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ABSTRACT
                Many things stretch the bonds between caregiver and
child, perhaps none more than war. Children's healthy illusions of
their personal safety, well-being, and control of their environment
is shattered. The resulting stresses cause varying levels and types
of trauma, as well as varying mechanisms of coping. This paper
explores the problems war causes in a child's environment,
particularly in terms of children's responses to war and its effects
upon the caregiver-child relationship. Children respond by becoming
either passive victims or active warrior victims: passive victims
tend to see themselves as helpless and try to carry on as children
despite their threatened safety, well-being, and lack of
environmental control; active warrior victims are children who take
on adult roles and forfeit their childhoods in trying to control
their environment. An examination of studies detailing the historical
experiences of children in the war situations of World War II,
Northern Ireland, Cambodia, South America, and of children in
concentration camps is included. Short-term and long term effects,
and differences in reactions in children of various age groups, are
examined. The paper stresses the importance of caregivers' knowledge
of these issues. Contains 25 references. (SD)

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CHILDREN AS PASSIVE VICTIMS OF WAR: WHEN AN ENVIRONMENT IN CHAOS
STRETCHES THE BONDS OF CAREGIVING

Abigail S. McNamee
Lehman College of The City University of New York

Introduction

When war, the ultimate stressor for those who nurture and
those need nurturance, creates chaos in a child's environment,
bringing with it its particular psychological and physical dangers,
it offers a tragic dilemma for caregivers, the ultimate
predicament: What do we do as caregivers? Do we support the
killing game of war from the edges sending off those whom we care
for, including children, as warriors? Do we fight in it, leaving
children behind to be nurtured by some else? The United States has
begun to experience wars (or actions) wherein mothers have gone to
fight. How do we continue to give care?

War is also a metaphor for the conflict caregivers face as we
try to integrate the complexity of our roles for state and family:
as we find ways of being nurturers in public life and public
environments; as we find ways of being nurturers in family life and
family environments often while living a public life; as we find
ways of helping developing people, regardless of gender, to be more
nurturing for state and family.

Many things stretch the bonds between caregiver and child,
perhaps none more than war. War, in fact, can rip the bonds apart
at worst, or stretch them with little hope of memory yarn to pull
them back into comfortable position once again. War destroys the

illusion in caregiver and child, vulnerable at the best of times, that we are safe.

Children and Illusion

I think that all of life is an illusion to one degree or another. From the beginning of life, children summarize and generalize their daily experiences, developing impressions of the world. From their impressions of experiences, illusions develop which are both sensual and conceptual in nature, specific and general in form, and to some extent inaccurate. It is out of these illusions that assumptions about ourselves and the world in which we live develop and continue, often throughout life, with little or no reality testing. Our basic assumptions are 1) that the world is a safe place; 2) that I am ok; 3) that I can influence what happens in the world (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). These basic assumptions are important; they allow an illusion of safety, they allow space in which to develop.

Accuracy of illusion and resulting assumption is perhaps not necessary early in life; in fact accuracy may destroy or interfere with the development of an illusion of safety for a child. But, as we develop, our illusions must be modified somewhat by reality to further our adaptation to life. The earlier illusions are the foundations of our lives; the later developed, more grown-up, illusions are working hypotheses which we can tryout and then retain or discard. But not all of our illusions are perfectly in tune with reality even in adulthood...these illusions provide us with "the means for trusting ourselves and our environment"

(Janoff-Bulman, p. 55). We tend toward conservatism...we tend to hold on to our illusions, biasing us toward what we already know, saving us energy. While change in our external environment may take place quickly, change in our internal environment often takes place slowly.

Children and Stress or Trauma

Despite the development of a protective illusion of safety, children, all children, live their lives experiencing some degree of stress...even relatively happy children. Some stressors are merely difficult life experiences; some are traumatic, violent shocks or wounds with consequences affecting the whole of a person.

Some stressors seem to come primarily from inside the child, from the internal environment. These might be related to a child's intelligence, ethnicity or physical appearance, to illness, to fears and wishes, and to mistaken, unhelpful, or self-defeating perceptions of self and others (McNamee & McNamee, 1981, McNamee, 1982).

Other stressors seem to come primarily from outside the child, from the external environment. These might be related to events within the family where safety and security are central issues (absence or death of a parent/s, family discord/ divorce, evacuation and separation of children from parent for a variety of reasons, physical destruction of the home by natural and unnatural causes). Stressors might also be related to the immediate or larger outside community where safety remains a central issue. Internal and external stressors are always part of children's lives

to some extent; unfortunate children experience a stacking of multiple stressors so that they do not have the option of dealing with only one at a time. War intrudes itself on any already existing stressors creating excruciating pressure on the caretaking bonds between parent and child; excruciating pressure on the child's ability to cope and on the caregiver's ability to protect the child physically and to protect the child's illusion of safety psychologically. When children are in direct contact with war, when war becomes part of their neighborhood they become victims either passive victim or active/warrior victim; both possibilities ripping at the bonds of caregiving. When children are in indirect contact with war (when parents or other relatives go away to fight one, they see it on television, or hear about it in others' conversation) their fears and fantasies stretch the caretaking bonds of caregiving perhaps permanently.

