regular calendrical schedule (i.e., daily, weekly, seasonally, etc.). These include Sunday dinner, maple sugaring, special fishing trips, etc., as long as these activities are adequately specific in their timing and 'special' enough to be considered ritual. Thus, the same activity may be a ritual in one family but not in another. For example, one family in this study (Roberts) goes on a yearly vacation in late summer, almost always to the same place. This event, considered very special by family members, is considered a special family activity. Another family in the study (Chase) takes several vacations a year, but at no consistent time of the year or usual place. Thus, the second family's vacation is not reported as a ritual.

**Holiday celebrations** are also calendrical rituals. Other celebrations such as birthday and graduation parties will be reported under ceremonial rites and cultural life-cycle rituals. Anniversaries are reported under couple rituals. Holiday celebrations with more ceremony or ritualized detail will be given greater attention, but all celebrations that are consistent yearly events will be reported. Both religious holidays (Christmas, Chanukah, Easter, etc.) and secular holidays (Thanksgiving, July 4th, New Year's Eve, etc.) are included in this category.
Problem-solving rituals take two forms in these data. For each family the pattern of bedtime rituals will be described. There is considerable variation in the complexity and importance of these practices across families. This category of problem solving rituals is called ritualized routine. Under family institutions there are numerous possibilities, but only three examples come from these data. One is a magical rite performed to give good speed in track and ski races (Roberts). This corresponds to Wallace's category of rituals of technology. A second institution from the same family is the family song, which is reported under institutions for the reader's interest. It is highly special but not temporally specific, so not considered a ritual practice. A third family institution is a system of fines, complete with a chart of offenders, for failure to perform chores (leaving the garage door open), etc. which is called 'the penalty box' in one of the families (Chase). Its use might be seen as corresponding to Wallace's category of rituals of expiation under the broad heading of rituals of salvation.

Life Cycle Rituals

Three types of family life-cycle rituals can be defined on the basis of the data from the five families. These are ceremonial rites, symbolic gifts, and cultural rituals.

Ceremonial rites in the family include birthday celebrations, and ritually marked firsts. Each family's mode of birthday celebration will be presented in this category, although in one family (Hastings), for example, in which birthdays are celebrated consistently, but in no consistent way, it would be more appropriate to term the practice a custom
than a ritual. When firsts are reported under this category they must be marked with some kind of ceremony, or celebration. An example is the first family bike ride (Levy) which took place in commemoration of the youngest's learning to ride a two wheeler. This was a first which went on to become a part of the family routine. The explicit statement to the child that this was a celebration of her learning to ride a two wheeler as well as announcements of this fact to neighbors helped in determining this event as a life-cycle ritual. An example more on the borderline of inclusion is the first opening day of hunting season for a young boy in another family (Roberts). This was mentioned as a special, important event by family members, but did not seem to be accompanied by much ceremony or explicit statement of the event's importance at the time. This example is included as a life-cycle ritual because of the attitude and subjective meaning of the event for family members. Other firsts less ritualized than this are reported under developmental change of routine.

Symbolic gifts are presents which have attached to them some special developmental meaning. Often such gifts are given on the occasion of the birthday. Here a particular birthday may stand out as special in relation to others because of a gift that is meaningful developmentally. A gift of a bracelet, handed down from grandmother to mother to child and given on the tenth birthday is one example (Hastings). An example of a symbolic gift that was not a birthday present is a gift of maps for an oldest son to help him plan his first cross-country trip (Roberts). This was a Christmas gift.

The primary cultural ritual found in these families that can be
considered a life cycle ritual is the ritual of the tooth fairy. The particular way of practicing this ritual is reported for each family. Another type of cultural ritual is the family marking or celebration of a developmental event that takes place in the larger society. An example of this kind of family commemoration is the family graduation party. Other possible variations of this kind of ritual would be ceremonies or celebrations surrounding getting a driver's license or obtaining one's first job, although these examples do not come from the data of the study.
CHAPTER VIII

CASE STUDIES OF FIVE FAMILIES

Each of the five case studies which follow is divided into three sections. This organization is presented in outline form in Figure 1. The first section in each is a description of the family, its history and its structure. This is meant to provide the reader with an introduction to the family context in which ritualistic and developmental events take place. Names, places and other identifying details have been changed to protect the identities of the families who participated.

The second section of each case study is a description of family behaviors in two broad categories: binding and life-cycle. Within each of these categories behavior that is part of the family routine will be presented, followed by descriptions of the family's rituals under the classifications defined earlier (see Classifications of Rituals in Family Life).

The third section of each case study will be a consideration of the family's response to the developmental transition which occurs when the youngest child enters school. Other current developmental issues will also be discussed and some thoughts about how the family copes with developmental change will be presented.

Case Study I--The Roberts Family

Andrew "Andy" (Father) 42 Forester
Susan (Mother) 40 Coronary ICU Nurse
Case Study Outline

Section I. Family History and Structure

Section II. Binding and Life Cycle Behavior

A. Binding Behavior

1. Family Routine

2. Family Binding Rituals
   a. Couple rituals
   b. Regular family activities
   c. Celebrations
   d. Problem solving rituals
      i. ritualized routine
      ii. family institutions

B. Life Cycle Behavior

1. Developmental Change of Routine

2. Life Cycle Rituals
   a. Ceremonial rites
   b. Symbolic gifts
   c. Cultural rituals

Section III. Response to Developmental Transition--The Youngest Enters First Grade

Figure 1. Outline of case study format.
Steven (Son) 18  Lumber Mill Worker
Mark (Son)    17  H.S. Senior
Laura (Daughter) 16  H.S. Junior
Linda (Daughter) 16  H.S. Junior
Douglas (Son)    7  First Grade

Family History and Structure:

The Roberts live in an old New England home on a country road in a village a few miles from town. They have been living there for the last four years. Before that they lived (for 16 years) in town. Andrew (42) was born and grew up locally, where his parents, in their late 70's, still reside. Sue (40) grew up in a city on the New England coast.

Andy and Sue met on a blind date when in May of 1957 she was in Nursing School and he was in the Navy. For about a year they corresponded with each other, saw each other when they could, and he gave her an engagement ring on Valentine's Day, 1958. They were married that September 20th, twenty years ago.

Sue described her family of origin as a 'fun' family, in which there was always some reason for everyone to get together and celebrate. "We might have had forty people or more all come together at the drop of a hat for someone's birthday, someone coming, someone going..." Until her mother died, when she was 12 years old, they had a big Sunday dinner every week. Sue's father took ill and came to live with the Roberts when the children were quite young. He died at age 63, after living with them for only several months.

Both of Andy's parents are still living in the house he grew up in
in town. He had a younger sister who died as an infant, but no other brothers or sisters. He described a quieter home life with a smaller extended family than Sue had.

Both Sue and Andy were quickly and easily accepted by each other's families when they announced their engagement. The only problem mentioned in the process of joining the two families was that Andy's mother wanted to be a mother to Sue in a way which made Sue uncomfortable.

Children came quickly for the Roberts. Steven, their oldest (now 18-1/2), was born about a year and a half after their wedding. In retrospect both parents reported that they might have liked to have had a bit more time without children. They felt quite ready at the time though, and 20 years ago, as they report, there was more pressure to have kids right away. Their second son, Mark (now 17), was born a year and a half later. Then, just a year later, Sue gave birth to twins—Laura and Linda (now 16). Their youngest, Doug (now 7), was born nine years after the girls. Thus, the family, at the time of this research, is in the process of launching the oldest son, who graduated high school a year ago, at the same time as they are sending the youngest off to first grade.

Both Sue and Andy work, Sue as a coronary ICU nurse (since the girls were four) and Andy as a forester, doing consulting on lumber and wood lot management. Both derive considerable satisfaction from their work, but expressed strongly the value that they prefer a country, family-oriented lifestyle to a life based around occupational or financial ambitions. Their division of labor seems more based on preference than sex roles. Andy does a considerable amount of the cooking and
child care (breakfast each day, reading to the children, etc.) while also pursuing more typical masculine activities such as hunting, fishing, woodcutting, etc. Sue has worked for a number of years at a job which required her to rotate shifts (this was a main complaint in the interviews with the children), and has also begun taking evening courses through the local university.

The Roberts are a very active, athletic family. Both girls are members of the school's cross country ski team, and every member of the family was out skiing at some point while I was present during the two days of observation. They have their own cross country ski trail cut out in the woods near their home. Ice fishing was one of the activities I took part in on the Sunday I spent with them (all but Sue and Doug participated). They go on camping trips each summer. They are also quite involved in their community, Andy (and the older sons) in the Fire Department (a radio in the kitchen is tuned to the fire call station at all times), Sue in the church (all but the oldest of the kids were in the church Christmas play I attended the Sunday I spent with them).

As a couple, Sue and Andy complement each other. Sue is the more talkative, openly emotional and outspoken person; while Andy is the quieter, more easy going of the two. In my interview with them, both described a mutual pattern of support in their relationship which usually takes the form of keeping an eye on each other's mood. If she seems down or tired, for example, he will get her to go out skiing or initiate some other activity which gets her out of her bad mood.

The whole family seems characterized by a kind of caring attentiveness. There is considerable kidding, sometimes even bordering on ridi-
cule, but never, it seems, experienced as really hurtful. There is a lot of physical affection—especially between the parents and between Doug and both mom and dad. Attention is paid to family members' needs as they arise. Questions from the kids never seem to get lost in the business of the moment. They may be put off for a bit, but they get a response. I sensed an atmosphere of safety and nurturance, which seems to be enhanced especially by Andy's unusually warm and nurturant participation in the child care.

Sue and Andy expressed a philosophy of family togetherness and said they saw themselves as relatively strict parents. Family rules reflect this philosophy. For example, everyone is expected to help out with chores, since, as Sue often says: "In a large family if everyone does something there's more time for all of us to do something together." No more than two nights out till 9:30 are allowed during the school week, and one late night on the weekend. This becomes gradually more flexible as the kids grow older, however. Steve, who is 18-1/2 now and graduated high school last year has 'free run' according to Andy, as long as he lets his parents know where he will be and when he will be home. According to the boys, their parents are a bit restrictive, but they respect their parents' judgment: "We don't always like it, but we stick by it" (Mark).

Steve (18-1/2), as mentioned before, graduated high school last year. He is currently working in a lumber mill and saving for a planned cross-country adventure this coming summer. He has his own car and freely declines to participate in some family activities (e.g., the Christmas play) while participating in others (e.g., ice fishing). He
plans to go to college after a bit of traveling, but has not decided on any particular field.

Mark (17) has a year of high school to go. He is an outstanding track runner and cross-country skier on the school team. He is said to look and act more like his mother than any of his siblings (e.g., both are grumpy in the morning). He also expects to go to college, but has not settled on a specific goal.

Laura and Linda (16) are twins. Although they are not actually identical twins, I was still having difficulty telling them apart at the end of my work with the family. Both are avid cross-country skiers on the school team. Both are also more involved than their brothers in taking care of the youngest, Doug—playing with him and helping him with school work, etc. In their interview they spoke of how they are each other's closest friend and viewed leaving each other as the most difficult aspect they anticipate in growing up. They both appeared a bit shy and awkward in their interview, but were very cooperative.

Doug (7) began first grade this fall. Sue referred to him as 'his father's son.' His father affectionately calls him 'old man.' Doug seemed fairly relaxed but reserved in relation to me. His parents made the decision just before he was to begin kindergarten to hold him out of school for a year, since he would have been just about the youngest in his class. They expressed to me the belief that this had been a major factor in how easily he had adjusted to school and how well he was doing. Doug struck me as a rather determined, grown up, gentle young fellow. He gets a lot of attention since he is the youngest among so many relatively old people. He also seemed to me to live up to his father's
nickname of 'old man' in the reserved, independent way he carries himself.

In general, it was my impression that the two oldest boys are in the process of making relationships outside the family, while the twins are more engaged in their relationship with each other and with their younger brother. There were several fights between the older brothers and their sisters or Doug over the use of the bathroom in the morning, whether a certain light should be on or off upstairs one evening, etc., during my time with the family. Yet I also heard a few stories during the interviews about them loyally defending each other in neighborhood fights when they were younger. All of the children seemed very enthusiastic about their family and the fun they have together. This might make growing up and leaving home harder, but, as the ritualistic practices in the family reflect, there is considerable support for developmental movement.

In their interview with me, Andy and Sue stressed the importance of teaching their kids independence. They talked about how they try to encourage each child to make decisions for him/herself. For example, one day that I was with them, Doug felt sick and was encouraged to decide for himself if he was well enough to go to school.

When asked about what it will be like as the four adolescent kids in their family leave home, Andy and Sue both began to talk about the adventures they had when they first left home--getting into hot water and "cutting-up" in college--and seemed to feel that those experiences were very valuable for them. They would not want to deprive their children of making mistakes, they said, even though they might worry a bit.
Andy spoke of how he would, "quite frankly, miss Steve", when he leaves for his cross-country trip this summer. Sue spoke of some envious feelings, and that "it's gonna leave an awful hole." But, after all these years of having kids around, she said, "Then comes our time to enjoy each other."

The kids are also aware of and responsive to their parents' development, although this is expressed in more joking fashion. Every now and again, Sue is approached by one of the boys with a question like, "Back in the days when you were young, did they have things like telephones and electricity?..." Quite a point is made each birthday about how the parents are just about over the hill.

Binding and Life Cycle Behavior

**Binding behavior**

In general, this family provided more examples of ritualistic practices than any other in the study. This included both practices of the 'binding' type and the 'life-cycle' type. These ritualistic practices, far from leading to an air of formality or rigidity, are part of a family atmosphere which is affectionate, mutually attentive, fun-loving and fond of celebration.

**Family routine**

The routine which forms the day-to-day life of this family could be seen as beginning each night when Andy mixes together his breakfast concoction of oatmeal and fruit in the crock-pot to cook through the night and be ready for everyone to eat between six and seven the next morning (week days). Another habit of his is the keeping of a daily log in
which he records important family events, the day's weather, how many eggs the chickens laid, etc. This log was started just a year ago "because it was something I always wanted to do." Typical chores are distributed by and large among traditional sex-role lines among the older kids (the girls do dishes; the boys do trash, wood, shoveling snow, etc.). Sue takes care of dinner most of the time and the laundry. This family practices the opposite of the special Sunday dinner found in some families--Sunday it is "every person for him/herself", a day for mom, especially, to relax.

The Roberts do a lot of things together as a family. They are especially fond of outdoor activities, and each year go camping and on picnics together. Ice fishing, working on the garden, and cross-country skiing are also whole family (or large sub-parts) activities, which are not particularly ritualized.

Family binding rituals

Couple rituals. This family did not report any couple rituals.

Special family activities. Seasonal activities which have somewhat more of a ritualistic quality than gardening or camping include the opening day of deer season, which is quite important for the older boys and their father. Another is the yearly vacation, which takes place each summer. They either go to Lake Champlain or a camping ground on the coast of Maine called Hermit's Island. This was brought up a number of times in my stay and my interviews with family members as a very special event. The choice of where to go is made on the basis of everyone's needs and no one has ever expressed a wish to stay home. Once, several years ago, Mark got sick with pneumonia and they had to postpone the
trip. This came up as the family was discussing difficult times in their history. Mark said he felt really guilty that everyone had to stay home. Another time, when they had gone to Hermit Island, it rained for three days and showed no signs of stopping, and they had to leave and head for drier territory.

Another calendrical ritual in this family is April Fools Day. There is always some kidding and joking going on in the family—a certain amount of trying to embarrass each other. On April Fools Day, most years and especially when the kids were younger and more gullible, Andy would always try to trick or fool somebody. An oft-repeated instance of this was one year when, with everyone else catching on and going along, he had Steve convinced that he had missed a whole day of school.

**Holiday celebrations.** This family has a fairly elaborate Christmas celebration which, this year, included participation of all the kids (except Steve) in the Church Youth Group Play (which I attended on the Sunday I spent with them). Each year they have a Christmas tree, which is decorated with candy canes and numerous tree decorations, some of which have been in the family (both sides) for several generations. On the night before Christmas they go to church. When they come home they have cookies, Andy reads 'The Night before Christmas' aloud, and they put up their stockings. There is the traditional present opening in the morning. This version of the traditional cultural Christmas ritual corresponds pretty closely with both parents' recollections of the ritual as practiced in their families of origin. Other holidays, including Thanksgiving and Easter, are celebrated as a family, complete with Easter egg hunts, special dinners, and sometimes a visit from Andy's par-
ents (called Grammy and Grampy).

**Problem solving rituals.** Like many families, the Roberts have evolved rituals surrounding bedtime. When the kids were younger and there were four to get to bed all at once, a game (which had its origins in Sue's family) was part of a ritual which made bedtime fun. This ritual was first described in the interview with the girls. When it was time for bed, Andy would announce that it was 'time to climb the wooden hill' at which point he would go to the top of the stairs and all would pretend that there was a big rope he was using to pull each kid up the 'wooden hill' one by one. Thus, a potentially annoying or difficult rule was made into a fun game. These days, with only one young child in the family, the wooden hill is seldom used, but there is a rather full bedtime ritual for Doug which involves both parents. Usually Sue goes up with Doug and tucks him in with a good-night kiss, at which point Andy takes over, sometimes reading a story and often lying down next to Doug until he begins to drift off to sleep and tells his father he can go. This practice is becoming less important as Doug grows, so that recently he will go to sleep with a shortened version. For example, on the first evening I visited the Roberts, Doug just came downstairs and gave each of his parents a good-night kiss before going to sleep.

While Doug was in kindergarten, Sue or one of the older kids used to walk him down to the school bus each morning. This got started when Doug began coming home to go to the bathroom after leaving for school. This was timed just right so that he would miss the bus and have to be driven to school. When Sue asked him about this she discovered that he
was afraid of 'big trucks' on the road and it was decided that someone would walk with him each day.

A particularly interesting practice employed by the Roberts is called High Speed Banana Bread. It seems that one night before a ski race in which the girls participated, Andy baked some banana bread and put it in with their lunch. They won that day and before most races now, Andy will bake 'high speed banana bread' and put it in the lunch of a family member who has a race or a track meet (Mark) that day. This might be seen as a magical rite corresponding to Wallace's (1966) category of rituals of industry, mentioned earlier.

Another practice in the Roberts family that deserves mention, but may not necessarily be considered ritualistic is the singing of family songs. These songs seem to have served as a socialization tool when the children were younger, which is why I include them under the problem solving heading. They originated in Sue's childhood, are encouraged in the family by Andy, and were first mentioned in the interviews by the girls. One such song was sung by all to anyone who was a 'goop', and was meant to encourage bathing. The words go as follows:

Garbage (name), garbage ________,
Lives on top of garbage hill,
Never washes, never will,
Boop, bing, Garbage ________.

When I inquired about family members' attitudes towards these kinds of binding practices in the family, they seemed universally appreciated. As Laura said: "I think they're excellent. Life would be boring without them."
Life cycle behavior

Developmental change of routine

There are numerous ways in which the routine of this family has changed in relation to the developmental growth of its members. No exhaustive account of these will be attempted, but some examples will be mentioned.

This is a family in which a lot of importance is placed on events in the children's lives. Sue, in the parents' interview, spoke of having enough 'first shoes' in the attic, "I could open up a shoe store!" Elementary school papers, first locks of hair, etc., were also kept, as they were in her family of origin.

One example of family routine that changes with the growth of the children is the bedtime routine. Bedtime itself, which, when the kids were younger, was hierarchical by age, as it is in most families. Bedtime got later as the kids grew older, and for the four adolescents in this family, there seems to be no particular parental involvement in what time they go to bed. This change took place gradually, sometime around ten or eleven years old. There has been a gradual change in the bedtime ritual for Doug as well. He requires less and less attention around going to bed, and soon will put himself to bed entirely. No particular marking or ceremony accompanies these gradual changes in bedtime routine.

A developmental change in a family-binding ritual in this family will come this summer when Steve, who will be on his cross-country trip, will not be with them for their yearly vacation. This may receive some kind of special (perhaps ritualized) attention at the time. The fact
that he was not involved in the Youth Group Christmas play this year, as were the rest of the kids, is another reflection of his gradual withdrawal from the traditional activities of the family.

Other changes in routine that are noteworthy are the older boys dropping out of the dish-washing rotation somewhere between ages ten and twelve, and the girls beginning to iron their own clothes at about the same age.

**Life cycle rituals**

_Ceremonial rites._ Birthday celebrations are given a lot of attention in this family, and seem to have evolved a fairly consistent repetitive format. Even if one of the kids has a party for friends, there is still a special family party, as well, which includes the child's favorite dish for dinner, and cake after dinner. Andy's mother and father usually come up from town for the cake after dinner. The boys reported that a fuss was made at their thirteenth birthdays about now turning into a teenager, but the girls did not remember their thirteenth birthday as being particularly special. For their birthday, however, there is a special yearly ritual which they very much enjoy, and that is being taken fishing by their father. Andy made a point in one of the interviews about how successful those fishing trips were, sometimes really showing up the boys with the size of the catch. This is a binding ritual within the life-cycle ritual of the birthday.

The boys, especially, noted that on their parents' birthdays there is a lot of kidding each year about becoming aged and over the hill.

Another ceremonial rite in this family, particularly relevant for this study, is the ritual on the first day of school. This rite, done
with the older kids until they were in third or fourth grade, takes place each year, but was described as particularly special on the first day of first grade. Starting a week or so before the first day, there are preparations—making sure books and pencils are in order, etc. Then, on the first day, both parents have been home, whenever possible. They were both home for Doug's first day of first grade this year. The child or children are dressed up and Andy takes a picture of them standing in front of the house. I was shown several such first-day pictures from family scrapbooks when I asked about the first day of school. When I asked Doug in his interview what his attitude toward the ritual was, he said he really liked it and that it made him feel almost as if his parents were going to school with him. The parents both felt the ritual to be especially moving this year, since it was their youngest going off to first grade. They mentioned feeling sad and having their eyes become a bit teary. It is also interesting to note that Doug decided to walk alone from their house to the school bus stop, without having someone walk with him as he had when he was in kindergarten. He has walked to the bus by himself ever since.

