

- 3 J. Useem, J. D. Donoghue, and R. H. Useem, Men in the middle of the third culture. Presented at the 58th annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Washington, D. C. (September 6-8, 1962).
- 4 R. H. Useem, The American family in India, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 368:132-148 (1966).
- 5 Sidney L. Werkman, cited in John Bainbridge, *Another Way of Living: A Gallery of Americans Who Choose to Live in Europe* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1969), pp. 268-274.
- 6 Werkman, The eye of childhood: psychiatric myths and media realities, *Clinical Proceedings of the Children's Hospital of Washington, D. C.* 26:235-242 (1970).
- 7 E. Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow* (New York: Oxford University Press 1965), p. 86.

Comment

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These comments appeared with the Werkman article in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*.

The intriguing title of this paper brings into focus an important aspect of child development and preventive psychiatry on the international and trans-cultural level. A need exists for further *detailed* clinical and epidemiological studies of this virtually unexplored territory.

Dr. Werkman very briefly reports psychopathological reactions of some children who have lived overseas, emphasizing the possible effects of: (1) leaving the child completely in the care of a caretaker, (2) unusual child-care practices in the host country, (3) a lack of feeling of belonging to either country, and (4) separation from the caretaker and return to the United States.

I am generally in agreement with Dr. Werkman's observations and would particularly like to underline his suggestions for prevention and management of the problems inherent in this potentially traumatic situation. However, to accurately assess the frequency and validity of these psychopathological reactions, further elaboration of the dynamics of the child and the

family is necessary along with a brief statement of the child's developmental lines¹ both before and after the traumatic experience.

Dr. Werkman speaks of the problems engendered by the differences between American child rearing practices and those of other countries. But, aside from a few books such as Dr. Spock's *Baby and Child Care*, our knowledge of specific child rearing practices in this country is very limited. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin stated, "Curiously enough, anthropologists have secured more complete information about child rearing in at least seventy other cultures than they have about child rearing in the United States."² Specific information on child rearing patterns in the United States is needed to adequately assess whether there has been normal development or a psychopathological tendency in these children before their departure from the United States. Then, it would be possible to differentiate existing psychopathological tendencies from a severe traumatic reaction to overseas living.

In most of the case reports, I would question the quality of the mother-child relationship before the family's departure. I have some doubts whether "because of the availability of servants, even devoted mothers find themselves ambivalent about caring for their children." The availability of servants is very tempting but when a mother in a strange and new culture leaves the total care of her child to a stranger I would like to explore further the mother's intrapsychic dynamics, her relationship with her husband, and her feelings toward her child.

I am in agreement with Dr. Werkman when he emphasizes that under no circumstances should mothers leave the majority of mothering of their children to anyone else. Caretakers can be used judiciously but under the careful and watchful eye of the mother. We know that in the absence of mothering some form of maternal deprivation occurs even with the help of the best caretaker. Bowlby stated that "when deprived of maternal care the child's development is almost always retarded — physically, intellectually and socially — and that symptoms of physical and mental illness may appear."³

We cannot assume that moving to a new country would affect the quality of mothering so drastically that most of these mothers would leave the *total* care of their children to a caretaker. We know that some children suffer from maternal deprivation even though they live with their own mothers. Again, I stress the need for detailed information assessing the quality of mothering in the cases reported.

In comparing the patterns of child rearing in two cultures one needs to keep in mind Ruth Benedict's comment that an "observer will see the bizarre

developments of behavior only in alien cultures, not his own. . . . There is no reason to suppose that any one culture has seized upon eternal sanity and will stand in history as a solitary solution of the human problem.”⁴

When the family leaves the host country, the problems of separation of the child from the caretaker and his surroundings along with the child's new adjustment in the United States is of prime concern. It is not infrequent to notice that young children do develop deep attachments to their caretakers and to their friends in the host country. Without adequate preparation at the time of their departure, feelings of great loss and of being uprooted can and often do lead to mourning and depression. Children simply cannot understand the joy and excitement of the parents about returning to the United States and they become quiet, morose, grouchy, and often picky eaters. These behaviors anger and irritate the busy and excited parents, and this response of the parents adds to the child's feelings of estrangement and alienation and contributes to his future difficulties in school and to peer relationships after his return to the United States.

In summary, I hope that this very interesting and exciting paper will open a door to the study of the transcultural aspects of child development and to the problems of the psychological growth of the children of two cultures. There is a great need for more detailed and comprehensive studies in this area, along with the exploration of the positive and rewarding aspects of living in two cultures.

REFERENCES

- 1 Anna Freud, *Normality and Pathology in Childhood* (New York: International Universities Press 1965), p. 54.
- 2 Robert R. Sears, Eleanor E. Maccoby, and Harry Levin, *Patterns of Child Rearing* (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company 1957), p. 8.
- 3 J. Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health and Deprivation of Maternal Care* (New York: Schoken Books 1966), p. 15.
- 4 R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York: New American Library 1960), p. 207.