Some stressors, like war, create chaos in our external and internal environments, threatening our survival and self-preservation and we're not prepared for them. Our earlier illusions are shattered. Safety and security cannot be assumed. New illusions which are more responsive to the new devastating reality must be developed if a person is to survive. Denial and numbing allow time for a new integration; intrusive and repetitive re-experiencing of the events, which may seem painful and self-defeating, also allow for a new integration. Language provides a medium for containing, processing, and sharing the events with others as we modify our interpretations of the events and re-define

them after the fact. Dreams allow us to play freely with the new
material without real world constraints. Self-blame, seemingly
negative, allows us to take some bit of power, some sort of
control: what could have been done to prevent; what can be done to
change. A warm supportive environment provides powerful evidence
that some people are still good, that the world is not all evil and
meaningless, that you are a worthy person (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).
New illusions developed within a supportive environment help to
maintain the illusion of safety for children.

Children as Victims of War

War, in whatever form it takes, wherever it takes form,
stretches the bonds of caregiving, caregiving between adults, and
especially caregiving between adult and child. War is dangerous to
children in psychological as well as physical ways. There are
basically two alternatives for children having direct experience
with war: they can become passive victims or active/warrior
victims. I think that children construct their own reality within
the passive or active victim role, tailoring either alternative to
their own uniqueness, reacting individually to their unique
context. But I think these two alternatives offer the only choices
in time of war. Both alternatives rip at the bonds of caregiving.

1) <u>When children become passive victims</u> war is done to them,
they see themselves as helpless to some degree, they respond with
passivity to some degree. Passivity may be a poor choice of
vocabulary here: I do not mean that they are intellectually, or
emotionally, or even physically passive necessarily (though they

might disintegrate enough that they are); what I mean is that they do not actively participate in the war as warriors, they try to continue a child's life in spite of war to the degree that this is possible. To the degree that this is possible. In fact, their experience either **calls to question** or **destroys** the illusion of safety which children need to develop:

- if war calls to question the illusion of safety, the bonds of caretaking are stretched and childhood is threatened. Children are vulnerable psychologically if they do not know that they are safe, if they do not know if they <u>will</u> be taken care of, if they do not know if they <u>can</u> be taken care of.

- if war destroys the illusion of safety, the bonds of caretaking are destroyed, childhood is destroyed. Survival becomes the issue. There is no space for developing an unbruised, undamaged, undefeated sense of self. The actual self, not only the psychological self, is threatened.

2)   <u>When children become active/warrior victims</u> (through active participation as warriors in the war effort) the illusion of safety is also destroyed, childhood is destroyed; survival becomes the issue, there is no space for developing an unbruised, undamaged, undefeated, unselfdefeating sense of self. But something else happens here: the "child" behaves like an adult warrior, trying to fabricate the only power he/she has known, but without having an adult self. These "adultlike" children have only a limited death concept, a limited sense of the risks of their actions, and often a lack of fear. They no longer rely on adults

to provide safety. Instead they wrap around themselves a magical cloak of safety which will, in fact, withstand no danger but which establishes the illusion of safety.

On a recent television program in the United States (WLIW/New York), "Moyers: Gathering of Men", Bill Moyers interviewed the American poet, Robert Bly, on, among other things, the subject of warriors. Bly's concept of the positive and negative warrior sheds some light on the child warrior, I think, and, more importantly on the issue of bonding.

Bly talked about the negative warrior, the kind who goes off to kill; but he talked also about the need for a positive warrior: inside of each of us, an inner warrior or "soul warrior" who energizes us and lets us keep with a task until it's finished. The positive warrior "holds the boundaries" of our behavior, keeps us focused. To get a positive warrior, Bly thought, a person must bond with mother and then separate from her psychologically (sound child development theory), then bond with father and separate from him psychologically, then bond with a mentor and, I suppose, eventually separate from him/her. A mentor is a person older than you, a "heartlink to the world", he/she holds a child in his/her heart and establishes a trusting relationship; if a male, Bly calls him a "male mother". Each of these bonding experiences is necessary.

War, I think, interrupts, perhaps irrevocably, this bonding process at some point: with mother, with father, with mentor, perhaps at all points; leaving a child without psychological and/or

physical support or hope. War can also confuse children on the mentor issue at a time when a child may be experiencing diminished or vanquished parental support, at a time when a child is most vulnerable. War can introduce false mentors, negative warriors who go off and kill, but who are attractive in the excitement and power and hope that they engender. These false mentors seduce potential good warriors into becoming bad warriors, into joining the war. But they are not supportive in reality, they don't hold a child in their heart, they don't become a heartlink to the world. They expect obedience and service from very young warriors; they punish in some way.

There are some who might think that these child warrior victims, because they are active and their very activity might reduce feelings of hopelessness, are healthier than those children to whom I have referred as passive victims. I am not sure about this. I suspect that they are in more danger psychologically speaking: they are victims in all the same ways as are the more passive children with the added vulnerability of seeing the world lose control and joining the fray, their own loss of control being sanctioned by society. They are also in the position of being used and manipulated by adults, not protected by them.

