

California Youth Authority, Ventura (U. S. A.)
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**THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENTIAL PARENT-CHILD RELATION
ON IDENTICAL TWIN RESEMBLANCE IN PERSONALITY**

by

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The following account of a pair of monozygotic twin girls, reared apart, is offered as a small twin-data contribution to a better knowledge of the effect of differential home environment, especially parent-child relations, on personality development. In most respects, other than home life itself, the twins in this report did not experience materially different conditions of rearing, at least not for the first half of their lives. They were separated at nine months and lived as near neighbors up to the age of 9 years. At this point a material change in their community environment took place, which lasted until they were re-united at 16. This reunion, however, took place only within rather restricted limits of time and space.

The girls were born 18 years ago to an 18-year-old unmarried American-born Mexican mother and a Mexican father who was subsequently deported to Mexico and about whom nothing further is known. After the twins were born, the mother worked in the maternity home for nine months, when she married another Mexican. At this time she placed twin Elvira with her husband's step-aunt, and twin Esther with her husband's step-mother. At no time did the mother give up either girl for adoption. A few months later she took Elvira into her own home, but continued to leave Esther with her foster mother, claiming later that Esther herself had objected to leaving her foster home. Elvira, in time, acquired half-brothers and sisters and became part of a closely knit family group, whereas Esther was reared as an only child. During their first nine years the twins lived in neighboring houses, perhaps a couple of hundred feet apart, in a small desert town. The mother stated that the girls played together there, that they were aware of their twin relationship, that they were constantly furnished with the same type clothing and toys and amusements, and that Esther would on occasion even spend a night or nights with Elvira when her foster mother was ill or for some reason absent from her home.

At the age of nine, the girls became geographically separated, with the mother

and her family, including Elvira, moving to another state and into a crowded urban environment. Esther was left behind in the desert with her step-aunt. Thereafter, the girls exchanged occasional visits, Elvira and her family usually returning to the old home town in the summertime.

This is substantially the story as told by the mother to the writer. Elvira also narrated the sequence as outlined, but Esther dramatically held that she knew nothing of the existence of a co-twin until she was 14 years old, when by accident, she came across some old photographs in her foster-mother's bureau drawer! It was her demand for an explanation, Esther insisted, which led to her finding out about Elvira.

The mother stated that Esther liked her foster mother well enough as a small child, although the foster mother "had quite a temper and probably hit the child a lot". Elvira's mother, on the other hand, was over-lenient in her discipline, allowing her children to do pretty much as they pleased, and loving them all the while. In spite of many weaknesses, she was kindness and affection rolled into one. At no time, however, did she interfere with the foster mother's rearing of Esther, feeling that the latter had a right to use her own methods since she had taken full responsibility for the child. The mother reported—and Esther bore this out in detail—that Esther had to do a lot of hard work for her foster mother, cooking heavy meals constantly for hoards of company, doing heavy household laundry and housework, and never resting, whereas Elvira's life was a pretty easy affair in her mother's simpler home. As a child, Elvira would go to bed nightly at 8:30 or 9:00 PM, whereas Esther often would have to stay up cleaning the kitchen after doing heavy supper dishes. Then she would do her homework and not get to bed before 9:30 or 10:00 PM.

The twins began their school lives the same day in the same desert town, but in time Esther was promoted a grade ahead of Elvira, who did not like school very much and who studied less than Esther did. In Elvira's home, both Spanish and English were spoken, while in Esther's only Spanish was used. Esther learned her English outside of the home.

Both girls were breast-fed until two months, and weaned simultaneously. They had quite a time cutting their first teeth at five months, for when one threw up her food, the other promptly did so also. They talked at 11 months, walked at 16 months, and were toilet-trained without tension before they were a year old. Both girls chewed their finger nails for years. Both girls had minor accidents, nose bleeds, etc., with Esther fainting at the sight of blood. They shared together in the usual children's diseases of whooping cough, chicken pox, and mumps. Both were addicted to ear aches, with Esther's ears having to be lanced; also they each continued to have headaches which lasted into maturity, with occasional dizzy spells—as did their mother also.

At the time of their adolescence, Elvira and her step-father began to have troubles getting along together. The step-father reportedly drank to excess, was rough, perhaps at times even brutal, beating the mother and Elvira, too, and

finally ordering Elvira out of his home. During this time the mother proved quite inadequate to control the girl, although she was ready later to protect her from the authorities who wished to restrain her from further misconduct. When Elvira left home she took to the streets, and from there on it was an easy step to delinquency. This led to her being sent to a correctional school after being picked up several times by probation officers.

