

## Delinquent Girls:

### Observations of Their Styles within a Cottage Setting

Elva Poznanski, M.D.\*

*University of Michigan Medical Center*

and

Bettie Arthur, Ph.D.

*University of Michigan Medical Center*

**ABSTRACT:** An attempt was made to understand by means of testing, interviews, and observations the individual and group psychodynamics of 13 delinquent girls in one cottage of a girls' training school. The girls were individuals almost uniformly impoverished in ego skills and consequently showed a great deal of role diffusion and could deal only with the immediate and present. Group interaction was dominated by a core group of four girls who represented the stable power structure of the cottage. With the exception of one dyadic relationship, most other relationships between the girls were transient (lasting one or two weeks) and of low emotional intensity. Overall, a girl's homosexual involvement was predictive of her total social involvement because of its index of the ability to relate emotionally to others.

The impetus for this study stemmed from the frustrations and curiosity engendered by the senior author's experience as a consultant to a girls' training school. These were generally girls who

---

\*Dr. Poznanski is Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Children's Psychiatric Hospital, University of Michigan Medical Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. Dr. Arthur is Associate Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, Children's Psychiatric Hospital, University of Michigan Medical Center. The authors wish to thank Miss Louise Bodwin, Assistant Superintendent, without whose help this study would not have been possible, and Miss Jane Murphy, Superintendent, also of great help in their contacts with the institution.

had had several incarcerations at their local Juvenile Home and were committed to the State Training School as a last resort. Frustration arose from the failure to grasp either the psychopathology of the girls in depth or the patterns of social interaction within the institution. Curiosity was stimulated by the tantalizing bits of information which could not be integrated into a cohesive pattern. This project was designed to explore the general style of functioning of the girls in one cottage, the nature of their internalized images, and how these, in turn, could be related to the social patterns of interaction observed within the cottage itself.

### The Setting

The setting was a state-operated institution for delinquent girls designed to house 384 girls ages 12 to 18. The inmates were distributed among 16 cottages which ring a large, tree-lined central mall. Most of the red brick buildings were constructed many years ago and create an aura of austerity that seems out of keeping with the character and pace of modern living. The cottage selected to be studied was in cooperation with the school administration. The authors indicated a need to study a cottage in which the staff and patient population would be stable for a six-week period. Because the study design required the investigators to rely on the cottage parents to collect observations on the daily behavior of the girls during this study period, the cottage staff had to be sufficiently interested in the study to carry out this extra work.

At the time the study was initiated there were 15 girls living in the cottage, 8 black and 7 white. The sample was also equally distributed in other ways, about half coming from the inner-city ghetto of a large metropolitan area and the remainder from smaller communities scattered throughout the state. Before the completion of the study, however, two girls truanted from the cottage and did not return. In the analysis of the data, these two girls had to be dropped from the sample.

### Methodology and Its Problems

In carrying out an investigation of this type one encounters a variety of difficulties with both the rules and regulations of a setting itself, with the nature of the inmate population, and the relationship

of this population to the institution. Before detailing some of the problems, however, a brief overview of the study design is indicated.

During the first week of the study a sociometric test was administered to all the girls in the cottage at one time. During the second through the fourth weeks, the girls were seen individually for a psychiatric interview which included the Early Memories Test [1] and for psychological testing which included a shortened form of the Figure Drawing Test, a standard Rorschach, and a Semantic Differential.

Both the examiners found the girls very hard to interview and test both on an individual basis and a group basis. There was a marked tendency of the girls to identify the interviewers as part of the administrative structure of the institution. Most studies dealing with similar populations make no mention of this problem.

For group testing we followed the advice of the administration. The group had to be split into two parts and placed in adjoining sections of a large room. Two monitors were provided for each subgroup; however, these were inadequate as they were constantly kept busy answering questions and trying unsuccessfully to keep the girls from communicating some of their answers out loud.

