Parents as Educators*

THE COMPULSION TO EDUCATE AND ITS CAUSES

Recently an acquaintance of mine asked me for advice as to the measures she should employ in raising her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter. She reported that the child had been headstrong and obstinate for some time. For example, she would scream violently for the slightest reason or sit down in the middle of the sidewalk and neither persuasion nor severity could induce her to go home. Before proceeding, I must mention that the child’s mother is in close contact with analytic circles. She is knowledgeable about psychoanalysis, sympathetic toward its findings, and, since the birth of her child, has tried to act accordingly, although of course not always with success.

I have chosen this example as an introduction, from among many others, because the optimal conditions for a favorable development have converged in this child’s upbringing. It is obvious that the child of an alcoholic and an unhappy woman is bound to suffer serious psychic damage due to its milieu. This has been a subject frequently dealt with in recent pedagogic literature. Still, it is important to realize that even under the best circumstances imaginable, problems may arise that stem from an unconscious attitude of the parent and hence are difficult to approach. Knowledge cannot always be transformed directly into activity. Thus the reader will understand that this cannot be an attempt to approach the problem of raising children by answering the question “What should a parent do?” Since I am not an educator but a psychiatrist, the venture would be unsuccessful from the start. It seems advisable to limit oneself to examining the psychological pre-conditions of child rearing and to an analysis of faulty upbringing before advancing to the question of what “should” be done. The car-

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dinal principle of psychoanalysis is that one must first thoroughly understand a situation before taking action.

This modest contribution to the psychology of rearing children follows in the footsteps of the educator Bernfeld who in his brilliant book *Sisyphos or The Limits of Education* stresses primarily the "education of educators." Although I support this unconditionally, I must view the question of education from a different standpoint, not that of an educator answerable to society, but rather that of a physician who is primarily interested in the genesis and cure of neurosis.

But let us return to our theme. The mother in question had avoided excessive severity in discipline and, from the very beginning rejected spanking altogether. On the other hand, she was aware of the ill effects of an over indulgent attitude toward the child that, due to her qualms, could swing to the opposite extreme. "In other respects I have, happily, been able to overcome a number of difficulties, such as the child's tendency to bed-wetting which lasted several months about a year ago. I realized that scolding and admonishing were of no use and since I am convinced that spanking only turns a child into a chronic bed-wetter, I ignored the issue altogether. Gradually the bed-wetting stopped. But I can't just allow her refusal to leave the park in the evening go unnoticed!"

The situation was quite unclear. Was the mother at fault for the child's recalcitrance? In my experience, when situations remain unclear during the analysis of adults, the analyst is usually at fault. Since the relationship between the patient and the analyst has much in common with the child-parent relationship, I asked her to describe in detail the most recent eruption of obstinacy and its causes. She guessed my intentions and said that she was aware of no fault on her part, and then related that the child had been playing happily and had willingly followed her to the park gate. There, however, presumably because of fatigue, she had asked to be carried. The patient refused to accede to her daughter's request in order not to spoil her. "It was only a very short walk from the gate to the streetcar station." When the child began to rebel, she succeeded in distracting her by telling her a story. However, just as she was about to lift the child onto the streetcar, she began screaming (the mother used the term "bellowing"). She then quieted down, only to begin again when she was supposed to walk the short way from the streetcar to their home. When the mother refused to carry her, she sat down and would not move. When she was finally lifted into her mother's arms she scratched her in the face and flailed about screaming. Subsequently, left alone in her room, she continued to scream at the top of her voice for a full hour, would not allow herself to be undressed, ate nothing, and only fell asleep after she had totally exhausted herself. The next day she showed no signs of this agitation.

While the mother was relating this, it occurred to me that she had mentioned, in passing, not wanting to carry the child "in order not to spoil her." Thus she had intended this as a training measure. If indeed she was at fault, her error had to lie concealed in this area. During the further course of our conversation she added nonchalantly: "And by the way, I must confess that the child is getting too heavy for me and I didn't want to carry her all that way to the streetcar stop."