Symbolic gifts. Although there are probably numerous examples of symbolic gifts in this family, only two stood out and were mentioned in my talks with the members of this family. First mentioned was the Christmas gift of maps this year for Steve to be used on his trip cross-country this summer. The first thing Steve said in response to my interview question about whether his parents made it difficult for him to become independent was, "Well, they gave me maps for Christmas." With this gift, his parents are showing support for the trip as well as en-
couraging him to plan a route ahead of time. This exemplifies the combination of control and support for independence which seems to characterize these parents' approach to their children's development.

Another symbolic gift, which came up in relation to a discussion of Steve's Christmas present of maps, was the gift to Mark of camping gear and maps of the Long Trail, which is one of his favorite trails to hike. This was brought up by Sue as an association to the idea of a gift to encourage independence.

Cultural rituals. The ritual of the tooth fairy, which involves putting the lost baby teeth under one's pillow at night and finding some money in place of the tooth in the morning, is practiced in this family as it is in each of the families I worked with. In discussing it with the parents, the inflation rate was commented on in each family, a tooth going for a quarter in most families these days, when it was more like a nickel or a dime in the parents' families when they were six or seven years old.

This family has participated in a number of church related rituals, one of which, Baptism, is a religious rite of passage. This was done in the Baptist church they belonged to in town before they moved further out into the country. The ritual is called a 'believer's baptism' and is done by free choice at age 14. It is a rather dramatic religious event, involving complete immersion in water.

The Roberts' involvement in church-going and church community activities is an important part of their life as a family, but it has decreased in importance as the kids have grown older. There was a time (before they reached Baptism age) when the whole family attended church
regularly. In the interview with the boys they commented that their mother got satisfaction from people coming up to her and complimenting her on having her whole family at church. When the four older kids reached early adolescence, it became harder to get everyone to go. The boys recalled to me that the best tactic was stalling, since Sue especially did not like being late. There were even a few dramatic fights about church-going. Eventually they were not expected to go if they did not want to. At this point the kids are involved in youth group activities, and attend church on Sundays occasionally. On the Sunday I spent with the family, Sue went to church alone, but did not seem to encourage or expect other family members to come along.

Response to Developmental Transition--The Youngest Enters First Grade

This is a family in which a considerable amount of attention was paid to the youngest's first grade entry. For several weeks in advance, the event was a topic of conversation, and people (especially Doug's sisters) spent a good deal of time talking with him about what school would be like and helping him prepare. All of this culminated in the early morning picture-taking ritual on the first day of school, which, besides being perceived as very supportive by Doug, seemed to be a useful emotional focus for both parents. The image of the two parents standing in front of the house feeling appropriately sad as they watched their youngest walk down the road off to school is a heartwarming one. It reflects a kind of nostalgic quality that I experienced as present in the life of this family. Some excerpts from the interview with Sue and Doug seem apropos here:
(talking about the ritual on the first day of school)

Ed: How did you feel?

Sue: Well, it's always sort of a sad feeling to see the last one go off. I thought I'd done it once before when I sent the twins off to school. It's kind of a funny feeling when you see the last one go down the road. It's kind of an awful feeling--you know--the tears kind of come to your eyes. They really did. They did with Andy, too. Our last child--our little one is no longer a little one anymore. He's growing up and growing up fast. And once they start school, oh, they just grow up much too fast.

Ed: You both had a few tears?

Sue: Oh, yes. Sent the last one off to school. It's different from kindergarten, first grade is. Really. There is a real difference between first grade and kindergarten. First grade they're out the door and going and that's just the beginning of them leaving home. You know, it's fun to watch them grow, but it's that first time that you let them really go...it's... it's hard, at least I've found for those few minutes, you know that it's gonna happen, you know it's what's expected to happen, but it's still hard when it happens.

Ed: (to Doug) Did you hear what your mother said? That she felt a little sad when you went to school. How did you feel? A little sad, too?

Doug: I felt scared, very scared. I didn't know what it was gonna be like. I thought it was gonna be work. But it wasn't--just math and stuff.

Ed: Did you think you would miss being a little kid?

Doug: No. I wanted to grow up. (laughs)

Sue: Most of them are like that. They can't stop and think about those things. They just go on and do more things... .

The only problem in Doug's adjustment to first grade was some anger and disappointment when he did not learn to read the first week and had to wait a bit for some of his books to come. Perhaps this is related to
all the attention paid to his starting first grade by the family. His expectations may have been rather high at the start. Whatever disappointment he may have felt at first seems to have had no real negative effects on him or his attitude towards school, however. Except for sometimes when he says the work is really hard, his attitude toward school is quite positive.

It is particularly interesting that this family is engaged in two related developmental transitions at once--the youngest entering school and the launching of the oldest child. This may have made the school entry of the youngest all the more poignant an event for the parents.

What was most impressive to me about this family was the degree to which feelings about these transitions were present and available to family members. This is not a highly emotional family. Indeed, they have more of a stoic New England quality than may come through in this description. But, when asked about their feelings about events in the family, they were responsive, frank and nondefensive.

The ritual on the first day of school is an example of how ritual may be an important part of the way this family copes with or works through a developmental transition. Another example of this principle in spontaneous action came in the family interview, when the discussion came around to how the family was going to deal with Steve's leaving home. At first there were quips from his various siblings about who would get his room, that there would be more food, it will be good to be rid of him, etc. Then people began to mention how someone else will have to pick up on his chores, with Andy saying to Doug: "He won't be around to make the holes in the ice when we go ice fishing." At that
point the family seemed a bit sad, and Doug said he didn't think it would be a very happy Christmas without Steve home. Mark asked Steve when he would actually be leaving and Doug piped up, "We'll have to have a party!", a suggestion which met with general agreement, as if it were, of course, the natural and appropriate thing to do. When I pointed out how this might be a way of marking an important event in the family with a celebration, Sue related that this was their custom and had been in her family of origin.

Case Study II--The Chase Family

James (Father) 38 General Surgeon
Deborah "Debbie" (Mother) 38 Home Maker
Allison (Daughter) 11 Sixth Grade
Lindsay "Lynn" (Daughter) 8 Third Grade
James Brewster "Bruce" (Son) 6 First Grade

Family History and Structure

The Chases live just outside of town in a large early-1900's home which they have remodeled in a colorful, modern fashion. This has been their home for the last four years. Before that, the Chases lived in the Northwest for two years, Scotland for a year, and several places around Boston since they were married in 1964. James, the father, was born and brought up in a town in central Massachusetts, where his parents still spend their summers (they winter in Florida). Debbie, the mother, comes from a city in upstate New York. Her father died four years ago in his late seventies. Her mother still resides in upstate New York, but, like James' parents, spends her winters in Florida.
James and Debbie met at a mutual friend's wedding reception, when, as they told it, she came up to him and put a strawberry in his champagne glass. At that time they were both living in Boston: she working in an office; he in his second year of Medical School. After about a year and a half of dating and a brief period of living together, they were married on December 12, 1964.

These two people come from rather different backgrounds. James' family was described as very formal. His father, although he earned great respect as a neurosurgeon, was seldom home during James' childhood, and when he was he maintained considerable distance. James described, almost with disbelief, how he was not held, read to, played with, etc. by his father. In an austere atmosphere, tempered only somewhat by his mother, strong expectations for achievement were help up to each of the kids in James' family.

Debbie's family was described in less detail, but seemed to be in marked contrast to James'. There was a sense of warmth, relative informality, and less class-consciousness. Her father was described as a "humanitarian businessman."

This difference in background was played out dramatically when James and Debbie decided they wanted to get married. In the interview with them, James described how his father told him that, since Debbie's father was Jewish, he would be disinherited if he married her. This shocked and deeply disappointed him, especially in the context of the many ways he had lived up to his family's very high expectations (e.g., going to an Ivy League college and prestigious Medical School). He decided, after hearing this threat from his father, to drive directly to
Debbie's parents' home in New York State, tell them what had happened and announce his intention to marry her. This marriage led to a break between James and his family that lasted five years.

From James' description, Debbie's parents were quite receptive and supportive in the situation. They invited James in as a member of the family and helped pay his tuition for his last year of Medical School. This series of events was crucial in forming the Chases' attitudes toward children and family life. James, especially, felt that his act of autonomy in marrying Debbie was very important in his development as a person with integrity. He explained that his approach to being a father is in many ways an attempt to provide for his children what his father did not for him. Their choice of a relatively small New England town, instead of a city, for James' surgery practice is a reflection of stated values of the importance of spending time with the family.

The lifestyle of the family might be seen as typical for an upper-middle-class professional household. Debbie is a full-time homemaker, quite involved in various projects of her own, including baking, sewing, working with the Hospital Auxiliary, etc. James takes responsibility for typical masculine chores around the house, such as cutting wood for the fire-place, sharpening the knives, building and fixing things around the house, etc. In general, Debbie is more involved with the day-to-day disciplining of the children, while James moves in to rescue her when the kids are out of hand and to mete out punishments.

Debbie maintains a home life that James moves rather freely in and out of, as they agree is necessary for a surgeon on call, but which is also compatible with his personal style. During the time I spent in the
home, when he was not on call, much of James' time was spent engaged in his own activities, such as going out cross-country skiing alone, reading in his study, going to church alone, etc. This may seem at first like a recapitulation of his father's style, which James says he wants to avoid. In fact, by comparison to his father, James is very engaged with his wife and children, reflecting, as it were, a generation of improvement in the role of father.

James and Debbie described, in the couple interview, a cycle in their relationship in which their 'mutual independence' pulls them apart from each other. One of them (usually Debbie) will call attention to the distance before the gap gets too wide. Often at these times they will cancel something they have planned socially and make a point of spending time alone together. This seemed, from their description, like a homeostatic cycle that works well in their relationship—bringing them closer to each other before their busy involvement in independent activities draws them too far apart. Couple rituals, to be described later, are part of this homeostatic process.

The Chases have three children. Allison (11), their oldest daughter; Lindsay (8), their younger daughter who is called 'Lynn'; and James Brewster (6), their son, who is called 'Bruce.'

Allison (11) might be described as a very 'grown up' responsible oldest daughter. She was the most able to be helpful to me during the observation and in the interviews. She will begin Junior High School this coming fall. She has not reached the point where she has a rebellious yearning for independence, yet she is grown-up enough to take considerable responsibility in the family. This responsibility includes,
for example, being a paid babysitter for the other two children some nights when her parents go out. During her mother's bout with pneumonia last spring, she took on what might be seen as 'parentified' responsibility for a short time—getting the kids off to school, some cooking, laundry, etc. She is also responsible for doing the dinner dishes, a chore she willingly surrendered to me on one of the nights of observation. Her interests include gymnastics and horseback riding.

Lynn (8) experiences life as a bit more of a struggle. Her parents noted that as Allison begins to find interests outside of the family, Lynn has become more involved in a competitive struggle with Bruce, which has led to quite a bit of scrapping and fighting. In fact, while I was present on the Sunday of observation, I witnessed one such scrap and its aftermath—James laying down the threat that if such fighting did not stop they would not come along on the planned family trip to Disney World. More responsibility was given to Lynn, as the older, to control the urge to fight. A number of times Lynn (and her parents) mentioned an achievement of which she is especially proud: winning a bronze medal in a swim competition. Besides swimming and other sports she told me of an interest in nature—butterflies (also, an interest of her father's) in particular.

Bruce, the first grader in this family, is a very enthusiastic fellow whose impulses are very much on the surface. He made numerous references to his wish to marry his mother, sometimes in song. This has, incidentally, not gone unnoticed in the family. At one point during the weekday evening I spent with them, when Lynn was reading a story about a young beaver who wanted to grow up to be a tramp, Bruce was sitting on
his father's lap. Bouncing him on his knee, James said jokingly: "you'd make a good tramp. You'd kill daddy and marry mummy and grow up to be a tramp." Bruce was very affectionate and cooperative with me, but quite apt to get silly and noisy when he got bored with being interviewed or when a topic made him anxious (e.g., whether he missed his mother while he was at school).

The Chases are an active family, enjoying skiing, camping, and swimming in their backyard pool. They might be seen as a family at the stage of latency, with all three children in elementary school now. The parents discussed some apprehension about Allison's beginning Junior High School next year, and seemed to see this as a more complicated transition for them than Bruce's first grade entry. They appear to be a family in which each person has quite a bit of personal private space, which is respected by everyone but Bruce (who will probably soon accept that as well). There was less demonstrative physical affection between family members than in some families, although they were by no means stiff and formal. There was a sense, not of disengagement, but separate independence among family members.

As will be evident in the description of family rituals to follow, there is considerable attention to the children's development as reflected in responsibilities and privileges, but this is not expressed, by and large in any kind of ceremony. Children did not report any sense of their parents changing over the years, although Allison did mention that her parents' 40th birthday (they are both now 38) would be important.
Binding and Life Cycle Behavior

**Binding behavior**

The sense of separateness and autonomy which characterizes relationships within this family describes also the quality of this family's relationship with the broader community in which they live. On the Sunday that I spent with the family, James went to church, saying as he left that this attendance "should hold us till spring", which suggested that his attendance at church had more to do with duty and obligation than a sense of spiritual or community connectedness. Similarly, although they are involved in the affairs of the town and have many social contacts, my impression was that most such contacts have a rather formal quality, as reflected, perhaps, in Debbie's referring to her husband as Dr. Chase when telling their neighbors that he would give their kids a ride to school. This relative formality is reflected, also, in how my entry into the family was handled. My first meeting, with James and Debbie, took place at James' medical office. When I arrived for my first visit to the home, I was given a guided tour by Allison.

In general it would seem that much of what is accomplished with rituals in some families is accomplished with routine among the Chases. One problem with ritual in this family is that all special events are subject to cancellation without notice if James gets called to the hospital. Instances of interruptions of social gatherings, birthdays, anniversary dinners and even the Christmas celebration were mentioned in the interviews.

**Family routine**

The central figure in the daily routine of the family is Debbie.
She takes primary responsibility for the breakfast meal, preparing lunch boxes and getting everyone off to school. Some chores (putting up the flag, taking out the trash, raking the lawn) are rotated among the kids. Lynn is responsible for setting the table for meals, Allison for the dishes and Bruce keeps the kindling basket full. Both the girls make their beds before coming down to breakfast, a chore which Bruce will also do when he gets a bit older. For now, Debbie or Allison takes care of Bruce's bed.

In the afternoon, Debbie is usually home when the children come home from school. When they get home they have a snack, often something that Debbie has baked that day, and they tell their mother about the activities of their day while she cleans out their lunch boxes. Then they become involved in play.

When the children were younger, they ate dinner before their parents, who waited till they were in bed to have their meal. Now, it is more likely that the whole family will eat together (about four times a week). Except for an occasional evening when they will eat out, Debbie prepares dinner, sometimes with Allison's help.

Other activities that are part of the routine of the family, but are not especially ritualized include skiing, camping, washing the car together, swimming in their backyard pool, cookouts and vacations.

Family binding rituals.

Couple rituals. For James and Debbie the before-dinner cocktail is a regular and special part of the day. While the kids may be present, they do not participate in the drinking ritual. Especially during the summer, two or three specific evenings a week are reserved as 'parents'
nights', when the kids are sent outside or to the TV room to play while James and Debbie sit together in the living room with a Manhattan and discuss their day, read the mail, make plans, etc.

Another couple ritual that James and Debbie have is going out to dinner alone on their anniversary.

**Special family activities.** Sunday breakfast, although not a special event each week, often has a special family quality, especially when James makes the pancakes. After breakfast on Sunday, they often hold a 'Sunday School at Home' in which either James, when he is home, or Allison filling in, will read a chapter from a book of Bible stories. While this went on the Sunday I was there, Debbie was in the kitchen taking care of the breakfast clean-up. Allison did the reading because James was in church.

A yearly ritual which was universally considered to stand out as important among the many 'whole-family' activities is a trip to Boston to see a Red Sox game. Along with a trip to Fenway Park they will usually go to a museum or a show in the City the same day. What makes this a ritual and not just a routine family activity is the attitude of family members to the event. When I read down a list of family activities during the family interview and asked if any was 'special' all agreed that the yearly Red Sox game stood out.

**Holiday celebrations.** There is some form of celebration for each typical holiday in the Chase family. Each child gets an Easter basket in his/her room on Easter. This is a much less elaborate celebration than James remembers from his family, in which his mother used to hide eggs all over the house and yard. They have a traditional Thanksgiving
dinner, but it is not rigid or accompanied by any particular ceremony. Last year, for example, they went to James' brother's home for Thanksgiving. Halloween is a special holiday for the Chases especially at this time in their family life when all of the children are fairly young, yet old enough to participate. For the last year or two, Allison has gone with her own friends to trick or treat. Both James and Debbie usually go with the younger kids.

By far the most formal and elaborate celebration in this family is their celebration of Christmas. This was described by James as the "most formal family time" of the year in the family, and each year the ritual is the same. James gets a Christmas tree a week or two before Christmas, but it is not trimmed until a day or two before the holiday. On Christmas Eve each year, he reads "The Night before Christmas" in front of the fire and then they take a picture of the kids under the tree. Stockings are hung and the kids are put to bed. In the morning, only stockings may be opened before a special pancake breakfast. After breakfast all the rest of the presents are opened.

**Problem-solving rituals.** In the wintertime the after-dinner custom in the Chase family is reading before the fire. Sometimes the parents read, but just as often Allison or Lynn will read a story. The kids make special trips to the library to pick out books for reading in front of the fire. As 8 o'clock approaches, the children are put to bed, starting with Bruce at 8, who puts up a little fight, then Lynn (8:30), who is especially careful to be sure she gets to stay up later than Bruce. Allison puts herself to bed without any particular attention from her parents, although her official bedtime is 9:00. The actual
tucking in is rather brief with just a tuck in and a kiss goodnight. According to Debbie, who is the one who usually does the tucking in, Allison no longer gets tucked in, Lynn about 60% of the time and Bruce 95% of the time. I noticed a goodnight kiss ritual between Allison and James in which they both would kiss their hands and slap each other's hands as she went by on the way upstairs to bed. James called this a 'slap kiss.'

Sometimes, when life gets very busy, the ritual of reading before the fire will get skipped for awhile. Before very long, as James and Debbie mentioned in their interview, the parents will be forcefully reminded by their children that this is an important event not to skip. In the summertime things are a lot less structured, with no school, Allison in camp (for four weeks), and the sun out longer. As a result there is less of a consistent pattern of reading before bedtime in the summertime.

A rather unique ritual solution to a problem in the Chase family is called 'the penalty box.' It is the only example in the data of a ritual that could be included under Wallace's (1966) classification of rituals of salvation, in this case expiation through penance.

The penalty box is actually a can which has been decorated by Allison with a chart to match. It was 'dreamed up' by James as a solution to the problem of people not doing their chores consistently enough and not being careful about things like the electric bill. When an offense is committed, such as leaving the garage door open so the pipes begin to freeze, leaving lights on or putting a spoon down the disposal, etc. one must pay a fine to the penalty box. The offender's name, the offense
and the fine are entered into the chart Allison made to go with the box. James is the one who decides what is an offense and the amount to be paid. All family members can be fined, although until Bruce began to get an allowance at age 7, he did not have to pay. When the box is full, it was mentioned that the money might be used to finance a trip to see the Red Sox.

Had it not been for Bruce's mentioning it in the family interview, this institution in the Chase family would have been missed, as interesting family institutions in other families probably have been, simply because such things are quite difficult to notice when they are part of one's daily life and hard also to elicit by interview questions.

Life cycle behavior

Developmental change of routine

In this family, as in the other families in the study, changes in family bedtime rituals reflect the developmental progress of the children. In the Chase family, this is especially evident since the children are spaced so evenly by age. Everyone participates in the reading before the fire, but doing the reading is a sign of growing up. Along with changes in bedtime itself, bedtime rituals change, as reflected in the gradual decrease in 'tucking in' mentioned earlier. No particular ceremony seems to accompany these changes in bedtime practices.

Another important aspect of going to bed was mentioned by Allison in her interview as something which seemed to reflect maturation. This was whether one had a glass of water by one's bed or not. Apparently, since it was scary to get up to get a drink during the night in the dark, each child in this family would get a glass of water (first provided by
a parent, then by her/himself) and keep it by her/his bed. At a certain age (different for each but around the start of latency), when the child was no longer so scared of the dark, the glass of water by the bed would gradually disappear. Only Bruce still keeps water by his bed, and he said it would not be for long since he never uses it, but just likes to have it there.

According to Debbie, crossing the street in this family happens at about age four and for sure "before kindergarten." Sleep-overs, whether at home or a friend's house, begin sometime around third grade. Again, no particular ritual marking accompanies these changes.

A whole series of important developmental changes of routine happen during first grade. Some of these will be mentioned later as 'firsts' under ceremonial rites, but, in fact, these events are by and large not so much ritualistic as part of a set schedule in the family. There are a number of things a child is allowed to do or expected to do sometime during the first-grade year. Although Bruce has been slower to begin making his bed than his sisters were, he will probably be making his own bed before he begins second grade. He will also shortly begin to wash his own hair. Currently his father usually washes his hair in the shower, although Bruce washes everywhere else himself. He will learn to ride a two-wheeler this summer as his sisters did the year of their first grade. Allowance also begins at age 7 and increases each year thereafter. Also, at the point of starting first grade, the call of "mummy come wipe me" is no longer heard in the Chase household. This was explained by the parents as largely a result of being in school fulltime with teachers who would not be as cooperative about such mat-
ters as nursery school and kindergarten teachers.

Going to camp (Allison first went at age 10) is also a developmental change of routine, but again, this event is not celebrated or marked in any ritualistic way. As James commented, having a particular right or responsibility tied to a certain age has less to do with ritual marking than as a family structure and a way to explain the limits:

If Lynn says, "Why can't I go to camp?", well, you're not old enough is the answer. When you're nine or ten years old you can. Because you're too young, you'll be homesick and this kind of stuff. That's how it's explained. But there's no rite involved. Passage but no rite.

Life cycle rituals

Ceremonial rite. Several firsts deserve mention here because they are accompanied by more than routine excitement and are tied to a particular age of growing up. Two of these happen during the first-grade year: bedmaking and first allowance. Both girls learned to make their beds when each was starting first grade. This was accomplished by their mother making the bed with the young girl every day for a week or so until she had learned how to do it herself. This was mentioned by Lynn as one important series of events that made her feel she was becoming more grown up. As mentioned earlier, Bruce has been a bit slower on bed making than his sisters, but before second grade he will also have learned how.