In the meantime, at the age of 15, Esther had grown weary of her hard life in her foster mother's home and — filled with dislike for her foster mother — determined to move away to join her true mother and twin sister in the distant city. When Esther arrived in her mother's home, Elvira, her twin, was already in the correctional school. But Esther was made welcome by her mother and the other children. Esther's initial adjustment with her mother was good, but she, too, later developed friction with the step-father, became discontented, and left the home, also. Her one desire was to be with her twin, just as the latter's was to be with her. When Esther disappeared, the mother feared lest word reach Elvira at school and upset her there. The school officers, knowing of Elvira's interest in Esther, were quite put to it to explain Esther's disappearance from home, for the bond between the girls was a close one.

No sooner had Esther taken to the streets and become delinquent (as Elvira had done before her) than she found herself also committed to a correctional school, but to a different one from that to which Elvira had been sent. Esther, however, managed to effect an escape from her school and to disappear again. By this time, Elvira was on release, very much upset, and determined to find Esther. In due time both girls were picked up, though separately, and both were sent separately to the same school. It was after this commitment that the writer became acquainted with them.

At the school they proved devoted to each other, keeping an eye out for each other's interests and welfare, quarreling in true sibling-spirited fashion, and rapidly making up again. Elvira proved to be the stronger character of the two, while Esther proved by test to have the brighter mind.

It was possible now to make certain observations and tests on the girls, enough to establish that they were one-egg twins. In appearance there was the usual difficulty about telling them apart. Both girls had coarse skin and hair, brunette coloring, and rather heavy bodies. Yet both were graceful, musical, and skilled in Mexican fancy dancing steps and rhythms. Unquestionably both had participated in night club and cabaret life entertainment, while on the loose, yet both girls were hard workers, fond of good rich food, and ready to go to a lot of trouble to turn out a good meal, regardless of effort or expense.

Dermatoglyphics

Finger prints, palm prints, and foot prints were taken of the girls, but of these only the finger prints have been studied to date, and these show many similarities. For instance, the index fingers of each girl on both hands had whorls; the same

for the ring fingers. In fact, all the fingers of both girls were of the same type, with the exception of the right thumb, on which Elvira had a whorl pattern while Esther had an ulnar loop pattern. On Elvira, the index, middle, and ring fingers were of the outer whorl type, while on Esther they were of the meet-whorl type. The two little fingers of each twin, all being loops, were identical in count (11 on the left, 12 on the right). In all the rest of the characteristics, the prints were similar. In fact, it can be stated that a study of the girl's finger prints showed a much closer resemblance than would be shown by those of any two people selected at random, and certainly, also, a closer resemblance than would be shown by two ordinary siblings.

Dental Structure

Dental examinations of Elvira and Esther revealed interesting similarities in both tooth conformation and alignment of the anterior teeth, but a marked dissimilarity in the grooves of the molars, Esther having more secondary grooves than Elvira. Esther also had a considerably higher incidence of decay, both pit and fissure and tooth surface, than did Elvira.

Electro-encephalographic Tracings

When the girls had their electro-encephalograms made, the tracings proved so similar that the encephalographer did not feel any need to send two separate reports! This is what he wrote of one of them:

“ The alpha frequency is $11\frac{1}{2}$ cycles per second; the amplitudes average 30 microvolts. There is a slight amount of random 5-7 cycles per second slow wave activity in all areas, but it is not excessive for this age. Hyperventilation produced little more than an increase in irregularity. There were no phase-reversals or clear cut amplitude asymmetries. This is a normal electro-encephalogram. It is identical in all respects to that of the patient's sister, suggesting that the two are identical twins ”.

Psychological Findings

Because of individual isolations for infractions of rules, escapes, etc., the girls were actually not able to see each other until some five months after both were committed to the correctional school. After that they lost no time in finding one another and in being together as much as possible. Observations by their supervisors and teachers were to the effect that Esther was the more tense and unstable of the two girls and that Elvira was the one who appeared to have the controlling influence over the other. Elvira was more outwardly expressive and aggressive, Esther more easily upset and sensitive.

Parallel psychological tests were administered to the girls, each on the same days, but in different rooms. These tests included the Wechsler-Bellevue, the Maslow Security-Insecurity Inventory, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and the Rorschach Test. Briefly, the results were as follows:

Wechsler-Bellevue, Form II

	Verbal I. Q.	Performance I. Q.	Full Scale I. Q.
Esther	94	103	99
Elvira	83	96	88

Maslow Security-Insecurity Inventory

		R. S.	S. S.
Esther	" Insecure "	52	72
Elvira	" Average "	29	52

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

	T Scores												
	?	L	K	F	Hs	D	Hy	Pd	Mf	Pa	Pt	Sc	Ma
Esther	50	50	48	70	70	63	70	76	49	65	74	80	68
Elvira	53	60	46	53	46	49	49	62	63	44	45	47	65

In the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory it can be noted that both sets of responses appear to be reliable and are a true reflection of the personality make-up of the girls, but it will be noted also that Esther's scores on Hs, Pd, Hy, and Sc reach or exceed the top limit of T, with Ma almost reaching the limit, suggesting personality maladjustment in these areas, whereas Elvira's scores are all within the normal range and suggest balance and stability.

