



The Children

Who Wait

THE CHILDREN WHO WAIT

-Marsha Traugot

Summary and Central Idea

In 'The Children Who Wait' Marsha Traugot gives reasons for a new trend in adoption. Adoption refers to the legal process of keeping children as foster child. Such children do not have their family and are kept in foster homes. Marsha Traugot talks about the changing trend of the adoption system because of sociopolitical and psychological change of the people. Traugot argues that until 1960 middle or upper class childless white couples would adopt healthy white infants. They used to adopt a one year old baby. Handicapped children were regarded as damaged things. But, within the last 20 years, there has been radical change. The various civil rights movements, birth control, changing mores and social science research have a great impact in transformation. The black civil right movement had immediate and long term impacts: The women movement, legalized abortion and changing attitudes towards sexual behaviour and marriage had also taken a great change in the traditional pattern of adoption. Not only unwanted babies are born, rather the unwed also face less social pressure while giving birth. When there was a lack of healthy, white and under one year babies, people turned their eyes to other children. At present the buzz word is matching. First, the social workers evaluate the child's characteristics like physicality, cultural background, biological and emotional behaviour then, they form a profile of an appropriate family. In seeking to match a child and a family, the social workers must overcome his or her own attitudinal barriers. Adoption agencies look first to the family listed with them. If there is no likely candidate, the children is registered with the regional or state adoption exchange. If this also does not function well, commercial advertising from newspaper and television is given. The Boston Globe's Sunday Child" is one of the newspaper's most popular columns.

Marsha Traugot gives an example of 5.5 years old Tammy, who is waiting for a permanent home. She is recently been legally free from adoption. She is bold and beautiful but suffered from fatal alcohol syndrome which could not put a stop to her intellectual growth at any time. So, social workers are in search of a one or two parents, black or biracial family with older sibling. Tammy is not white and in fact but there is hope for war and supportive family for her permanent settlement.

Important Questions:

1. What are the causes of important change in Adoption scene in America?
2. What changes are noticed in the American adoption scene?
3. What is Tammy waiting for?
4. What is the match finding? Explain.

Short Answer Questions

1. 2076 SET B Q. NO. 2

Why are the children like Tammy waiting for adoption? [3]

- Tammy is the name of a representative of handicapped children in America who were labeled unadoptable in the past, before the 1960s. Tammy was the victim of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Consequently, she, despite her attractive look, was labeled as unadoptable in the past. Not only that Tammy was also listed as unadoptable child because she was a nonwhite child. The colored, handicapped as well as In the children beyond infancy used to be considered as damaged goods and none of the parents would adopt such children. Tammy was both handicapped and none white. Beginning her essay, "The Children Who Wait" Marsha Traugot presents the causes why some children were labeled unadoptable. Tammy is five and half years old with the face of 'Mona Lisa' but still was regarded as unadoptable. By describing this an unadoptable child, Traugot points out the reasons why Tammy-like-children in the past used to be considered as unadoptable. Up to 1960 only white healthy children were considered adaptable. Physically deformed children were regarded as damaged goods. No one was ready to adopt such children. Tammy was, thus, the victim of such bias and was labeled as unadoptable in the past.

2. 2076 SET C Q. NO. 2

What is the significance of starting and ending the essay with the reference of Tammy, the Negro Child? [3]

- In 'The Children Who Wait' Marsha Traugot gives reasons for a new trend in adoption starting and ending it with the reference of Tammy. Adoption refers to the legal process of keeping children as foster children. Such children do not have their family and are kept in foster homes. Marsha Traugot talks about the changing trend of the adoption system because of socio-political and psychological changes of the people. Tammy is a beautiful child of five and half years of age, she is brown and she suffers from a handicapped situation called Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. She is featured in the newspaper column for adoption. This surprises people, though. She waits for the warm and supportive family who could give her love and affection. This girl is mentioned at the end of the essay by Traugot. She has done it with a purpose. She makes her essay effective by doing so. The essay becomes realistic. We once again are brought back to the children like Tammy, who were once labeled as unadoptable because of their age, coloured condition and handicapped situation.