The event of getting one's first allowance at age seven might be appropriate as a symbolic gift as well as a ceremonial rite. Allowances start at 25¢ at 7. Lynn, at 8, gets 35¢, and Allison, at 11, 50¢, which will go up to 75¢ when she is 12. Changes in allowance seem less emo-
tionally charged than the event of first receiving allowance. The sym-
mbolic message of permission to, as it were, 'do business in the outside
world' which the first allowance represents is a powerful communication
to the child. Once again, however, there is no elaborate ritualization
of this even in the developmental schedule of the Chase family.

The birthday ritual, however, does stand out as a family ritual.
It was described by James as very formal, like Christmas. Until age 7,
there is a party for the child's friends complete with balloons, cake
and presents. After age 7, Debbie explained that it was no longer ap-
propriate to have such a big party for peers, but a few friends are
sometimes invited over. Slumber parties were mentioned as a future pos-
sibility.

As well as the celebration with friends, though, there is always a
special family birthday celebration. The child (or parent) may choose
his/her favorite meal and cake, to be served on the birthday if possi-
ble, but sometimes on another day just before or after the actual birth-
day if schedules are tight. Before dinner presents are opened while the
parents have their cocktails. Then, after dinner, the cake is carried
in, with the appropriate number of candles lit, by a brother or sister.
A picture is taken (usually by James) of the child blowing out the can-
dles. Even the dog enjoys a birthday celebration of his special day,
and there are several pictures of him devouring his cupcake, candle and
all.

It was mentioned several times that James will frequently, if not
always, say at bedtime to a kid who has a birthday the next day: "Enjoy
it--it's the last night you'll be 7 (or 8, 9, etc.)."
Symbolic gifts. Aside from the first allowance mentioned above, there were not reported any symbolic gifts which had a strongly ritualistic quality. When I asked about this kind of gift the girls mentioned gold rings with their names engraved that they received from their grandmother on a recent trip to Florida, but they did not seem to think there was any special meaning attached to them. This Christmas Bruce received a work-bench which his father had built secretly in the basement. This was a very special gift for Bruce, which might carry some symbolic meaning vis. his ability to use tools and be a more grown up boy.

Cultural rituals. On the day of the family interview, I arrived just before the kids came home from school. When Bruce came in the first thing he did was announce with glee that he had lost a tooth that day in school. He came in, showed his mother the hole where the tooth had been and carefully took a paper napkin out of his lunch box and unveiled the tooth with some pride. Debbie responded with a lot of excitement and interest and said the tooth fairy would have to be notified. This was, for me, a direct example of the amount of emotional excitement that a mother and child can share around a developmental change, symbolized in participation in a cultural ritual. In discussing the tooth fairy with the family I found that with bigger teeth one received more money, that it continues in this family for a number of years (Allison having collected on some tooth extractions just two years ago), and that under special circumstances (e.g., the tooth being eaten by the dog or falling down the bathroom sink) this could be explained to the tooth fairy by writing a letter and leaving it under one's pillow.
Response to Developmental Transition--First Grade Entry

In this family it is particularly important to view the entry of the children into first grade in the context of considerable pre-school experience. In fact, when I first approached the topic of changes in the family concurrent with Bruce's entry into first grade, James said, "I hate to ruin your theory, Ed, but it just wasn't much of a big deal." He went on to say that Allison's first day of nursery school was more traumatic, partially because it was he and not Debbie who took Allison, since Debbie was in the hospital giving birth to Lynn at the time.

Still, Bruce going to first grade was an event of some importance. It was a frequent topic of dinner conversation at the time and was 'looked forward to for six months.' There was no special ritual on the first day, and was none for either of the other children in the family. To their recollection, neither parent had any kind of first day of school rite in his/her family of origin.

Each year, with the notable exception of the first year for Allison, Debbie has driven all the kids to school the first day. Debbie did not have any especially strong feelings to report about Bruce starting first grade this year and said she felt more about his starting kindergarten. When asked what kind of things she thought and felt, she spoke of it being 'hard to believe that my little one has grown up so fast.' She also noted how, with pre-school and kindergarten before first grade 'the pangs are spread out.' She thought that it might be much harder for the mother of a child who had no pre-school.

In response to my query about any adjustment she had to make to the half day in kindergarten and full day in first grade she said:
Oh, well, yeah there is... but I'm busy all the time anyway. As far as finding yourself left in the house with nobody... that, that wasn't my feeling since I'm running around at 50 miles an hour most of the day whether the kids are around or not.

Ed: Do you miss them at all?

Debbie: Yeah, I do, but I don't think about it. Maybe I did the first week but after that I didn't. The fact that it was quiet around the house. But then again I thought to myself, "Isn't this nice. I can sit and drink my coffee and write letters for the first half of the day"--which never happened before--that alone is an adjustment but in a way it isn't an adjustment because I found it very enjoyable. I've found the parent is as ready for it as the child. I really believe that. You reach a point where you're at that stage too. You don't want any more babies around or whatever. Otherwise you would just have more children. You get to relive it as a grandparent if you're lucky. That's why grandparents get such a kick out of grandchildren... There's nothing wrong with being devoted to your children, but you have to have a life of your own.

While she acknowledges some feelings of sadness and separation, it is interesting to note that the way this is dealt with is by quickly moving to the positive aspects of the change and not dwelling very long on separation issues. She describes how she felt about the youngest going to school as disbelief. I point this out not to suggest that Debbie's adjustment to her kids all being in school full time is in any way faulty, but it is interesting to note how the 'pangs', as she calls them, are dealt with. In this connection it is also interesting that Bruce, in his interview, spoke about how he doesn't miss his mother when he is in school because he forgets about her: "I forget about her mostly. I'm thinking about my work, recess and lots of other things and I can't keep her in my mind. I like her but I forget about her in school."
His way of handling the separation seems to parallel his mother's.

In discussing this topic with the parents, Debbie mentioned how, instead of increasing her activities in response to the new free time she would have each day, she actually cut back so that she would have some time to 'mother herself' and do a lot of the things by herself that she had not had a chance to do before (especially sewing and baking). Also, she was in the process of recovering from a ruptured disk in the fall, and did not want to take on anything new.

In general, as James said, the transition represented by Bruce's first-grade entry cannot be seen as especially pivotal in this family, largely since there is a gradual entry into school from age three on. No particular ritual marking accompanies school entry, although it receives a bit of attention both in anticipation and when it is taking place. Debbie accompanies the younger children to school on the first day, but does not stay very long or become especially emotional. From all indications, Bruce's attitude toward school is very enthusiastic. His only complaint was other kids in his class that get the teacher mad and that scares him. He reported being a bit scared the first day: "You know how it is when you go to a new place and you get sort of scared." He said he got used to it very quickly.

Case Study III--The Levy Family

Bernard (Father) 34 Educator
Dina (Mother) 33 Artist/Craftsperson
Moses (Son) 8 Second Grade
Lucretia "Looey" (Daughter) 6 First Grade
Family History and Structure

The Levys live in a modest home in a residential street in town. They have been living in town for the last six years and before that lived for a few years further out in the country. Bernie, the father, grew up in a town on the coast of Maine, where his parents and extended family still reside. Dina, the mother, grew up in a small community in the rural south, where her mother still lives. Her father died nine years ago.

Bernie and Dina met in Peace Corps training in the summer of their Junior year of college. They were part of a special Peace Corps program which had two summers of training before placement overseas. They got to know each other better during the second summer of training and were both assigned to teach in the same town in an African country. They were married within about a month of their arrival (9/29/66) in Africa.

Bernie and Dina described their decision to get married as somewhat unusual in that they did not go through much of a typical courtship. They attributed the decision to marry largely to the stress of being placed in such foreign circumstances. They announced their marriage to their respective families by mail. Both received congratulations, although Bernie reported that he learned later than his mother had been rather surprised and upset, since she had not met Dina or been informed before the marriage.

Both spouses have developed an amicable, but, from my inference, not particularly close relationship with the other's family of origin. They spoke of having developed for themselves a lifestyle quite different from their families and seemed to be quite invested in having each
been the one sibling to have moved away from the family and made a separate, independent life.

Dina was the youngest of nine siblings in her family of origin. Her parents were divorced when she was 16. She described her father as a very eccentric, creative man who had many different jobs during his life, but was never 'successful' at anything financially. While her family was Baptist, her father, who had gone to Yale Divinity School, spoke with great respect of the Jews. He was 'liberal' and 'freethinking' and, according to Dina, 'an early hippie.' Among the unusual things he did was building and living under an outdoor theater for which he wrote plays. Dina spoke of his exploits with a combination of amusement and respect. She told me she considered herself to be more like him than any of her brothers and sisters are, all of whom still live in the south and who have led upper middle-class professional lives. Dina works as an artist, doing soft sculpture, lives in New England and has converted to Judaism.

Bernie has one brother who is two years older than he. According to Bernie, his brother was the one who was expected to leave the family, while Bernie was to join the family heating business. This was because Bernie was 'not a good student.' With some delight, he told me how just the opposite has happened. His brother has joined the family business, while Bernie is completing his doctorate in education and has been working for about 10 years doing teaching and administration in an educational institution.

Although they visit Bernie's family in Maine about three times a year and these visits are important and ritualized, Bernie and Dina
stressed perceived differences between their family and Bernie's family of origin, especially with regard to his family's opulence and 'materialistic values' versus their more modest middle-class lifestyle. In fact, one of the events they reported as a ritual was a discussion they have every time during the drive home from a visit to Maine in which they reaffirm their own values and lifestyle.

Shortly after they were married, while they were still in Africa, Dina converted to Judaism. When asked about this, she talked about how she had wanted to convert for some time before meeting Bernie. She said the origins of this wish were her father's respect for the Jews as well as the fact that when she took sociology and psychology courses in college she noticed that the Jews seemed to be the lowest percentage in any category of pathology. She spoke of admiring the unity and strength of the Jewish family and community. After her conversion, she and Bernie had a Jewish wedding (still in Africa). Bernie mentioned that his parents were pleased and comforted that Dina converted, but they were quite clear that as far as they were concerned, Dina's conversion was accomplished for only her own wishes.

Being Jewish is an important part of the life of this family and a determinant of many of their rituals and celebrations. They send their children to Hebrew Sunday School and are active in the Jewish community organization in town. They are not, however, religious in the sense of keeping a kosher home or attending services each sabbath, etc.

The division of labor for this couple is not along traditional sex role lines. Bernie always wakes up early in the morning before anyone else and does some kind of work. He told me that sometimes he writes or
reads during that part of the day, but usually he will work at cleaning up around the house. The two early mornings I was there he was busy folding laundry, doing dishes and preparing food. He also did morning exercises in preparation for running several miles before breakfast. He appeared bright, energetic and enthusiastic in the morning. Dina was quite cordial but reported much less enthusiasm in the morning of a typical day.

Dina does a good part of the cooking and cleaning around the house, but is also the one who likes to repair bicycles, change light bulbs and do other handiwork. When the children were infants she was the primary child caretaker. As they grow older and able to do things that Bernie enjoys, he has been spending more time with them.

Moses (8) is in second grade this year. He was cooperative with me during the observation and interviews. He showed me, with appropriate pride, parts of his collection of matchbox cars. This collection was first on the list of hobbies he mentioned when I asked about his activities in our interview. He also told me that he likes to draw, ride his bike and play baseball. He was able to talk about specific, concrete things, like the go-cart he and a few friends from the neighborhood are building, but he was not particularly willing or interested in talking about his feelings about school or discussing celebrations in the family.

Looey, who began first grade this year, was reserved in relation to me, and quite decisive about when she wanted or didn't want to talk, participate, etc. This was certainly consonant with her parents' description of her as strong-willed. She especially likes drawing and
painting, enjoyed reading a story to me on the Sunday evening I was with them, and has recently been working very hard at learning to ride a two-wheeler.

There was a good deal of scrapping between Moses and Looey and Bernie and Dina explained that Looey gets very angry if Moses gets anything she does not also get. This is why, for example, the non-Birthday person always gets a gift as well as the birthday person on a child's birthday. There is no age-determined hierarchy of privileges (e.g., bedtime) in this family, and in general, except as they may differ in physical ability to do something, the rules are the same for both children. This was attributed both to the fact that they are only a year and a half apart in age and that Looey really would not tolerate it any other way.

During the time I spent with this family, there were several times when there was yelling between Moses and Looey over who could pick the show to watch on the television. There was also a good deal of conflict over limits between both of the children and their parents. This took the form, for example, of Moses refusing to wash his face or have his face washed, Looey trying to grab and drink the wine the adults were having for dinner, both children running screaming down the halls of Bernie's office. Although it seemed to me that Bernie and Dina were near the point of exasperation at several points, they maintained a patient, but firm attitude toward this behavior and explained to me that this was quite typical for a day in the life of their family. They told me that they had reports that their children were actually rather shy and quite well behaved in school. As Bernie put it: "They do much bet-
ter as far as behavior and getting on well outside the house than they
do in the house. . .um. . .which gives me a sense of satisfaction. If
they misbehave here, sometimes it's hard to live with. But I'd rather
have it that way than the other way around." Moses and Looey seem quite
free to express rebellion and negative feelings in relation to their
parents. Both Bernie and Dina described themselves to me as having been
mischievous children. They seemed to expect the same from Moses and
Looey.

Binding and Life Cycle Behavior

Binding behavior

Family routine

There is considerable regularity to the daily life of this family.
Although there are differences in which activities are engaged in on
school days as opposed to weekend days, the overall impression I got
from being with them was that many activities are planned in advance,
and a lot of what goes on is expected, regular, and repetitive.

As I mentioned earlier, the day for this family begins with Bernie
getting up, usually between five and six. As the rest of the family is
waking up, he is busy with cleaning, preparing food or with his own
academic work.

The kitchen in the Levys' home is set up with a counter that has
the stove and sink on one side, and two bar stools on the other. There
is an adjacent dining room, but it is very unusual for everyone to sit
down to a meal together. Instead, the kids are usually served first.
When they are done eating, which was quite quickly at the times I ob-
served, they go off to play. Then Dina and Bernie will have their meal. Most of the time parents and children will eat the same menu, although when the kids were younger, I was told, two separate meals would be prepared.

The primary force for this way of organizing meals seemed to come from Bernie. He explained that in his family of origin food was an important focus of activity. He prefers to be able to eat with no distractions, interruptions or noise. He explained that, if they were to all eat together, the kids would be asking for things, fighting, etc., and he would not be able to appreciate his meal in relative peace and quiet. Dina sometimes will eat at the same time as the kids and sometimes will wait and eat with Bernie. In either case, there is no formal sitting down to eat. Table manners also are quite relaxed. This does not mean, however, that there is a deemphasis on eating. Much of the life of the family is centered around the kitchen and eating. Dina and Bernie share in the responsibility for preparing meals and frequently would say to Moses or Looey: "Do you want some of this or some more of that?, etc.," giving me the clear impression that everyone is encouraged to eat quite well.

Bernie has made a habit for some time of doing morning exercises and running early in the morning, and recently this has turned into a family activity. Some or all family members will join Bernie and will ride on their bicycles as he runs. The first time this took place was more of a special occasion and will be mentioned under ceremonial rites below.

After the children have gone to get their bus to school, Bernie will
usually ride his bicycle or run to work and Dina will begin her day's work in her studio, which is in the upstairs part of their house.

When the kids return from school at about three in the afternoon there is always a quick snack and then they go out to play with the other kids in the neighborhood. From just after they get home from school till after they are in bed the television is usually on, sometimes being watched and sometimes not. Supper is usually around five o'clock, which is also about the time Bernie gets home (although his schedule is flexible). Moses and Looey are fed, then the parents eat. Bedtime is at 7 on school nights. The bedtime ritual will be described below.

After Moses and Looey are in bed, Dina and Bernie will usually watch television and talk. Sometimes Bernie will have waited until this time to have his meal and will eat while he watches television. Dina and Bernie go to bed at about ten o'clock.

In the summer time the whole family will go down to the town swimming pool for a swim in the evening, as they said: "Every evening without fail unless there is really terrible weather." Often, also, they will enjoy a brief drive before dinner to the nearby vegetable stand to get corn or other vegetables for the evening meal.

There are no set chores for the children in this family. Bernie and Dina did mention that, from time to time, there is a spurt of industriousness when both Moses and Looey will ask for jobs to do for pay, but this comes and goes. When they are a bit older they will begin to be expected to do some things regularly around the house. Allowance is also not a regular thing. Money is more tied to jobs or given out as
Family binding rituals

Couple rituals. One very regular, ritualized event is the Friday evening glass of wine which Dina and Bernie share. This they described as their 'end of the week celebration.' They said it did not have anything especially to do with the Jewish sabbath custom, but was more their regular way of ending the week. With the wine they usually talk about the events of the week and discuss plans for the weekend, but are frequently interrupted by the kids coming in and grabbing their glasses, putting their fingers in the wine, etc. Sometimes this gets Dina and Bernie angry "if we're trying to talk about something important." Sometimes Moses and Looney can be bribed with food to leave their parents alone.

Bernie and Dina celebrate their anniversary on the day of the civil ceremony of their marriage each year. This celebration takes place without involving the children. There is an exchange of gifts and usually going out to dinner--sometimes with another couple.

Another couple's ritual for Bernie and Dina is connected to a larger family ritual trip to Bernie's family in Maine, which will be described in some detail later. Here, however, it is appropriate to mention a ritual conversation that they always have on the way home from each visit to Bernie's family. This conversation, mentioned earlier, is about the difference in material values between them as a family and Bernie's family of origin, especially his brother. A few lines from the couple interview will illustrate:
Bernie: We always talk about how they live as compared to how we live and, you know, I mean it's almost a verbatim conversation. It's almost the same every time. But we have it because we enjoy it. You know, it's in a sense cathartic...

Dina: It also makes us feel good that...we feel that we're living the way we prefer. It's a choice rather than just a matter of circumstances.

Ed: So it's a re-affirmation.

Dina: Yes.

Bernie: Yeah--very much so. In a relatively profound way. Emotionally and in a more objective sense that we've made the choice to live the way we live. To kind of share our lives more than my brother or my parents do. Because their lives are very separate husband and wife roles. Going to Maine helps us to clarify that.

Here a ritual seems to serve the function of reestablishing a boundary after a visit to Bernie's family of origin. My impression was that during the visits, Bernie settles into living in his family of origin and Dina can become somewhat uncomfortable, feeling a bit out of place. This ritual serves to reunite them at the end of the visit.

Often, when they are alone together, especially when travelling, Dina and Bernie will have an elaborate fantasy conversation about their cat, Lucretia Jane. They will plan her future, sending her to 'Ratcliffe', and discuss her as 'an object of worship.' They told me they admire her qualities of independence and her unwillingness to be held. As Dina said: "She doesn't put up with any crap." They will also be forceably affectionate to her, making her 'pay a toll' of being petted before letting her go out the door. Lucretia Jane is now almost ten years old, and was 'our first child substitute.' They even used to wrap
her in a baby blanket when the children were infants and present her as the baby to visitors as a joke. While these are not rituals, per se, they seem to represent a joking theme for this couple, which dramatizes some feelings about dependency as well as a more directly stated love for all kinds of animals. They explained the fact that they named their daughter the same first name as the cat by saying they always liked the name and had had a few years with the cat to try it out. I might ordinarily not include this 'couple institution' except that it captures a certain sense of humor in this couple and, besides, they were quite insistent that I include Lucretia Jane in their case study.

**Special family activities.** A regular visit to Boston, which takes place twice a year, involves doing exactly the same things each time. Specific stores (Haymarket, Filene's Basement, certain shops in Cambridge, and a particular Chinese restaurant) are visited each time in the same order. This has been a couple ritual and is in the process of becoming a family ritual. Now that the kids are old enough to come along, trips to museums, the aquarium and a Red Sox game are gradually being substituted.

A frequent activity on the weekend is a ritualized shopping outing in which the whole family usually participates. Usually on Saturday, at least once a month, most of the afternoon is spent driving around to different stores buying food for the family, but especially concentrating on the 'specials' in each store. Newspaper coupons are collected in advance for this excursion. On the Saturday I spent with this family we went to four different stores and supermarkets in different towns. This ritual always begins with a stop at a certain candy store where both
Moses and Looey are allowed a certain amount of money to spend on candy to eat on the trip.

Holiday celebrations. Two or three times each year the family travels to Maine to visit Bernie's family. This takes place at Thanksgiving time each year and may be repeated over the Fourth of July weekend or Labor Day. Again, the pattern of this trip is the same, or nearly the same, each time. It begins with a stop at the nearby candy store (the same one which is part of the Saturday shopping ritual). Moses and Looey may each buy a magazine for the ride. During the trip they eat a lunch packed in advance. At the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Howard Johnsons they stop to go to the bathroom. Then they always make stops at five or six outlet stores to shop for good bargains. If it is near Labor Day, school clothes and shoes are emphasized, if the Fourth of July, summer things. Several outlets are slated for the trip up and several are visited on the way home, but this is an integral part of the trip.

At Thanksgiving time there is more of a sense of formality surrounding the actual family visit. Everything centers around the dinner itself, which is held in Bernie's brother's house. As many as 25 people may be in attendance. The traditional American Thanksgiving meal is served each year, but there is no other formal ceremony of any kind.

At the other times they visit, there is always a dinner or bar-b-que, but this is a less elaborate affair.

A yearly trip to visit Dina's mother and siblings takes place in February or March. They try to coordinate it with education conferences Bernie attends in the South. There are visits to the homes of various brothers and sisters of Dina's and sometimes all or part of the family
will get together. In general, the annual visit south seems less structured and ritualized than the visit to Maine.

The Levys keep a number of traditional Jewish holidays, including Passover, Chanukah, Purim, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur. They keep their children out of school for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. On Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) they have a special family dinner. On Yom Kippur, Bernie and Dina fast, but the children are 'too young to have it be meaningful.' Chanukah is celebrated with considerable enthusiasm. There is a candle-lighting ritual each night and gifts each night for eight days and the traditional potato pancakes. At Passover the Levys always attend at least one Seder (ritual meal), but it has been several years since they had one in their home. The tradition of hiding and the children finding a special matzoh called the Afikoman (which is turned in for a reward) is an exciting part of the seder ritual for the kids.

