

# Psychoanalytic Studies in Child Development— Biological and Social Deprivation in Early Childhood

## Panel Discussion

27 December 1967, AAAS Annual Meeting, New York City

Chairman: Albert J. Solnit (Director, Child Study Center, Yale University)

### Discussants and Topics

Justin D. Call (Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of California, Los Angeles, The Center for the Health Sciences, Los Angeles, California 90024)—*The Influence of Feeding on Patterns of Arousal and Activity in Boys and Girls from Birth to Age 4 Days.*

Selma Fraiberg (Associate Professor, Child Psychoanalysis, The University of Michigan Medical Center, Neuropsychiatric Institute, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104)—*Parallel and Divergent Patterns in Blind and Normal Infants.*

Charles A. Malone (Training Director, Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)—*Notes on the Deviant Development of Pre-School Children from Disorganized Slum Families.*

Reginald S. Lourie (Director, Department of Psychiatry, Children's Hospital of the District of Columbia, Washington, D.C.)—*Preventive Implications of Constitutional Vulnerabilities in Early Ego Development.*

Sally Provence (Professor of Pediatrics, Child Study Center, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06510) will be a discussant.

In presenting a panel of selected psychoanalytic investigations in child development, the American Psychoanalytic Association reflects an increasing involvement of psychoanalysts in the direct observational studies of children. Psychoanalytic research from the beginning of Freud's heroic work has combined reconstructive data derived from the psychoanalytic method with direct observations of children as a source of hypotheses and as a refining influence on the psychoanalytic theory of child development.

In this panel, trained investigators in psychoanalysis from centers throughout the United States will present four studies that are related by the similarity of the methods they use in conducting their respective investigations. Each study utilizes psychoanalytic theory as a guide in ordering, refining, and reducing observational data of child behavior that has been gathered at times and in situations suggested by the assumptions derived from a psychoanalytic theory of child development. Each study utilizes the medical research model of investigating functions and processes that are expected to become visible because of deficiencies in the child's biological equipment or in his environment, or both.

In the studies reported in this panel, certain conditions of high illumination are revealed in the observations of normal and abnormal biological and social crises in childhood. Psychoanalytic propositions have suggested when and what to observe and how to use such observations for theory-building activities in psychoanalysis.

In the first paper, the crisis condition is the normative one of the neonatal period. Through the study of neonates, Justin Call compares boys and girls, observing

arousal-activity patterns as they are influenced by the feeding experiences.

In the second paper, by Selma Fraiberg, children who are blind are observed and compared to children who have vision. In this longitudinal study, detailed observations of young children in both groups reveal parallel and divergent patterns of behavior in blind and normal infants.

In the third paper, Charles Malone will report on observations of a mixed racial group of preschool children of disorganized, multiproblem slum families in a therapeutic nursery school. The study is an example of applying psychoanalytic knowledge and thinking to non-analytic observational data. Patterns of deviant development in a group of these underprivileged children will be described and formulations will be derived along lines suggested by psychoanalytic theory.

In the fourth paper, Reginald Lourie will present data from a longitudinal study that has enabled his group to devise an inventory of constitutional characteristics and vulnerabilities in infants.

Psychoanalysts characteristically confront clinical and direct observational findings with theory-building formulations, utilizing clinical studies to test theoretical propositions and theoretical formulations to enrich and refine clinical studies. Contributions of psychoanalysis to a general psychological theory of child development and behavior are demonstrated in this AAAS Panel.

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