Individually, the girls were often openly distrustful and suspicious in their attitudes toward the examiner. In order to gain even minimal cooperation it was necessary to provide a detailed explanation of who the investigators were, why the girl was being seen, and the relationship of the study to the girls in the institution. The girls needed considerable reassurance that the information collected would not become a part of their permanent record.

During the interviews some of the girls rocked primitively in their chair in a self-stimulating sexual way, underlining their limited ability to find verbal communication satisfying. Only one girl was overtly anxious during her interview, a few appeared mildly depressed, especially when asked about past events, but most were affectively bland much of the time. After seeing the senior investigator around the cottage picking up the weekly reports and talking to the cottage parents, several girls relaxed their initial distrust and made comments and remarks openly (though clumsily) designed to gain the attention they so desperately wanted.

In the interviews, the girls responded almost exclusively to questions to which they could give limited concrete answers. Open-ended questions almost always resulted in a blank stare. Only one girl answered questions with more than a brief single sentence. Many of the girls repeatedly responded to questions with "I don't

know," conveying a defensive and/or negativistic attitude. Even when the girls seemed to want to communicate, they found it difficult to express themselves verbally and would grope for a word briefly and then give up. This, coupled with their readiness to reject others and to anticipate rejection from others, made constant reassurances necessary in order to establish and maintain even minimal verbal productivity.

Other types of thinking and communication limitations were also observed. Ideas reflecting a sense of continuity of identity over time were almost totally absent. Information about early childhood experiences and the girls' relationships to their parents and family was extremely difficult to get. The question "What did you do at home?" was met with such uninformative replies as "Never did much," "Read horror magazines," and "Played records with my cousin." Some gave answers that appeared to have little direct relevance to the question asked. Other girls could not think of anything to say since, for them, living at home was too far in the past. A question such as "What do you do with your mother?" generally elicited replies having to do with the recent past, referring concretely to the last time they had seen her at the training school. Even then they would make only the most general comments—for example, "We went shopping."

In order to gather any information about their past lives, it was necessary to use the Early Memories Test. By shifting into a "test" situation where the emphasis was on the gamelike qualities of the task and the significance of the content was played down, the girls were able to mitigate the affective components that appeared to interfere with direct recall of personal experiences in the home. Encouragement and support was given after every answer, and this, in turn, resulted in increased productivity.

Like questions about the past, for the most part questions about the future elicited puzzlement and confusion. For them, the future was tomorrow, not two weeks away. The only material the girls felt at all comfortable in talking about had to do with the immediate present. They could make some statements about the girls in their cottage, the school, and their work assignment. But the affective meaning was often not readily apparent.

### **Individual Psychopathology: Its Contribution**

In order to provide some overall view of the psychopathology manifested by these girls, two brief representative cases will be given,

followed by descriptions of the girls' families and the results of psychological testing. These particular histories were selected as they represent the extremes of social involvement in the cottage: the first girl was a cottage leader and the second a social isolate.

### Case 1: A leader

Donna was a third-generation prostitute. She was raised in the South until age four, when her mother moved North and supported herself and her children by living with various men. Donna's mother bore three additional children while living with one man in the North before they legalized their relationship. Following their marriage, two more children were born. Both Donna and an older sister were disliked by the stepfather who preferred his own five natural children. When Donna was 12 years old, she accused the stepfather of trying to rape her. The mother denied this and stated that Donna was trying to break up the marriage. When Donna was 14, she had an illegitimate child, who was cared for by "friends." She refused to reveal to the authorities in the institution any of the arrangements made for the care of this child. At 15, Donna was known to be involved with prostitution and dope peddling, although the official charge placed against her by the mother was truancy. Donna's background also included some overt homosexual experiences.

Donna was a very dark-skinned, obese, Negro girl whose hair was attractively arranged, but whose overall appearance was barely average. In the psychiatric interview she related in a warm, though guarded, fashion and spoke with an unusually good vocabulary. A striking mannerism was the constant stroking movement of her hands, as if she were caressing or feeling something very pleasurable. Donna's attitudes were more objective than those of the majority of girls. She realistically criticized the vocational program as having little to offer the older girls in the institution and felt that locking the girls in their rooms for punishment was "too much." Blatant egocentricity and a need for instant gratification ran throughout the interview. She made such comments as "I'm going to do what I want, bad or good," and "Maybe I'll work until I buy some clothes." Unlike most girls, Donna could think of the future and planned to resume the care of her child upon release.

