Theodore Lidz

# The Family

*The Person*

# The Family

**Theodore Lidz**

e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *The Person* by Theodore Lidz

## Table of Contents

# The Family

## INTRODUCTION

The person's development cannot be understood properly without consideration of the critical role of the family in the child's developmental process. Infants do not develop into competent adults simply through the unfolding of their genetic endowment; they require not only prolonged nurturant care but also direction and delimitation of their vast potential to develop into integrated individuals capable of living in a society together with their fellows. The early stages of the life cycle upon which all later development rests transpire in the nidus of the family and evolve favorably or unfavorably because of how the parental persons guide the child through them as much as, or more than, because of the child's innate characteristics. Attempts to study the child's development independently of the family setting distort even more than they simplify, for they omit essential factors in the process.

The family is, knowingly or unknowingly, entrusted by virtually every society with the task of providing for its children's biological needs while simultaneously transmitting the society's way of life and techniques of adaptation. Everywhere the family evolved gradually along with the culture, for it must be suited to the society in which it exists and capable of transmitting the society's ways to the new generation. However, in examining how the family carries out its child-rearing functions, we must realize that the rapidity of social and cultural change during the past century has seriously weakened the family's capacities for rearing competent, stable, and adaptable individuals.[1] As we shall consider later in this chapter, the extended family has been broken by migrations and industrialization into isolated units of parents and children which lack the support of kin; intermarriage between different ethnic groups has mixed up traditional marital roles and ways of child rearing; awareness of the ways of other cultural groups as well as scientific advances have led to a distrust of tradition as a guide into the future. Customs handed down by parents, religious tenets that served to guide behavior, and the traditional relationships between parents and children and husbands and wives have been questioned and disregarded. Currently, women's challenges to their traditional place in society have further shaken the stability of the family.

Although some observers, male and female, believe that the women's movement and its demands will fade, there are reasons to believe that women's newly expressed strivings and demands reflect the alterations in their position brought about by recent social changes, and represent requisite efforts to establish a new societal equilibrium. Women's position has changed for a number of reasons: their increased education and capacity to pursue careers; their need or desire to work outside the home; the threat of overpopulation that has diminished the desirability of large families; the advent of the "pill" and other reliable contraceptive techniques, as well as the legalization of abortion, which permit women to decide whether they will have children, when, and how many; the decrease in the years women spend in child rearing; women's realization that they have as great a capability for sexual pleasure as men, if not greater; women's new confidence that they can achieve on their own, rather than gain satisfactions primarily through the accomplishments of husbands and sons; their desire for an autonomy in which major gratifications will derive neither from caring for others nor from being cared for; the reasonable expectation that in the absence of household help the burdens and satisfactions of housekeeping and child care should be shared by spouses, particularly when the wife works outside the home; and because of still other ways in which women seek a place in society equal to, though not necessarily similar to, that held by men. As mothers virtually always have been the major figures in providing or guiding children's care, we must appreciate the impact of women's changing roles upon the personality development of children.

As part of women's desire to change their identities as well as their roles, there have been efforts to obliterate the differences in the ways in which boys and girls are raised. Such practices will have profound and far-reaching effects that are difficult to envision, for the blurring of differences between men and women affects one of the most fundamental and pervasive factors that provide structure to both people and society.

Efforts to change the family and society in order to meet the needs and wishes of liberated women are complicated, because not all women wish the same sort of liberation. Then, too, some women prefer the security of more traditional relationships with husbands and believe that they can gain greater satisfaction from complementing the life of a husband and raising children than from a career. They wish girls to be girlish and boys to be boyish, and admit that they are very concerned about any vagaries in their children's gender identities. They know where they are and who they are in their traditional roles

and turn away from all invitations to depart from them.[2]

Many men and women who believe that family life has stifled their development and kept them from realizing their potentialities now seek to achieve greater freedom for self-expression by finding substitutes for conventional marriage and family life. It has been easier to criticize the shortcomings of marriage and of the isolated nuclear family than to find substitutes that provide greater satisfaction for adults and adequate assurance that children raised in such new types of families, or substitutes for the family, will develop into functioning adults. Thus, as a result of such experimentation, the family may become even less stable in the future. Still, the old extended family cannot be reinstituted in contemporary society. In time—if there is time—a new stable pattern may evolve. We may be able to foster constructive change if we can ascertain what the essential functions of the family are, and hold them fast to assure their preservation despite change (Lidz, 1963b). In this chapter we shall consider the family's functions for child rearing and how it has carried them out in the past. How it will carry them out in the future is a matter for conjecture, but the presentation will seek to convey something of the complex issues involved, and, perhaps, enable the reader to assay the feasibility of various proposals for the future.

## FAMILY FUNCTIONS

The family forms the earliest and most persistent influence that encompasses the still unformed infant and small child, for whom the parents' ways and the family ways are *the* way of life, the only way the child knows. All subsequent experiences are perceived, understood, and reacted to emotionally according to the foundations established in the family. The family ways and the child's patterns of reacting to them become so integrally incorporated in the child that they can be considered determinants of his or her constitutional makeup, difficult to differentiate from the genetic biological influences with which they interrelate. Subsequent influences will modify those of the family, but they can never undo or fully reshape these early core experiences.

Because the family, like the air we breathe, is ubiquitous, it has long been taken for granted, and many of its vital functions have been overlooked and remain unexamined. Indeed, the family is a universal phenomenon, because human beings are so constructed that the family is an essential correlate

of their biological makeup. It is the critical institution that enables children to survive and develop into integrated, functioning persons by augmenting their inborn adaptive capacities. The prolonged helplessness and dependency of children necessitate that they be reared by parenting persons to whom the child's welfare is as important as, if not more important than, their own; and it is children's need for and attachment to such parental figures that provides major motivations and directives for their development into competent members of society. The family, as we shall examine, also subserves essential functions for the spouses and for society, functions inevitably interrelated with child rearing.

The structure and functioning of the family must meet two determinants; the biological nature and needs of humans, and the requirements of the particular society of which the family forms a subsystem and in which its offspring must be prepared to live. Therefore, families everywhere will have certain essential functions in common while also having some very discrepant ways of handling similar problems.

**Child Rearing for Membership in a Society**

Let us consider in very general terms how the family shapes the child to the societal patterns and conveys the culture's instrumental techniques as an integral part of providing the essential nurturant care before we examine various aspects of the process separately.[3]

Infants in our society are traditionally fed on a more or less regular schedule and may even be left to cry if they become hungry before feeding time; their mothers dress and feed them at the same time each morning, and place them in their own cribs in their own rooms for naps at about the same time each afternoon, and prepare them for bed according to schedule each evening. As toddlers, they spend time in playpens and soon learn what they can touch and what they must leave alone, and which toys are theirs and which their siblings'. In most Western societies infants and children are already being prepared to live in time—for scheduled living—and for existence as independent individuals with their own possessions, and eventual autonomy from their families of origin. But other little children are being prepared for a different way of life. Let us look at our friends the Hopi in considering education to live in a time-oriented scheduled world. Hopi children grow up in a relatively timeless world that traditionally was encompassed by the horizon surrounding the mesa on which they live. In this small world, which

their ancestors had inhabited for countless generations, little changes from day to day or from year to year. Children do not learn to hurry lest something be missed or an opportunity be neglected—or to make every minute count on their way to amounting to something. They do not learn to do things to bring about innovations because there can be no innovation; the Hopi believe that everything already exists. Everything already exists, but some things have not yet become manifest. They learn that wishing and thinking for something, particularly collective concentration such as occurs during rituals, are means of having things become manifest. Thus, thought and wish have greater pragmatic value than activity, and among the Hopi a child's wishful thinking and daydreaming are not likely to be derogated as escape mechanisms that supplant effort. They do not grow up being oriented to do things to try to improve themselves and their world. The language they imbibe along with their mother's milk not only is suited to this orientation but prevents them from considering matters very differently because there are no tenses in the Hopi language.[4] There is no way of talking about the past, present, and future but simply about what has and what has not become manifest—and to say that something is not yet manifest is the same as saying it is subjective; that is, it exists only in the mind, which, of course, is the only place we experience the future. The Hopi also do not think or talk about tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, but rather about when day will return again or return for the second time. Such differences are more than different ways of expressing something; they reflect a divergent orientation to the nature of the universe and human experience.[5]