For the benefit of readers not familiar with the coding of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, it might be pointed out that for Esther, 6 scales (out of the 9) were in the direction of being abnormal. Her responses revealed a great deal of concern over bodily functions. Her handling of test material identified her with the type of personality troubled by phobias or compulsive behavior, mild depression, excessive worry, lack of confidence, inability to concentrate, bizarre and unusual thoughts, marked overproductivity of thought and action. In this personality there is a splitting of subjective life from reality, so that the observer cannot follow rationally the shifts in mood or behavior. Responses were typical of the group of persons whose main difficulty lies in their absence of deep emotional response, their inability to profit from experience, and their disregard of social mores. Their most frequent digressions from the social mores are lying, stealing, alcohol or drug addiction, and sexual immorality.

Since all of Elvira's responses fell within normal limits, there is nothing essential to report on her.

Rorschach:

Both girls were given Rorschach Tests, of which only the summary statements will be reproduced here:

Esther:

" Esther can be characterized as a somewhat repressed, matter-of-fact individual who usually successfully (?) smothers her natural instinctive drives. She is unable to face these, and fears the outcome of her own aggression. Her anxiety

is shown in rather severe inner tension and great self-concern. She shows little ability to release her feelings in a socially acceptable way. There is suggestion of some self-concern.

However, she has intelligence, originality, and creativity. This is *not* freely expressed—it actually comes out most often under social stimulation. In other words, she does not tend to respond socially, but rather creatively, to social situations ”.

Elvira:

“ Elvira can be characterized as a basically aggressive girl who expresses her aggression mainly in socialized channels. Enough is left over to suggest a damping up of emotionality which might be expressed in psychosomatic areas, although none is now suggested.

Elvira tends to be more obvious than her sister, and more infantile. She inhibits her aggressiveness because of a need for affection which she “ buys ” by her childlike “ goodness ”. However, her responsiveness to emotional situations (social aspects of life), while not as strong as her sister’s, is expressed in somewhat the same area of creativity and originality. There is even a suggestion of insight ”.

Both:

“ Actually, both girls are somewhat alike. Elvira is more social, and does not put as much emphasis on her creativity and intellectual ability. She needs affection and is more able to express this need.

Esther cannot admit freely to her need for affection, nor can she express her emotional needs in the purely social area. She is under great inner tension and could use therapy to release some of this.

Both girls have more intellectual ability than they can express, except under certain circumstances.

Elvira is more emotionally labile and infantile. Actually she may get along better by putting her problems on others’ shoulders. Esther *shows* a better adjustment, but it is at greater expense to herself.

Again it will be noted that, although the girls show many similar traits, Esther suffers from inner tension and insecurity not noted in Elvira ”.

Release and Parole:

Because of unevenness in their dates of arrival, and their varying amounts of time lost on escape, the girls did not leave the correctional school at the same time, Esther being released 3 months earlier than Elvira. On leaving the school, each girl returned to the home of the mother and step-father, the latter now showing a greater readiness than he had previously shown to receive the girls as his daughters. Social workers visiting the home commented on the warmth and love in this home as “ something especially worthy of note ”. The mother and her children were closely attached to one another, the strong point being the sharing of love among all of them.

Within a few months of her release, Esther was married, with Elvira planning to do the same. Esther and her husband continued to live with the girl's parents. Soon, however, although she had been devoted to her fiancé before marriage, Esther grew restless, discontented, and inclined to "go on the loose" again. At times she would drift into spells of silence, and sit thinking, as if she were contemplating something. One day she disappeared altogether, leaving no word of her whereabouts or plans. Her family felt sure she would return soon, and did not become too concerned about her absence. But her heartsick young husband, whom she had left without explanation of any kind, and who was devoted to her, tried desperately to find her and bring her back. One of the last notations in the parole files is to the effect that both Elvira and the mother were very angry at Esther for leaving her husband.

In the meantime, Elvira's marriage plans crashed on the rocks through no fault of her own. This girl met her disappointment staunchly, did not "break down in any way", and set out to earn her living in a well-adjusted fashion.