Christmas and other Christian holidays are not celebrated in this family, but there is a lot of enthusiasm around Halloween. Since Dina's work is soft sculpture, she has an entire studio full of different types of material, furs, etc. Shortly before Halloween, she asks Moses and Looey what they want to be and puts together a costume for each. On Halloween, which is also a big event on their street, one parent will 'man the house' and the other will go out trick or treating with the kids fairly early in the evening. Then, after 'taking the candy away, labeling the bags and listening to the screaming and yelling,' the kids are permitted to stay up and help give out goodies.

**Problem solving ritual.** Bedtime on week nights is 7 o'clock. On
weekends and when something special is on television, it may be as late as 8 or 8:30. The ritual of reading at bedtime is usually, but not always, done by Dina. It takes place in Moses' room from a book which is almost always chosen by Looey. Dina told me that sometimes Looey will let Moses choose the book. Dina generally reads for about fifteen minutes, and then it is time for bed. Moses may stay up and play for a while if he wants to, but always gets into bed to get his good night kiss and then gets up again. Looey may play a bit in her room if she wants to, but either falls right to sleep or will read in bed for a while before falling asleep.

Before she will go to sleep, Looey has a series of ritual questions she asks Dina. If she does not get to ask and have answered to her satisfaction each of these questions, "she becomes furious and will not go to sleep." They are: Are you and Daddy going anywhere?; Is anyone coming?; and, Will I have bad dreams tonight? Dina told me that these questions are beginning to drop away. They began when Looey was about three, when she began having nightmares. Neither Dina nor Bernie knew what the dreams were about. Dina tried to explain that she could not predict whether Looey would have a bad dream or not. But Looey would get mad and refuse to go to sleep until her mother would say she would not have any bad dreams.

**Life cycle behavior**

Developmental change of routine

As was mentioned earlier, differences in development between Moses and Looey are deemphasized in the family. As Dina said:
They tend to reach those points at almost the same time. Or maybe we think they do because it makes it easier. It's much easier to let them both do something at the same time rather than to separate it and say Moses is older.

As far as changes in rules and privileges are concerned, both children are treated, in a sense, as a unit. Recent changes, like spending an afternoon at a friend's house, crossing the street, washing hands before meals, and bathing (except for hair washing which requires help) have taken place at the same time for both. These changes have been gradual, and, although there is quite a bit of encouragement of autonomous behavior and attention paid to 'firsts', this does not take the form of ritualized practices:

They're not really formalized. We don't usually say at this certain time you will be allowed to do this. It's more a matter of recognizing that the time has come and it just happens naturally. I was very strict, for example, about crossing streets. Up until last year even though other kids their age were allowed to cross the street, they were not. And then I just eased off because I could see that they were--they didn't just dash out at the street--they would approach it in a more sensible way (Dina).

There are differences in what Moses and Looey can do on the basis of physical ability. Moses learned first how to ride a two wheeler, and is permitted to ride within larger limits in the neighborhood. Looey has dressed herself for several years while Moses still gets some help (which he asks for but does not actually need on the basis of physical ability).

Life cycle rituals

Ceremonial rite. Dina and Bernie noted that they are quite attentive to and make a point of commenting on 'firsts' for their kids:
We do that a lot when they do things for the first time. We usually comment on it fairly strongly—um—when they swim or ride a bike or write their name in longhand... anything they do for the first time we do certainly take note of it (Dina).

While the practice of 'commenting' on firsts may not be structured such that it can be placed in a category of ceremonial rite, it reflects the kind of confirming attention and developmental awareness that is reflected in more elaborate life cycle rituals.

Two events in the life of this family seemed to stand out as more ritualized recognitions of developmental progress. One was Moses' learning to ice skate, which took place in school this winter but received attention in detail each Monday when he would talk about his progress and receive praise and support for his persistence. Toward the end of the winter, Bernie took him out to skate and this seemed an important opportunity for Moses to show off his progress to his father.

An accomplishment which was received with even more fanfare was Looie's success at learning to ride her two-wheeler. This was marked with a first whole-family bike ride down to the nearby gas station to get air in the tires, with announcements to neighbors on the way. Dina reported that she said to Looey: "Looey, this is the first time we've been able to do this because you learned to ride your bike." She mentioned that Looey seemed quite pleased to receive all this attention. This is an example, also, of how a first event, in this case the family ride, can then go on to become part of the family routine.

Birthday celebrations in this family do not have an especially formal ritualistic quality to them. Until recently there has been a party for friends, which ranged from written invitations to neighborhood kids
to "We have a cake so go out and round up some friends." In their interview, Dina and Bernie noted that such parties can get quite loud and messy, so starting this year they have changed the birthday celebration to a trip out to the movies with a few friends.

One interesting part of birthday custom in this family mentioned before is the practice of giving a gift to the non-birthday child. This practice seems to be a compromise to Looey, who tends to get angry when anybody, especially Moses, gets something and she doesn't.

**Symbolic gifts.** Up to now there have been no examples of gifts that were symbolic communications or affirmations of developmental progress in the family. Dina and Bernie mentioned, however, that there is a watch from Israel for Moses and a star of David necklace for Looey which will be given to them on their respective thirteenth birthdays. Moses and Looey have seen these special gifts and know they are waiting for them.

**Cultural rituals.** As in all of the families in the study, the Levys follow the practice of putting the lost tooth under one's pillow and finding money there in the morning. Notes to the tooth fairy are also a part of the ritual. According to Dina, notes from Looey usually are explanations of how the tooth got lost and how she should get her reward anyway, and notes from Moses are usually attempts to convince the tooth fairy that the tooth in question is really worth 50¢ rather than the usual 25¢.

In discussing the tooth fairy, Bernie and Dina emphasized that they do not promote fantasy beliefs in their children. Although they do practice the ritual, everyone "knows damn well that there is no tooth
fairy." The same goes for Santa Claus, although they assured me that no attempt is made to make fun of other people's beliefs. They pointed out that their kids are not afraid of the dark, and that, especially, they do not use fantasy notions like boogey men or ghosts as punishments or threats.

The Levys anticipate participating in traditional Jewish rituals that are tied to development, although they were clear in stating that they felt their responsibility was to expose their children to Jewish customs and traditions so that they can decide for themselves how much they want to have to do with Judaism when they get older. Two developmental rituals that are part of the Jewish tradition are the Passover ritual of the youngest able member in the family reading the 'four questions' during the Seder, and the Bar Mitzvah at age thirteen, which is a full initiation rite.

Response to Developmental Transition--The Youngest Enters First Grade

For this family, starting first grade did not appear to be experienced as an especially significant developmental event. Both children attended nursery school from about age three and had gone to a full-time kindergarten, so the first day of first grade, and the transition into first grade for Looey was, as Dina put it, "an adventure, but it wasn't a huge adventure." She recalled that Looey had been quite excited about the start of kindergarten, which she said she could tell because Looey had a series of nosebleeds. Looey had not talked much about being excited about the start of kindergarten, but the nosebleeds were a sign to Dina that she was excited.
To stay with beginning kindergarten briefly, it is here that the most special event surrounding school entry seems to have come. This was a ride in a cart behind Bernie's bicycle down to the bus on the first day. Dina described this as a special 'treat' which was not repeated. In my interview with Looey, she told me she had been mad at her mother that day for not coming with her to school. When asked about this, Dina said that Looey "probably told me not to come and then got mad when she saw everyone else's mother there."

In general, first days of school seem to receive a good deal of attention in the family. Along with a bath the night before, there is the buying of school clothes and shoes at the outlets on the ritual fall trip to Maine, and a lot of preparatory talk and concentration on what bus will pick them up and where. Bernie and Dina emphasize the details or mechanics of getting to school that first day "so the small things won't make them anxious." A helpful thing that is done in their particular school is the practice of having the kindergarten class spend a day in the first grade class with the teacher they will have the following year. This way they know the teacher they will have and the room they will be in. Another useful practice in this school is a home visit paid by the kindergarten teacher to each family before the start of kindergarten.

Bernie and Dina told me they had looked forward to their children being in school--especially Dina, who has taken the primary responsibility for them. When asked if she felt any sense of sadness at the separation, Dina replied: "Maybe a little twinge of 'there they go', but just a little one. I had been looking forward to it. Just to have a
few hours of peace and quiet." At another point she said:

I'm always happy when school starts because it keeps them busier and I can get back more seriously to my work. I work in the summer, but not as much and, so, I'm always glad to see school coming--um--which I don't think is negative. I don't think the kids mind that I'm glad to get them out of the house. I think they do understand. And by the end of the summer they're tired of their summer activities. They are ready for a change.

So the transition in this family from family with pre-schoolers to family with school children has been gradual and not marked by any formal or dramatic ritualization. Both children seemed to be doing well enough in school. Looey made a point of telling me that she hated school, that it did not make her feel grown up to be in first grade, etc., but my sense, or inference (especially from her reading ability), was that in fact she is quite positive and motivated in the school setting, and that this, along with Moses referring to his father as a piece of old rag and his mother as 'old perfume smell', was a reflection of the level of open negative expressiveness in the family.

Case Study IV--The Hastings Family

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caleb (Father)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Varied Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia (Mother)</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel (Daughter)</td>
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<td>Fifth Grade</td>
</tr>
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<td>Benjamin (Son)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Third Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica (Daughter)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>First Grade</td>
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Family History and Structure

The Hastings live in a classical old New England farmhouse a few
miles down a dirt road in a village outside of town. Their home is part of an old summer camp from the 1940's which is still owned by Julia's family. The Hastings share this property with two other families, who live in separate dwellings on the land and participate with the Hastings in a 'community lifestyle.' This is a relatively new venture for them, having begun in the last two years, although they have lived on the land for four.

Julia spent her early years in New England. In third grade, her family moved to Atlanta, where her father was a college professor. Both of her parents are living, and have moved back to New England. Her parents usually come to visit the Hastings about six times a year.

Caleb grew up in a town in suburban Connecticut after age five. Before that his family had moved around in the western part of the country while his father, a minerologist, was working with the Geological Survey. Both of Caleb's parents are also living, but visits to see them in their home in Connecticut are less frequent. This was attributed in part to the fact that his paternal grandfather and maternal grandmother live with his parents and are ailing.

Caleb and Julia first met during auditions for the University Choir at the Ivy League school they both attended. They both made the Choir and, with the help of an introduction from a mutual acquaintance, they became friends. It was six years before they were married. In the interim, they had grown together and apart. Julia had left college and gone to a prestigious art school. Caleb had graduated and was a promising graduate student in physics in California. As they described it, at a point when she went out to the coast to visit Caleb, his mother
sent Caleb an engagement ring that had been in the family for a long time. This they referred to sarcastically as a 'subtle' communication about what they should do. Caleb noted that this act could have had a very negative effect on things, but it did not. They became engaged and then married on June 10, 1964, at Julia's grandfather's home.

Both Julia and Caleb described their families of origin as traditional, highly structured Episcopalian families who were quite approving of and pleased with the marriage.

In the years that have passed since their marriage, Caleb and Julia have had three children and have accomplished a major shift in lifestyle. After graduate school, Caleb received a research fellowship in Europe, where they spent three years. This was described as the hardest time for the family, with one point at which they had three children under four. Childcare was almost totally Julia's responsibility, since Caleb's work required a heavy time commitment. They decided that this way of life (including the realities of the politics of research physics) could not continue.

The next year or so the family spent 'on the road' traveling around the USA in a Volkswagen van, until they settled where they live now four years ago. Until last year, Caleb drove the school bus for the village school. He is no longer directly involved in research physics. Instead he is employed in a variety of ways within their small community. He listed farming, house maintenance, wood cutting, parenting, being a husband and 'solitary unpaid intellectualizing' as his occupations. Julia, along with mother, wife, community member and farmer, does some professional pottery. These activities do not entirely provide for the finan-
cial needs of the family. They apparently draw upon some savings from what Caleb called 'the lucrative days' and also receive some financial help from Julia's parents.

Caleb and Julia spend about an equal amount of time in the home. They both take part in preparing meals, although Julia appeared to do a bit more cooking than Caleb, especially baking. In general Caleb handles anything that requires mechanical or technical skill (car maintenance, wood cutting, electricity, etc.). They heat with both oil and an old parlor wood stove in their kitchen. They grind their own grains for flour and grew their own homemade beer.

My impression was that both Julia and Caleb take about equal responsibility for child care in the family. In their relationships with the children, Caleb is practical, logical and a good teacher of facts, from my observation. Julia seems to express more sensitivity to their emotional needs and seems more physically affectionate with them. In general, my impression was that they expect considerable autonomy and independence from their children. In the family interview, Caleb expressed this by way of comparison to his and Julia's families of origin: "You kids get to make up your own minds about things a lot more than we did and probably the parents don't worry about you as much." From my observation, the children are largely responsible for their own development. They pester their parents to respond to their development (by permission to cross the bridge on a bicycle, to have one's own room, to own a jackknife). More will be said about this later.

Rachel (10) is the oldest daughter. She, like her brother and sister, struck me as quite bright, verbal, and self contained. She likes
to read and sew and play music. Although some of this may have been exaggerated for my benefit, I was impressed with the amount of responsibility Rachel took in relation to her brother and sister. She also functioned as the one who reminded the family of the topic several times during the family interview. She complained a bit in her interview with me about the drawbacks of being the oldest: "When you're the oldest in the family, you get stuck with doing a lot of things." She said the biggest problem for her in the family was that the kids fight with each other too much. She mused about what it might be like to be an only child. She expressed particular pleasure in certain aspects of the family lifestyle, especially that they do things together as a family (Dad is home a lot), they don't eat 'junk food' and only seldom go out for dinner so that it stays a special treat. Her complaints about her parents were that sometimes her mother yells too much and that her father can't stand messes and 'makes the kids clean up a lot, even though his own study is a big mess.'

Ben (8) also seemed to me to be remarkably self contained and verbally able. Along with typical interests in skiing, animals (they have goats and chickens), hiking, fishing, etc. he has been taking recorder lessons. He played a book full of tunes for me quite skillfully. He said his worst problem was that the boys at school sometimes gang up on him. Although in general he seemed more interested in talking about maple sugaring or jacknives or the price of a new set of skis, he impressed me with his emotional sensitivity. When I asked him, for example, how he thought his mother felt when he went off to school for the first time, he showed sensitivity and empathy:
Ed: How do you think your mother felt about your going off to school?

Ben: Well, a little bit glad and a little bit sad, probably, 'cause if I didn't go to school I wouldn't be that smart and if I did she'd probably miss me.

Jessica (6) was by far the most energetic of the three children. She seemed most of the time to be racing about, frequently getting herself into conflicts with Rachel or Ben that would send her howling across the house in a tearful rage. Julia described her as especially strong willed, and she expressed a touch of regret that Jessie had been in such a hurry to catch up with her brother and sister that she did not seem to have learned to slow down and be nurtured like a baby. While I was there, Jessie was at points busy painting water colors, making a book out of cardboard, construction paper, thread and cloth, playing out in the snow, etc. She was remarkably conversant for her age and quite cooperative.

A reflection of the children's strength and ability to cooperate as well as fight was the way they greeted me each morning when I came to observe. They had conspired beforehand to hide behind the door and take me by surprise when I arrived. This they did, entirely as a game and (I inferred) a way of welcoming me. I should note, also, that at first my real contract for the study was with the children. When it came time for the family to decide whether or not to participate in the study a vote was taken. The children all voted in favor and 'won' against their parents, three-to-two. This, of course, did receive some support from the parents, at least in the form of their suspending their veto power. As Caleb said in the family interview:
Sometimes when we have three-to-two votes, Julia and I say "tough, we win anyway." This time we thought about it and decided it wouldn't be nice to the kids. We couldn't see any harm in it--it wasn't like eating candy before supper or something like that. . . . Besides, we wanted to go down in the annals of American Psychology as a democratic family.

**Binding and Life Cycle Behavior**

**Binding behavior**

**Family routine**

The routine and daily life of this family is centered around their home and the small community in which they participate. They share laundry facilities, care of chickens and goats, maple sugaring and a large community garden with two other families. These two families each have younger children. Also, three supper meals each week are community meals, held in each home on a rotating basis. I shared such a community meal on the weekday I spent with the Hastings. There are also regular weekly community meetings, which either one or both Julia and Caleb attend.

The most structured part of the life of this family is their children's school attendance, although they are involved in many work and cultural activities, including seasonal farm chores, Caleb's singing in a local church choir, Julia's involvement with psychosynthesis workshops, etc. Julia has also served as class mother in Rachel's class, and Caleb goes in to the elementary school to talk to classes about science a few times each year.

There is considerable structure surrounding meals, including each person having an assigned napkin ring and seat. Meals are generally taken together as a family, although breakfast on school days is more a
matter of getting the kids fed on time and then eating for Caleb and Julia.

Other events in the family routine include after school activities of the kids, the most noteworthy being music lessons for Rachel and Ben. This requires quite a bit of planning around rides and schedules, and was a topic of conversation at several points during my time with them. It was also mentioned initially as a rather important compromise of values for the parents, who felt that the music education in the school system was inadequate, but were uncomfortable about 'private' lessons.

Family binding rituals

Couple rituals. In talking about any rituals they might have as a couple, Julia mentioned that there might have been some rituals that she would have liked to have between them that Caleb did not want to institute. The example she gave of this was her wish to have afternoon tea each day with Caleb. She said that he had regarded such a practice as a waste of time (to which he did not disagree) and so she has tea alone.

One ritualistic practice which started out as a couple ritual and has since become a family ritual is reading to the person who is doing the dishes. This practice came from Caleb's family, in which his father used to read to him and his sister while they did the dishes. He believed it likely that this had been done in an earlier generation as well, although there was some question about whether they had had servants who did the dishes. In the early years of their marriage, Caleb used to read to Julia when she did the dishes. Now either of them may read to Rachel while she does them. One evening that I spent with them, Julia read a part of the Diary of Anne Frank to Rachel as she washed.
In Julia's family of origin family members used to sing madrigals while washing the dishes. Singing, although not madrigals, frequently accompanies dishwashing after community meals.

**Special family activities.** Another ritual which originated in Caleb's family is the practice of having pancakes or waffles and maple syrup on Sunday morning. For the adults, hot milk and coffee accompany the pancakes. There are several variations on the type of pancake, including buckwheat, whole wheat, and corn in various combinations—all hand ground. There seemed also to be something special about having their own homemade maple syrup. Other variations have been brioche at times when they were living in Europe, and a fairly recent switch from waffles to pancakes when the waffle iron recently developed a short. No special ceremony accompanies this breakfast.

A ritual that is not always practiced is that of grace before meals. When grace is said, however, as it was the Sunday evening I was with them for supper, it is a special grace, created by a family member. That night's grace was Jessica's, which involved her turning to Rachel and saying "my love to Rachel" who turned to Julia and said "my love to Julia", etc., around the table. For community meals, grace seems to have become a more consistent practice. This grace often takes the form of everyone singing 'om', sometimes in harmony.

In the couple interview, Caleb pointed out the relative looseness of these rituals as compared to those practiced in his family of origin. For a time during his childhood they would have grace before meals, and evening prayers and hymns after dinner. This started, according to Caleb, when his mother read a Reader's Digest article which spoke of the
strength of the Jewish religion being based on practicing the religion in the home.

Celebrations. Christmas is by far the most elaborately celebrated holiday in the Hastings family. For five nights before Christmas, Caleb reads a 'stave' of Dickens' A Christmas Carol each night while the children make popcorn strings and other tree decorations. Typically on Christmas Eve for the last few years there has been an expedition with the whole family to town on which everyone buys presents for everyone else. On Christmas day, the whole day is spent in preparing a feast in which each member is responsible for at least one dish. This whole-family activity is a very special and looked-forward-to day of cooperation.

This year there was also, for the whole community, a Christmas feast, which took place before the holiday because one family was going to visit relatives. For this event, the children were allowed to decide what the meal should consist of. After dinner everyone went out into the central 'common' area (which is a large garden in the summertime) and lit candles on a big Christmas tree they had put up. Then they all stood around and sang Christmas Carols. This way of community celebration was enjoyed very much by the Hastings, and Julia indicated that she believed it would be repeated next year.

Easter and Good Friday are also important holidays for this family. Hot cross buns and a Bible reading by Caleb are the Good Friday ritual. More hot cross buns and an Easter egg hunt comprise the Easter Sunday practice. The Easter egg hunt has become a community event. This year they also attended Unitarian services on Easter.
Like they do for Christmas dinner, the practice in this family is to spend the whole day working together preparing the Thanksgiving meal. A special aspect of this year's celebration was that Ben had raised the turkey. Each member is responsible for some particular dish or dishes, but not necessarily the same food each year.

In describing these rituals, one thing that was often repeated was the fact that they are not rigid, standardized forms for this family, but may change in form from year to year quite flexibly. In this way the holiday is always celebrated, but the form of celebration may vary.

Problem solving rituals. Bedtime in this family is hierarchical by age. Jessica at 8:00, Ben at 8:15, Rachel at 8:30. Bedtime in general is fairly strictly enforced, but the differences between the kids not. There can be, thus, a range of about half an hour between bedtime and the time they actually go to bed. When the children were younger, beginning when they lived in Europe and Caleb would come home at just about bedtime, Caleb would sing to them until they fell asleep. As he described it, they began to get into arguments about what he should sing, and would use choice of songs as a way to get back at him if they were mad at him, so he gradually switched to improvisational stories. This practice was dropped this fall when Rachel moved into a separate room from Ben and Jessica. Previously the children all shared a room.

Fagenschmidt is a family institution—a mythical person-monster for whose creation the credit when to Rachel. When something would be lost or broken, it was Fagenschmidt who was responsible. This was a more prevalent explanation when the children were younger.
Life cycle behavior

Developmental change of routine

One change that took place this fall seemed partially related to Jessie starting first grade and partially related to the fact that Caleb stopped driving the school bus. This was the decision, made by Caleb and communicated to Rachel by him, that it would be the kids' responsibility to get themselves up and out in the morning. It was agreed that Caleb and/or Julia would get up and make their breakfast in time for school, but that they would have to take responsibility for waking up on their own, getting their coats and books, etc. together, and getting out in time to walk the mile or so down the road to the bus.