We might also consider the plight of benighted Fijian children who are brought up without gaining any notion of attaining possessions or amassing wealth, or of outstripping peers in achievement and preparing to gain power in order to bring prestige and pleasure to parents. Little wonder that they continue to live in grass huts and play neither golf nor bridge. They do not learn in early childhood that if their father does not work the family will go hungry, be dispossessed, or go on relief and lose its self-esteem. There is no cajoling or tacit threat of loss of love if they do not exert themselves to learn enough to gain entry into a proper nursery school that will assure admittance to the private school that will open the gates to a college that will prepare them for graduate school to make it possible for them eventually to occupy prestigious positions in society. Fijian children do not even know the meaning of private possessions except in the limited sense of a few personal necessities. What relatives in the village possess is theirs. Indeed, a person's future security depends on giving and sharing rather than accumulating. So

long as Fijians practice the custom of sharing with relatives and providing for them when custom requires, they can be certain that relatives, even distant ones, will provide for them, even in old age. Food is generally available without requiring much effort to grow or catch and is freely shared. When the hut is rotted by termites, the villagers gather and collectively build a new one. Aspirations are limited because there is a taboo on ambition and self-advancement.

By means of similar methods that are largely unconscious because they are simply part of the way people live, boys in our society—indeed in all societies—are prepared to become men and girls to become women.

## SOME SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FAMILY

Although we are concerned with the family's child-rearing functions in this chapter, we must appreciate that the family also subserves essential needs of the spouses and of the society, for these affect how it raises its children. The family constitutes the fundamental social unit of virtually every society: it forms a grouping of individuals that the society treats as an entity; it helps stabilize a society by creating a network of kinship systems; it constitutes an economic unit in all societies and the major economic unit of some; and it provides roles, status, motivation, and incentives that affect the relationships between individuals and the society. In addition, the nuclear family seeks to serve the sexual and emotional needs, and to stabilize the lives of the spouses who married to form it. These three sets of functions of the family—for the society, for the parents, and for the children—are interrelated, and it is likely that no other institution could simultaneously fill these three functions without radical change in our social organization. It even seems probable that these three functions of the family cannot be carried out separately except under very special circumstances because they are so inextricably interrelated. Nevertheless, these functions can conflict, and some conflict between them seems almost inevitable. The society's needs can conflict with those of both the spouses and children, as when the husband must leave the home to enter military service, or even when taxes diminish the family income appreciably. Fulfilling parental functions almost necessarily conflicts with the marital relationship, and the failure to anticipate and accept such interference has destroyed many marriages.

Indeed, there is considerable difference between a marriage without children and a family. In a

marriage the spouses can assume very diverse types of role relationships and find very different ways of achieving reciprocity, provided they are satisfactory to both, or simply more satisfactory than separating. They can both live in their parental homes, or gain sexual satisfaction from a third partner, and so forth. The various ways in which spouses relate are virtually countless. However, when the birth of a child turns a marriage into a nuclear family, not only must the spouses' ways of relating to one another shift to make room for the child, but limits are also set on the ways in which they can relate to one another and simultaneously provide a suitable developmental setting for the child.

Even though a marital relationship is a complicated matter it can be understood in terms of the interaction between two persons. A family, in contrast, cannot be grasped simply in interactional terms, for it forms a true small group with a unity of its own. The family has the characteristics of all true small groups, of which it is the epitome: the action of any member affects all; members must find reciprocally interrelating roles or else conflict or the repression of one or more members ensues; the group requires unity of objectives and leadership toward these objectives to function properly; the maintenance of group morale requires each member to give some precedence to the needs of the group over his or her own desires; groups tend to divide up into dyads that exclude others from significant relationships and transactions.[6] These and still other characteristics of small groups are heightened in the family because of the intense and prolonged interdependency of its members, which requires the family, in particular, to have structure, clarity of roles, and leadership to promote the essential unity and to minimize divisive tendencies. The family, moreover, is a very special type of group, with characteristics that are determined both by the biological differences of its members and by the very special purposes it serves.

The nuclear family is composed of two generations whose members have different needs, prerogatives, obligations, and functions in the family. Although the spouses are individuals, as parents they function as a coalition, dividing the tasks of living and child rearing. They are properly dependent on one another, but parents cannot be dependent on immature children without distorting the children's development. They provide nurturance and give of themselves so that the children can develop, serving as guides, educators, and models for their offspring, even when the parents are unaware of it.

Children, in contrast to parents, receive their primary training in group living within the family and are properly dependent upon their parents for many years, forming intense bonds with them while

developing through learning from the parents and assimilation of their characteristics. Sexual relations within the family are forbidden for them lest the intrafamilial bonds become too firm. The children must so learn to live within the family that they can eventually emerge from it into the broader society.

The nuclear family is also composed of persons of two sexes, which traditionally, at least, have had differing though complementary roles and functions. As the roles and functions are no longer clearly divided according to traditional sex-linked roles in many families, how the tasks of living and child rearing are shared requires conscious agreement—a solution that can create difficulty, as will be considered in subsequent chapters. However, traditional roles usually remain more or less a factor in the way parents achieve reciprocally interrelating roles. The fundamental functions of the mother derive from the woman's biological makeup and is related to the nurturing of children and the maintenance of the home needed for that purpose, which has led women to have a particular interest in interpersonal relationships and the emotional harmony of family members—an expressive-affectional or affiliating role.[7] The father's role, also originally related to physique, traditionally has been concerned with the support and protection of the family and with establishing its position within the larger society—an instrumental-adaptive role. Some such role divisions continue in most contemporary families—even though not essential—because tradition changes slowly, but also because it continues to meet the needs of many spouses.

These characteristics of the nuclear family, and corollaries derived from them, set requisites for the parents and for their marital relationship if their family is to provide a suitable setting for the harmonious development of their offspring.

## THE FAMILYS REQUISITE FUNCTIONS IN CHILD REARING

The family fosters and organizes the child's development by carrying out a number of interrelated functions, albeit often without knowing it, which we shall examine under the headings *Nurture, Structure,* and *Enculturation.*

### Nurture

The nurture of the infant and child is the one child-rearing function of the family that has been

specifically recognized by most developmental theories. As it forms a major topic of this book, we shall here touch upon only a few principles that are germane to the integrated functioning of the family and leave their elaboration to subsequent chapters.

Parental nurturance must meet children's needs and supplement their immature capacities in a different manner at each phase of their development. It concerns the nature of the nurture provided from the total care given the newborn to how parents foster the adolescent's movement toward independence from them. It involves filling not only children's physical needs but also their emotional needs for security, consistency, and affection; and it includes furnishing opportunities for children to utilize new capacities as they unfold. Proper nurturance requires parents to have the capacity, knowledge, and empathy to alter their ways of relating to a child in accord with the child's changing needs. The degree of protective constraint provided a nine-month-old is unsuited for a toddler, and the limits set for a fifteen-month-old would restrain the development of a two-and-a-half-year-old child. The physical intimacy a father might provide his five-year-old daughter could be too seductive for an early adolescent girl. The capacity to be nurturant, or to be maternal, is not an entity. Some parents can properly nurture a helpless and almost completely dependent infant, but become apprehensive and have difficulties in coping with a toddler who can no longer be fully guarded from dangers inherent in the surroundings; some mothers have difficulties in permitting the child to form the erotized libidinal bonds essential for the proper development of the infant, whereas others have difficulty in frustrating the erotized attachment of the three-year-old. However, unstable parents and grossly incompatible parents are often disturbing influences throughout all of the child's developmental years, and such panphasic influences are often more significant in establishing personality traits or disturbances in children than the difficulties during a specific developmental phase.

While the mother is usually the primary nurturant figure to the child, particularly when the child is small, her relationship with the child does not transpire in isolation but is influenced by the total family setting. The father is also an important nurturant person and becomes increasingly significant as the child grows older. Further, the mother requires support in order to invest her infant properly with her love and attention and needs to have her own emotional supplies replenished; and in most contemporary families there is no one other than the husband from whom she can gain such physical and emotional sustenance.