3. 2075 GIE Q. NO. 2C

Why is it difficult for the handicapped children to find permanent homes? [3]

- Though Traugot doesn't explicitly write the reasons why it was difficult for the handicapped and black children to find foster families, we can simply enlist them through the context she sets. The first can be the cause that there used to be sufficient white healthy infants in the past. Because the abortion in America was not legal, unwed mothers could not keep the babies with themselves. Consequently, the number of unwanted babies used to be more. And the foster family would easily get the white healthy infants for adoption. This really created difficulty for the rest of the other handicapped and black children. Next can also be the cause that the blacks were not free in America up to the 1960s. The Civil Right Movement, though guaranteed them their rights, before that they were taken as second class citizens. This sort of social framework obstructed the children from adoption. After Black Civil Right Movement raised a standard of human decency and justice, this was also applied among the children leveled unadoptable. And ultimately people began to see the changes and transformation in America in the matters of adoption.

4. 2075 PARTIAL E Q. NO. 12D

What does the title "Children Who Wait" actually signify?

- By entitling her essay as "The Children Who Wait", Marsha Traugot has some specific children to refer to. The children she refers to are all those who were labeled unadoptable in the past and were regarded as the damaged goods. They are handicapped children, the children beyond infancy and black children. Since they were legally freed for adoption after the 1960s, they are waiting for the foster family. The essay's Tammy is such a child who has been waiting for the supportive family. Marsha is not referring healthy white infants as the waiting children who are enlisted in the social worker's list as the waiting children. Their background, biological condition and characters affect the type of family they are waiting for.

5. 2073 SUPP Q. NO. 2D

According to Traugot, what changes are transforming the American adoption scene? What factors are responsible for the changes? [3]

- Marsha Traugot starts her essay by presenting the changes that are transferring American adoption scene. First of the changes, she presents, is regarding the types of child. Unlike pre 1960s, the foster families have started adopting a handicapped child, a child beyond infancy and black children. Such children are not regarded now as the damaged goods, instead are legally freed for adoption. The second change that is transforming the adoption scene is the type of parents that adopt the child. Quite unlike the past childless couple. Any sort of parents can adopt the children now. The third change is social workers. They are involved in match finding more intensively. There are some factors behind such changes. The Black Civil Right Movement is the one. The movement ensured the rights of the blacks. Whites too changed their attitudes towards them and started getting back and mixed-race infants into their families. Women's movement is the second factor for such change. The movement resulted into birth control, abortion legalization, changed attitudes towards marriage and sex. This reduced the number of white infants. Similarly, the honour given to the unwed mother, single woman, teenage mother and the role of the social research are other fundamental factors to changes in American adoption scene.

6. 2073 SET D Q. NO. 2D

How did paper media help in the adoption process? [3]

- Adoption agencies find a potential family step-by-step. The process of matching is taken very seriously. Adoption agencies keep the list of families living periphery. Efforts are made to find a home from the listed families, but if it fails then the adoption agency refers the child to the State Adoption Exchange and gives information about the concerned child to other agencies. Monthly meetings and informal meetings are held for matching families. If they cannot find a matching family through any of the means they apply, the child welfare organisation and adoption exchange advertise through media, TV and the newspaper. For example - Tammy is in search of an adoptive family.

7. 2073 PARTIAL A Q. NO. 2

Why were children like Tammy not adopted in the past? [3]

- Please refer to **2076 SET B Q. NO. 2C**

8. 2073 PARTIAL Q. NO. 2D

How did the Negro's Civil Rights Movement help positively in the adoption process?