Another change in routine which has started this year is the institution of chores for each of the kids. Ben is responsible for keeping the wood box full, Rachel is responsible for doing the dishes, and Jessica for setting the table. Most of the time, Rachel and Ben do their chores without having to be reminded. Jessie often must be reminded, but the parents are tolerant of this, since she is younger. Rachel, however, protested during the family interview that Jessica gets away with too much.

Rachel and Ben began having friends stay over and staying over at friends' homes during the year of second grade.

Although Ben still sucks his thumb at times, both Jessica and Rachel have been weaned of thumb sucking with the encouragement of their parents. Rachel was promised her own room if she quit, which she promptly did. Caleb and Julia were less prompt about the room they promised, an attic room that had to be cleaned out and set up for her. It
took a year before the room was ready. Julia and Jessica had a conversation that Julia remembered warmly in which they agreed that Julia would quit biting her nails if Jessie would stop sucking her thumb. Added to that was the reward that Jessie chose, a bag of M&M's. She stopped sucking her thumb, as I believe Julia quit biting her nails, but like Rachel, she had to pester her parents for a while before they came across with the M&M's.

Life cycle rituals

Ceremonial rites. In this family birthdays are celebrated without fail, but the form of the celebration is never quite the same. Everyone seemed to agree that this increased the specialness of the celebration, since it could range from a small party with a few friends (especially when the kids were quite young) to Julia taking Rachel and a friend out to a 'pastry, tea and jewelry restaurant.' It is common for gifts and special events surrounding birthdays to be spread out over a period of time, but promised gifts and parties are seldom forgotten.

At age six each child received his/her first allowance, which is and remains ten cents a week. This is not accompanied by any special ceremony. Allowance started when Rachel asked first when she discovered her friends in first grade got allowances. It is not unusual for allowance to be forgotten about and left unpaid and uncollected for several months at a time, and then to be taken in a lump sum when there is a particular need for money (e.g., Christmas).

Symbolic gifts. At age eight, Rachel received a jackknife for her birthday. This seemed to have some significance to her as a sign of growing up. The significance was more important to Ben, who also re-
ceived a knife at age eight. I did not get the impression that this was, for either child, a very special ritualistic event. It was more the jackknife than its developmental significance that was reported to me as important in the interviews.

By contrast to the meaning of receiving a jackknife at age eight, a bracelet given to Rachel by Julia on her tenth birthday did seem to have strong meaning. It was the first thing Rachel mentioned in response to the question, "How can you tell you are growing up in this family?" She told me that this bracelet, which is gold and has a diamond in it, was given to her mother when she was ten, and that she was planning to likewise hand it down to her daughter. She was especially moved by the idea that her mother thought her grown up enough to take care of such a precious piece of jewelry. When she was younger, she said, she was not responsible enough. When I talked with Julia about this bracelet, it turned out that she had been twelve when she received it. She was pleased that it had meant so much to Rachel, but mentioned that it had not been such an important event in her life to receive it.

Cultural rituals. In this family, as in all five families who took part in the study, the tooth fairy is a mythical character shared with the culture. In this family it seemed to be tacitly understood that the tooth fairy really is one's parents, but that this is not to be openly acknowledged. The particular details of how the cultural ritual is practiced in this family are that 'baby' teeth are worth a dime, molars 25¢, and a lost tooth can still be claimed by way of writing a note. It was remarked that long and detailed notes describing the tooth, how it came out, how it got lost, etc. are quite common among the Hastings.
On the Monday I spent with them, Jessica came home very excited with a tooth that had come out during the day at school. She showed it to Caleb, who was deeply engrossed in cooking for the community meal. He looked at it and said, "God, disgusting." A short time later, she lost the tooth and came running in to tell her father, who assured her that she could write a note to the tooth fairy and still get her reward. Later that evening, just after grace at the community meal, Julia announced to the community the loss of the tooth and Jessica showed everyone the place in her mouth it had come from.

Response to Developmental Transition--The Youngest Enters First Grade

In my interview with Ben, I asked if Jessica's starting first grade was an important event for the family. He responded by saying that no, it had not been particularly special, "until you came." The actual starting of first grade for the youngest, from my observation, was not accorded great significance in the family. As Julia said: "What I mainly remember is everybody being very excited about going to first grade and that having a lot of significance for them, but as a family we didn't mark it in any particular way."

In fact, they forgot about it. On the first day of school this year, the kids were out most of the day with Julia getting a belated birthday gift for Caleb. It was a Wednesday, and they had forgotten that it was the first day of school. Someone from the school called and said: "We noticed that none of your children are in today," and Caleb, who was home, realized the error. He described the turn of events with amusement as "a moment of triumph."
Julia and Caleb are not, to use Julia's word, "wholehearted" about sending their children to school. They are uncomfortable about aspects of the socialization children receive in school, especially ways they feel school may stunt creativity and encourage competitiveness.

Actually, one of the difficulties for our children--although I don't know what their response will be eventually--but we ourselves have had such a sort of mixed feeling about school, about sending our children to school, and about the quality of the school, that we make a very small deal about it being a wonderful thing (Julia).

Indeed, Julia mentioned how, at one point early in Rachel's first grade she was chastised by Rachel for being negative about the kind of work Rachel had to do in school. Julia related this attitude to some unpleasant early schooling experiences she had had.

On the first day they went this year, Caleb walked with all three children to the bus. This was not necessary years before, since he drove the school bus. Only on the first day did he walk with them. There was also quite a bit of preparatory talk about the school and the teacher each child would have. Rachel helped Jessica get her clothing organized and her drawers cleaned out and also helped Jessica prepare through play:

Well, I remember just before school started Jessica always wanted to play school and so, you know, I would have to be the teacher and then, um, we'd, well, you know, make work sheets for her and I would erase my old work books so then when she got into first grade she'd be pretty good off (Rachel).

Except for a complaint about being 'almost the youngest in my class' and a bit smaller than many of the children in first grade, Jes-
sica told me she liked school. Her reading, writing and drawing abilities were impressive, and she mentioned several other children in her class whom she considered friends.

Several important changes in the family seemed to coincide with Jessica's entering first grade. Rachel got her own room several weeks before, chores were instituted, and there was a change in the morning routine in which the children were now more responsible for getting themselves out on time. These other changes may be seen as reflections of a change in developmental phase of the family as a whole. None of these changes were accompanied by any especially ritualized marking.

It was my impression that, in many ways, the impetus for developmental change in the children in this family comes largely from the children themselves. That is, when they are ready for greater autonomy, rather than having new status conferred on them by their parents spontaneously, they push their parents to recognize the change and confirm it. Their parents seem quite responsive once they have been pushed for a while, but it takes them some time to come around. The outstanding quality I noticed in the three children in this family of being self-contained or self-motivated--remarkably able to interact with me and communicate effectively with little anxiety--may be related to the way they are expected to take responsibility for their own development.

**Case Study V--The Clark Family**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry (Father)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Book Printing Factory Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol (Mother)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Part Time Cook--Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia (Daughter)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>High School Junior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lisa (Daughter) 15  High School Freshman
Henry Jr. "Hank" (Son) 13  Eighth Grade
Billy (Son) 11  Sixth Grade
Karen (Daughter) 6  First Grade

Family History and Structure

The Clarks live in a contemporary home set back from a main road in a village outside of town. There are two other dwellings on the court they live on. Henry's parents live in one and some cousins in another. The elementary and junior high school for the town (Grades 3-8) is across the main road a few blocks away. One can see the school through the picture window in their dining room.

The Clarks have lived at this address for the last sixteen years, but have been living in the house only for the last seven years or so. Before that they lived in a trailer. They gradually built the house themselves.

Carol grew up until age eleven in Nova Scotia. Her family, which included a younger brother and two younger sisters, moved to Massachusetts just outside of Boston, when she was eleven. A few years later her youngest sister was born. Both of her parents are living, but they divorced shortly after Henry and Carol got married. Both have remarried. Her father still lives in Massachusetts. The Clarks visit him about four times a year. Her mother has returned to Canada. It has been two years since they have visited her.

Henry has lived in the town they live in for most of his life. Both of his parents are living, in their early seventies. Although they
live right next door, they visit surprisingly little with the family. Henry expressed some disappointment that his parents "don't act like grandparents." They sometimes come over for a child's birthday or for Thanksgiving, but have always been reluctant to babysit for the kids. "In the seventeen years we have lived here," he commented, "we have been over there for dinner maybe once or twice."

Henry's aunt owned a store right next door to where Carol and her family were living in Massachusetts. Carol was fifteen when they met. Henry was almost twenty one. They saw each other as often as they could over the next year or so. Then they decided to get married.

When I asked them about their decision to get married, Carol turned to Henry and said: "I'll let you answer that one." Henry simply said, "We figured we'd see more of each other if we moved up here." Her parents were opposed to the idea, since Carol was only sixteen, but "we figured we could do as well as anybody." Carol spoke of the cold war that was going on between her parents. One worked nights, the other days. They didn't fight, but they did not get along. Henry and Carol were married in October, 1961. Their oldest daughter, Cynthia, was seventeen in the spring of 1978. This suggests the hypothesis (unconfirmed) that pregnancy may have also been a factor in Henry and Carol's decision to get married.

Henry described how he quit a two-dollar-an-hour job in a local woolen mill and took a job for a dollar an hour at the book factory where he is still employed. Although he had only gone to school through the ninth grade, he has been able to secure an apprenticeship and work his way up the pay scale over the last seventeen years. He works full
time on weekdays and five hours on Saturday morning, cleaning the ma-
chine he operates. He told me his work is boring, but that he is ex-
perienced enough that it requires less attention than it used to. Peo-
ple thought he was crazy to leave a two-dollar-an-hour job for a job
that paid only one, but he knew that there he could eventually make
enough money to support a family.

About three years ago Carol began working from nine to twelve in
the school across the street cooking in the cafeteria. Karen was three
at the time and Carol used to take her along to work. Carol stopped
school in tenth grade.

Both Henry and Carol expressed disappointment, even bitterness,
about their families of origin. Both felt that the main differences be-
tween their family and their families of origin is that "we care about
our kids." Henry gave dental care as an example: "The folks, they
never had their kids' teeth fixed or brought them to doctors." He said
the first time he went to the dentist, he went himself and paid his own
bill. That was in his late teens. Carol described painful abscessed
toothaches. She believes her mother, an LPN, knew enough but didn't
care enough to take her to the dentist. "We couldn't stand to see any
one of our kids with that pain."

Memories of their grandparents, however, had a warmer quality.
Henry described going to his maternal grandmother's for Sunday dinner
every week. Carol described trimming the Christmas tree each year when
she was little at her maternal grandmother's.

They told me that they believed one reason for their success as a
family is that they fight. Henry pointed out that his sister and her
husband never fight, and that his sister has an ulcer. They said they spend a great deal of time together, and really feel strongly that "communication is important." A lot of couples they know don't talk to each other, and that, they explained, leads to problems. Carol also expressed appreciation that Henry, unlike most men she knows about, really enjoys his children. He likes to do things with them and shares responsibility for them. This makes her feel more secure about the marriage since, "He could never stand just seeing them on weekends."

The division of labor for this couple is largely along traditional sex-role lines. Carol does all the cooking and cleaning, with help from the girls. She also made a point of mentioning that each of the boys (Hank and Billy) was learning to cook, even though the two older girls (Cynthia and Lisa) were more serious about cooking and could competently handle cooking for the whole family. Henry does any repairs that need doing around the house and yard, with help from the boys. He also had a garden on a farm nearby which he cultivated until a year ago when he decided it was not worth the energy he was putting into it.

The children in this family seemed quite shy in relation to me for the first day of observation. They did not engage me in conversation or play with me very much. They referred to me as "that man." During the second day of observation, they seemed to be getting more comfortable. In the interviews they were all cooperative and talkative. In the family interview, this warming-up process happened again in microcosm. At first Carol took control and "called on" each child, in age-descending order, to answer my questions. Soon there was a general loosening of tension and everyone began to talk more freely.
Cynthia (16), the oldest daughter, is in her junior year of high school. She plans to go to college and hopes to become a teacher. She seems to fill the role of substitute mother in some ways in the family, in that Lisa, Hank, and Billy all said they would go to Cynthia with a problem if their parents weren't around. In a sense, she seems to be the family intellectual. She got a lot of kidding about always having her nose stuck in a book. She engaged me in conversation about novels and history.

Lisa (15) is not as studious as her older sister. It came up in the family interview that she has been grounded in the recent past for poor grades on her report card. She is a cheerleader in the town high school; active in outdoor activities.

Hank (13) (as he is called) spent a year in the 'primary' class between first and second grade. He also has some trouble keeping up his grades. He expressed most interest in hunting and fishing and told me he wanted to be a professional baseball player when he grew up.

Billy (11) likes to work with his hands and told me he would like to be a carpenter when he grows up. He seemed a bit more flexible in activities and emotions than his brother, baking a cake as well as skiing on the Sunday I spent with the family. He said he expected he might feel a little sad when his older sister went off to college, whereas Hank said he expected to feel no such thing. He was also the one to break the ice in the family interview in response to the question: "What has it been like to have me in your family?" After his father said, "It didn't bother me," and his sisters had said, "I don't know," he said, "I think it was fun," which brought laughter and a little re-
Taxation of tension.

Karen (6) was very shy in relationship to me except in the interview situation. Here she talked quite openly about how she liked "take-aways" better than "plusses" and how she disliked the noise the kids make on the school bus. She assured me that she was not the kind of person who made noise and got reported to the principal or yelled at by teachers. She seemed well motivated and obedient in the interview situation.

I would describe the children in this family as generally embodying characteristics of obedience and inhibition. Henry (Sr.) freely ordered Cynthia and Lisa to get him a beer or clean something up, and they quickly did as they were told. I got the strong sense from being with the family and talking with the children that the parents made the rules and kept them. This held for deciding what television show to watch, what time to go to bed, whether one could go out and with whom. As Lisa said, "Mom believes she has the right to say no just because she feels we shouldn't do something." Lisa thinks her mother should have to explain 'why' when she says 'no.'

As will become evident in the description of family routine and rituals to follow, there is quite a bit of confirmation of developmental progress for the children in this family. Still, I got the impression that there was less comfort with adolescence and independence than there is with the growth and development of younger children. Carol said quite directly that she believed it would be harder for her and the family to go through Cynthia's leaving for college than it was to send Karen off to first grade. She confided in me that she has fantasies of
Cynthia becoming a teacher in the school across the street, and then added that she knew she should not expect that kind of thing to happen.

I think that I have to work hard at not being overprotective. I would really like to keep everybody right here. Henry included. It's the way I like it to be. It's a terrible thing to do to people.

In the family session there was quite a bit of talk about Cynthia leaving. Henry told her she could leave if she wanted to but he would "still tell her what to do." It was hard for me to tell if he was joking, although everyone laughed. The day before he had said he would not let her leave "until she was thirty." "When you ask for the car I'll say no, you're on your own," he said. Cynthia replied, "I'll know when I'm on my own. I can tell," and held her ground. This seemed to me to be a playful working through of the issues the family has to begin to face in a few years. In another incident in which Henry made fun of Lisa's new 'painter's pants,' Lisa took him very seriously but went on ahead and wore them when she went out later. Here it also seemed that a kind of playful sham-conflict was the vehicle of handling developmental tension.

In the way Henry wrestles with the boys, also, it seemed to me that the line was thin between fun and serious expression of conflict. Henry mentioned to me that he thought it would not be long before he couldn't get away with rough housing with his sons the way he does. In a few years they will be as strong as he is.
Binding behavior

Family routine

A typical day in the life of this family begins just after six AM, except on Sunday, when they rise later. Breakfast on weekdays is in shifts, as different members have to be at work or school at different times. Carol coordinates this morning routine, often keeping after the kids so they won't miss the bus. At about 8:15 she is standing in the picture window watching the last kids walk toward the school. Then she finishes her coffee, cleans up and gets ready for work herself.

Carol told me she is almost always home before the first child returns in the afternoon. Various activities, such as feeding the chickens and ducks, doing puzzles together, making dinner, and doing homework take up the late afternoon, until Henry gets home at about five. Carol and Henry then have coffee together, followed shortly by supper.

A typical evening during the week will find this family watching television together from dinnertime to bedtime. Other activities, such as swimming, homework, working on a jigsaw puzzle, are also possible in the evening.

Weekends are different, especially Sunday which is quite ritualized, with a pancake breakfast, a late afternoon Sunday meal and popcorn in front of the television in the evening. These rituals will be described in more detail later.

The Clark family especially enjoys activities in which they all participate together. This was mentioned by several of the children as something they especially like about their family in comparison to the families of friends in school. Hiking, doing puzzles together (and
other games), cookouts, swimming in their backyard pool, etc. are favorite whole-family activities. Although Carol and the girls have come along from time to time, hunting and fishing are generally male activities, and very much looked forward to.

There is a lot of touching in this family. Between the boys and their father this takes the form of roughhousing. Henry will also wrestle with his daughters. When they are all sitting together in the evening in front of the television, just about everyone is touching someone else--either holding hands or sitting close or on someone's lap, etc.

Family binding rituals

Couple rituals. Each day, when Henry returns from work at about five o'clock, he and Carol will sit down alone in the dining room and have a cup of coffee together. They will talk about the events of the day, plans for the evening, whatever is happening with the kids, finances, etc. The children are not permitted in the dining room during this ritual. In the past, "when gas was less expensive," they used to go for a brief drive at this time of day. This daily ritual is very seldom skipped.

On their anniversary, Carol and Henry go out for dinner without the kids. Henry will give Carol a gift of flowers or candy each Valentine's Day.

Special family activities. Sunday is a particularly family-oriented day in this family. They will typically sleep a good deal later (8:30 the day I spent with them), and, if her energy is not gone from the week, Carol will make a pancake breakfast that morning. When asked about what got this ritual started, they gave two reasons: Carol said
that they did it because Henry likes breakfast and doesn't get to have a real breakfast the other six days of the week. Henry saw it also as a regional practice, a New England custom.

In the mid-afternoon, they sit down to their most formal meal of the week each Sunday. There is no grace or other ceremonial (there is none at any meal in the family), but the table is set, candles lit and a more elaborate meal than usual is served. The television, which has likely been on during most of the afternoon, is turned off during the meal, no matter what is on.

In the evening, almost every Sunday, there is no late meal, just popcorn in front of the television. Here again, this seemed to be a very consistent, special practice that could be seen as a family ritual. They always make the popcorn in the same old pot that they used when the kids were little. Henry will have a few beers with the popcorn, and they will all sit together and watch the Sunday evening television shows.

There are, of course, Sundays when other activities, visiting, etc. may preclude the Sunday pattern, but most Sundays are quite similar.

Maple sugaring is one activity that the Clarks do as a family every year. They do their sugaring with another family. Each afternoon, when the sap is running, Henry and the kids (especially the boys) will go over to the land where they tap and collect sap. Then, after dinner, Henry and Carol will go over and, with another couple, boil through the evening. This was originally begun "so that the kids could have the experience." As the kids have grown older, they mentioned that the activity may soon be abandoned.
A yearly trip to a particular trout pond for an overnight fishing trip in late spring was on the top of the list of special family activities for Hank and Billy. Sometimes the whole family will participate, but every year at least Henry and the boys go.

Henry and the boys will also go out hunting for deer in the fall together. A trip to Hampton Beach to swim each summer "at least once" and a trip to Boston to see a Red Sox game were also mentioned, but these did not seem to be quite as temporally specific as fishing, hunting, and sugaring.

**Holiday celebrations.** Carol mentioned in the couple interview that "the most religious thing we do" is to have the kids participate in the annual church Christmas play and to attend the play each year. Although the actual Christmas celebration is not especially elaborate, several events surrounding the holiday as they observe it are important rituals in the family. There is a rule, firstly, that each child is permitted to give only one present to another child, so that each year lots are drawn to determine who will give his/her one present to whom. This practice was explained as being based on purely economic necessity.

Another family ritual around Christmastime is a yearly trip for all the kids with Henry to buy Christmas presents for Carol. This practice seemed to give Carol a lot of pleasure. She brought it up in the interview and expressed considerable appreciation of it. Henry mentioned that he would bring each youngster along as soon as s/he could walk. He gets a lot of help from Cynthia in keeping them all under control. On the way home he takes them all out for dinner.

The Clarks have a traditional Thanksgiving meal, but with no cere-
monial of any kind. This is not always held at their home, but may be
at the homes of brothers or sisters. Generally they alternate having
Carol's sisters one year and having Thanksgiving with the Clark extended
family the next.

An Easter ham, shared with Henry's parents, is a yearly event for
Easter. They also color Easter eggs, but do not hide or hunt for them.
In the morning, each child will find candy at his/her place on the din-
ing room table:

We do make quite a go of that Easter Bunny deal. Like this
year alone each kid had a chocolate rabbit in a box and a big
solid egg in a box and a whole pile of jellybeans and four or
five little marshmellow chicks there (Henry).

Each year they have a cookout on July Fourth, but this did not seem
to be especially ritualized in that cookouts by the pool are fairly typ-
ical summer evening events in this family. They used to go to see fire-
works in a nearby town each year but these days "there are too many peo-
ple drinking and riding around on motorcycles" to continue the practice.

The parents stay home on New Year's Eve, and the kids are allowed
to stay up until midnight.

On Halloween, Henry used to take the kids out. Now the older kids
take the younger ones trick or treating.

Problem solving rituals. Bedtime in this family is rigidly en-
forced. The developmental aspects of bedtime will be discussed shortly.
There is no elaborate bedtime ritual. Karen, the youngest, for example,
kisses each of her parents goodnight and goes upstairs herself. The
kiss goodnight is a ritual, in that it is not skipped, except if she is
angry with her parents, and even then she will usually come down again to kiss goodnight if she goes to bed without kissing them. She will also, as a ploy to get to stay up just a little later, insist on kissing everyone several times. This does not work for long, according to her brothers and sisters. In general, though, she will decide to go to bed and will put herself to bed by herself.