The attachments of children to parents that arise as concomitants of their nurturant care provide major directives and motivations for their development into social beings and furnish the parents with the leverage to channel their child's drives. Children's wishes and needs for their parents' love and acceptance and their desires to avoid rebuff and punishment lead them to attempt to conform to expectations. Through wishing to be loved by a parent, as well as to become someone like a parent, the child gains a major developmental directive through seeking to emulate and identify with one or both parents.

The quality and nature of the parental nurturance which children receive will profoundly influence their emotional development—their vulnerability to frustration, and the aggression, anxiety, hopelessness, helplessness, and anger they experience under various conditions. As Erikson (1950) has pointed out, it affects the quality of the basic trust children develop—the trust they have in others, and in themselves. It influences their sense of autonomy and the clarity of the boundaries established between themselves and the parental persons. It contributes to the child's self-esteem as a member of the male or female sex. It lays the foundations for trust in the reliability of collaboration and the worth of verbal communication as a means of problem solving. The child's physiological functioning can be permanently influenced by the manner in which the parental figures respond to physiological needs. Hilde Bruch (1961) has pointed out, for example, that the child needs to learn that the physiological phenomena that occur with hunger are signs of *hunger* that can be satisfied by eating—something which may never occur if a parent feeds the child whenever the child cries for any reason, or in response to the parent's own hunger rather than the child's. It is apparent from this brief survey of topics that will be discussed in later chapters why so much attention has properly been directed to the parental nurturant functions and how profoundly they influence personality development.

**Structure**

Let us now consider the relationship between the dynamic organization of the family and the integration of the personality of the offspring. Although the family organization varies from culture to culture and according to social class within a society, it seems likely that the family everywhere follows certain organizational principles. The family members must find reciprocally interrelating roles, or distortions in the personalities of one or more members will occur. The division of the family into two

generations and two sexes lessens role conflicts and tends to provide an area free from conflict into which the immature child can develop, and which directs the child into the proper gender identity. While all groups require unity of leadership, the family contains two leaders—the father and the mother —with different but interrelated functions that enable them to form the coalition required to permit unity of leadership. We may hazard that, in order for the family to develop a structure that can properly direct the integration of its offspring, *the spouses must form a coalition as parents, maintain the boundaries between the generations, and carry out the fundamental functions related to their respective gender-linked roles*[8] These requirements which sound simple are not easy to attain or maintain.

### *THE PARENTAL COALITION*

As has been noted, all small groups require unity of leadership, but the family has a dual leadership. A coalition between these leaders is necessary not only to provide unity of direction but also to afford both parents the support essential for earning out their cardinal functions. The mother, for example, can better delimit her erotic investment in the small child to maternal feelings when her sexual needs are being satisfied by her husband. Coalitions are usually easier to achieve when spouses fill complementary rather than similar roles. The family is less likely to break up into chads that create rivalries and jealousies if the parents form a unity in relating to their children; a child's wishes to possess one or the other parent for himself alone—the essence of the oedipal situation—are more readily overcome if the parental coalition is firm and the child's fantasies are frustrated and redirected to the reality that requires repression of such wishes. Children provided with adult models who treat one another as alter egos, with each striving for the other's satisfaction as well as for his own, are very likely, when they grow up, to value marriage as an institution that provides emotional satisfaction and security.

The child properly requires two parents: a parent of the same sex with whom to identify and who forms a model to follow into adulthood; and a parent of the opposite sex who serves as a basic love object and whose love and approval are sought by identifying with the parent of the same sex. However, a parent fills neither role effectively for a child if he or she is denigrated, despised, or treated as an enemy by the spouse. Parents who are irreconcilable are likely to confuse the child's development because the child derives contradictory internal directives from them. It is possible for parents to form a reasonable coalition for their children despite marital discord and to some extent even despite separation; they can

agree about how children should be raised, and each parent can convey to the children that the other is a worthwhile person and parent even though the parents could not get along together. Some of the most destructive effects of divorce on children occur when one parent vilifies the other to a child.

### *THE GENERATION BOUNDARIES*

The division of the nuclear family into two generations lessens the danger of role conflict and furnishes space free from competition with a parent into which the child can develop. The parents are the nurturing and educating generation and provide adult models and objects of identification for the child to emulate and internalize. Children require the security of dependency to be able to utilize their energies in their own development, and their personalities become stunted if they must emotionally support the parents they need for security. A different type of affectional relationship exists between parents from what exists between a parent and child. However, the situation is complicated because of the intense relationship heightened by erogenous feelings that properly exist between the mother and her very young child and by the slow differentiation of the child from the original symbiotic union with the mother( see Chapters 5 and 6). The generational division helps both mother and child to overcome the bond, a step that is essential to enable the child to find a proper place as a boy or girl member of the family, then to invest energies in peer groups and schooling, and eventually to gain a discrete ego identity. The generation boundaries can be breached by the parents in various ways, as by the mother failure to differentiate between her own needs and feelings and those of a child; by a parent's use of a child to fill needs unsatisfied by a spouse; by a father's behavior as a rival to his son; by a parent's attempt to be more of a child than a spouse. Incestuous and near-incestuous relationships in which a parent overtly or covertly gains erotic gratification from a child form the most obvious disruptions of generation lines. When a child is used by one parent to fill needs unsatisfied by the other, the child can seek to widen the gap between the parents and insert himself or herself into it; and by finding an essential place in completing a parent's life the child need not—and perhaps cannot—turn to the extrafamilial world for self-completion. The resolution of the oedipal situation thus depends for its proper completion upon the child having a family in which the parents are primarily reliant upon one another or, at least, upon other adults (Chapter 7).

Failure to maintain the generation boundaries within the nuclear family can distort the child's

development in a variety of ways, and is a major source of psychopathology.

### *SEX-LINKED ROLES*

Security of gender identity is a cardinal factor in the achievement of a stable ego identity (see Chapters 7 and 10)[9] and a child's sex is among the most important determinants of personality traits. This statement refers primarily to a person's self-concept and self-esteem as a male or female and to his or her ways of relating to others and not to capacities to carry out various occupations. Today many parents do not wish to raise sons who will lack affiliational and nurturant qualities, or daughters who will be passively dependent and incapable of pursuing a career. A child does not attain sex-linked attributes simply by being born a boy or girl, but through gender allocation that starts at birth and then develops through role assumptions and identifications as the child grows older. The maintenance of appropriate gender-linked roles by the parents is one of the most significant factors in guiding the child's development as a boy or girl. Although in most contemporary families the parents need to share parental functions and many wish to share various roles, some differences between mothers and fathers need to be maintained to direct a child's development. The problem is more subtle than the father's filling of the instrumental, and the mother's the expressive-affiliative, role. It is apparent that even in traditional settings mothers carry out instrumental functions in running the home and raising children, and fathers fill affectional-affiliative functions with their wives and children. However, fathers have had the major responsibility for supporting the family and mothers for the emotional harmony of the family and for rearing children. Though the functions of mothers and fathers are changing, clear-cut role reversals furnish the children images of masculinity and femininity that are culturally deviant. Moreover, as Parsons and Bales (1955) have pointed out, a cold and unyielding mother is more deleterious than a cold and unyielding father, whereas a weak and ineffectual father is more damaging than a weak and ineffectual mother. More explicitly, a cold and aloof mother may be more detrimental to a daughter who requires experience in childhood with a nurturant mother in order to attain maternal characteristics than to a son, whereas an ineffectual father may be more deleterious to a son who must overcome his initial identification with his mother and gain security of his ability to provide for a wife and family than to a daughter. Further, the child's identification with the parent of the same sex is likely to be seriously impeded when this parent is unacceptable to the other whose love the child seeks. Of course, other difficulties can interfere with a child's gaining a secure gender identity, such as the parents' conveying

the wish that the boy had been born a girl or vice versa; still, when parents adequately fill their own gender-linked functions, and accept and support the spouse in his or her roles, a general assurance of a proper outcome is provided.

The relationship between the family structure and the integration of the offspring's ego development is a topic that is only beginning to be studied. Still, a little consideration leads us to realize that the family's organization profoundly affects the child through such matters as the provision of proper models for identification, motivation toward the proper identification, security of sexual identity, the transition through the oedipal phase, and the repression of incestuous tendencies before adolescence.