Donna's early memories were as follows. Her first memory was of "falling in the river. It was frightening. My stepfather grabbed me." She placed her age at about four or five years. Her first memory of her mother caused Donna to smile and say, "She took me to the store to buy some clothes." She then went on to relate that her mother was in and out of the hospital because of a bad heart and numerous pregnancies. Donna ended by commenting that her mother looked the same now as she did when she was younger and that she liked to wear fluffy ruffles around the bottom of her dresses. She added that her mother punished her frequently. When Donna was asked about the first memory of her father, she appeared sad and said, "I don't know him." Her father telephoned her mother when Donna was 12 years old, but she did not know him before then, or that her father was a "wino." Donna's first memory of a friend was of a very recent occurrence. "She took me in when I ran away from home."

## Case 2: A social isolate

Jane was the sixth of eight children born in a Tobacco Road-like environment. The family lived in a run-down farm without plumbing and with only a small coal stove for heat. The family had been on welfare periodically before Jane was born. Her father was a partial cripple and, in addition, had poor health due to heart trouble and hepatitis. The mother was neat and clean and, except for having had several miscarriages, was in good health. The parents blandly reported that there were no difficulties with any of their children—information that was not supported by the court record, as all three of the older children had been in trouble with the law.

Jane was committed to the institution because of school truancy and involvement in a B & E. During psychiatric interviewing Jane said that she had an argument with her mother and had then accompanied her brother when he committed the B & E.

Jane was one of the least attractive of the girls, being overweight, with an extremely poor complexion, and dirty, stringy hair. She played with her belt throughout the interview and spoke in a passive way with a southern accent. Her attitude was positive, but distant. During the interview, Jane said that she did not have any friends in the cottage. She did speak of having some "close" friends in nearby cottages. In talking about her former boyfriends, Jane stated that she had been going steady with two boys at the same time.

When asked about her earliest memories of her mother and father, she appeared very sad. She did not respond with any verbal material. Her early memories of a friend were of a girl named Dee, with whom she had been close for 11 years. Jane said that she and Dee kept one another out of trouble.

On psychological testing, Jane performed in the borderline defective range of intelligence. It was difficult to assess her potential because of her passive, withdrawn attitude. Jane's behavioral record at the institution was excellent, simply because she isolated herself most of the time and therefore did not get into trouble.

## Family background

At the time of the study only 2 of the 13 girls had fathers who were living in the home. Of these, one father was alcoholic, the other a partial cripple with many other health problems who had never worked consistently. The natural father was unknown in four cases. In seven others, the father was out of the home because of divorce, abandonment of the family, or commitment to prison. All of these separations had occurred before the girls had reached puberty, and most before the girl was seven years of age. In the two remaining cases, one father had left the home at an unknown time and the other had died two years prior to this study. The latter had been a bigamist.

The mothers, while generally more visible in the lives of the girls,

also had difficulties. Two were known prostitutes, and in several other cases extreme promiscuity was recorded. Instances of serious maternal neglect were recorded in seven girls' histories. The range of behaviors reported for these mothers extended from child abuse through "giving" the child away and charges of neglect and desertion. None of the 13 girls had had a realistically good relationship with her mother.

Two girls had recorded instances of incest with their stepfathers. One girl's natural father was her "pimp." The cottage parents believed the incidence of such behavior was even higher, as judged by conversations they had overheard between the girls in the cottage.

These girls came from large families (the mean was 5.5 children per family, the range was from three to eight). Twenty percent of the children were recorded half siblings. This figure is likely an underestimate since several girls whose fathers were listed as "unknown" were recorded as having several full siblings.