**Life cycle behavior**

Developmental change of routine

In general, it seems from my observation that developmental change progresses gradually and without much marking or ceremony in this family. Developmental change of routine takes the form of loosening of restrictions, increasing the activities in which a child has permission to participate, and increase of responsibilities.

Over the last few years, for example, Cynthia has taken on a secondary parent role in the family. She, followed by Lisa, has been given more home chores, particularly those around meals. She also does much of the care of the younger children. She is, as I mentioned before, considered the next best thing to a parent when one of the younger children needs advice on a problem.

In a similar, gradual way the two boys have been given greater responsibility. They care for the chickens and ducks, mow the lawn, and help their father on projects. Hank was the one who walked Karen to the bus on the first day of school. Among the things the boys mentioned as reflecting their growing up was the unsupervised use of power tools, which Hank has permission for, but Billy is not old enough for yet. Another important step, from their viewpoint, was learning to use a gun
and accompanying their father hunting. This seemed to take place at around age ten, and was very important, but not accompanied by any rite or ceremonial marking. As Carol said of the family's attitude towards developmental change:

It comes gradually and you do it with each child as it seems to be the time. I don't think there's any hard rule you can follow for it. There's no big deal made of it or anything like that.

Other noteworthy changes in routine include the gradual move from four in the bathtub, through same-sex pairs, to individual baths. Henry will still shampoo Karen's hair if Cynthia or Lisa do not. Age four is the approximate age for bathing without parental help; somewhere between six or eight for bathing alone. These seem to be self-initiated changes --they happened without parent's prompting, according to Henry and Carol.

Sleepover guests and permission to sleep over at a friend's house begins sometime during fourth grade.

When the kids were very young, Henry won $50 in a shop contest and used the money to open up bank accounts for the three older children. When Cynthia was in seventh grade (about twelve) and began to make money babysitting, Henry went to the bank with deposits and opened accounts for Billy and Karen. Over the years, with the help of occasional gifts of money from members of the extended family, these accounts grew. Each child has more than six hundred dollars by senior year in high school.

No withdrawals were permitted on these accounts until the time came when Cynthia got her driver's license. To drive the family car she had to pay for her name to be added to the family insurance policy, and she
was allowed to withdraw money from her account for this purpose. From
the way this was discussed, I got the impression that this may become a
family ritual as each child gets her/his driver's license. There was
talk in the family interview of how quickly the boys' accounts would be
depleted, since insurance rates for teenage boys are so much higher than
for girls.

Life cycle rituals

Ceremonial rite. Just this year, the bedtime for Cynthia and Lisa
has been changed from 9:00 to 11:00. In fact, although it seems that
there is an implicit 11:00 rule (that was the time reported by Cynthia
and Lisa), their parents told me they had no official bedtime. The
first time Cynthia and Lisa were allowed to stay up late and share the
late night snack with their parents was remembered as a very special
treat and a confirmation of their getting older. They were in seventh
and eighth grades (12 and 13) at the time. They mentioned that they
often saw the remains of inviting late night snacks in the morning.
They felt like they were being allowed to join a special and exclusive
club when they were permitted to stay up watching television with their
parents till eleven one night and were given a big frozen pizza to share.

Birthdays are the most elaborate ritual of the life cycle in the
Clark family. All of the children's birthdays take place over about a
month in the late spring, so there is much focussed excitement around
birthdays.

There are several distinctive rules about gifts. First, the chil-
dren are not permitted to exchange gifts. The gifts come from the par-
ents and are often picked out by the recipient right at the store. Sec-
onds, birthday gifts are practical. As Cynthia said: "A birthday present is somewhere between a luxury and something you need." Often the gift will be a pair of shoes or other clothing.

There is always a family birthday celebration for each birthday. This involves a cake with candles and ice-cream after dinner—usually right on the day. "Happy birthday" is sung, a wish is made and the candles are blown out.

An interesting variant of singing happy birthday, which seems to be a playful acknowledgement of aging, takes place on parents' birthdays. Parents will be evasive about their age when the children sing, "How old are you now?" This game is a consistent part of Carol's birthday party. The first time the kids sing, "How old are you now?", she will say, "Twenty", or some other obviously understated age. Then, over several choruses, the kids will sing louder and louder as Carol's answer approaches the truth.

Another birthday practice in this family, perhaps the most often mentioned family institution during my work with them, is the ritual of birthday spankings. With the recently instituted exception of Carol, who hid in a closet last year and then declared herself exempt, each member receives his/her age in spankings from every other member. I was told in the family interview that Henry will sometimes take his turn a few times—for example once each day for two days in advance of Karen's recent seventh birthday. There is also a legend in the family about how he put a towel in his pants to soften the blows on his birthday a few years ago. The children make deals with each other about how hard they will spank each other, the one with a birthday later in spring is at the
mercy or vengence of the earlier. During the family interview, Cynthia announced that she thought there should be a rule that at age sixteen (her current age) one no longer gets spanked. Her suggestion got no support, as Henry pointed out that he was a lot older than sixteen and Cynthia retorted that he was a parent. The boys said they believed that spankings would probably stop for someone when they went off to college.

**Symbolic gifts.** Two special birthday gifts were mentioned by Cynthia and Lisa: some fingernail polish and other make-up at age ten and a ring from their maternal grandmother at age twelve. Hank got a gun for his tenth birthday, which he considered a special gift. Billy did not receive such a gift, but has been learning to shoot with the gun Hank received.

**Cultural rituals.** Each child will get two graduation parties in this family: eighth grade and high school. This is a family party, sometimes with a few friends as well. The pool is the center of the event. Of course, there have been no high school graduations, but some celebration similar to eighth grade graduation is expected. The parents give the graduate of eighth grade a symbolic gift appropriate to going to high school—either clothes or school supplies (e.g., a dictionary). During the family interview, Billy suggested that Cynthia ought to get a car for high school graduation. All were assured by Carol that that would not be likely. Some appropriate symbolic gift will be given at the time, however. This is an example of the family commemoration of a rite of passage in the larger society.

Concerning the tooth fairy, Carol said that with the first four children they were more consistent about putting money under the pillow
when the children lost teeth, especially for the first few teeth. For Karen, the ritual has "just about fizzled out," and it is Cynthia who fills in for her parents by noticing when Karen loses a tooth and remembering to put money under her pillow. Only once was a note written to the tooth fairy—that was one time when Lisa lost a tooth and Carol wrote a note for her. Cynthia remembered trying an experiment to test to see whether the mythical character really existed. She had been led to doubt the existence of the tooth fairy in discussions with friends in second or third grade. She put a tooth under her pillow but purposefully did not tell her parents to alert the fairy and, sure enough, no money appeared. She told this story in part to explain why she tries to make sure Karen is not disillusioned too soon about the myth.

Response to Developmental Transition--The Youngest Enters First Grade

Although there is no ceremonial rite to commemorate school entry, starting school and the first day of school through seventh or eighth grade are important events. Each child gets some new clothes and gets "spruced up" for the first day each year. Kindergarten entry and first grade entry seem to be equally important, but for different reasons. Kindergarten is important because it is the first time going to school (none of the Clark children went to pre-school). First grade is important because it is full-time and because it is there that the child learns to read.

According to Carol, Karen was very shy and scared when she went to the spring pre-kindergarten screening. She was also shy starting kindergarten, not really talking the first day. By the third or fourth day
she was comfortable. Before first grade began, Karen said she didn't want to go. She thought she would have to read the first day: "I thought we'd be reading the first day and I was scared because I thought I was gonna be bad at reading and everything." Her brothers and her father told her jokingly how much harder first grade would be than kindergarten was. Her sisters tried to "show her the ropes" by telling her "not to talk back" and to always "do what the teacher says." One thing that helped was that, although she had not met the teacher, she knew all of the kids. She had stayed in the morning kindergarten class when the classes switched at mid-year, since her mother worked mornings in the school cafeteria.

On the first day (and for the next two days) Hank walked his sister to the bus so that she would get the right one. As he said in his interview: "Everybody was joking to her how hard it was going to be and all this. Everybody said she wouldn't like it, but when she came home the first day, 'We had fun in school,' she says."

As is her custom, Carol watched through the picture window as Hank walked Karen to the bus. She said she felt more when she saw Karen walk alone for the first time, but that it was not that hard to accept:

To me it is definitely an ending. When I see younger women with little children, I used to feel envious--feel well, gee, I'd like to have another baby. Now I feel envious in a different way because it's something that's passed for me. I've accepted it--it's something that was that I'm envious of--not that I want it to be happening. And so it really...I don't think it was that hard for me to accept her going to first grade.

Carol explained that she had faced the prospect of the last one go-
ing off to school when Billy got near school age (he is five years older than Karen). She resolved it by having another baby. "I did not want it to end at that time and I knew I didn't and I knew I wanted to have another baby. At the time she [Karen] was born, I still could not accept not having another baby." She told me later that, except for financial reasons, she would probably have had yet another. She said other people had asked, "How can she cope with all those children?"

"But when they went to school, it bothered me. I like to know what is going to happen." She shared with me her concerns about the school staying open on icy days just so they will stay within the number of snow days set aside on the calendar. One day, she told me, she simply kept them home when she thought the weather was too bad.

In response to my question about whether she and Henry will get closer as the children grow more independent, Carol said that she did not think they had ever been less close because of the kids. Her own response to Karen's first day of first grade seemed to me to reflect a mixture of feelings:

I had my own little celebration. I didn't answer the telephone. I took the car that day and I did go down and pick Henry up for lunch. It was the first time in sixteen years that I didn't have a pre-schooler at home, so I figured that whole day--while the kids were in school--would just be mine.

Neither Carol nor Henry seemed to think there was any real change in the family as a whole that resulted from Karen's first grade entry. The biggest change, they said, was in Karen, who had become more 'ornery.' Carol maintained that by the time it happened, she had adjusted to the idea, and, since she had been working part-time already for three
years, her schedule did not change much. Henry simply said: "I don't see no change at all." Both agreed that it would be harder for them and the family as a whole to manage the older kids growing up and leaving home.

My impression, overall, of this family's response to developmental change is that the child is given a mixed message about his or her move toward independence. This is to be seen, however, in the context of a 'healthy' family. The mixed feelings and acknowledgement by Carol that she has to "work hard at not being overprotective"; the joking by Henry and other family members about how much Karen would not like first grade; Henry joking that he won't let Cynthia leave until she is thirty are examples of how this mixed message is delivered. It leaves the developing one in a position where s/he is very much on her/his own emotionally to run a sort of 'family gauntlet' as part of a developmental transition. Like the birthday spanking, but less elaborately structured, this has something of the quality of an initiation rite. Change is not prevented, but it is a struggle. I suggest that much of the ambivalence that underlies this way of handling developmental change lies in the amount of satisfaction Carol and Henry get from being parents of young children, especially in the light of their description of their family of origin experiences.
CHAPTER IX

RITUAL, STRUCTURE, AND FUNCTION IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM

In this chapter, and the concluding two chapters to follow, the data which have been presented in the case studies will be analyzed and conclusions drawn about the function of ritual in the modern family as well as the effects of school entry of the youngest child on the family. The implications for further research and therapeutic intervention will be discussed. Not all of the data included in the case studies will be discussed. Rather, relevant examples will be used as illustrations. It is hoped that the depth of material presented in the case studies will be helpful to the reader by providing a context within which to evaluate the analysis which follows.

Functions of Tribal Rituals

An analysis of the function of ritual in the modern family must begin with a consideration of the ideas presented by those who have studied ritual in tribal culture. Wallace (1966) makes a distinction between the goal of a ritual practice and its social function. For example, many of the tribal rituals described within Wallace's five categories of ritual (industry, therapy, ideology, salvation and revitalization) have magical goals. Rain-making ceremonies, offerings, voo doo curses and the like are generally agreed unlikely to be effective in manipulating the material world. The function of such rites must differ, then, from their conscious goals.
Numerous writers have speculated on the functions of rituals in tribal life (cf. Malinowski, 1948; Radcliffe-Browne, 1952; Freud, 1948; Kluckhohn, 1942; Gluckman, 1962; Wallace, 1966; etc.). Three different but related functions of rituals are proposed: impulse control, anxiety reduction and the maintenance or integration of social structure.

Malinowski (1948) writes of the mourning rites of primitive peoples as having the function of controlling impulses to abandon the corpse, destroy the dead person's belongings, and run away from the tribe in fear and horror. He writes of these impulses as disintegrating forces and sees ritual as a reflection of the forces of reintegration:

The ceremonial of death which ties the survivors to the body and rivets them to the place of death, the beliefs in the existence of the spirit, in its beneficent influences or malevolent intentions, in the duties of a series of commemorative or sacrificial ceremonies—in all this religion counteracts the centrifugal forces of fear, dismay, demoralization, and provides the most powerful means of reintegration of the group's shaken solidarity and of the reestablishment of its morale (p. 53).

Homans (1941), Radcliffe-Brown (1952), and Malinowski (1948) have discussed anxiety reduction as a principal function of ritual, especially magical ritual which is aimed at influencing matters that are not within technological control. Freud (1948) in his classic paper relating religious ritual and obsessive-compulsive symptoms, brings together the notions of impulse control and anxiety, showing how the performance of a ritual can be seen as a defensive process which involves the repression of a dangerous impulse and thus the reduction of anxiety. Kluckhohn (1942) amplifies this conception in his paper on "Myth and Ritual", in which he also suggests that both myth and ritual are reflec-
tions of the cognitive tendency toward organization or 'configuration':

The all-pervasive configurations of word symbols (myths) and of act symbols (rituals) preserve the cohesion of society and sustain the individual, protecting him from intolerable conflict (p. 157).

Anthropologists seem to agree that ritual is the symbolic reflection in behavior of social structure. Radcliffe-Brown sees ritual as predominantly regulatory in its function in social systems. In Structure and Function in Primitive Society (1952) he writes:

Rites can therefore be shown to have a specific social function when, and to the extent that, they have for their effect to regulate, maintain and transmit from one generation to another sentiments on which the constitution of society depends (p. 157).

All three of the functions suggested for ritual (and myth) in primitive society are fundamentally related. Anxiety reduction, impulse control and the maintenance of social structure can all be seen as homeostatic functions (Turney-High, 1968) aimed at regulation and maintenance of 'steady state' in the group.

If the function of ritual in tribal life is to be seen as essentially homeostatic, it is important to note how this applies to the rites of passage which regulate developmental change of status in the tribal group.

In the tribe, when the members of one age group reach a new developmental phase there is a restructuring of the social system, facilitated by ritual. The change that takes place involves disintegration, symbolized by the phase of 'transition' in the rite of passage, and re-
integration, symbolized by rites of incorporation. As compared with more simple rites whose function is homeostatic—inspiration of confidence and reduction of anxiety in relation to material events (food supply, weather, etc.), or maintenance of relationships already established (taboos and courtesies in relation to the king, celebrations, ceremonies, and rites of intensification, which reinforce tribal 'cohesiveness', etc.) rituals which regulate developmental change processes in the life of the tribe seem to correspond to the more complex concept, homeorhesis. This concept, presented earlier, describes the regulated change which characterizes growth. I therefore suggest that while all rituals can be seen as functional in the maintenance of the structure of the social system, a distinction should be made between those which maintain existing structure and those whose function is to facilitate controlled change in structure. It is precisely this distinction which forms the basis to the classification of family rituals into binding and life cycle types.

Functions of Ritual in Family Life

In this section I will propose and demonstrate with examples some hypotheses about the functions of ritual in family life. In general, I hope to provide a conceptual basis for further, systematic research into the function of ritual in the family.

Ritual in the family serves four major functions: the enrichment of family life, maintenance of family structure, socialization, and facilitation of developmental change in family relationships. The first of the four functions of ritual I propose is the most broad and encom-
passing. Rituals of both binding and life-cycle types seem to provide for family members an enriched 'sense of family.' Rituals seem to enhance a sense of family identity, a feeling of knowing 'who we are and what we, as a family, do.' Questions about what life was like in an individual's family of origin often are met with the response of recounting family binding rituals: "I remember every Sunday we used to visit my grandmother's house" (Henry Clark). Rituals are the practices that make up family traditions which may be passed down to the next generation. They are characterized, as Bossard and Boll (1950) have noted, by a feeling of rightness. As Linda Roberts said in the interview I did with her family, "They are fun."

While I would hold that all (non-pathological) family rituals serve the function of enrichment, I will mention a few particular examples from these families. The bedtime ritual in the Roberts family, in which the potentially unpleasant business of getting the kids to go up to bed was made into the fun game of climbing the 'wooden hill' exemplifies this quality of a ritual as enrichment of life. The 'penalty box' as a family institution in the Chase family also is an example of a ritual game which makes it fun to enforce the rules. The Levy family's 'comment' on Looey's accomplishment of learning to ride a bike with a ceremonial family ride is an example of a life-cycle ritual that enhances the feeling of family. When the Hastings read to the person who washes the dishes, their family life is enriched. Going Christmas shopping with dad in the Clark family is a time of fun and a time to learn about giving as well as frugality. All of the celebrations, the ritual of the tooth fairy, and the other special family events which have been defined
as rituals contribute to the enrichment of life.

While the maintenance of family rules and developmental changes of role might, theoretically, be accomplished without ritualization as part of family routine and developmental change of routine, the quality of enrichment that ritual adds to family life would be missing. Thus, while ritual may not be necessary for the family to function, it has an effect on the quality of life in the family. Some thoughts on potential negative effects will be discussed in a later section.

Family Structure, Homeostasis and Homeorhesis

The conceptual correspondence between binding ritual and homeostasis, and life-cycle ritual and homeorhesis has already been suggested. In order to demonstrate these relationships using the data of this study as a basis, it is first necessary to translate these abstract concepts from system theory into more concrete terms that can be applied to examples of rituals in real families.

Both homeostasis and homeorhesis are concepts that deal with the regulation of change in systems. In human systems (in this case family systems) the kind of regulation we are concerned with is the regulation of human relationships. Minuchin (1974) has provided a model, which he calls the structural model, of analysis of family relationships. Although originally developed from work with troubled families, it seems to lend itself well to the analysis of relationships in healthy families and how they change.

Minuchin conceptualizes family structure as the relations between subsystems, which may be individual members, or may be formed by sex,
generation, interest or function. Thus there are the spouse subsystem, the sibling subsystem, male and female subsystems, etc. Boundaries between subsystems define "who participates and how." Boundaries may be clear, diffuse or rigid depending on the family's place on the enmeshment-disengagement continuum. Clear boundaries are necessary for proper functioning of the system. Diffuse boundaries suggest enmeshment and rigid boundaries suggest disengagement. The symbols for these boundary types to be use in diagrams that follow are: Clear, ______; diffuse, ......; and rigid, ______ (from Minuchin, 1974).

Transactional patterns within this model, according to Minuchin, regulate family members' behavior. It follows that a family ritual within this model is a highly structured, repetitive, transactional pattern that defines or reaffirms in analogic, symbolic form, the rules of relationship, which are reflected in the boundaries between subsystems.

Function of Binding Rituals

Before proceeding with examples, it is important to first differentiate between two related but distinct functions binding rituals may serve in the structure of the family. These two functions are homeostatic functions and maintenance functions. Homeostatic functions may be defined as the reinstating of boundaries which have become too diffuse or rigid, while maintenance functions are ritual reaffirmations of boundaries which have not changed. This is an important distinction, since the concept of homeostasis involves a return to a particular state or setting of the system after it has deviated from the norm. To refer to maintenance functions as homeostatic would be a misuse of the term.
Two examples of couple rituals from the data will help to demonstrate the difference between homeostasis and maintenance. In the Clark family, Carol makes a point of being home before the kids get home from school every day. She confided in me her 'problem' with being 'overprotective' with her children, her preference for keeping people close to her. We may perhaps speculate that when Henry is at work in the afternoon the boundary between Carol (Mother) and the sub-system of children may sometimes become diffuse:

Mother (executive subsystem)

children (sibling subsystem)

The ritual practice of Carol and Henry having coffee together when he gets home in the evening each day may function to reinstate a clear boundary between Carol and the kids:

mother

children

It may be, in fact, that in order to effectively reinstate the clear boundary between Carol and the children, there must first be a rigid boundary around Carol and Henry as a subsystem with a diffuse boundary between them:

Mother ; Father

children

during the time they are having coffee together. This would account for
the stated wish that they not be interrupted by the children during the
coffee ritual. Once the couple boundary is reestablished, a clear bound-
ary is possible between parents and between parents and children:

```
            mother      father
            -----------
            children
            Parents
            ---------------
            Children
```

The practice of having a cocktail before dinner in the Chase family
can be seen as an example of the maintenance function of a couple ritu-
al. Here, the children are permitted to be present and may interact
freely with the parents, but may not share in the beverage rite. This
reaffirms the clear boundary between parents and children:

```
mother and father (drinkers)
-----------------------------
children
```

Here the beverage symbolizes the difference (boundary) between adult and
child.

A similar couple ritual of wine on Friday night in the Levy family
is often interrupted when Moses and Looey sneak up, grab a parent's
glass and take a sip of the wine. This creates a diffuse boundary be-
tween parent and children sub-systems:

```
       parents
       ............
       children
```

This is an example of a couple ritual in a family which is unsuccessful
in its maintenance of a clear boundary between parent and children subsystems.

Another example of the homeostatic operation of a couple ritual can be found in the ritual conversation Dina and Bernie Levy have on their way back from visits to Bernie's family in Maine. During their visit, Bernie relaxes into his family's lifestyle and Dina is somewhat uncomfortable, feeling like an outsider:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Dina} & \text{Bernie} & \text{Bernie's Family} \\
\end{array}
\]

Their conversation, which reaffirms their own values and lifestyle as their choice over the way Bernie's family chooses to live, reestablishes a clear boundary between Dina and Bernie:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Dina} & \text{Bernie} & \text{Bernie's Family} \\
\end{array}
\]

Other binding rituals reaffirm boundaries between subsystems in a way which maintains family structure. The trip to a special trout fishing pond each spring in the Clark family is an example of the differentiation of subsystems by sex:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{male subsystem} & \text{female subsystem} \\
(fishermen) & \\
\end{array}
\]

The Christmas shopping trip for presents for Carol in the same family illustrates how such a ritual can reaffirm the status of a parental child (Cynthia) who functions as a parent in helping Henry control the younger children:
Father and Parental Child (Cynthia)

Most other holiday celebrations and special family activities can be seen as reaffirming a clear boundary between the family as a whole and its social network. Some of the more regular of these, such as Sunday breakfast or Sunday dinner, especially when attendance is compulsory or strongly encouraged, may be seen as homeostatic in reestablishing a boundary with the outside society which has become diffuse during a week of busy involvements and activities. The degree to which this boundary is made rigid or clear by the ritual varies with the rules about attendance.