**Enculturation**

The family's function of enculturating the child may be more properly divided into socialization and enculturation. Socialization concerns teaching the child the basic roles and institutions of the society through the transactions between family members; whereas enculturation deals with that which is transmitted symbolically from generation to generation. However, there is considerable overlap, and the two functions cannot always be differentiated.

The form and functions of the family evolve with the culture and subserve the needs of the society of which it is a subsystem. The family is the first social system that children know, and simply by living in it they properly gain familiarity with the basic roles as they are carried out in the society in which they live—the roles of parents and child, of boy and girl, of man and woman, of husband and wife—and how these roles of the family members impinge upon the broader society and how the roles of others affect the family Whereas roles are properly considered units of the social system rather than of the personality, they also are important in personality development, directing behavior to fit into roles and giving cohesion to the personality functioning. Individuals generally do not learn patterns of living entirely on their own, but in many situations learn roles and then modify them to their specific individual needs and personalities.

Children also learn from their intrafamilial experiences about a variety of basic institutions and

their values, such as the institutions of family, marriage, economic exchange, and so forth; and societal values are inculcated by identification with parents, ethical teachings, example, and interaction. The wish to participate in or avoid participating in an institution—such as marriage—can be a major motivating force in personality development. It is the function of the family to transmit to the offspring the prescribed, permitted, and proscribed values of the society and the acceptable and unacceptable means of achieving such goals. Within the family children are involved in a multiplicity of social phenomena that permanently influence their development, such as the value of belonging to a mutually protective unit; the rewards of renouncing one's own wishes for the welfare of a collectivity; the acceptance of hierarchies of authority and the relationship between authority and responsibility. The family value systems, role definitions, and patterns of interrelationship enter into the children far more through the family transactions than through what they are taught or even from what the parents consciously appreciate.

The process of enculturation concerns the acquisition of the major techniques of adaptation that are not inherited genetically but are assimilated as part of the cultural heritage that is a filtrate of the collective experiences of a person's forebears. The cultural heritage includes such tangible matters as agricultural techniques and food preferences, modes of housing and transportation, arts and games, as well as many less tangible matters such as status hierarchies, religious beliefs and ethical values that are accepted as divine commands, or axiomatically as the only proper way of doing things, and are defended by various taboos. In a complex industrial and scientific society such as ours, the family obviously can transmit only the basic adaptive techniques to its offspring and must rely upon schools and other specialized institutions to teach many of the other instrumentalities of the culture.

Enculturation is a topic that has received increasing attention in anti-poverty programs, in which it is becoming apparent that the cultural deprivation of the children is almost as important as their social and economic deprivations. They cannot learn readily because they have not been provided with the symbolic wherewithal for abstract thinking and with the breadth of experience to reason adequately in guiding their lives into the future. Further, there is increasing evidence that a significant proportion of mental retardation derives from cultural deprivation rather than from biological inadequacy.[10]

The studies of disorganized families and their young children, predominantly white, by

Pavenstedt, Malone, and their colleagues (1967) clearly indicated that many of the children were permanently crippled both intellectually and emotionally by the time they had reached nursery school.[11]

We have already considered some aspects of the family's critical task of transmitting the culture's adaptive techniques to its children, and here we shall only consider the crucial family function of inculcating a solid foundation in the culture's language. Language is the means by which people internalize experience, think about it, try out alternatives, conceptualize and strive toward future goals rather than simply seeking immediate gratification. After infancy a person's ability to acquire almost all other instrumental techniques depends upon language, and most cooperation with others, which is so vital to human adaptation, depends upon the use of a shared system of meanings. Indeed, the capacity to direct the self into the future, which we shall term "ego functioning," depends upon a person's having verbal symbols with which to construct an internalized symbolic version of the world that can be manipulated in imaginative trial and error before committing himself or herself to irrevocable actions.

To understand the importance of language to ego functioning, we must appreciate that, in order to understand, communicate, and think about the ceaseless flow of experiences, people must be able to divide their experiences into categories. Experiences are continuous, categories are discrete. No one can start from the beginning and build up a totally new and idiosyncratic system of categorization. Each child must learn the culture's system of categorizing, not only in order to communicate with others in the society but also in order to think coherently. Each culture is distinctive in the way its members categorize their experiences, and its vocabulary is, in essence, the catalogue of the categories into which the culture divides its world and its experiences.

The proper learning of words and their meanings and of the syntax of the language is essential to human adaptation, but there is no assurance that the language will be taught or learned correctly. The correctness and the stability of what children learn rests upon their teachers, primarily upon members of their families. The language usage children learn depends largely upon the parents' meaning systems and the way in which they reason, and also upon the consistency of the parents' use of words and of their responses to the child's usage.[12] The topic of how children learn language and its importance to them will be amplified extensively as we follow the course of their development.

The enculturation of boys and girls has until now differed in all societies. Each sex has been taught a somewhat different array of skills and knowledge according to the society's gender-role divisions of the tasks of living. The priesthood, teaching in elementary schools, the practice of medicine, or raising vegetables may, for example, be predominantly male activities in some societies and female activities in others. However, child rearing and the maintenance of the home have been predominantly female functions in virtually all societies, whereas hunting and warfare rarely have been. Even words often have had different meanings for men and women: for a man, "pork chop" has meant something served on a plate, whereas for most women its meaning has included how it is purchased and prepared.[13]

## FAMILY TYPES

### The Family Type and Child Rearing

Within the limits set by the biological makeup of human beings, which divide the nuclear family into two generations and two genders and imposes certain functions upon the family, families exist in an endless number of forms, varying with the culture and subserving differing functions for the parents and children. Families can be classified in different ways—as patrilineal or matrilineal, patriarchal or matriarchal, patrilocal or matrilocal; as monogamous, polygynous, or polyandrous; as nuclear or extended; or according to various rules of exogamy that help direct the choice of partners. We shall first consider two general types of family organization that we commonly encounter in order to highlight some contemporary problems of family life.

The extended family with strong kinship ties will be contrasted with the more self-contained isolated nuclear family of parents and their children that is becoming increasingly prevalent in an industrial and highly mobile society.

#### *THE EXTENDED KINSHIP FAMILY*

We shall first take a model, an approximate model that is not specific to any society, of an extended kinship system common in societies with essentially non migratory populations. It may be applied to some very different types of families, such as the Mexican village family, the Fijian family, and the Sicilian

peasant family. However, it is of importance to us because many immigrant or second-generation families are emerging from this form of family life and continue to have values based upon it. Indeed, in a very modified form, extended families remain fairly common in contemporary urban populations. In the extended kinship system, the nuclear family is not clearly demarcated from the larger network of relatives. The various functions of a family are shared by the relatives. The parents have help in raising their children, who, reciprocally, have many surrogate parents. The influence of the eccentricities and deficiencies of the parents is minimized, and the impact of the individuality of parents upon children is also lessened. Advice and support are readily available to the parents. As at least one of the parents remains close to his or her family of origin, the couple are not completely dependent upon one another for tangible support and emotional complementation. Indeed, the husband and wife tend to live parallel lives rather than sharing mutual interests and functions. In a study of London families, Bott (1955) found that the women in modified extended families tended to spend much of their time with female relatives—sisters, sisters-in-law, mothers-in-law—whereas the men spent very little time in the home, making the pub the center of their nonoccupational activities. Persons who grow up in extended families have ample opportunity to observe and practice child rearing techniques. Little girls often help care for children of relatives. Further, in communities where both parents are reared in a similar type of family and observe a number of other similar families intimately, the spouses enter marriage with relatively compatible ideas of the roles of husband and wife and of how children are to be raised. Particularly in nonindustrial rural communities, few new influences accrue to change the family pattern and parental roles from generation to generation. The family here is an organization which places emphasis upon the transmission of traditional ways of adaptation to the environment and upon the ways of living together that have evolved slowly with the culture.

The extended family tends to assure stability through furnishing clear patterns of how to live and relate to others. It has the disadvantage of retarding changes in adaptive techniques as required in a rapidly changing scientific era. The extended family breaks down with migrations and with the demand of industrial societies that their members, both labor and management, follow opportunities for employment. It would be erroneous to consider that the modified extended family is found only among the lower socioeconomic groups. The strength and power of some wealthy industrial and banking families have been heightened by kinship loyalties.