Not all the details of the girls' adjustment on parole are known or available, but it is known that the wandering Esther joined the group of adolescents recently attracted to narcotics. It is doubtful, indeed, if Elvira had ever done so. Certainly there is no suggestion of it in her record.

On 5-29-51, Esther's body was found in the hall of a hotel where she was not known, where she had not even registered, and in a big city where she could not be identified until after a great deal of police investigation. There were punctures inside each of her arms where morphine had been administered, whether by herself or someone else could not be determined. The coroner's jury gave a verdict of "accidental death due to morphine poisoning", taking the position that, because of lack of evidence to the contrary, the girl had administered the morphine to herself.

In this way the twins' story ends. Elvira, the one who grew up with full benefit of close, warm mother love and parental security, a permissive environment, and a supporting family of brothers and sisters, is today well adjusted and — we hope — happy, in spite of the severe afflictions she has had to meet in losing both her fiancé and her beloved twin sister. Esther, who grew up with a restrictive mother, who was required to do too much hard work, who did not have the benefit of siblings in her home, and who had not basked in warm mother love throughout her formative years, became tense and unstable and sought that last refuge from which there is no escape or relief from permanent tension.

Much of the story is left untold, of course. Most of it will never be known, but enough is recorded here to point up the moral for parent-child relations: love, permissiveness, relaxation, and emotional security are the stuff of which temperamental stability is made.

SUMMARY

To demonstrate the effects of home environment and parent-child relationship on personality and development, the author tells the life story of a pair of monozygotic twin girls reared apart. One, who grew up as a member of a large closely-knit family group, with mother-love and parental security, has become well-adjusted and happy in spite of severe set-backs. The other, reared as an only child by a hard and restrictive step-mother, and always required to do much hard work, became a tense and instable person, addicted to drugs and finally probably committed suicide.

RIASSUNTO

Viene descritta la storia di una coppia gemellare MZ femminile. Elvira ed Esther, di anni 18, le quali crebbero separatamente ed in ambienti differenti durante 15 anni, per dimostrare l'influsso dell'ambiente e particolarmente del rapporto genitori-figlio nello sviluppo della personalità. Elvira crebbe circondata dall'amore materno e nella sicurezza della casa paterna, come membro di una grande famiglia, con fratelli e sorelle. Anche in seguito Elvira raggiunse un soddisfacente equilibrio di vita ed appare contenta, benchè abbia perduto prima il fidanzato e, più tardi, l'amata sorella gemella.

Esther invece crebbe come unica figlia adottiva di una madre severa e durante gli anni di separazione dalla sua famiglia fu sottoposta a lavori pesanti. Era rozza, instabile, dedita alla morfina e probabilmente si uccise.

(**Riassunti a cura della Redazione.**)

RÉSUMÉ

On décrit l'histoire d'un couple gémellaire MZ féminin. Elvira et Esther, âgées de 18 ans, qui ont vécu séparées pendant 15 ans et dans des milieux différents, pour démontrer l'influence du milieu et surtout l'influence des rapports de parents à enfants dans le développement de la personnalité.

Elvira a grandi entourée de l'amour maternel, comme membre d'une grande famille, avec des frères et sœurs. Aussi plus tard a-t-elle bien ordonné sa vie et abouti à un équilibre d'existence satisfaisant; elle semble contente malgré la perte d'abord de son fiancé puis de sa sœur jumelle bien aimée.

Esther au contraire a grandi comme fille unique adoptive d'une mère sévère, et pendant les années de la séparation d'avec sa famille elle a été soumise à des travaux pénibles. Elle devint rude, instable, adonnée à la morphine, et probablement mit fin à sa vie par le suicide.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Autorin erzählt die Lebensgeschichte eines weiblichen Zwillingspaars, Elvira und Esther, 18 Jahre alt, die 15 Jahre lang getrennt in verschiedener Umgebung aufwuchsen, um die Einwirkung letzterer und die Beziehung zwischen Eltern und Kind auf die Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit aufzuzeigen.

Elvira wuchs umgeben von Mutterliebe und in der Sicherheit des Elternhauses auf. Sie wurde Mitglied einer grossen Familie und hatte Brüder und Schwestern. Im späteren Leben kam sie gut voran und war soweit ganz zufrieden, obwohl sie erst den Verlobten und später auch die geliebte Zwillingsschwester verlor.

Esther hingegen wuchs als einziges Adoptivkind einer strengen Mutter auf und musste viel harte Arbeit während der 15 Jahre, die sie getrennt von der Familie lebte, leisten. Sie wurde grüblerisch und unausgeglichen, war dem Morphium ergeben und nahm sich höchstwahrscheinlich das Leben.