I have also wondered whether it is possible for any children who experience war directly in their environment not to be victimized. Can a child come through war unscathed, relatively unscathed? To approach an answer to this question I considered what happens to an environment, what children are likely to

experience living directly in war.   I think my list is not exhaustive, but begins like this:

loss of freedom to move about (a Kuwaiti girl interviewed on CNN said, "I used to be able to go about wherever I wanted");

loss of services (schools may close, sanitation/health services become dysfunctional, entertainment services cease);

loss/reduction of available food and supplies in general;

separation/loss of family members
through death, displacement/evacuation, imprisonment;

intensity of sound bombardment (bombs, sirens, warnings, yelling);

disruption of sleep; movement back and forth to shelters;

devastating human and animal sights (maimed and dead people including friends and family members);

torture of others as it is occurring;

torture or taunting of self by peers or adults;

devastating physical sights (bombed buildings, streets, trees destroyed for fuel);

loss of home and/or possessions;

parental/caretaker irritability, fear, panic, hopelessness;

pressure or seduction to become a warrior.

How victimized a child becomes depends, of course, on many variables: which of these experiences a child has had, how many a child has had at one time or in succession; the child's perception of the experience/s which has to do with the child's vulnerability as a person; and the kind of support the child has had, primarily

from a family that remains at least partially intact, and from outside mediators (friends, teachers, counselors, other mentors).

Once there is war, once children experience war directly, we cannot protect them really. War may serve political interests, it may serve business interests, it may be a competitive game, it may be described like a fairy tale with a villain, a victim, a hero; it may even serve to act out, as one film described, "menstrual envy" (Zedd, 1990). But it is never good for children.

The literature on children who have experienced war directly describes both kinds of child victim: passive and active/warrior. Professional literature tends to emphasize the child as passive victim; the popular literature tends to emphasize the child as active/warrior victim. I am using the term "war" to refer to violence or force between organized bodies or sides whether or not officially declared. The balance of this paper will focus on the child as passive victim to an external environment in chaos.

Children as Passive Victims of War

Children as passive victims of war might be victimized in two possible ways:

1)   the emotional reaction of the adult caregiver to the war and its specific events can have a negative affect on the emotional reaction of the child;

2)   children are more devastated by separation from parents than by the destruction of war.

A book entitled WAR AND CHILDREN, published in 1943 by Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham and based on their work with children

and their families at the Hampstead War Nursery (1941) which they
co-founded in London, England, offers, fifty-three years later, the
most valuable description of how children become passive victims of
war. Based as it is on a psychoanalytic understanding of children,
it grew, not only out of their professional relationship but also
from their personal relationship which also lasted for about fifty
years. Both were daughters of famous men, Sigmund Freud and Louis
Tiffany.

Anna and Dorothy opened a nursery together in Vienna (1937)
which evidenced the seeds of their thinking about young children's
needs later to been seen and more fully developed in England. The
purpose of the nursery was to observe children's actual experiences
in the first years of life, not to experiment. When the Freuds
were forced to Leave Vienna to escape the Holocaust, Burlingham
followed as did collaboration. The Hampstead War Nursery was
begun.

In all, three residences for children whose family lives had
become disrupted during the war were set up (two in London, one a
farm in Essex) and after the war these became the famous Hampstead
Child Therapy Clinic for the treatment of children and for research
in child psychoanalysis. WAR AND CHILDREN describes the effects of
war on the children of London during the Blitz (bombing of London)
but remains relevant to the effects of war on children in other
places, other times.

Freud's and Burlingham's study indicates that children find
separation from parents more disturbing than the sight of military

destruction, injury, and death. Their study excluded children who had received severe bodily injuries in air raids but did not exclude children who had been bombed repeatedly and partially buried in debris.

> ...there were no signs of traumatic shock to be observed in these children. If these bombing incidents occur when small children are in the care of their own mothers or a familiar mother substitute, they do not seem to be particularly affected by them. Their experience remains an accident, in line with other accidents of childhood (p. 21).

They also found that even when children arrived at shelters in the middle of the night, straight from their bombed houses, they showed "little or no excitement and no undue disturbance. They slept and ate normally and played with whatever toys they had rescued or which might be provided" (p. 21).

When parents showed lack of fear and excitement (p. 34), offered protection and fortification (p. 33) children did not develop air raid anxiety even in cases where the air raid shelter itself was destroyed, the exits blocked, and survivors dragged out by rescuers one by one. A mother described this experience for her child when she appeared with the child at a London clinic: When asked what was the matter with the child she first responded, "I think she has a cough and a bit of a cold". When asked about the cause of these symptoms she responded, "Being taken out from the warmth into the cold might be responsible". When further questioned she explained about the direct hit on the air raid shelter adding, "As a matter of fact, I have been quite worried about the little one because for a while they could not find her",

but the transition from the blazing furnace of the shelter to the cold December air resulted in "the cough and a bit of a cold" (p. 33). Another mother described her windows and frames being blasted out. "...we were ever so lucky. We had only blast, and my husband fixed the window frames again" (p. 34). Freud and Burlingham describe "the quiet manner in which the London population on the whole met the air raids...responsible in one way for the extremely rare occurrence of 'shocked' children" (p. 33).

Not all mothers, of course, were so calm. Freud and Burlingham also describe very anxious mothers with very anxious children. One mother developed agoraphobia during air raids. She would not sleep during an alarm and not go to a shelter. She would stand at the door trembling, insist that her five year old get dressed and stand next to her, holding her hand. He developed nervousness and bedwetting in her company but displayed neither when separated from her in the Children's Centre (p. 34).