*THE ISOLATED NUCLEAR FAMILY,*[14]

For an ever-increasing number of American families the extended kinship ties have been broken by social and geographical mobility. A family pattern has evolved in which the couple is often on its own after marriage. Marriage, for many, marks the final achievement of independence from parents, and the marital partners are expected to be the heads of their own family. Marriages, particularly in cities, often cross ethnic and religious lines. This rapid reshuffling of ethnic influences and the fracturing of kinship ties enable each generation to raise its children differently rather than according to set patterns that become unsuited to changing needs.[15] However, there is little assurance that a family which arises from the joining of two dissimilar backgrounds, rather than through the trial and error of many generations, will be suited for rearing stable children.[16]

The atomization of family life into isolated nuclear families has placed many additional strains upon the family and its members. As Parsons and Bales (1955) have properly pointed out, the high divorce rates and even higher incidence of marital conflict do not bespeak a diminishing importance of the family, as has so often been assumed. Even though thirty-seven percent of marriages end in divorce, eighty percent of the million people who are divorced in the United States each year remarry. The high divorce rate reflects not only the greater ease in obtaining a divorce, but also the greater strain due to the number of functions subsumed by the nuclear family and which must be carried out by the spouses alone. The wife, particularly during the rears when her children are young, is not only overburdened but apt to lead a relatively isolated life at home. Her education for running a household and raising children is likely to be meager.

Caught up in cleaning, cooking, diapering, laundering, shopping, she thinks longingly of the days when she, too, left the home to work. The husband finds that when he returns from work his home is not a place for relaxation and romance but requires his presence as an auxiliary nursemaid, handyman, gardener, playmate for children. In most societies many of these functions are carried out by persons other than the spouses; and in many places couples do not necessarily expect companionship or even sexual gratification from one another. The discrepant expectations which spouses may ha\e of one another because they come from different backgrounds has been aggravated by the notable shifts in the division of tasks between husbands and wives, with the need for conscious agreement about who will do

what. In recent years, however, the stability of marriage probably has diminished, because more women, having only one or two children and the capacity to support themselves, are willing to accept or seek divorce than formerly. Further, fewer people seem willing to continue with marriages that do not provide personal gratification and continuing sexual pleasure.

**Social and Ethnic Differences**

No society is homogeneous and its component families reflect its subdivisions in their structure and functioning. Subdivisions exist according to social class, ethnic-religious groupings, and race. Although social class divisions are not as striking in the United States as in many other countries, they are still very significant; and the admixture of ethnic groups that have immigrated to America has resulted in a wide variation in family forms and practices. Children are raised very differently according to the social position of the parents and according to ethnic origins, particularly in families that have not yet been assimilated. The traditions taught, the expectations held, the role examples provided, and the intellectual atmosphere afforded the child vary from social class to social class. Even though great opportunity for upward social mobility exists in the United States, the classes tend to perpetuate themselves through the differing ways in which they rear their children.[17] The boy in a lower-class family will, in general, complete twelve years of schooling with reluctance and will have virtually finished his personality development by his mid-teens. The upper-middle and upper-class families will expect children to gain at least a college degree and continue to expand their horizons into their twenties, permitting them to remain more or less dependent upon parental support. Although the topic cannot be pursued here, the influences are far-reaching—affecting, for example, the prevalence of different types of physical and emotional illness in each social class (Hollingshead and Redlich, 1958).[18]

A relationship often exists between ethnic groupings and social class, as when one ethnic group is subjugated by another (as the African by the slaveholder) or when a displaced group finds a humble refuge in a new country. However, ethnic groups tend to perpetuate themselves because of their adherence to customs that afford their members a feeling of identity. The methods of child rearing which are unconsciously accepted as proper, and which are the only spontaneous methods that the parents know, promote the continuity. The people of the United States constitute an agglomerate of ethnic groups which are gradually shedding their prior cultural heritages to assume an American way of life—a

culture of somewhat indefinite characteristics which is in the process of formation or constant reformation as it assimilates characteristics of different groups. Some ethnic groups such as the Mennonites, Hassidic Jews, and some Greek Orthodox communities, seek to guard against assimilation and try to maintain a strict hold over each new generation in order to preserve a separate identity. The customs of such groups are notably divergent from those of the general community. Other groups seek to become assimilated while maintaining some separate identity, whereas still others tend to lose the desire for separateness after one or two generations.

However, even after considerable assimilation has taken place, the way in which the family is structured and functions frequently contains many elements of Old World patterns which the parents continue to carry within them without knowing it. An understanding of children's development and the tasks they encounter requires recognition of such ethnic and religious differences. The Irish-American child may grow up influenced by the mother's tendency to treat her husband like a grown-up child, pretending to believe the fabricated tales lie tells and admiring his ability to tell them; and while she seems to defer to her husband's authority, she holds the family reins tightly in her own hands, at the same time ceding to the church a superordinate authority which must not be questioned. The boys and girls in such families grow up with very different ideas and feelings about their respective roles and responsibilities, and with different reactions to male and female authority figures from those of children in those German-American families which retain the strict discipline of a stern father who is almost unapproachable to the child, but in which the mother acts as a go-between, knowing how to circumvent her husband by being deferential and concerned with his comfort while swaying him to yield to a child's wishes. Children with parents of southern Italian origins may be influenced by the expectation that they maintain strong ties to their extended family, and may be puzzled about their parents' seeming irreligiosity, for their attitude to the church is much more relaxed than that of the Irish children in the neighborhood and of the Polish priest, who is so rigid in his expectations of children. Jews, even after several generations in the United States, may be surprised to learn that some of their attitudes concerning health and education as well as a variety of family customs are not idiopathic to the family but clearly derive from customs of Eastern European Jews.[19]

**The Afro-American Family**

The situation of American blacks presents some special problems. In contrast to immigrant groups in the United States, most of whose members manage to emerge from lower-class status within one or two generations, blacks, because of their earlier status as slaves, their skin color, and the rural, uneducated background of many who recently migrated to cities, hare not been able to become upwardly mobile as readily. A significant proportion are threatened with permanent lower-class status because of family disorganization in the inner-city slums. We are not considering here the ever increasing number of black families who are middle class, even though their children are commonly confronted by serious problems because of their race. Many of the ways of life and of rearing children that have been considered characteristic of lower-class black families are simply attributes of lower-class families. The status of Afro-American and Latin American families in the New York inner city (Minuchin *et al.,* 1967) and of white, lower-class families in Boston (Pavenstedt, 1967) shows many basic similarities because all three are essentially without cultural tradition and similar types of disorganization are common to all. Relative lack of concern for the future, a high prevalence of broken homes, adolescent pregnancies, and premature reliance on older siblings to care for very young children are common. However, other factors bear consideration. The Afro-Americans brought to the Americas as slaves were largely cut off from their own ethnic groups, and their traditions were totally unsuited to life in slavery. Culture heroes and ideal figures who provide a people with models and self-esteem were forgotten. Frequently, slave owners paid little attention to family formation, couples were separated, and women were used for breeding slaves and as sexual objects of whites. Children were often raised without fathers, and the women had to take an unusual degree of responsibility for child rearing. The mother-centered family became a pattern that tends to persist, affording the boy an inadequate role model to follow into manhood.[20] Because of meager economic opportunities, the man has difficulty in achieving or maintaining adequate self-esteem. Problems such as these continue to aggravate those created by poor education and economic deprivation, and they obviously seriously influence the children's development.[21]

## RECONSTITUTED FAMILIES

As over a quarter of all marriages in the United States are now second marriages, the topic of families containing a stepparent requires consideration. Eighty percent of the nearly one million persons

who get divorced each year remarry, and increasingly such remarriages involve children.[22] Divorce in itself creates problems for developing children. Their security is diminished; the value of one parent as a model for identification and the other as a basic love object can be undermined, conflicts in loyalties occur, and many other functions of the family are affected. However, parental divorce may not be as injurious for children as living with parents who are seriously incompatible. The effects of divorce are accentuated when parents derogate their former spouses to their children and seek to turn the children against the other parent.