The recorded numbers of siblings did not reflect the number of people under one roof. Children were "given away," adopted out, or sent to live with their mother, stepmother, or foster mother, adding children of their own to the total household. Often it appeared quite confused as to what child belonged to whom and for how long. One definitely had the impression that people were constantly shifting in and out of any one girl's life, thereby creating an extremely diffuse, unstable, fluid primary group.

### Psychological testing

The psychological test findings were limited primarily because of the impoverished nature of the test protocols. This impoverishment is best illustrated by their performances on the Rorschach where the productivity was low (the mean was only 11 responses, the range was 7 to 24 responses). The typical girl showed moderate constriction (65% *F*), little capacity for empathy (mean *M* = 1), and a tendency to act upon impulse (*FM* > *M:CF* > *FC*). Almost all of the girls utilized only the whole blot or easily seen large details for their responses.

The five girls who exceeded the mean number of responses did so through an increase in the form-dominated responses and thus remained in general quite constricted. These same girls tended to give human movement responses that embodied derogatory comments and reflected anxiety and discomfort in interpersonal relations. While

the low productivity group did produce more real humans (often blacks), these occurred usually on Card III (the Popular percept). There did seem to be a greater capacity to conceptualize real humans engaged in appropriate actions. This group also produced the greatest number of card rejections (primarily of Cards IV and VI—which are thought to represent masculine concepts).

Each girl was asked to draw only one human figure. On the whole the drawings were quite poor, five being stick figures, two stylized cartoons, two heavily sexualized figures, and two showing distortions in the body outline. All of these were affectively bland, wooden, and empty-looking figures. The remaining two were more realistic, but one depicted a very angry person and the other a very dejected person. On the whole the girls paid more attention to the faces than to the rest of the body (suggesting some concern with interpersonal relations).

Ten of the girls produced associations to their drawings that reflected hostility toward the self and toward others. When asked what they wanted to change about the person they had drawn, four out of five who drew females expressed a desire to change the negative attitudes of the figure and one to eliminate her sensitivity to what others say. Of those who drew males, only one accepted the figure as he was, three wanted to make him "smarter," three less aggressive, and the other expressed a wish for retaliation. The remainder of the questions elicited no discernible trends, largely because the verbalizations were so limited.

The Semantic Differential Test showed these girls to have a moderate capacity to differentiate themselves from others. They were neither fused with others nor particularly alienated. As a group they tended to see the father figure more negatively than the mother and to find neither parent to be very close to their image of an idealized friend. The self-images were less differentiated from the images of the mother than of the father and ideal friends. They saw the fathers as more potent and active than themselves. They wanted their friends to be less potent but more active than themselves. The relationships between the Semantic Differential scores and the sociometric data are discussed in the next section.

On the whole the psychological test findings were disappointing. The girls' inability to communicate, their inner impoverishment in terms of ego skills, their low investment in taking the test, and their overall guardedness resulted in so little material that it was difficult to find even minimally significant trends. While this approach may be useful with other populations, the authors believe that with this type

of population, little can be gained through extensive psychological testing because of the heavy reliance on verbal communication.

### Social Interaction within the Cottage

The social relationships within the cottage can be best described as centering around two core groups: a very stable foursome and a relatively stable dyad. The remainder of the girls formed no cohesive groupings, and individually they developed more or less transient relationships with one or more of the girls in the core foursome. It should be noted, however, that many of the girls who lacked a permanent tie to a cottage group established fleeting relationships with girls in other cottages. The physical setting, as well as the institutional regulations, made relationships of this sort necessarily difficult.

The key to understanding the social structure of this particular cottage lies in the relationships existing between the four girls in the core group. All four were black and from the inner-city ghetto. Their backgrounds were similar in that two of the four had been prostitutes prior to commitment. Their interests were also similar in that three were known to have sought and effected physical contact with one or more of the other girls in the cottage. These three girls were particularly vocal in their shared dislike for male staff—a dislike that was not shared by their cottage mates. These same three girls constituted the power faction in the cottage. Donna (case 1) was the acknowledged leader of the cottage, and another girl acted as her “henchman.” Donna’s position was sustained through cajolery, manipulation, threats, and actual physical aggression. The openness with which such activities were carried on is attested by the fact that Donna and her henchman were locked in their rooms as punishment for aggressive behavior for a total of six days during the six-week period covered by the study. A third girl in this same core group was known for her good behavior and, in fact, received a star from the housemother every month for it. She had been a sexual object for the two leaders. The fourth member of the group was a quiet girl who fulfilled the role of liaison with the other girls in the cottage without having to resort to threatening or other aggressive forms of behavior.