While shocked children were rare in London, Freud and Burlingham caution, "It is a widely different matter when children, during an experience of this kind, are separated from or even lose their parents" (p. 21). They write that the fear of air raids takes on completely different dimensions for children who have lost their fathers as a result of bombing.

> In quiet times they turn away from their
> memories as much as possible and are gay
> and unconcerned in their play with the
> other children...The recurrence of an
> air raid forces them to remember and
> repeat their former experience...For
> these children every bomb that falls is
> like the one which killed the father, and

is feared as such (p. 36).

This kind of air raid anxiety is not the usual kind, but primarily a reaction to the death of the father.

Freud and Burlingham summarize types of air raid anxiety in children which have proven relevant far beyond WWII:

1) being mildly interested and afraid, then forgetting the menace and going on with play; they get rid of their fear by dropping their contact with reality and denying the facts, returning to the pursuits and interests of their childish world (pp. 27-28);

2) having fear aroused when killing and destruction are witnessed because their own "bad" destructive and aggressive impulses are only recently and tentatively buried inside and may be awakened even though they would like to believe they have no further wish to do these things (p. 28);

3) having fear aroused because they are developing conscience, may think that they have done "bad" things, and imagine ghosts, bogeymen, policemen, gypsies, robbers, devils, even the moon which will steal them away. War and its accoutrements can easily be added to this list of fearful punishers of evil thoughts and behavior, they might take children away or their protectors (pp. 30-31);

4) having fear aroused, not only belonging to their own developmental stage, but because they borrow the fear reactions of those grownups around them especially their mothers. The younger the child, the more thoroughly this anxiety will overtake him/her;

5) having fear aroused because of the actual loss of a parent.

These fears were those of children on the whole who remained with at least one parent in London. In addition to focusing on children's reactions to air raids while with their family, Freud and Burlingham studied the effects of evacuation or "billeting" of children in other parts of England and even the United States. This evacuation usually meant separation from parents for long periods of time.

> The war acquires comparatively little significance for children so long as it only threatens their lives, disturbs their material comfort or cuts food rations. It becomes enormously significant the moment it breaks up family life and uproots the first emotional attachments of the child within the family group. London children, therefore, were on the whole much less upset by bombing than by evacuation to the country as a protection against it (p. 37).

There was debate about evacuation during the first year of the war, but interest in its psychological repercussions diminished as air raids increased during the second year. Survival took precedence over psychological well-being. Not an unusual happening for the time or for recent times, by the way. Even UNICEF has only recently recognized officially that psychological well-being must go hand-in-hand with survival issues.

Evacuation raised interesting social problems: children billeted with families of higher or lower social and financial status were very conscious of the difference and often resented different value systems (i.e., related to cleanliness, speech, manners, social behavior, moral ideals) seeing them as directed

against their own families. Some children refused to wear new clothes either clinging to memories or seeing the change as disloyalty. Some children reacted in the opposite way: dropping their families standards as an expression of hostility to their own parents. Children staying with families of lower socioeconomic status sometimes saw this as punishment for former ungratefulness at home. Often billeting touched on peacetime fantasies of going to a more ideal family or being stolen away from their own family. These fantasies are attempts to deal with conflicted feelings toward their own families; when evacuation occurs in the midst of these normal fantasies it gives "sudden and undesired reality to a situation which was meant to be lived out in the realms of phantasy" (p. 39).

There were other problems with billeting: foster mothers were expected to care for children whom their neither loved nor "over-estimated" (over-estimation leading to a natural mother's ability to love a child who is neither good-looking nor clever). Foster mothers either remained indifferent to the children billeted with them or adopted the mother's attitude, feeling toward the strange child as if it were her own. There are problems with both stances: with the first the child may be and feel uncared for, may even be abused as sometimes happened (an adult friend in Northern Ireland described to me being billeted from Belfast to the country and being scrubbed painfully over and over again to clean up her naturally olive colored skin, an unusual skin tone for NI); with the second jealousy may arise between the foster and natural

mother.   The real mother will suddenly turn up on weekends or holidays expecting rights of possession.   It was often impossible for two mothers to share one child (pp. 40-41).

There were also problems of jealousy and competition between foster and natural children.   Children rarely feel friendly toward new additions to a family; sometimes new additions are gradually accepted if they are small and helpless.   Billeted children were neither; they often usurped rights while, at the same time, feeling like second class citizens and being embittered by it (p. 41).

Evacuation schemes were never meant to include children under school age, but often little ones were taken along as younger brothers or sisters.   For children under five, mothers were intended to go along and be billeted also, but mothers were sometimes unwilling or unable to leave London, so little ones went unattended.   Children were reported sitting in the exact spot where mother had left them, not speaking, eating, or playing; having long, drawn-out cases of homesickness, upset and despair (p. 43), refusing to be handled or comforted by strangers, monotonously calling their mother, clinging to a toy or article of clothing from home (p. 51), illness (colds, sore throats, intestinal troubles) (p. 53) Often the depth and seriousness of the young child's grief was underestimated, particularly if it was short-lived, because it is not understood that a young child must turn toward a love object to give it immediate satisfaction.   Its needs are urgent; it cannot live on memories or look to the future (p. 52).   At first unwillingly, but sooner or later the child will turn away from the

mother image in its mind and accept another.