The reconstituted family, even when it provides a more favorable setting than the original family, almost always creates some significant difficulties for the children—a topic that we can only touch upon here. Commonly children are jealous of their parents' relationships to their new spouses, a situation aggravated for older children by their perception of the newly reweds' heightened sexual interests in one another. The chances of an adolescent girl's becoming pregnant increase shortly after her mother's remarriage (Fleck *et al.,* 1956). The child's obligation to conform with a parent's "visiting privileges"—decided by the parents themselves or by the court at the time of separation—interferes with the child's friendships and more natural schedule of activities. Each parent may seek to equal if not outdo the other in winning a child's affection and thus spoil the child, as when the child must go on vacation with each parent. Less fortunately, each parent resents the time and money he or she must give the child because of the disinterest of the other parent. The reshuffling of space, possessions, and affection with stepsiblings who live in the home or who visit in it creates difficulties. Stepparents are often reluctant to exert needed discipline. Parents become jealous of affection given to their children by stepparents or of a child's preference for the stepparent. Then, too, the children, who are in many ways the persons most affected by a divorce, rarely have a say in their own disposition. The difficulties that ensue when one parent, usually though not always the father, simply deserts are, of course, still more serious.[23] Reconstituted families can, and often do, form good developmental settings for children, but it requires considerable understanding and effort on the part of all of the three or four parents involved.

## SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

Currently one child in six is being raised by a single parent in the United States, a situation aggravated by poverty for about one of every ten children.[24] Almost a million children are being raised by

fathers alone. Of course, one-parent families are nothing new. Widows, divorced persons, and unmarried mothers have managed to raise children by themselves successfully but rarely without considerable difficulty. Recently some women have preferred to have children and raise them without being married, and adoption agencies have given children to single parents of both sexes. Most single parents, particularly those who work, must rely heavily on neighbors, friends, babysitters, and care-taking agencies. We have already considered why a child properly needs a parent of each sex; but one competent parent is better than none. Here we must note that a parent also properly needs a partner to share the pleasures as well as the tasks and decisions involved in raising a child. Unless a person is not only highly motivated and very well organized but also capable of gaining considerable satisfaction from nurturing and being needed, he or she is likely to feel restricted, burdened, and, at times, overwhelmed by the task.[25]

## NEW FAMILY FORMS[26]

Over the past ten to fifteen years a number of persons who have been dissatisfied with the families in which they grew up or with their own marriages have suggested, and some have tried out, new types of marriage or substitutes for marriage which they believe will be more satisfactory for children as well as adults. The family, particularly the isolated nuclear family, is regarded as the source of all social evil, as the root of most individual unhappiness, and sometimes as an institution created by men to enslave women. The condemnations reflect an appreciation of the critical moment of the family in human affairs and the difficulties the contemporary family has in meeting the needs of spouses and children.

Various wars of living and rearing children have been suggested and carried out, such as: two or more couples living together, sharing housekeeping and child-care functions (and in some arrangements, sharing spouses); both spouses working half-time to enable one of them to be at home with the children; living in communes, with or without distinct individual marriages; contract marriages or non-marital relationships with a prior provision for separation; homosexual marriages; marriage only after the birth of a child; serial monogamy; etc. Some of these arrangements are attempts to avoid or diminish the commitments of marriage and at the same time to regain some of the dependence that was lost in separating from parents.

The communal forms of living are endeavors to retrieve advantages of the extended family. The desire for communal life, when not simply a wish to "drop out" of Western civilization, has been fostered by the Israeli kibbutz—though few, if any, communes have had the organization and discipline of the kibbutz—and also by the alluring picture presented in Skinner's *Walden Two*[27] When effectively organized, communes permit sharing of the tasks of living and can free the women for work outside the home. Sharing the care of children can lessen the ties of the child to the mother, which some people consider desirable. It is difficult to discuss the feasibility, advantages, and disadvantages of communal living because communes differ, because few people, as far as the author knows, remain in communes for more than a few years, and because insufficient time has elapsed to judge the outcome for children.[28]

The feasibility and practicality of various other types of family relationships depend very greatly on the persons involved.[29] It is clearly simpler to find the faults in the more traditional family life than find workable solutions. One can only hope that, with clearer conceptualization of the functions of the family, some successful innovations will emerge, as did the kibbutz.

**Parental Personality and the Family**

Whatever the form of the family, the personalities of the parents will be a major factor in how the family functions and what sort of child rearing it provides. How a family enculturates its children depends greatly upon how the parents grew up and internalized their culture. They transmit the cultural ways to their offspring through the language they use, their ways of relating, the taboos which they unconsciously hold, their value systems, and their role assumptions and expectations more than they do through what they consciously teach to their children. Family ways that reflect the individuality of the parents and how they interrelate transcend ethnic, religious, and social class origins. One child may, for example, grow up in a home filled with talk in which the mother happily recites nursery rhymes to her totally uncomprehending infant, gives a cloth picture "book" as one of the first playthings, and later reads the baby a story each night as part of the bedtime ritual. The father in such a family may take the child on trips and patiently respond to endless questions. Another child has a mother who cannot be close and is annoyed when her child interrupts the fantasy life that sustains her, and has a father who, like the child, feels excluded by his wife and who has found refuge in his profession and rarely relates to the child. Such differences will be referred to repeatedly in subsequent chapters.

Not only is the family the setting in which the child's personality development takes place, but the parents' personalities and interactions as well as the transactions of the family as a whole profoundly influence the child's development and who the child becomes. In a sense, the parents' wars and personalities enter into the child's makeup as much as do their genes.

The child requires not simply nurturance of inborn directives to achieve a mature and workable personality, but positive direction and guidance in a suitable interpersonal environment and social system. The positive molding forces have been largely overlooked, because they are built into the institutions and mores of all societies and into the omnipresent family which everywhere has knowingly or unknowingly been given the task of carrying out the basic socialization and enculturation of the new generation. The biological makeup of the human being requires that a child grow up in a family or a reasonable substitute for it, not only for protection and nurturance but in order to be directed into becoming an integrated person who has assimilated the techniques, knowledge, and roles required for adaptation and survival.

As we study the various essential functions of the family for the child, we realize that studies of child rearing as well as much advice given to parents have largely neglected the influence of the family as a unit upon the child. Emphasis has been placed upon what parents should do for the child and with the child—the influence of natural childbirth, nursing, cuddling, weaning, bowel training, love, stimulation, etc., all of which are important and will be considered in the ensuing chapters. But perhaps it has been so obvious that it has been taken for granted and then often forgotten that what counts most of all is who the parents are, how they behave, how they relate to one another, and what sort of family they create, including that intangible—the atmosphere of the home.

## *REFERENCES*


Aberle, D. F. (1951). The Psychosocial Analysis of a Hopi Life-History, *Comparative Psychology Monographs*, vol. 21, no. 1., Serial No. 107. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Ackerman, N. (1958). *The Psychodynamics of Family Life*. Basic Books, New York.

Bernstein, B. (1974). *Class, Codes and Control: Theoretical Studies Toward a Sociology of Language*. Schocken Books, New York.

Bott, E. (1955). "Urban Families: Conjugal Roles and Social Network," *Human Relations*, 8:345-384.

Brown, R. (1965). "Language: The System and Its Acquisition," in *Social Psychology*. Free Press, New York.

Bruch, H. (1961). "Transformation of Oral Impulses in Eating Disorders," *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 35:458-481.

Child, I. (1943). *Italian or American? The Second-Generation Conflict*. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn.

Comer, J. P. (1971). *Beyond Black and White*. Quadrangle Press, New York.

Cooper, D. (1971). *Death of the Family*. Pantheon, New York.

Daedalus, *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*; issue on "The Negro American," Fall, 1965.

Erikson, E. (1950). *Childhood and Society*. W. W. Norton, New York.

Fleck, S., et al. (1956). "Pregnancy as a Symptom of Adolescent Maladjustment," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 2:118-131.

Frazier, E. F. (1939). *The Negro Family in the United States*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Freud, A., and Burlingham, D. (1944). *Infants Without Families*. International Universities Press, New York.

Grier, W., and Cobb, P. M. (1968). *Black Rage*. Basic Books, New York.