- One of the causes that brought about radical change in American adoption scene is Negro's Civil Rights Movement. It has raised the standard of justice and humanity. It also encouraged liberal whites to adopt nonwhite babies for the sake of racial integration. Due to the Black Civil Rights movements, liberal whites adopted black and mixed race infants and toddlers. The movement helped in making America a more integrated and discrimination-free society. It helped whites change the formerly vindictive attitude of the white against the Afro-Americans. In the changed American society, the liberal whites gathered the black mixed-race infants and toddlers into their families. Blacks started to enjoy the riches of just decency as well.

9. 2071 SET C Q. NO. 2

Why was Tammy labeled as unadoptable in the past? [3]

- Please refer to **2076 SET B Q. NO. 2C**

10. 2071 SET D Q. NO. 12D

How were the handicapped, black and weak children viewed in the past? [3]

- Marsha Traugot presents the pre 1960s and post 1960s American scene of adoption in her essay "The Children Who Wait ". Giving the example of five and half Years' Tammy who is now legally freed for adoption, the essayist shows how the handicapped children and black children in the past had been viewed. Handicapped children didn't have any place in society. They were more or less regarded as damaged goods. The biracial and handicapped adoption was unheard of. They were virtually ignored. As a result, they waited and waited in the foster house. In the past, only white healthy children were considered adoptable. Physically deformed children were regarded as damaged goods. No one was ready to adopt such children. This view, however, started disappearing after the sixties. People's attitude towards them gradually became positive. The change in thoughts was brought by various factors. Traugot mentions black Civil Right Movement, Legalization of Abortion, change in attitude of the people, and change in government's policy as responsible factors.

11. 2069 PARTIAL Q. NO. 12F

What is "fetal alcohol syndrome"? Explain. [3]

- Marsha Traugots' Tammy suffers from "fetal alcoholic syndrome". This is a condition in new-born babies caused by excessive intake of alcohol by the mother during pregnancy. This may cause many defects like mental retardation. In the case of Tammy, this syndrome could put a stop to her intellectual growth at any time. Traugot informs that such babies are handicapped and leveled unadoptable in America before the 1960s. They used to spend life in foster homes since there used to not be any parents to adopt such children. But after the 1960s, even the child with fetal alcohol syndrome can get the parents since they are legally freed for adoption. Thus, Tammy-like- children wait for warm and supporting family who can view their intellectual functioning is only an aspect of the total child.

12. 2065 Q. NO. 12 A

What had happened to the handicapped children in the past? [3]

- Marsha Traugot suggests reasons for new trends in adoption in America in the essay. While doing so she presents the past scenario of adoption too. More Specifically talking about the handicapped children, they were leveled unadoptable in the past, before the 1960s. Such children were sentenced to foster homes in the past. No parent would think of adopting such children. Handicapped children were more or less regarded as damaged goods. They were virtually ignored by any sort of parents and consequently they had to spend their life waiting in the foster house. The researchers indicated that the handicapped children consigned to foster care for more than eighteen months had to hang in limbo until they reached maturity. Once put in the foster house, the handicapped children would suffer from many other problems like child delinquency and sexual perversion. But the handicapped children like Tammy are legally freed for adoption and wait for a warm and supportive family. The situation underwent a sea change after the 1960s.

13. 2064 Q. NO. 12E

How do adoption agencies find potential parents? [3]

- Unlike traditional social workers, the agencies after the 1960s were first involved in "matching" to find the potential parents for the children at foster homes. First, the workers and agencies prepare the list of adoptive families after evaluating the child's character, personality, cultural background, condition, existing relation with biological parents or foster family and emotional state. They identify the potential parents by seeing children as well as parent's characters. While finding the potential parents, the adoption agencies go through the families listed with them. If there are not likely candidates, the child is registered with the regional or state adoption exchange, which distributes a photo and description of the child to other agencies. Similarly, some exchanges hold meetings every month where social workers can discuss waiting children and families furthermore, they also give parties in which children, workers and prospective parents meet informally. If the match still is not found, they take the help of the media. They advertise the children with their videos and photos in the newspaper and television which indeed has proved fruitful.