Once another is accepted, other problems arise: children sometimes failed to recognize their mothers once they had settled down in their new surroundings. This was not a problem of memory' they would look into their mother's face with stony indifference as if she were a complete stranger, while remembering lifeless objects which were part of their past (p. 53). Parting with fathers was less of a shock as children were generally used to their coming and going. Parting from the mother touched the child's inner relationship with her.

> The mother has disappointed the child and left
> her unsatisfied; so it turns against her with
> resentment and rejects the memory of her person
> from its consciousness (p. 54).

Toward the age of five increased understanding of real situations, of real reasons for being sent away, acts as a real help in lessening the shock. "More comfort can be derived from memories, and hopes for the future begin to play a part" (p. 55). Relationships with parents are less simple and harmonious; a child has ceased to live in partnership with its mother only. It has become a member of a larger family group. Anger and jealousy and resentment are felt toward parents as demands to be more civilized increase...accompanied by strong feelings of guilt. Wishes to banish parents are not uncommon; wishing a parent dead can shift quickly to feeling affectionate. Negative feelings are held in check with parental daily contact. "But separation seems to be an intolerable confirmation of all these negative feelings. Father and mother are now really gone. The child is frightened by their

absence and suspects that their desertion may be another punishment or even the consequence of its own bad wishes" (p. 58) To overcome their guilt feelings, children over-stress their love for parents, turning the separation into intense longing which is hard to bear (p. 59).

After age three children rarely forget their parents, but their parental images undergo great changes: absent parents become bigger, better, richer, more generous and tolerant than they ever were in reality; negative feelings are repressed (p. 61). But even though relationship with parents persists in fantasy, the affection of older children gradually leaves the parents. They, too, live mainly in the present, form new ties, become attached to new places which they are sometimes reluctant to leave (p. 63).

There were many reasons why evacuation seemed a good idea: greater danger to lesser danger, unhygienic conditions for hygienic ones, lessened possibility of infection from people being massed together in shelters, better food, more time for play and companionship, less dreariness and queuing up (p. 44). But all these advantages "dwindle to nothing when weighed against the fact that it has to leave its family to gain them" (p. 45) even when the mothers were not good mothers, even when mother was lazy, negligent, hard and embittered, overly strict. "The attachment of the small child to its mother seems to a large degree independent of her personal qualities, and certainly of her educational ability" (p. 45)

The Hampstead War Nursery, planned initially as a shelter for

bombed-out shelter shifted to fill a greater need for a residence designed particularly for children who were billeting problems in some way: they couldn't be evacuated without their mothers or, perhaps, developed difficulties in foster care situations. At three sites all working at capacity in 1941, 120 children were being cared for (pp. 246-247). In addition to the long-range impact of this nursery, an impact was felt as Freud and Burlingham drew on their understanding of children and families to plan their environment: they made a point of involving absent parents as much as possible in the children's lives. Mothers of newborns were encouraged to live in and work as housekeepers so that they could nurse their babies; a number of sibling groups were accepted together so that sibling bonds would not, like so much else, be disrupted and so that parents would be visiting only one place. The buildings were open to visiting at all hours. Correspondence was maintained with fathers serving overseas; cards, letters, and packages were requested and received for children when parents could not visit (pp. 249-250). The nursery became a training during the war for teachers and psychoanalysts during the war and remains one of the most famous centers for the psychoanalytic study of children today.

Other researchers of children and war during WWII and after partially support the findings of Freud and Burlingham related to children as passive victims of war yet differ in some ways as well.

Enid John (University College, London, 1941) studied 100 children evacuated from London and billeted in a Welsh seaside

resort during WWII. She found that unsatisfactory adjustment was greater among pre-school children than among older school-age children. "...this is not essentially due to the greater susceptibility of children at these tenderer years, but rather to the less satisfactory arrangements made for the billeting of these cases" (p. 179). She found that children under two adjusted themselves somewhat better than children between two and five and than, among pre-school children, the less intelligent children adjusted somewhat better than the brighter children. In addition, she found that children of stable temperament adjusted better than children of "an unstable temperament" and that the emotional characteristics of child and mother were more important to adjustment than the non-psychological conditions of the billet itself. She found that children billeted with their own siblings or with their own mother adjusted more readily than those without siblings and mother and that, if siblings and mother were not present it helped to have other young children in the billet home. Children moved among a succession of billet homes were found to be unsatisfactorily adjusted. Even after three to six months in a quiet area, children who had experienced air raids were found to show nervous after-affects, particularly those children whose mothers had exhibited fear when in the child's vicinity (pp. 180-181). Unique in the John study, I think, was that it was not the youngest children who suffered most but those closer to school age (due to their increased awareness of change John believed) and that the nature of the billet homes (proper food, warmth, fresh air,

hygienic conditions in general as well as security, affection, sympathy; qualified caretakers, caretakers who like to care for the age child she's given) appeared mainly responsible for poor adjustment rather than the nature of the small child itself (p. 175).