Hollingshead, A. B., and Redlich, F. C. (1958). *Social Class and Mental Illness*. John Wiley & Sons, New York.

James, H. (1897). *What Maisie Knew*. Penguin Books, New York, 1974.

Lidz, T. (1963a). "The Family, Language, and Ego Functions," in *The Family and Human Adaptation: Three Lectures*. International Universities Press, New York.

____(1963b). *The Family and Human Adaptation: Three Lectures*. International Universities Press, New York.

Lidz, T., Fleck, S., and Cornelison, A. (1965). *Schizophrenia and the Family*. International Universities Press, New York.

Minuchin, S., et al. (1967). *Families of the Slums*. Basic Books, New York.

Morgan, M. (1974). *The Total Woman*. Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, N.J.

Myrdal, G. (1962). *American Dilemma*. Harper & Row, New York.

O'Neill, N., and O'Neill, G. (1972). *Open Marriage*. Avon Books, New York.

Parsons, T., and Bales, R. (1955). *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process*. Free Press, Glencoe, Ill.

Pavenstedt, E. ed. (1967). *The Drifters: Children of Disorganized Lower-Class Families*. Little, Brown, Boston.

Rothchild, J., and Wolf, S. (1976). *The Children of the Counterculture*. Doubleday, New York.

Simmons, L. W. (1945). *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn.

Skinner, B. F. (1960). *Walden Two*. Macmillan, New York.

Spitz, R. A. (1945). "Hospitalism: An Inquiry into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, vol. 1, pp. 53-74. International Universities Press, New York.

Thomas, W., and Znaniecki, F. (1927). *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Tiger, L., and Shepher, J. (1975). *Women in the Kibbutz*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. New York.

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Policy Planning and Research (1965). *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Varga, G. (1953). *Little Novels of Sicily*. Grove Press, New York.

Westoff, L. A. (197;). "Two Time Winners," *New York Times Magazine*, August 10, pp. 10-1;.

Whiting, B., ed. (1963). *Six Cultures: Studies of Child Rearing*. John Wiley & Sons, New York.

Whorf, B. L. (1939). "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language," in *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. J. Carroll, ed. MIT Press and John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1956.

Zborowski, M., and Herzog, E. (1952). *Life Is with People: The Jewish Little-Town of Eastern Europe*. International Universities Press, New York.

Zimmerman, C. (1947). *Family and Civilization*. Harper Bros., New York.

## *SUGGESTED READING*

Anthony, E. J., and Koupernik, C. eds. (1974). *The Child in His Family*. Wiley-Interscience, New York.

Bell, N,. and Vogel, E., eds. (1960). *A Modern Introduction to the Family*. Free Press, Glencoe, Ill.

Lidz, T. (1963). *The Family and Human Adaptation: Three Lectures*. International Universities Press, New York,

Minuchin, S., et al. (1967). *Families of the Slums*. Basic Books, New York.

Parsons, T., and Bales, R. (1955). *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process*. Free Press, Glencoe, Ill.

Pavenstedt, E., ed. (1967). *The Drifters: Children of Disorganized Lower-Class Families*. Little, Brown, Boston.

Rossi, A. (1972). "Family Development in a Changing World," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 128:1057-1066.

Simpson, G. (1960). *People in Families*. Thomas Y. Crowell, New York.

## *Notes*

1 As the family is the basic social structure of society, the warp and woof of the social fabric, the disorganization of the family can presage the dissolution of a society. According to Zimmerman (1947) the Christian fathers appear to have been keenly aware that the deterioration of moral character as well as the general social disorganization during the decline of Rome were related to the decline of the family. It was for such reasons that they reinstituted the sanctity of marriage and placed a divine interdiction upon consorts, hetaerae, and homosexual liaisons, and banned the abortions and infanticide that had been rife since the days of Augustus.

2 University-educated women—and men—particularly from the East and West coasts may find it useful to read The Total Woman, the best seller by Marabel Morgan that advises women how to find fulfillment as devoted, supportive, religious and sexually fulfilled wives who thus know how to provide sexual fulfillment to their husbands and to manipulate them subtly.

3 Recently, various people have called for the abolition of the family because it inculcates the societal mores and ethos into the child and thus interferes with the spontaneous, uninfluenced development of the child, who therefore can never be truly free. Such individuals fail to appreciate that a child cannot grow up uninfluenced by adults, and that such undirected freedom can only lead to the child's death or at least to a non-human type of existence. The reasons given by Cooper in *Death of the Family* show a surprising disregard of essential aspects of human development. Indeed, the family is so vital that it has unknowingly been carrying out its complex tasks since the emergence of humans, and some even long before protoman appeared on the scene. As the parents who usually provide the family environment also by and large transmit the genetic heredity, the child's personality traits have traditionally been attributed to heredity. It was obvious enough: intelligent parents usually had intelligent children; the ruling class provided most governmental leaders; artisans bred artisans; and laborers supplied most of the laborers. Children did not always live up to expectation, but that was due to some fault in the ancestral line of the spouse. Perhaps it required the opening of the New World for such "obvious" truths to be questioned, for in the gigantic reshuffling children began to differ from their parents in many significant ways. (This happened even more distinctively in Australia where, I understand, few boast of traits handed down from their ancestral settlers at Botany Bay.) True, some children were raised in institutions and most of these did not turn out particularly well; but, after all, with rare exceptions, these were children of the poor and little more could be expected of them. It has required the comparisons of the influence of child-rearing procedures in widely different societies, the study of children raised in institutions (Freud and Burlingham, 1944; Spitz, 1945; Whiting, 1963), the gradual realization that individuals who are seriously disturbed emotionally were almost always raised in very faulty family settings (Ackerman, 1958; Lidz, Fleck, and Cornelison, 1965), and even more recently the understanding that the child's cognitive development rests heavily on family influences (Brown, 1965; Lidz, 1963a) to draw attention to some of these essential functions of the family and to pose the proper questions that are always required before proper answers can be found.

4 This does not necessarily make the Hopi language the ideal of language students who may be bothered by the many tenses in Latin, Hebrew, or English. The complexity comes about in other ways, such as in the change in the form of the verb to tell how something is known—for example, because it is seen, or heard, or because someone has said so, or because it customarily happens.

5 The illustrations are not necessarily accurate and should be taken as symbolic illustrations (as the author is not an ethnologist). See D. F. Aberle, *The Psychosocial Analysis of a Hopi Life-History*; L. W. Simmons, *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*; and B. L. Whorf, "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language."

6 T-Groups and similar consciousness-raising groups are pseudogroups because they lack many of these characteristics. A "Ieaderless group" is to some extent a solecism.

7 See Chapter 1. When wives, from the time of marriage to late middle life, were caring for children and the management of the household required very special skills, it was more important than at present to prepare boys and girls to carry out different functions. However, because of an innate difference, because of family dynamics, or because of the influence of tradition, women tend to be more nurturant and affiliating than men.

8 The functions need not be the traditional ones, but we do not know the consequences of attempts to obliterate completely the differences between maternal and paternal roles. It seems likely that it would lead to confusions of gender identity in the child, and interfere with many facets of development. The reasons for such concerns will become apparent in subsequent chapters.

9 This may or may not include the secure acceptance of the self as a homosexual. There are reasons to doubt that a child can have a clear self-concept as a homosexual; and, in most contemporary societies at least, homosexuality would seem to involve a greater or lesser degree of ambiguity about gender identity.

10 An example, more amusing than malignant, of the handicaps imposed upon a child by cultural deprivation is provided by the following essay written by a London slum child evacuated to the country during World War II.

The cow is a mammal. It has six sides, right and left and upper and below. At the back it has a tail on which hangs a brush. With this he sends flies away so they don't fall into the milk. The head is for the purpose of growing horns and so his mouth can be somewhere. The horns are to butt with and the mouth to moo with.

Under the cow hangs milk. It is arranged for milking. When people milk, milk comes and there never is an end to the supply. How the cow docs it I have not yet realized, but it makes more and more. The cow has a fine sense of smell and one can smell it far away. This is the reason for fresh air in the country.

A man cow is called an ox. The ox is not a mammal. The cow docs not cat much but what it eats it eats twice so that it gets enough. When it is hungry it moos and when it says nothing at all it is because its insides are full up with grass.