The tightness of this small group was shown by the cottage parent’s reports of the daily social interactions of each girl in the cottage. For the members of this group, with the exception of the

girl who acted as liaison, there was an average of only 3.3 names listed as daily contacts over the six-week period. These contacts always included the names of at least two of the three other members of the core group. The remainder of the girls in the cottage averaged six names as daily contacts (range = four to eight). The relationships between the girls not included in the core foursome were, on the whole, quite transient, less intense, and generally lasted only one or two weeks. The sociometric data also strongly support these impressions. The relative stability of the foursome was reflected in the fact that at the beginning and again at the end of the six-week period each of these four girls listed the other three members of the group as their most-liked girls. The two girls who formed the stable dyad were the only girls who made the same reciprocated choices among the girls in the cottage on both measures.

Despite the transient nature of the friendships within the cottage ( $\tau = .48$  for the pre- and postsociometrics), the individual involvement for each girl remained relatively stable. Taking as a measure of involvement the frequency with which each girl was named as a positively or negatively cathected figure by her cottage mates, one can detect certain trends within the group that remained stable over the study period. Girls who were actively related to by the other girls retained the same relative position over the six-week period ( $\tau = .78$ ). In addition, the girls who were more involved with other girls in the cottage had an accurate perception of where they themselves stood with their peers, were more aware of the peer group power structure, and were less likely to seek out relationships with girls who actively disliked them. The girls at the lower end of the scale were, with one exception, of lower intelligence, often made the mistake of picking girls to like who actively disliked them, and lacked a clear understanding of the power structure within the cottage. It also appeared that physical attractiveness bore a slight relationship to degree of involvement with the total group. The two least attractive girls were at the lowest end of the involvement scale.

The explicit nature of the succession of transient relationships the girls had with one another bears closer scrutiny. Some of these relationships were likely true friendships, while others could be more accurately classified as "crushes." Relationships with sexual overtones were sanctioned by the group, as is common in single-sexed institutional settings. Indeed, the group pressure to "crush" is very strong. As one girl put it, "Either you crush or the girls ignore you."

The girls involved in crushing surreptitiously pass "love notes," and some of the notes are intercepted by the houseparents. These

girls also engaged in physical fondling, mainly putting their arms around each other or dancing close together. These activities were recorded in the weekly activity reports from the cottage staff. Actual sexual contacts were more difficult in the cottage because the girls had separate rooms and the staff kept a close surveillance on their behavior. Despite these precautionary measures, two of the four girls in the core group were known to have maintained a sexual relationship by engaging in self-masturbation while passing "love messages" to one another by tapping the pipes in the wall between their rooms. The houseparents felt that considerably more opportunity for mutual masturbatory activity existed in other areas (school and library) than in the cottage itself.

The weekly activity reports specifically requested information about any physical contact between each girl and any other girl. The staff reported that the girls who were later identified as being in the upper half of the involvement scale had physical contact on one or more occasions with another girl in the cottage. The girls at the bottom of the involvement scale ratings were reported as having no physical contacts within the cottage, although some of them crushed with girls outside the cottage. It would appear, therefore, that the involvement scale rating reflected, among other things, the extent of a girl's participation in physical contacts within the cottage.

That a girl's physical involvement with other girls predicted her total social involvement in the group bears further comment. The reasons behind this finding are multiple. The girls were extremely limited verbally, as evidenced by the previously described interviewing. Their prior experiences frequently geared them toward using sex as a common vehicle for many emotions. With this background it is not surprising to find sexuality as a mode of relating and, in the latter context, a positive attribute.