The popular literature on children and war describes evacuation of young British children (between the ages of five and sixteen) sent far beyond the British countryside to Canada, Australia, and the United States. The most disastrous effect of this kind of evacuation was the sinking of the ship CITY OF BENARES by a U-boat as it headed for Canada. Seventy-three evacuees were killed, bringing to an end the "Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB) (Wicks, 1989). There were, however, other negative effects of the overseas evacuation: Children were sent early in the war and then became stranded, with no possible visitation by parents, for five years. Many of these children were now securely attached to foster families and felt no wish to return home to families they no longer knew.

Evacuation was not unique to England during WWII, though perhaps more children were evacuated from cities in England, and from England itself than from any other country (3,500,000). To protect the children of Finland, strategically important to Northern Europe, many children were evacuated to Sweden which remained neutral throughout the war (Williams, 1989); this evacuation, and others throughout Europe necessitated learning a second language.

Ernst Papanek was responsible in 1939 for buying up castles in Southern France (under the auspices of the OSE, an organization of Russian and Polish doctors) for setting up and directing in them shelters for European refugee children. Their goal was to save as many children as possible. The children were largely the children of political or Jewish refugees located elsewhere in France, others were children smuggled of Nazi occupied countries. Still other children were sent walking to France by panic stricken Jewish parents as a last hope for survival. Papanek was an educator and child psychologist, fugitive from Austria himself, who would later come to the United States and found the Wiltwick School for Boys in the Bronx and, later, upstate New York. Papanek wanted to send back the kind of healthy, unbroken child that the parent, dead or alive, would have wanted; his goal was not only the physical survival of children.

Papanek's fascinating story is told in his book OUT OF THE FIRE (1975). Of particular interest is his description of children's reactions to the war as they experienced it in France, children who were separated from parents in a residential school setting. He reports that the older children had already read enough books and seen enough movies to be able to picture bombs falling and to imagine the resulting death and destruction. They were convinced that every action of the enemy was aimed at them.

> Oh, intellectually, they were perfectly
> aware that Hitler's grand design for the
> conquest of France was not really depen-
> dent upon the destruction of a handful
> of children's institutions, even if 80-
> 90% of the children were Jews. What can

> the mind tell you, though, when the feeling
> in your bones tells you otherwise? When
> they read about gas bombs they were sure
> we would be the first targets. When they
> read about bacteriological warfare they
> were sure our water would be the first to
> be poisoned (p. 20).

The least frightened at all times, Papanek indicates, were the preschoolers and kindergarten children. His explanation of this is that at this age "children are feeling creatures rather than thinking ones. Neither a blackout nor the wail of sirens holds any terror for them unless they have been personally injured in an air raid or have seen someone injured close by. They fear blackouts only if they are already afraid of the dark. They fear bombs and guns only if at some previous time they have been made to fear noise" (p. 21). Air raid drills were a game to them. They were sometimes cranky at being awakened or so tired that they would drop to a step and fall asleep. Once in the basement it was only a matter of tucking them in for them to fall asleep again (p. 21).

> Children of that age perceive the threat
> to them only by the reactions of the
> trusted people around them, their parents
> and teachers, their older sisters and
> brothers, and their comrades. Since we
> are careful not to alarm them, they
> literally sleep through every alert (p. 21).

Papanek saw the most vulnerable children as those between the ages of eight and twelve, "because this is the age of intellectual transition".

> They were old enough to understand the
> dangerous situation they were in and
> young enough to be only too conscious
> of their own limitations. But this
> was one instance...where the cure
> could be found in the malady. Their

> fear and confusion arose out of their
> developing intellect, and we were able to
> help them to overcome both the fear and
> confusion by intellectual persuasion.
> With them, even more than with the others,
> it was necessary to explain things com-
> pletely and never to underestimate their
> ability to understand what we were saying---
> even...when they did not seem to understand.
> They'll understand when they're ready. They
> may want a little time to think about it,
> that's all (p. 21).

Papanek refers to the magical thinking of these children,

a magic power which can be turned into a cloak or magic carpet:

the wish is as good as the deed. While sitting through a

particularly long air raid they began singing the "Marseillaise"

over and over. As Papanek tried to finally call it quits, the

children insisted on singing it one more time: "When our fliers

hear us they will be inspired to do their best. When the Nazis

hear us they'll know that we are not afraid and they will fly back

and worry" (p. 22). For even the older children Papanek refers to

the importance of adults concealing their own fear. "For just

as long as the adults were able to conceal their fear, the children

of all ages behaved with courage and spirit". On one occasion when

a woman teacher in the girl's home became hysterical, all of the

girls began crying, many clinging to each other, trembling and

shaking. Others were standing alone screaming at the top of their

lungs.

Papanek also wrote that the children often did not know what

they were afraid of: not of dying, "they couldn't imagine anything

as concrete as their own death. They were afraid of 'it'. Just

'it'. A free-floating fear they could give to name or shape to"

(p. 23). In a discussion on fear, Papanek told the children that
with so much fear danger around "we had no time for imaginary
dangers. We fear war, yes; we hate it. But we fear more the
dangers and destruction and the loss of freedom with which our
enemies   threaten   us."   They   then   described   specifics:
antiaircraft, how bombs work and Pananek added that fear wasn't
going to help anyone escape these dangers. "Fear had never been
know to alter the course of a single bomb or drive off a single
enemy plane. As best, fear accomplished nothing; at worst, it
prevented you from acting constructively to protect yourself" (p.
24).