11 Despite a pseudoprecocity concerning autonomy, such as wandering about alone or being able to go to the store and make simple purchases for their mothers, they were markedly delayed in their perceptual and cognitive development. Their language was impoverished and they could not generalize from one experience to another, or even name an object after it was hidden from view. Impulsivity and inability to delay gratification were obvious; and they could be almost paralyzed by anxiety. Not only were they distrustful of adults, but their inability to differentiate between one teacher and another frustrated their teachers' efforts to establish meaningful relationships with them. An older group of children from disorganized black and Puerto Rican families in New York studied by Minuchin and his coworkcrs (1967) had had very similar problems. Basil Bernstein (1974) drew attention to the serious limitations of lower-class children in London because of the paucity of verbal communication in their homes.

12 We know, for example, from direct observation of family interaction and tests of family members individually and collectively that the styles of communication and meanings in families with schizophrenic offspring are strikingly vague and idiosyncratic. The verbal and nonverbal cues, punishments, and rewards of one parent are apt to be inconsistent and those of the two parents conflicting.

13 Women's current objection to the use of the masculine pronoun in referring to a single child or person when the gender does not matter derives from the implication contained in the usage that males are more significant than females.

14 In recent years a good deal has been written about the instabilities and unsuitability of the nuclear family when the isolated nuclear family is meant. "Nuclear family" simply means the parents and their children, an entity that exists everywhere, even within extended families, except, possibly, in a few societies.

15 Differentiating so sharply between extended and isolated nuclear families serves to accentuate some of the problems confronting the family as an institution in the United States at the present time. In actuality a large proportion of families do not fit clearly into either category but are parts of modified extended families in which the spouses are the heads of their nuclear family but can expect support from their parents and siblings, particularly in emergencies.

16 Overt and clear communication of needs, wishes, and expectations becomes increasingly important to intrafamilial harmony, as roles and role expectations become less definite and less implicitly understood by the family members. What had been implicitly understood in the family of origin may be misunderstood in the marital family. Such considerations enter into the efforts of psychiatrists and marital counselors to improve verbal communication between couples.

17 A conventional way of dividing the population according to social class is to subdivide each of the usual upper-, middle-and lower-class groupings into upper and lower subclasses. Families can be allocated into the six categories adequately according to a scale based on place of residence and the occupation and education of the parents (Hollingshead and Redlich, 1958). Although such categorization divides up a continuum, clear-cut differences in living patterns and child rearing typify the social class groupings; and the differences are fairly sharp between groups that are not adjacent in the scale—for example, the lower-upper class and the lower-middle class are notably different.

18 The lower-lower class has particular importance to the medical-and social-oriented professions because it is composed largely of persons who have sedimented out, so to speak, because of the emotional instability of the homes in which they were raised, and many members are no longer capable of forming families that can properly rear a new generation. Perhaps too little attention has been paid to the difference between lower-class families that have not yet had an opportunity to raise their positions, such as immigrant families or black families recently migrated northward, and those lower-class families that have fallen back or remained lower-lower class because of chronic emotional instability over several generations.

19 The anthropological and sociological reconstruction of the Eastern European Jewish communities wiped out by the Nazis, Life Is with People (Zborowski and Herzog, 1952), shows that, even though separated for several hundred years, such communities in different countries preserved identical customs, many of which are reflected in contemporary American-Jewish practices, value systems, and attitudes. A comparison of this volume with Thomas and Znaniecki's classic study, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, offers a striking contrast of two cultures occupying the same physical environment—as striking as comparisons of the Navajo and Hopi, or the Fijians with the Indians living in Fiji. Italian-Americans can gain an appreciation of the origins of many of their family patterns by reading the novels and short stories of Varga (1953) or such books as Italian or American? The Second-Generation Conflict (Child, 1943).

20 In lower-class black families, sons are frequently rejected by their mothers, who prefer to have daughters. Such rejection is commonly accompanied by maternal domination, which increases the boy's lack of self-esteem as well as his hostility toward women. Grier and Cobb, in their book Black Rage, argue that black mothers purposely reject and emasculate sons to prepare them for their menial place in a white world. This is not what one hears from such mothers who gain little gratification from sons because they expect them to get into trouble and become a burden, and because the mother, as a child, had no father to give her affection, and, as a woman often has no consistent spouse to give her the love and support that would lead her to love his son. Without a stable and consistent father figure in the home the boy has no satisfactory male model to identify with and follow into adulthood, but only the model of a male intruder into the home, whom he resents. All too early, he follows the directives of peer groups, unchecked by a father he would like to emulate but only by the admonitions and punishments of a mother whose affectionate care is disrupted by the need to be a controlling and punitive figure. Here, as in many other family situations, a cycle has been established that tends to repeat itself from generation to generation.

21 An excellent presentation of the background problems can be found in E. F. Frazier's The Negro Family in the United States. See also the Daedalus issue on "The Negro American," the U.S. Department of Labor report on The Negro Family: The Case for National Action, Comer's Beyond Black and White, and Myrdal's American Dilemma.

22 In 1974 the parents of over a million children were divorced, involving approximately twice as many children as in 1965. A still larger proportion of second than first marriages end in divorce, a situation largely due to the fact that about eighty percent of second marriages in the lower socioeconomic segments of society break up. Sec L. A. Westoff, "Two Time Winners."

As every child knows from reading folktales about wicked stepmothers, reconstituted families were also common in the past. High

maternal mortality in childbirth and infectious diseases created numerous widowers and widows—but remarriage after divorce differs from remarriage after the death of a spouse.

23 The problems are far from new, simply more common. Henry James sensitively considered the plight of an upper-class girl after her parents' divorce in *What Maisie Knew*.

24 Figures are unreliable because welfare laws in the United States currently make it financially rewarding for some parents to live apart when the father's earnings are low. How many fathers simply live at other addresses but have not really deserted cannot be ascertained.

25 The single-parent family, as many other topics in this chapter, is a complex subject that transcends the scope of this book. Unmarried adolescent mothers, particularly if black, usually remain in the parental home.

26 Dual career marriages, in which serious efforts are made to enable the wife to continue her career and, when possible, not consider it secondary to her husband's, will be discussed in the chapter on marital adjustment.

27 The Israeli kibbutz is a carefully planned and well-organized institution that seeks to fit into and be useful to the larger society, and in which members work hard to make the kibbutz economically viable. The kibbutz method of raising children collectively in nurseries and then in special children's units in accord with the kibbutz pioneers' socialist beliefs, has also been a means of making it possible for the women to work, as required by the circumstances, without permitting their absence to affect the children deleteriously. However, very careful attention is paid to providing adequate mothering and individual attention by substitute mothers. No effort is made to minimize the importance of the biological parents, who spend considerable time with the child after work each day, perhaps giving the child more of their undivided attention than parents in most societies. The author, on a recent trip to Israel, found that many kibbutz women now wish to modify communal child rearing, by having the children sleep in their own homes, and also to return to more traditional activities of women. Tiger and Shepher (1975) believe such changes, which run counter to the ideology of the kibbutz movement and the wishes of the men, express the deep-seated wishes of women, perhaps reflecting something basic in women's makeup.

Walden Two is, as a careful reader will note, essentially a fantasy, for Skinner does not consider many basic problems that must be solved if such communes are to exist in reality

28 However, according to the book *The Children of the Counterculture* by Rothchild and Wolf, the misunderstanding of the capacities and needs of children, the neglect of them, and cruelty toward them is widespread in both rural and urban communes, and resembles in some ways the treatment of children in urban slums by adolescent parents who cannot invest or "cathect" their children because of their own intense dependency needs.

29 Some types, such as the O'Neill's' "open marriage" (O'Neill and O'Neill, 1972) seek certain benefits by sacrificing some of the fundamental advantages of marriage (see Chapters 13 and 14) and do not solve critical child-rearing problems. Others seem almost bound to fail because they do not meet many of the family's child rearing functions that have been considered in this chapter. One common problem is that a marital relationship is difficult enough to maintain, and when couples live together in multiples, whatever the type, the difficulties are apt to be multiplied rather than alleviated unless boundaries between couples are maintained and a firm organization exists—conditions that many persons living in groups seek to avoid.