14. 2062 Q. NO. 12 E

What kinds of parents were considered suitable for adopting children? What kinds of children were considered 'Unadoptable'? [3]

- Marsha Traugot presents pre and post adoption scene of America in her essay, "The children Who Wait". She talks both about the parents and children. In the past, middle or upper class childless white couples used to be considered as suitable parents. Non white parents, the parents with older siblings were not regarded as suitable for adoption. A single parent or two parents or black parents were unheard of. But this has undergone a sea change these days, any type of parent whether single or black or a couple with other children can adopt the babies. While talking about the adoption of children, only healthy white infants were thought to be suitable. Handicapped children were more or less considered as the damaged products. Similarly, non-white child and a child beyond infancy, and one who has crossed the age of five, were not leveled adoptable. Such children had to wait in the foster

house. But after the 1960s the scenario has been radically changed. The handicapped child like Tammy is waiting for a warm and a supportive family.

15. 2060 Q. NO. 10 D

Why was it difficult for the handicapped and the black children to find a Foster family?

- Please refer to **2075 GHE Q. NO. 2C**

16. 2060 Q. NO. 10 E

According to Traugot, what changes are transforming American adoption scene? What factors are responsible for the changes?

- Please refer to **2073 SUPP Q. NO. 2D**

17. 2057 Q. NO. 2A

Whom does Marsha Traugot refer to as the children who wait? [3]

- Please refer to **2075 PARTIAL E Q. NO. 12D**

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

18. 2074 SUPP Q. NO. 3B

Can children of different abilities be adopted today? How did electronic and paper media help in the adoption process? [10]

- Marsha Traugot's essay, "Children Who Wait " asserts that the children of different abilities can adopt the changed context of today. The children who were labeled as unadoptable on their handicapped condition, colored state and matter of age twenty years ago from the 1960s, are labeled adoptable today. Before twenty years, a black child, a child of more than five years and handicapped child was regarded as damaged goods. Only healthy white infants used to be adopted by home owning white couples in the past. But due to Civil Right Movement, social awareness, harsh economic reality, Women's Right Movement, legalization of abortion and changed attitudes toward marriage and sex made this change possible. The white healthy babies of desperate teenage girls have become quite less. The parents have to either go for biracial, or handicapped or a child more than five years for adoption. The child of different abilities like Tammy is waiting for a warm supportive family. But the adoption process of such children is not easy. The children of different abilities are kept in foster care in the Foster House). They need the strong support of adoption agencies. The adoption agencies mobilize the social workers and electronic media too for finding a match for such children. Adoption agencies find a potential family step-by-step. The process of matching is taken very seriously. Adoption agencies keep the list of families living periphery. Efforts are made to find a home from the listed families, but if it fails then the adoption agency refers the child to the State Adoption Exchange and gives information about the concerned child to other agencies. Monthly meetings and informal meetings are held for matching families. If they cannot find a matching family through any of the means they apply, the child welfare organisation and adoption exchange advertise through media, TV and the newspaper. For example - Tammy is in search of an adoptive family.

19. 2074 SET A Q.NO.3B

According to Traugot, What changes are transforming the American adoption scene? What factors are responsible for the changes?

- Please refer to **2073 SUPP Q. NO. 20**

20. 2074 SET B Q. NO. 3B

Why were children like Tammy not adopted in the past? Mention the factors which have brought changes in the adoption process. [3]

- Please refer to **2076 SET B Q. NO. 2C**

21. 2071 SUPP Q. NO. 13A

Many changes have undergone in the adaption process during the recent years." Explain. [10]

- From last 10 years, writer says, adoption process has undergone a radical change. In the past, the black, biracial, and a handicapped and child beyond infancy used not to be adopted. Such children used to be regarded as damaged goods. Similarly, a black, single, and biracial parents used to not get child adoption. Only couples with older siblings get the child for adoption. But because of Civil Movement, Women's Movement and harsh economic reality, the adoption process has undergone a change.