Hierarchical bedtime rules may be seen as maintaining the sibling structure in the family:

Parents

Child (Oldest)
Child (2)
Child (3), etc.

The ritual practices which accompany bedtime may serve to reaffirm parent/children boundaries or to reaffirm a boundary between parents when one parent takes more responsibility for the task of putting the children to bed. The bedtime ritual in the Levy family illustrates several of these points. There is no difference between the children's bedtimes, suggesting a diffuse boundary. Dina is almost always the one who puts the kids to bed:
The maintenance and homeostatic reestablishment of boundaries and thus the maintenance of family structure is one function of family-binding ritual. The maintenance of the family as a separate unit within the larger extended family and in relation to the family's social network is part of the maintenance of structure.

Not all family-binding rituals function in the maintenance of family structure, at least as Minuchin's model defines it. Some binding rituals serve the function of passing on or reaffirming a set of rules, values, philosophy or family tradition. The celebration of religious holidays, especially, accomplishes this in some families. For example, in the Hastings family, the practice of Caleb reading *A Christmas Carol* each Christmas is akin to the tribal recitation of myth, and the content of the story itself certainly teaches values, emphasizing the evil of greed and the virtue of generosity and good will. Jewish holidays, as practiced in the Levy family, involve a certain amount of education in cultural tradition. Families differ in the degree to which values and philosophy are stressed in their binding rituals, but this kind of socialization is one potential function, analogous to the class of rituals of ideology which Wallace (1966) calls social rites of intensification. Another way that ritual functions as socialization is in the maintenance of rules (e.g., the 'penalty box' in the Chase family). This can also be considered a socialization function.
One final thought on the functions of binding ritual in the family before moving on to consider the functions of life-cycle ritual. It would seem that one aspect of the function of binding ritual, probably related to the maintenance of clear generational boundaries, is the maintenance of the impression, or, as Gould (1977) has termed it, the illusion that the family is a safe place, that the parents are in control, and that the children will be protected. This parallels the function of rituals and myths in reducing or preventing anxiety in primitive culture. It may also be much of what in family ritual contributes to 'enrichment of the family life.' The magical ritual of 'high speed banana bread' in the Roberts family is the most specific example in these data of a ritual with this as its function. Binding rituals in general, and perhaps life-cycle rituals as well, seem to contribute to the maintenance of this 'illusion.'

So, in summary, family-binding rituals function to maintain (reaffirm) and homeostatically reinstate the boundaries between subsystems within the family. Binding ritual also functions to maintain and reinstate boundaries between the family and the extended family as well as between the family and its social network. Other functions of family-binding ritual are the reaffirmation and inculcation of family values and philosophy, and the maintenance and enforcement of family rules (socialization). All of these functions are related to the broader function of ritual in the family: to enhance and enrich the 'sense of family.'
Functions of Family Life-Cycle Ritual

Life-cycle rituals are symbolic statements of the homeorhetic process of developmental change in the family. They function to mark analogically the changes in family structure which accompany development (transformation) as well as provide symbolic confirmation of development through the modes of permission, affirmation and education. Life-cycle rituals provide a focus for expression of affect aroused by the process of developmental change in the family, and they contribute to the 'enrichment of family life.'

It would seem from the data from the five families in this project that healthy family development does not depend on life-cycle rituals for its accomplishment. Developmental changes of routine which reflect changes in roles and structure are plentiful in the data. These changes were accomplished without ritualization. This would suggest that the presence of life-cycle rituals in a family reflects more upon the mode the family chooses to work through the issues of its development than on the level of family mental health.

Change in Family Structure

A major function of life-cycle rituals is to mark or punctuate changes in family relationships through the life cycle. These changes in relationship among family members can be analyzed in terms of the structural model used to analyze the functions of family binding rituals above. Changes in family structure are reflected in changes in boundaries between subsystems.

An example of a life-cycle ritual which helps accomplish a 'change
in family structure is the first day of school ritual in the Roberts family. Several aspects of the family situation before and after this ritual event will serve to illustrate this. Shortly after he started kindergarten, a problem-solving ritual was innovated in the family which involved a parent (either) walking with Doug to the bus. This need for protection from a parent can be thought of in this context as setting up a diffuse boundary between Doug and one of his parents, while insuring that they are separated from each other at the time:

\[ \text{Parent}_1 \quad \text{Doug} \quad \text{Parent}_2 \]

The life-cycle ritual involved Doug walking with a bit of proud ceremony to the bus by himself, leaving his parents together:

\[ \text{mother and father} \quad \text{Doug} \]

Thus a clear boundary between the child and parental subsystems is established, and the change is marked by a ritual. There is also a change in the structure of the sibling subsystem that accompanies the first day of school ritual. The picture-taking ceremony and placing of Doug's first grade picture with those of his sisters and brothers in the family album symbolizes a change in membership status. The subsystem structure, at least in relation to the issue of full-time, independent school attendance, can be diagrammed as changing from:
This is, of course, not to suggest that this ritual accomplished these changes. It simply served as a focal point in time for changes which were gradual. It also provided Doug and his parents with a focus for the expression of the feelings they were having about the life-cycle change, which Sue describes in the case study of the Roberts family.

The rite of the first late night television snack in the Clark family is a second example of how a life-cycle ritual can be functional in the change of family structure. In this case the ritual was a first enactment of a change in bedtime rules. Through this ritual, Cynthia and Lisa were, in a sense, graduated to a later bedtime and the snack that goes with it. This formed a boundary around them as a separate subsystem within the sibling subsystem:

Cynthia and Lisa
-----------------
other children

It also served to initiate them into adult society, both by making their bedtime the same as their parents' and by permitting them to watch some of the more 'adult' material on late evening television shows:

Parents and older children
-----------------------------
younger children

The ceremonial rite of first allowance in several of the families
and the Levys' first family bike ride are other examples of life-cycle rituals which regulate structural change in membership. Cultural rituals of the life-cycle in which the family participates, such as believer's baptism in the Roberts family and the Clarks' graduation party also mark status and membership change both within the structure of the family and for one family member in relation to the social network.

Thus family life-cycle rituals may function as a focus for transformation of family structure. Another function of life-cycle rituals is the symbolic confirmation of developmental progress.

Confirmation and Disconfirmation

Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) have described confirmation, that is, the acceptance of the other's definition of self which occurs in communication, as "probably the greatest single factor ensuring mental development and stability that has so far emerged from our study of communication." Confirmation is the stuff of which social reality is made, and ritual functions to analogically confirm the definitions of social relationships.

The pathological counterpart of confirmation, disconfirmation, is a characteristic of schizophrenic families, as described by Laing (1961):

The characteristic family pattern that has emerged from the study of families of schizophrenics does not so much involve a child who is subject to outright neglect or even to obvious trauma, but a child whose authenticity has been subjected to subtle, but persistent mutilation, often quite unwittingly (p. 91).

In this connection it is interesting to mention that the original idea for this study of ritual in the family came during the observation of a
family therapy session of a family with a schizophrenic son. On this particular day it was the identified patient's birthday, and the therapist's acknowledgement of this by saying, "Happy birthday", turned out to be the first acknowledgement of the patient's birthday that had taken place. A discussion of how this was a reflection of the way the family responded (or did not respond) to the patient's growth and development followed this disclosure. It is in this sense that family life-cycle rituals may be seen as one important index of family mental health.

Ritual confirmation of development takes three related forms: permission, affirmation and education. These three aspects of confirmation do not define types of rituals, but rather modes of ritual function, since the same ritual can function in more than one mode.

When parents bestow allowance on a child, have a ceremony on the first day of school or give an adolescent who is planning a cross-country trip maps for Christmas, they symbolically grant permission to the child to have commerce with the world outside of the family. This is an active permission which supports individuation. Each of these examples is also simultaneously an affirmation of development. By affirmation, I refer to a communication to the developing member that her/his growth is noticed and validated. The developmental change and its meaning thus becomes a shared reality. Other examples of affirming life-cycle rituals include the symbolic gift to Rachel of a bracelet that had been handed down from mother to daughter in the Hastings family, the Clarks' graduation party, and the Levys' first family bike ride.

A final mode of developmental confirmation is education. Learning bedmaking in the Chase family is an example of a life-cycle ritual which
operates in this mode. The teaching of cooking, hunting and care of animals which is done in a less ritualized form in the other families also seems to exemplify this function, which is not unlike the sex-related tutelage which is highly ritualized in primitive society.

The Special Case of Birthdays

Although I have classified the birthday celebration under life-cycle rituals since it is clearly confirming of growth, the data would suggest that birthday celebrations function as binding rituals as well. Aspects of the birthday celebration which are the same each year (spanking among the Clarks, for example) function to reaffirm family structure, while 'special' birthdays, those on which age-related privileges (bedtimes, allowance, dating) are changed, have more to do with confirmation of development and change of structure. The ritual of Andy taking Laura and Linda fishing on their birthday in the Roberts family strikes me as a binding ritual which, in fact, tends to maintain a diffuse boundary between the twins rather than help them differentiate. In some ways it is the change in the birthday ritual (e.g., from small children's parties with friends to family dinner parties in the Chase family) and eventually the stopping of birthday parties that has more life-cycle meaning. In this way birthday celebrations themselves, apart from those changes in status that come with age, seem to operate more like binding rituals than life-cycle rituals.

The Tooth Fairy

Along with Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, the tooth fairy is one of the few remnant mythical figures that exist for children in our cul-
The ritual itself is one of the only remaining developmental rituals that are based on biological rather than chronological time. Like the birthday, this ritual seems to be universally practiced in the modern family in this culture, and seems to have both life-cycle and binding components.

Like receiving an allowance, to be given money at the age of five, six or seven can be seen as representing a form of permission to have commerce with the world outside the family. To get a prize for losing a tooth can also be seen as an affirmation and acknowledgement of development, and the popular practice of writing notes to the tooth fairy has an educational function, especially for first graders. The prize can also be seen, however, as a form of problem-solving ritual in which the child is compensated with money and a fun game for the pain and perhaps fear involved in losing the tooth. Also, it involves the maintenance of the mythical illusion that it is not the parents, but the fairy (who is notified by the parents), that awards the prize money. This illusion, which older siblings are by and large quite cooperative in maintaining, seems to function to reaffirm child/parent boundaries as well as the structure of the sibling hierarchy. In these ways the ritual has a binding function.

These two cases bring up an important point about the concept of homeorhesis in family development. Unlike the more simplistic concepts of fusion and differentiation (Bowen, 1972) and centripetal versus centrifugal forces (Steirlin, 1974) the concept of homeorhesis is not an opposite function to its companion, homeostasis. Rather, it represents a way of conceptualizing regulated change, that is, growth within struc-
ture. Thus the presence of binding as well as change-confirming aspects in these two family rituals should be viewed as complementary rather than contradictory or at cross-purposes.

Summary

Ritual in the family can, therefore, be said to have four major functions: enrichment of the family life, maintenance of family structure, socialization, and the facilitation of developmental change in the family. Both the binding and the life-cycle types of family ritual have enrichment and socialization as their functions. Binding rituals serve to reinstate or to reaffirm the structural boundaries between subsystems in the family and between the family and the outside world. In this way they serve homeostatic and maintenance functions, respectively. Life-cycle rituals may be symbolic enactments of change in family structure or confirmations of development operating in the modes of permission, affirmation, and education. They function to validate developmental change within the family and make it shared reality. Thus, life-cycle rituals may be seen as homeorhetic in their function, facilitating a new equilibrium at a greater level of differentiation in the family system.

This analysis must, of course, be considered in the light of the data on which it is based. In this sense what has been presented is speculation about the function of ritual in 'healthy' or nonpathological families. The question of ritual in troubled families will be discussed more fully in the final chapter on implications. The chapter which follows is a consideration of the family dynamics of school entry of the youngest child.
CHAPTER X
SCHOOL ENTRY AND THE FAMILY

A major focus of this study has been on the effects, in each of the families selected, of the entry of the youngest child into school. Each of the youngest children, three girls and two boys, attend public school. All had attended kindergarten before starting first grade. Bruce Chase and Looey Levy attended nursery school from approximately the age of three. The process of school entry is a gradual one and attention was paid to both its current and historical aspects in the data collection.

The First Day of School

Data was gathered in the interviews about how each family handled the first day of first grade for their youngest child. If we see the handling of this event as symbolic of the interface between the family and society, representing the issues of separation and individuation within the family as well as the family's boundary with its social milieu, much can be learned, at least in an impressionistic, inferential sense, about the family from an exploration of what happens on this day.

Each of the families in the study did some special things in relation to the first day of school for their youngest. This varied among families from the ceremonial rite in the Roberts family to Caleb Hastings walking his children to the bus on the second day after having forgotten about the first day. In four families, the child, or children were accompanied in some way, either by being driven (Chase), or walked
to the school bus by the father (Levy and Hastings), or an older male sibling (Clark). Doug Roberts chose to walk alone on the first day of first grade. He had been accompanied each day to the kindergarten bus the year before. Each family made preparations for the first day, discussed the coming of school at the dinner table in advance of the first day, etc. The Levys and the Clarks made special mention of new clothes, baths and general 'sprucing up' for the occasion of the first day.

The behavior of these families on the first day suggests at least one hypothesis about structural changes which may be concomitant with school entry. Contrary to what one might stereotypically expect, with one exception (Chase) it was not the mother who was principally involved in the actual process of taking the child to school. In three of the families (Levy, Clark and Hastings) the father or an older male sibling walked the child to the bus. Although admittedly speculative, this might be seen as an act on the part of the father or father substitute encouraging independence from the mother. In structural terms, the father taking the child to school can be seen as helping to make clear a diffuse boundary between mother and child. This parallels the change in structure previously described as facilitated by the first day of school ritual in the Roberts family (although in the case of the Roberts the parents' roles were seen as interchangable).

Using subsystem boundary diagrams the process looks something like this:

Initial situation:  

```
               Mother  
               |_________|
             child    |  Father
```
Three separate subsystems exist. The diffuse boundary between mother and child represents relative dependency on the mother before school entry.

Father takes the child to school:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diffuse boundary between father and child signifies protective support. Again three separate subsystems.

After school entry:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents (Father and Mother)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A clear boundary is established between parent and child subsystems.

It is interesting to note in this connection that this is precisely the intervention that structural family therapists suggest in the family treatment of phobias (including school phobias) in early school-age children. In a case entitled "The Modern Little Hans" (Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic Film Presentation, 1976), the clinical problem was conceptualized as fusion between mother and son (diffuse boundary), with an alienated father. Through a series of tasks in which the father was instructed to spend time with his son in the absence of the mother and then with the mother in the absence of the son, the child's phobia disappeared. Thus the father's help was enlisted in establishing a clear boundary between child and parent subsystems. There seems to be a parallel between this therapeutic process and the structural change which took place, without intervention, in these healthy families.

The only family in which the father was not directly involved in
the first day of school for the youngest was the Chase family. This reflects James' relative disengagement, which may be a factor in Bruce's expression of overt oedipal wishes and the fact that both he and his mother were more dependent on repressive defenses (not thinking of each other during the school day) as a means of handling separation issues.

It is not my intention to suggest that it is the handling of the first day of school that accounts for these differences. Nor am I proposing that all fathers should necessarily walk their six-year-olds to the bus on the first day of school. Rather, I present these speculative ideas to demonstrate how school entry may involve a change in family structure. Further, I wish to demonstrate the usefulness, from a research point of view, of analyzing a particular developmental moment in the life of the family. Further research is, of course, necessary to validate these speculations.

The Hastings' forgetting about the first day of school is another interesting bit of data that comes out of a consideration of the first day of school as symbolic of the family's response to school entry. Although Julia's explanation of their ambivalence about the school and its modes of socialization is certainly a valid value commentary, several factors point to the possibility that this family may have a more rigid boundary with the outside world than other families in the study. First, they showed the most reluctance (among families which ultimately agreed to participate) to my entry into their family. Also, they live in a community of three families, which changes the level in the system at which the interface between their nuclear family and the broader community takes place. Thus, while there are few limits, for example, on the
children's activities and interactions within the community, there is much more restriction on their movements outside the community.

In general, then, looking at the first day of school across these five families provides some impressionistic data about the changes in family structure which accompany school entry as well as how this change may be accomplished within the family. Similarly, the interface or boundary between the family and the social world outside its lifespace may be reflected in the events of the first day. All of the families provided a certain amount of protection and support for their youngest on the first day, one family with a ritual, the others by sending a representative with the child to make sure things went smoothly on the way to school.

Factors which Facilitate School Entry

Factors in the School

There are several ways in which the school itself can be helpful in reducing the anxiety of children (and families) who are preparing to enter first grade and kindergarten. As I mentioned before, the kindergarten teacher from the school to which the Levys send their children made a home visit shortly before the start of the year. This seems helpful both in terms of the child's and the parents' anxiety. Also, in that school the kindergarten class spends a full day in the first grade classroom with the first grade teacher shortly before the end of the kindergarten year. This provides a sense of orientation and familiarity with the first grade setting and thus likely makes the transition less anxiety provoking.
The school to which the Chase children go invites parents to bring their children in for a meeting with the teacher a few weeks before school starts. This, like the spring visit to the new classroom and the home visit, provides an opportunity for the child and the parent to become accustomed to school entry. The Chases' school leaves it more in the hands of parents to, in a sense, have a school entry ritual of meeting the teacher.

At the school to which the other three families send their children, there did not seem to be any special attempt made to facilitate the school entry process. This was the smallest school involved in the study, in a small rural village, and it was my impression that, in general, the families and the school were well known to each other. In fact, the families who participated included a cook in the school cafeteria (Clark), a former school bus driver (Hastings) and an old friend of the first-grade teacher (Roberts). Thus, perhaps there is less need for formalized introductions between the teacher and the families in this particular school.

Factors in the Family

It should be noted at the outset that none of the first graders in the study had any serious problem with school or school entry of which I became aware. Indeed, one of the criteria for family selection was that the child had, in the assessment of the school, made a healthy adjustment to first grade. Thus, although comparison between healthy and troubled families is not possible in this context, it may be possible to get some ideas from the data about what families can do to facilitate
healthy school entry.

The only distress surrounding school entry in any aspect was that of Karen Clark who was, according to her mother, very scared and upset at the time of the pre-kindergarten screening. She was also the most quiet and shy of all of the children in the study on the first day of school, although within a few days she was comfortable.

Karen's mother also experienced some distress surrounding her youngest's school entry. She told me she had Karen in anticipation of Billy (her next youngest) starting school, and that she would have had another child except for financial reasons. She expressed quite openly her wish to keep the children near her, that having them go off to school "bothered me." She tries to control her wish to be 'overprotective.' All of this is symbolized in her personal ritual of standing in the picture window each day watching as the children all walk to the school bus. Seen in this context, Karen's ambivalence, expressed in fear and shyness, appears to be related to her mother's mixed feelings. By no means pathological, this is an illustration of the kind of interactional dynamics which may sometimes underlie school entry problems (see Waldfogel et al., 1957; Messer, 1964; Minuchin, 1972). The family 'gauntlet', described in the case study of this family, might be seen as being an expression of the ambivalence about separation that characterizes Carol Clark's relationship with her children.

One of the things a family may do that facilitates a smooth first grade entry is to send their children to nursery school. Although the change to full-time school attendance is of some significance, the two children (Bruce Chase and Looey Levy) who had gone to nursery school in-
icated that starting first grade was easy since they had already been going to school for two or three years. Their mothers both also stressed that the process of separation between them and the youngest child had been a gradual one. "The pangs are spread out," as Debbie Chase said.

It certainly makes intuitive sense that a child who has been in pre-school will be less anxious beginning full-time school. There is nothing in the data that points to any striking differences in adjustment to first grade between the two children who went to nursery school and the three who did not, but, of course, we are dealing with a group selected for good adjustment.

Another facilitating factor within the family is the support given by siblings in preparation for the start of school. With the exception of the Levy family, in which the two children were only a year apart, and in which no such sibling 'showing of the ropes' was mentioned, each of the first graders were helped along by older siblings. One interesting aspect of this is that in each of the three families with both older brothers and sisters, it was the sisters who helped. In the Roberts, Clark and Hastings families, there were older brothers of various ages, but they did not seem to get involved in helping the youngest get ready for first grade. Of course, it is impossible to make much of this observation, given the size of the sample. It might be seen as a reflection of sex-role identifications. Another factor, however, is the fact that, except in the Roberts family, the sisters were the oldest siblings in the family.

In any case, this sibling tutelage was an important form of support for the youngest, as well as a valuable developmental experience for the
older sibling.

**How Important Is First Grade Entry?**

Although first grade represents a change from half to full-time school, none of the families in the study changed their day-to-day routine in relation to this shift in schedule. None of the couples reported any significant change in their relationship of which they were aware. For the mothers in the study, full-time school did mean some more free time for their own interests and activities. By and large, they looked forward to and enjoyed this change, but did not take on new projects or work outside the home. Thus, the notion of the mother's re-entry into the world outside the family being coincident with the child's school entry is not particularly supported by the data from these families.

In the two families with three equally spaced children (Hastings and Chase) the first grade year for the youngest seems to have been a time for considerable developmental change of routine. Chores were instituted in both families at this time. Allowance was also started. In the Hastings family there was a shift in responsibility from the parents to the children for a good part of the morning routine. In the two families with high school age children (Clark and Roberts) these changes had occurred earlier, and in the family with a first and a second grader (Levy) the shift in responsibility had not yet been instituted. Thus it seems that the meaning and implications of the youngest entering first grade is partly determined by the age distribution of the children in the family.
In general, school entry of the youngest child is an important developmental transition in the family. It is fraught with separation issues similar to, although less dramatic than, those which the family faces when the children reach adolescence. It is clear from the study of these families, however, that first grade entry may not be the most critical phase of the school entry transition, which is a gradual one spread out over several years.