Aside from the above activities, all but two of the girls in the cottage were involved in the pseudo-families often reported to exist in closed institutions for girls. In these relationships girls fill various family "roles" such as "father," "mother," or "sister," all of which have been described elsewhere [2]. The authors would like only to make additional comments about these "families" as they existed within the present setting. Information about them was difficult to obtain because the administration disapproved of these relationships. We learned that the "families" were independently organized insofar as the crushing activities of the girls were concerned, although there was in some cases a slight overlap. These "families" were unstable in that the girls shifted roles within the "families" and moved about

between "families." These activities reiterated the unstable and chaotic nature of the girls' personal experiences with their natural families. The girls also appeared to evolve such relationships more on the basis of the exigencies of their daily routine than in terms of long-term emotional commitments to any particular girl or girls.

The authors were repeatedly impressed with the lack of depth characterizing the interpersonal relationships of these girls. Another facet of their relationships was the finding that during the period of the study 5 of the original 15 girls in the cottage truanted for varying lengths of time.

Patterns of truancy from institutional settings have been only incompletely studied. Though the following comments in no way attempt fully to elucidate the problem, the observations may be of some value. Three girls were judged by the authors and the cottage staff to be the initiators of such behavior, while two others were passive, borderline defective girls who could easily be led into such activities. For two of the three leaders the truancy was preceded by three to six "locked days" (a girl being locked in her room as punishment). The third girl who acted as a leader was a latent psychotic who could poorly tolerate isolation. Previously the staff had been cautioned against locking her in her room. The locked days preceding the truancy likely reflected an increased tension between the girl and the staff—a tension not ameliorated by the girl's being locked in. It was noted that all five of the girls who truanted had a poor relationship with the cottage staff. The girls' comments upon being interviewed following the trancies reflected increased tension with peers. The breakdown of these relationships, coupled with the lack of a good relationship with the staff, resulted in the girls' feeling that there was no one to turn to and no point in remaining in a place where all avenues for obtaining gratification of basic needs for acceptance were closed.

One final observation regarding the relationships between the cottage staff and the girls is of interest. The weekly activity reports clearly reflected the attitudes of the staff toward the girls as individuals. The order in which these reports were turned in by the cottage parents each week closely paralleled the rank ordering of the girls on the involvement scale of the sociometric, as well as the power structure among the girls. There are several possible explanations for this. It could be that the girls most heavily involved with the other girls were simply capable of establishing better relationships with the cottage staff. It is also possible that similar personality characteristics were influencing both the cottage staff and the inmates to select the

same girls with whom to interact. Finally, it is possible that the staff, in ordering their reports for the authors, were unconsciously bowing to the power structure and paying attention first to those girls who commanded more attention among the inmates.

### Discussion

Interpersonal relations within an institutional setting are necessarily deviant in several ways, not only because of the artificial nature of the setting but also because the inmates characteristically have come from unstable home situations. In addition, the present sample is adolescent, which serves to complicate the issues further. Studies of girls in correctional institutions have already yielded detailed descriptions of the deviant social relationships that inevitably evolve in such settings and, further, have shown that the majority of both the homosexually tinged and pseudo-family relationships readily dissolve soon after the girls leave the setting [3]. However, if these girls actually formed emotionally meaningful relationships within the correctional institution, one would expect a continuation of these same relationships, or the substitution of similar ones, once they have left the institution. This is not the usual case.

The findings showed a constant shifting of allegiances among the girls with stability at a minimum. It appeared that the degree of tolerance for even minimal emotional relationships varied among the girls. When the intensity of a relationship became too great, behavior that tended to disrupt that relationship appeared.