Another issue involving children often separated from parents
during WWII, is that of what have been called "hidden children",
Jewish children (perhaps 10,000 in number) hidden in convents or
Christian homes often for the duration of the war. Professional
and popular literature refers to these children; the problems set
in motion by their particular war experience are unique. A recent
article in NEW YORK (Marks, 1991) describes their experience: they
lost everything children need to feel safe and whole; each day
brought risk of seizure, separation from families, death. "They
faced terror, a sense of guilt simply because they were alive, and
the shame inherent in having to conceal who they really were---to
keep quiet and out of sight, on pain of death" (p. 39). Some were
hidden in haylofts or sewers, scavenging for food on nights with no
moon, forced never to talk above a whisper, always cold, scared of
shadows, never seeing daylight.

Did the children placed in convents or with families fare better? Convent hidden children describe feeling different, being rejected. If the convent was a Catholic orphanage these children were different not only by religion but because they had a parent/s somewhere. One child described not wanting his mother to come on her weekly visit because the other children would taunt him for being different, for having a parent. Home hidden children often became attached to a new family and experiencing rich childhoods, well cared for and protected. For them the hell began after the war, either in being hidden from their biological family's survivors, being forced to convert (Isser, 1984), or being kidnapped by Jewish organizations which may have had idealistic intentions, but which created chaos in young children's lives, children who now had to deal with a second traumatic separation (Marks, 1991, p. 44). Some of these children became ashamed of their Jewishness and rejected Jewish life and religion. The Christian experience became associated with protection and selflessness; Judaism became associated with ostracism, self-deprecation, and selfishness. Later efforts to reconnect with their Jewish roots and to develop an identity which included their contradictory experience were often painful and difficult (Hogman, 1988).

While the focus of many WWII studies has been primarily on the short-term effects of evacuation or separation from parents, some studies undertaken after WWII focused on long-term effects, particularly of children who survived concentration camps. These

studies report unresolved mourning, unending rage, insecurity and inability to trust fellow countrymen not to repeat the horrors of the past (Baum, 1989); the adoption of the role of either "victimized Jew" or "fighter" (Danieli, 1982); the development of "Concentration Camp Syndrome" characterized by delayed effect symptoms resulting from prolonged traumatization: anxiety, depression, restlessness, sleep disorders, recurring nightmares or persecution and difficulties in establishing meaningful relationships (Kurtz, 1989); Another study indicates that the losses and disabilities associated with aging interact with unhealed psychic wounds and chronic health problems from the concentration camp experience bringing the effects of the war to the surface for the first time in many years, indicating that coping strategies used and depended on since the war are particularly vulnerable during the aging process (Steinitz, 1982).

There is also a great deal of literature indicating that the effects of concentration camp internment seeps into the next generation/s: feelings of guilt, difficulty in externalizing aggressive impulses in reaction to frustrating events (Nadler, Kay, & Gleitman, 1985), difficulty in dealing with a "conspiracy of silence", when concentration camp survivors cannot talk about their experience (Danieli, 1982). Some studies, however, indicate little difference between survivors and control groups in terms parenting skills indicating that cultural factors and their own developmental history may have more of an impact on parenting than concentration camp experience (Leon, 1981; Zlotogorski, 1983).

Another research study compares the long-range effects of evacuation on Finnish children, between one and thirteen years at the time of the evacuation (Rasanen, 1989) to Finnish children who stayed with their families. As adults it was found that the evacuees had received less education and had lower professional status than their peers who had stayed with their own family. Psychiatric disturbances, however, were equal; evacuees were physically healthier.

Mass (1963; Yarrow, 1983) studied young adults twenty years after they had been separated from their parents and placed in a residential nursery during WWII. His subjects (20 cases) had been separated once and reunited after a long period of time. The findings suggest that this kind of separation does not necessarily result in severe personality disturbance in later life; a single traumatic experience is probably not in itself a sufficient condition for later personality distortion. It does, however, increase the likelihood of personality damage if there are later reinforcing life experiences. Mass suggests that there may be a capacity for recovery and a greater toughness and resiliency in people than clinicians are inclined to assume. Mass does differentiate, however, between age at the time of separation: children separated younger than one year evidence the highest incidence of personal-social disturbance twenty years later, not because a focused relationship with the mother has been interrupted, but because it is not now able to grow. Infants were deprived of the learning conditions necessary for the development

of significant interpersonal relationships (pp. 74-75).

Heinicke and Westheimer (1965) who studied children separated from parents in a residential nursery suggest that the quality of the separation should be evaluated in determining the effects of this kind of separation:

1)   the nature of the child's previous development and relationship to parents;

2)   the circumstances of the separation (gradual or abrupt; quality of the setting and staff);

3)   the age and developmental status of the child;

4)   the length of the separation and expectation of return to the parents;

5)   the amount of contact that can be maintained with the family as well as the accompaniment of siblings;

6)   the potential for forming substitute relationships in the new environment (p. 2).