There are several factors which seem to help facilitate the entry into school. Home visits by the teacher, visits to the new classroom by the child, and a preliminary meeting with the new teacher at the school before the start of the school year are school-initiated practices which help reduce school entry anxiety. Factors in the family which seem to be facilitative of school entry are the relative engagement of the father in the life of the family, the supportive 'showing of the ropes' by older siblings, and more or less ritualized supportive attention to the child's needs at the beginning of the school year.
CHAPTER XI
IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH

The material on family ritual in this study comes from families which have been defined as 'healthy' on the basis of several broad criteria, including that they be intact (first marriage, two parents), and have no 'special needs' (physical, educational or mental health). Thus, what has emerged from this study is an exploration of the types and functions of rituals in the lives of five healthy families. This exploration has generated a series of hypotheses about the possible functions of ritual in the healthy family. The essential functions that have been suggested for ritual practices in the family are homeostatic (maintenance) for family-binding rituals, and homeorhetic (developmental) for family life-cycle rituals. The modes through which these functions are accomplished are maintenance of structural boundaries in and around the family system for binding rituals, and facilitation of structural change of boundaries and confirmation of development (through permission, affirmation and education) for life-cycle rituals.

Much of the work of numerous writers whose research and theoretical works have guided clinical practice in the mental health professions is based on the application of knowledge gained from the study of pathological conditions and their treatment. Even the most recent work in the treatment of families (cf. Minuchin, 1974) is based on a theoretical model derived from the study of illness. Our understanding of mental
health is in many ways based on what we have learned about how things go wrong in the psyche and in the family. This research project is an attempt to learn about what goes right; perhaps this approach can also be fruitful in the understanding and the treatment of psychological difficulties.

In an approach which employs the study of pathological phenomena to make generalizations about the nature of psychological life, there are obvious limitations. There is the danger, for one thing, of evolving a theory and weltanschauung which is pathology-oriented and pathology-based. In this context, the recent trend in thinking toward viewing human adaptation along a continuum of health instead of the traditional categories of 'abnormal psychology' reflects a philosophical advance in our field (Menninger, 1963; Angyal, 1965; Maslow, 1968).

The approach employed here, of studying health to learn about how to be healthy instead of studying illness to learn how not to be sick, also has its built-in limitations. There is the danger of developing a pollyannish view of, in this case, family ritual, which ignores, because it is not present in the data, the pathological potentialities of a phenomenon.

Therefore, before proceeding to consider the uses of family ritual in mental health practice, some thoughts on the ways in which family ritual might be dysfunctional in family development are appropriate.

**Pathological Family Ritual**

There are ways in which ritual may function to impede normal development. Binding rituals, by becoming more rigid in response to the
threat of developmental change (anxiety) can be potentially regressive in their function. Thus one may imagine a family with adolescents who are prevented from making autonomous relationships with peers outside the boundary of the family by a series of rigid, compulsory family rituals (e.g., ritualized meals, holidays, vacations, etc.) which become binding in an overly restrictive, pathological sense. Family of origin rituals which become much more important as soon as a grown child is married, for example, may reflect a homeostatic response to changing subsystem boundaries aimed at reinstating the old structure. Such rigidity of binding ritual may undermine the successful accomplishment of the formation of new boundaries around the married couple, ending in marital distress or failure. Thus rituals which function to bind may hinder the accomplishment of developmental change, if the family's homeostatic flexibility or range is too narrow.

Life-cycle rituals may also be pathological by being the analogic representation of a destructive change in structure. An example of this is the life-cycle ritual in one family in which the child's dinner plate was ceremonially broken at the point in late adolescence at which the child was expelled from the family and expected to fend for her/himself. Here there is certainly the symbolic expression of change in structure, but the supportive quality of the life-cycle rituals reported by the families in this study is conspicuously absent. Rather than a change of subsystem boundaries in which the adolescent takes on a more autonomous role within the system (homeorhetic equilibrium), in this case the member is defined only as a child in or an adult outside of the family, with no negotiable middleground. This ritual obviously symbolizes a
very painful developmental inflexibility in the family. It is distin-
guished from the positive life-cycle rituals reported in the case stu-
dies by the absence of a kind of intergenerational cooperation in the
accomplishment of developmental change. Another example of this is the
funeral and mourning engaged in by some orthodox Jewish families when a
child marries out of the faith.

These examples of potentially pathological forms of family ritual
underline the need for further research into the types and functions of
rituals in the lives and development of families, both 'healthy' and
troubled. Perhaps the definition, typology, and functional analysis of
rituals based on data from these healthy families will help to prepare
the way for further, systematic, investigation of family ritual.

**Family Ritual in Clinical Practice and Research**

Two potential uses for the concept of family ritual in mental
health practice suggest themselves from the foregoing analysis of family
ritual and its functions in the healthy family. These two uses are
diagnostic assessment and therapeutic prescription.

**Diagnostic Assessment**

Along with family sculpture, and kinetic family drawings, gathering
data about the ritual practices in the family referred for treatment can
provide valuable information about the boundaries between subsystems in
the family and how they are maintained. An exploration of binding ritu-
als could provide data for a thoroughgoing structural analysis of the
family as a system. This, like family sculpture and family drawings,
provides qualitative, inferential, symbolic data that could prove quite
useful to the family clinician.

More quantitative assessment information could be provided through administration of a family ritual inventory. Such an inventory, which would obviously have to be compiled from data collected from a much larger sample than that of the current project, might provide an evaluation of the family's place on the continuum of enmeshment-disengagement as well as a related assessment of the family's homeostatic flexibility, based on the number of binding rituals and their rigidity. Such an inventory would be especially valuable in testing hypotheses about the relationship between enmeshment, disengagement and family mental health using populations of distressed and non-distressed families.

The presence of non-pathological life-cycle rituals in a family could be seen by the clinician as an indication of homeostatic flexibility and a good prognostic sign. To ask a family if they have a birthday custom, whether the tooth fairy visited their home, what they did on the first day of school, if they commemorate graduations, etc., can yield important information about the degree to which there is confirmation of developmental progress in the family and what form such confirmation takes. This would certainly guide the family therapist in her/his assessment of how the family copes with developmental change and what modes it is accustomed to use in coping. In this way an investigation of family life-cycle rituals may point the way to a successful resolution of a developmental crisis in family therapy by showing the therapist a spontaneous, innovative solution to a previous developmental crisis.
The Prescription of Rituals in Family Therapy

Palazzoli et al. (1977) have published a case history of a family with an anorexic daughter with whom the prescription of a ritual, which I would call a family-binding ritual, effectively helped in the resolution of a serious physical symptom. In this case, the family was deeply enmeshed within a large extended family. This enmeshment was maintained by a myth which made taboo all criticism, envy, jealousy and overt conflict within the extended family. This myth was stated thus: "The survival, safety and dignity of its members depend on the family. Whoever separates himself from the family is lost" (p. 447). This myth maintained a pathological homeostasis (Ferreira, 1963) which eventually could not continue. Without going into the details of the therapy or the history of the family which gave rise to this "deadly myth" as Palazzoli et al. (1977) call it, this case shows the therapeutic power of ritual.

When it became clear that a frontal attack on the myth by the therapists was ineffective, a ritual was prescribed which served "to change the rules of the game, and therefore the family epistemology, without resorting to explanations, criticism, or any other verbal intervention."

This ritual prescription was as follows:

In the next two weeks that were to precede the next session, every other night, after dinner, the family was to lock and bolt the front door. The four members of the family were to sit round the dining room table, which would be cleared of all objects except for an alarm clock that would be placed at its center. Each member of the family, starting with the eldest, would have fifteen minutes to talk, expressing his own feelings, impressions and observations regarding the behavior of the other members of the clan [extended family]. Whoever had nothing to say would have to remain silent for the assigned fif-
teen minutes, while the rest of the family would also remain silent. If, instead, he were to speak, everyone would have to listen, refraining from making any comment, gesture or interruption of any kind. It was absolutely forbidden to continue these discussions outside of the fixed hours: everything was limited to these evening meetings, which were ritually structured. As for relations with members of the clan, a doubling of courtesy and helpfulness were prescribed (p. 451).

Clearly this prescription includes paradoxical injunction, in which the therapists align themselves with the family myth (doubling of courtesy and helpfulness; suggesting only that impressions be discussed, not criticisms of the clan), while prescribing a situation in which the negative feelings built up over generations would have to be expressed. For present purposes, however, we are concerned not so much with the paradoxical injunction, but with the prescription of a family ritual.

The ritual accomplishes several tasks. It sets up a rigid boundary between the nuclear family and the rest of the clan, symbolized most directly by locking the front door but also by the prohibition on discussion outside the ritual time. Within the family, it reinforces the age hierarchy among members and prevents division into subsystems (through alliances and interruptions). Through this ritual, a change in family rules was accomplished, substituting for the prohibition the obligation to speak clearly on taboo topics (the clan), which corresponds to the establishment of the boundary between the nuclear family and its extended family. In the next session the identified patient had greatly improved, and "changes followed in leaps and bounds. Once the field was cleared of the myth, it became possible to work on the family's internal problems" (p. 452).

As the authors note, the analogic nature of such a ritual prescrip-
tion makes it much more powerful than reasoned, verbal intervention:

The family ritual, especially in that it presents itself on the level of action, is closer to the analogic mode than to the digital. This preponderant analogic component is, by its nature, more apt than words to unite the participants in a powerful collective experience, to introduce some basic idea to be shared by everyone (p. 452).

It is clear from this example that the prescription of a family ritual can be an effective tactic in family therapy. If the cooperation of the family can be enlisted, prescribed ritual could function for the troubled family to maintain current structure, change structure, or maintain new structure once it has been achieved. Prescribed ritual of both binding and life-cycle types would function by the same principles by which spontaneous rituals function—the symbolic representation of boundaries between subsystems or the developmental change of subsystem boundaries. Palazzoli et al. (1977) caution the clinician, however, that it is not simply a matter of plugging the family into a stock ritual:

The invention of a ritual always requires a great effort on the part of the therapists. First, an effort of observation and then a creative effort, since it is unthinkable that a ritual proven effective in one family can be so in another. It must be specific for one given family, in the same way as certain rules (and therefore a certain play) are specific for each family in a given here-and-now that includes, of course, the therapeutic experience (p. 453).

In a sense, the therapeutic process itself can be seen as a ritual process. By setting up a family therapy arrangement that is regular in schedule and, possibly dividing the family on the basis of an analysis of family relationships (boundaries and subsystems), structural change may be facilitated, and then perhaps a ritual prescribed for its
maintenance.

A number of different possibilities exist for the use of ritual to redefine family structure and relationships and to make shared reality of developmental change in the family. Couple rituals could help to make parent/child boundaries clear. Prescribing the giving of allowance, certain age-related chores, etc. may be helpful in making developmental change a validated, confirmed reality in the troubled family. Prescription of rituals to redefine parent-child relationships, when, for example, a child has become 'parentified' and is assuming inappropriate responsibility for an abdicating parent, may also be effective aids in treatment.

An important aspect of the power of prescribing ritual is that the ritual, if performed according to the prescription, is an intervention in the form of analogic action. It is concrete, typically nonverbal, and does not require insight although it may lead to insight. This makes its power as a change-inducing agent much greater than interpretation. At the same time, it is important to consider that the success of a spontaneous, innovative family ritual in the resolution of a family problem probably has greater value than a prescription, in terms of the integrity and long-term autonomy of the family. Thus, in concluding this section on the clinical use of family ritual, I would stress the importance of its assessment uses and the therapeutic value of supporting and encouraging the natural healing modes that the rituals already present in the family may represent.
CHAPTER XII

A CRITIQUE OF THE METHOD AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

An attempt has been made in this study to explore the phenomenon of family ritual: to provide basic definitions; to use qualitative data to tie the emerging concept into a theoretical framework; and to prepare the ground for more systematic testing of hypotheses by presenting data-based speculations about the function of ritual in the modern family. Two methodological approaches, participant observation and semi-structured interviewing, allowed the necessary flexibility to explore the phenomenon of family ritual in some depth with a small sample of families. While these methods required the researcher to be the scientific instrument or apparatus, which has certain pitfalls and limitations of objectivity, it was also possible for the data, in large part, to form the basis for the analysis rather than forcing the subject of study to conform to the parameters of a more limiting, pre-formed methodology. Thus, the methods of participant observation and semi-structured interviewing of a small sample of families can be seen to be an effective approach and one appropriate to the goals and purposes of this study. Now that the terrain has been mapped, it is possible to employ more systematic hypothesis testing methods. After briefly discussing some of the ways in which this study might have been more effectively done within the methodology used, more will be said about possible directions for further research.
Thoughts on the Study of School Entry

It became clear in the course of this project that the start of first grade is only one in a series of important steps in the process of school entry for many children. In the sample of families in this study, several children had been to nursery school and all had been to kindergarten. It was expected that first-grade entry would be a particularly salient moment in the school entry process because it represents the start of full-time school. In these five families, however, very little actual change in the day-to-day routine of family members, except the first grader, accompanied the start of first grade for the youngest child. Several other points in the school entry process suggest themselves as potentially yielding richer data about the family's response to school entry. These are (at least in the community in which this study was conducted): the pre-kindergarten screening in the spring before the start of kindergarten, and the actual beginning of kindergarten. Of course, with these events as a research focus, nursery school experience would continue to be a complicating factor. In any case, a more fruitful study of the school entry process might come from following families through the several months from the pre-school screening into the beginning of the kindergarten year.

Post-hoc Critique of the Design

The use of a more systematic preliminary data collection, in which the details of holiday celebrations and special family activities were gathered would have helped to make the data analysis more convenient in this study. As it was, this information was collected during the inter-
views so that the degree of detail varied between families. A more detailed collection of basic data would probably not have detracted from the developing sense of trust and openness with the families. The quality of the data would have also been enhanced if two additions had been included in the original agreement with each family. First, that the researcher spend a few hours with the family viewing and discussing family photographs and home movies; and, second, that the researcher would return after a specified period of time to follow-up the original data collection with an interview with the couple to clarify any item of the data which, after study, needed further investigation. As it was, the contract made with each family left the issue of family pictures open, but the time available to view them was not built-in, so the photographs I did see were shown during the period of observation. A follow-up interview was not requested because this, also, was not built into the agreement, and I did not want to risk 'overstaying my welcome' in relation to these already very generous families. Both of these ideas (photographs and follow-up) would be useful additions to any in-depth study of the internal life of the family.

Directions for Further Research

The idea of a school entry study which would involve following a number of families through the pre-kindergarten screening and into kindergarten has already been suggested. After the pre-screening, families might be divided into groups and predictions made regarding school entry outcome. Another possibility would be to compare outcome on the basis of several variables suggested by the data collected in this study. For
example, differences in adjustment to the school situation might vary
with factors within the school (teacher home visits in advance of the
start of the school year; preparatory visits to the new classroom; pre-
aparatory meetings with the teacher). Family factors, including the
presence of life-cycle rituals, family constitution (number and age dis-
tribution of siblings, single mother or father, both parents present),
family style (sex-role factors, enmeshment-disengagement, involvement of
the father in the family life), etc. might be potential variables in
further study of school entry.

Several studies suggest themselves for the further study of ritual
in the life of the modern family, such as the development of a family
ritual inventory and comparing families with significantly greater or
smaller numbers of ritualistic practices. Using ritual as a way to op-
erationalize the concepts of enmeshment and disengagement would also
open up an entire range of studies based on differences on this dimen-
sion. Finally, single and multiple case studies of the use of family
ritual as an assessment index or as a prescription in family therapy
should be included among the valuable research possibilities that could
be done using the preliminary work of this study as a point of departure.

Aside from these more clinical research ideas, studies of a more
sociological, demographic nature would add to our basic knowledge of the
family. Studies to test the hypothesis that there is more ritual in
higher socio-economic status families, families in which the grandpar-
ents live within a certain distance, and families with larger numbers of
children are needed to provide hard data to confirm the speculations of
this writer and of Bossard and Boll (1950). The possibility that there
may be types of families which operate with different modes of structural maintenance is also a worthy direction of investigation.

It would seem, then, that the topic of family ritual offers a rich field of possible investigation in theoretical, clinical and demographic areas. It is hoped that the preliminary work on the topic presented in this dissertation can serve its intended purpose of preparing the ground for further study of the rituals in family life.
CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION--THE FUTURE OF FAMILY RITUAL

The decline of ritualization in social relationships has been discussed in terms of the gradual trend from tribal life, through agrarian feudalism and industrialization to present-day technoculture. The primary human social unit has correspondingly declined in size from the tribal unit, through the extended family, to the modal nuclear family of today. Even a few generations ago, the level of formality and ritualization in the family in western culture was strikingly greater than the level of ritualization in the contemporary families whose rituals are presented here. The family rituals reported and analyzed here are but vestiges of the rites of primitive culture. Yet they perform functions analogous to the social functions of tribal rituals.

What the future of ritual in the family may be in the context of ever-growing numbers of families with single parents, dispersed extended families, and experiments in collective living is impossible to predict. It may be that we will see the disintegration of ritual tradition, in which ritual forms are handed down through generations. Yet, the well-spring from which these symbolic behaviors originate may be seen as fundamental to human consciousness and communication and ritualization, as Erik Erikson (1977) has recently pointed out, is a fundamental characteristic of civilization. New generations may rely on ritual innovation rather than ritual tradition to maintain and change social relationships.
In any case, it would appear that the future of ritual and the future of the family (whatever its transformations) are inextricably intertwined.
REFERENCES


Company, 1945.


APPENDIX I

Description of Doctoral Dissertation Study

This study will involve the participation of 8 to 10 families whose youngest child is in first grade. The purpose of the study will be to learn more about how healthy families resolve the developmental transition families face when their youngest child enters school. This study will employ methods of observation in the home and interviews of family members as modes of data collection. The special focus of questions and observations will be on ritualistic practices in the family. Although this research structure clearly leaves somewhat flexible the questions to be posed, the following are examples of the kinds of questions I will be asking families involved:

Were there any special events or celebrations in the family around school entry (going to meet the teacher, etc.)?

If there were any events to mark the school entry of the youngest, were there similar practices to mark the event for older siblings when they entered school?

Were there any differences in the family's approach to school entry based on the sex of the child?

How do the parents share responsibility for each child's education?

Has the parents' relationship changed in any way as the children have become school age? If so, how?

Is there any special change taking place in the family now that the youngest is in first grade? Changes in mother's activities? Father's activities?

What are the older siblings' views on the youngest entering school? Recollections of their own school entry?
How does the first grader feel about starting school?

Does the family have special rituals not having to do with school, such as dinnertime customs, bedtime rituals, holiday celebrations, etc.?

If yes, how did each of these originate (parents' families, spontaneously) and what are family members' attitudes towards them?

The plan of the study is to spend two days—one weekday and one weekend day—participating in the family's daily life and observing the family's customs and habits. Besides providing rich data about life in the family, this will provide an opportunity for me to get to know the family and they me, so that an atmosphere of openness and trust can be established between us. During the weeks that follow, I will return for a series of interviews aimed at understanding in more depth the observation of the two days spent with the family. During these interviews I will also gather specific data on school entry in the family, focusing in particular on any family customs surrounding this event.

This plan for the research will be fully explained to each family before they are asked to agree to participate. They will at no time be pressed to participate, or during participation to discuss matters which are felt to be uncomfortably private or sensitive. They will be informed of their right to choose not to reveal information and their full right to withdraw from the study for any reason at any time. These are fundamental ethical rules laid down by the University of Massachusetts Human Subjects Committee, which has approved this study.

In considering this project for approval there are several important aspects about it which it would be helpful to keep in mind:
*Endorsement: This research has been endorsed by the University of Massachusetts Department of Psychology. This project has also received the approval of the Human Subjects Committee which passes on the ethics of psychological research.

*Healthy, Normal Families: The research will not require the participation of 'special needs' families. The families involved will not be labeled or evaluated in any negative way.

*Informed Consent: Families will be fully informed about the study before they agree to participate. They will be free to withdraw at any time. They will sign an agreement before participating which acknowledges this informed consent.

*Confidentiality: All names, places and other identifying details will be changed or omitted in the final manuscript. Information about the families will be held confidential to anyone not directly involved in the Graduate Program for which the dissertation is written. (General findings, however, will be available to the school system.)

*Minimal School Responsibility: No classroom involvement or access to confidential records is requested. The school is only being asked to serve as a contact between myself and the families.

*Benefits: Families will benefit from learning more about themselves and how they cope with change. Schools will benefit from a workshop on the findings related to the effect of school entry on the family. The whole community benefits from cooperation between institutions.
APPENDIX II

Research Participation Agreement

We agree to participate in this study of family adjustment to the youngest child starting school. We understand that this project is being done by Edward Yeats for his Doctoral Dissertation in Psychology at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst. The study will involve allowing him to be a participant-observer in our family for two days, and our participating in interviews (to be tape recorded) about our family life. This will take place over a period of about one month.

The investigator promises not to disclose any information about the family to the school, to other families involved in the study, or to anyone not directly connected with the Graduate School, and to protect the identity of the family in any oral or written presentation of the results of the research. The family will be permitted access to the final written dissertation (except for specific information about other families in the study) and to hear tape recordings of the interviews together with the investigator.

The family is free to withdraw participation at any time. The investigator will answer any questions family members have about the study at any time.

________________________________________________________________________

Investigator

Participant

Participant

Participant
APPENDIX III
BASIC INFORMATION FORM

1. Family Name____________________ Address________________________
   Phone #________________________

2. How long have you lived at this address?___________________________
   in this community?___________________________

3. Who lives in the home?

   Name   Age   Sex
   Father   M
   Mother   F
   Children (oldest first)
   Other? Relationship___________________________

4. Parents:  First marriage? _____yes   ____no

   Date of Marriage / / 

   Occupation   Educational Level (1 = 1st grade;
   Father   12 = H.S. Graduate, etc.)

   Mother

5. Grandparents:

   Are any of either Mother or Father's parents living?

   If so, please identify whose parent and indicate how many miles from
   your home the grandparent(s) live.

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________