It appears that the extremely short-lived quality of the alliance between girls was related to the diffuseness, instability, and lack of definition in their internalized object representations. The psychiatric interview and psychological test findings strongly reflected the poor ego differentiation, including poorly defined object representations. This lack of object differentiation seems in turn derived from the chaotic quality of the home background, the numerous comings and goings of a large number of people, and the ill-defined roles these people bore to the individual girl. These girls lived a variety of life roles in their own homes. Many were alternately daughter, wife, mother, sister, half sister, foster child, stepchild, and so on, with such transience and so little definition that it is little wonder that their self-concept as reflected on the Figure Drawing Test and their capacity for definitive specification on the Rorschach

were limited. The role diffusion within the home and the general lack of family stability contributed heavily to the meaninglessness of their role definitions within the institutional setting.

Given the transient nature of the majority of their relationships, one cannot help asking what factors make it probable and necessary that the girls actually become involved in a wide variety of relationships and why more of them cannot and do not resist the social pressures emanating from the total peer group for participation. The answer that seems to emerge is that they are able to act a variety of roles because no single role has any more meaning for them than any other. There is no point in resisting because they "own" no personal definition and identity and, therefore, have nothing to fight for or with.

Complex explanations seem thinly drawn when couched in terms of intense oral cravings generated in an environment characterized by deprivations and in terms of narcissistic aims at variance with the institutionalized societal patterns.

If the underlying psychodynamics were as intense as has been claimed [4, 5], then the ease with which these relationships are abandoned would be difficult to explain. Furthermore, if such explanations were actually the case, we would expect to see a greater degree of ego differentiation, more signs of intrapsychic conflict, as well as objective and/or subjective signs of anxiety and discomfort in such relationships.

For the majority of the girls in our sample, the findings simply do not fit this model. With rare exceptions the girls had rather primitively organized, immature, somewhat unstructured personalities. Indeed, they were quite impoverished in terms of ego skills, and also indiscriminating in their approach to life. Their values were poorly defined, they lacked ambition, goals, and even minimal direction (except for such immediate needs as getting out of the institution). Everything remained defined in terms of the present and the immediate. Such findings could not be reconciled with descriptions of such girls as being essentially neurotic, nor were they psychotic (with one possible exception). They clearly lacked the facility of the psychopath in relating to and using others for narcissistic gain. They were so simple in their personality organization that they lacked guile. They seemed "empty" in the broadest sense, with rare exception. These findings support those of Kaufman and Heims [6], that there was a depressive core, with the added stipulation that the depression was not the classical type in which there is an intrapsychic conflict waged between a punitive superego

and a weak ego, but rather the type of depression seen in young children wherein the ego is helpless in its impoverishment to cope with the environment [7, 8].

In conclusion, among the 13 girls studied with the aim of understanding intrapsychic structures in relation to observed behaviors, there were none who showed age-appropriate personality differentiation. These findings have led to the conclusion that the observed behavior of crushing and the pseudo-families constituted little danger to the girls' eventual adjustment and instead served an adaptive need. It caused one to question the premise that all homosexuality is inevitably bad since, at least in this cottage population, it allowed the girls to relate socially and gave them an illusion of an affective relationship, thus decreasing their feelings of abandonment and alienation from society.

### References

1. Mayman M, Faris M: Early memories as expressions of relationship paradigms. *Amer J Orthopsychiat* 30:507-30, 1960.
2. Selling LS: The pseudo-family. *Amer J Sociol* 37:247-53, 1931-32.
3. Halleck SL, Hersko M: Homosexual behavior in a correctional institution for adolescent girls. *Amer J Orthopsychiat* 32:911-17, 1962.
4. Greco MC, Wright JC: The correctional institution in the etiology of chronic homosexuality. *Amer J Orthopsychiat* 14:295-307, 1944.
5. Bloch HA: Social pressures of confinement towards sexual deviation. *J Soc Ther* 1:112-25, 1953.
6. Kaufman I, Heims L: The body image of the juvenile delinquent. *Amer J Orthopsychiat* 28:146-59, 1958.
7. Sandler J: On the concepts of the superego. *Psychoanal Study of the Child* 15:128-62, 1960.
8. Bibring E: The mechanism of depression. In P Greenacre (Ed), *Affective Disorders*. New York, International Universities Press, 1953.