Morris Fraser in his book CHILDREN IN CONFLICT, GROWING UP IN NORTHERN IRELAND (1973) writes that there is a certain universality about a child's response to disaster. The varying realities of the event may well add details to the nightmare and fantasy, but the child's fear is always...that of loss of the factors that make for physical and emotional security. He dreads the prospect of separation from his parents as much, if not more, than he does bodily harm to himself...an aspect of preventive psychiatry often forgotten in the rush to evacuate children from disaster areas.

Fraser refers to children's reactions to what he calls "riot stress" in Belfast. He writes that their reaction depends partially on the degree of emotional security enjoyed by the child before and during the period of acute stress. "This related not only to his (the child's) own psychological resources, but also to those of his immediate family" (p. 74). Children who were vulnerable and whose parents were vulnerable before and during the period of stress were more vulnerable to the stress. Vulnerable children showed prior nervous symptoms, were not physically robust, and had over-reactive parents (a mother might become acutely agitated, a father might become angry and aggressive during a riot in the street. These children would see their parents as vulnerable, feel inhibited from expressing their own anxiety, their anxiety would then communicate itself as a psychiatric symptom. "No child was disturbed in isolation; each problem, on examination, proved to be that of a disturbed family. The parents' inadequacy when it came to providing emotional support had been evident long before the period of acute stress; then it had broken down completely...one child said, 'My parents were calm, so I didn't worry. If they had been frightened, it would have been awful.'" (p. 75). Fraser writes that it was as if each child had his Achilles heel (fainting fits, somatic symptoms) which showed up when the immediate family failed to respond adequately to his needs during a period of acute stress (p. 75).

Fraser indicates that it is probably children between eight and puberty who were most vulnerable, probably related to increased

comprehension. Younger children did not fully understand the danger, could more easily be reassured. "On the other hand, older children were more likely to find refuge in action or flight, and were less susceptible to wild rumor" (p. 76).

It is apparent beyond question that war at best calls to question the illusion of safety which children need to develop, at worst destroys this illusion of safety. It is apparent beyond question that war at best stretches the bonds of caretaking threatening childhood, at worst destroys the bonds of safety, destroying childhood.

It is apparent beyond question that war leaves little or no space for developing an unbruised, undamaged, undefeated sense of self.

And yet...most children show a great capacity for emotional renewal after even nightmarish experiences. It is still not clear whether emotional renewal signifies cure or symptoms disguised or submerged.

There is some indication that PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) affects children years after war: David Kinzie of the Portland Health Sciences University reports that Cambodian children now in the United States are experiencing recurrent nightmares, difficulty in concentrating and sleeping, being easily startled, showing signs of depression (lack of energy, interest in life, brooding, self-pity, pessimism) and shame at being alive; admitting that they had never told anyone about their feelings (Goleman, 1987).

William Arroyo, a psychiatrist at the University of Southern California who studied South American war refugees in Los Angeles, writes that psychological problems related to war vary with age:
- children under five often regress by returning to bed wetting or loss of toilet training, extreme anxiety about strangers or a parent's leaving, loss of recently mastered skills like speech;
- school-age children often use play or day dreams to deny whast actually happened by rewriting the past with a happier outcome; they may obsessively repeat joyless games that reenact the event;
- adolescents generally misbehave: truancy, promiscuity, drug abuse, delinquency (Goleman, 1987).

How bleak is the view: bleak, bleaker, bleakest? Nina Murray, a clinical psychologist at Harvard, studied children who survived the Holocaust. They were well-adjusted as adults...they have occasional flashbacks and nightmares, but they are generally stable, productive, compassionate people who are not cynical or pessimistic, but optimistic despite whast they lived through (Goleman, 1987). Certainly testimony for children's capacity for emotional renewal. Perhaps this will be the legacy of the children of Afghanistan, Burma, Northern Ireland, Israel, Palestine, Cambodia, Vietnam, Northern Ireland, Kuwait, Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Rwanda, none of whom could find much safety in a wild place.

The point of understanding the work of Freud and Burlingham, and the work of others related to the children and their care during war, is ultimately that we'll work harder in our public

lives and public environments to prevent wars (an outcome that we are unlikely to achieve, I am afraid, even with hard work) and in our family lives and family environments to build nurturing values in both males and females. That we'll work harder to maintain the illusion of safety for children (there being to real safety this is the best we can hope for), as Freud and Burlingham did, wherever we can so that they will have time to develop an unbruised, undamaged, undefeated, unselfdefeating sense of self which will lead to their own nurturing ability.

Maurice Sendak, the American children's author and illustrator, illustrated the concept of illusory safety in a child's environment by drawing a bird's nest filled with baby birds atop the head of one of his imaginary wild creatures in THE BIG BOOK FOR PEACE, a picture book for children on peace. He labeled his illustration "A Wild Safe Place". This, I think, is what Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham were after for children, an illusion of safety in a wild world. This is the heritage which caregivers of children, sharing an environment which always threatens chaos, can continue.

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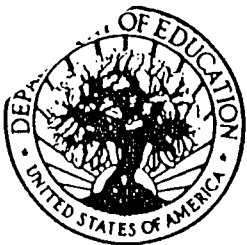
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124 Walworth Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606

Position: *ASSOC. PROFESSOR*

Organization: *LEHMAN COLLEGE/CUNY*

Telephone Number: (718) 960 - 7873

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