Finally, there was a ray of light. The distance to the street-car stop was considered short for the child, while for the mother it was long. This contradiction could not be without significance.

"Were you annoyed with the child?" "No." That seemed peculiar because recalcitrant children are annoying. When I expressed my doubts she betrayed herself with the following contradiction: "No, I am certain I was not annoyed because I didn't do anything to the child. I didn't show any annoyance either. On the contrary, I used kind persuasion." I drew her attention to this contradiction as well as to her conflicting comment on the distance to the station. For a long while she refused to see the contradiction, until it finally occurred to her that when the child began to scream after leaving the streetcar she had thought: "But now you definitely won't be carried."

What motive could this otherwise discerning mother have

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1*Sisyphos oder die Grenzen der Erziehung*, Int. Psychoanalytischer Verlag. 1926.
had for "repressing" her annoyance with the child? Did the thought that she, too, had been spiteful embarrass her? On further questioning, she remembered that she had greeted her husband with the following remark when he came home shortly thereafter: "Your daughter is completely unmanageable." During the preceding days her relationship with her husband had been affected by those seemingly unreasonable ill-feelings that arise from time to time, even in the most enduring personal relationships. Thus she had repressed the annoyance with her daughter because it had combined with the more significant annoyance with her husband ("your daughter"). This, in turn, prevented her from making the only correct decision, namely to carry the child (who was, in fact, tired) the short distance to the station.

This example illustrates clearly how the compulsion to educate may arise. An acute disturbance of the relationship between the parents causes a momentary rejection of the husband and "his" child. This, in turn, causes the child to be denied something unnecessarily which is then rationalized with an educational purpose. The entire process evokes a spiteful reaction in the child. An analogy between the compulsion to educate and other compulsive symptoms may also be seen in the fact that repressed hate impulses are the basic motor drive in both.

The mother asked me two further questions:
1.) What should she do when her daughter reacted in a similar way to necessary denials, for example, when she did not want to leave the park in the evening?
2.) Had her daughter's reaction already been a pathological one?

Let us consider the first question. In order to grasp the effect of the denials on the child, we must first take into account the fundamental antithesis between adult and child psyches, as discovered by Freud.

Children's thoughts and actions are governed by principles other than those of adults. Whereas the adult is controlled almost exclusively by the reality principle, it is the pleasure principle that governs the child, particularly at this critical age. Children are not acquainted with internal admonishments such as "one shouldn't do that," and when the admonishments come from the outside they are not understood. All a child values is what causes pleasure, while it rejects anything unpleasurable. This is the child's biologically and psychologically well-founded logic. Due to the pleasure-unpleasure principle, the unpleasure reaction occurs automatically whenever the striving for pleasure meets with obstacles. These obstacles are usually the prohibitions of parents or educators and constitute limitations on instinctive desires. The child's natural reaction is negation. Only the form of negation differs according to age and temperament; its essence remains the same, namely, a mixture of hate and spite toward the person effecting the denial. In childrearing, the child's primitive strivings, which are directed exclusively toward pleasure gains, are restricted and replaced to a certain extent by drive inhibitions. Freud demonstrated further that these inhibitions, which form the nucleus of later "morals," are implanted by the external world, while the striving for pleasure is a primary biological phenomenon. Would a new-born child of cultured parents who was marooned on a lonely island and able to care for itself develop moral inhibitions? It is pointless to ask this question, though one is inclined to answer in the negative.

If "morality" is indeed an "unnatural" attitude, then what gives it its enormous power (primarily as an opponent of sexual instincts)? Here, too, Freud offers explanations culled from empirical data. Morality was only able to grow so strong because it derives its power from the instincts themselves and not, as was assumed until now, because it is an innate striving, such as the striving for pleasure. When, for example, a child forgoes the pleasure of playing with its feces, this occurs for love of the mother. Thus it becomes "moral" as a result of its striving for pleasure. To the extent that, for love of its parents, the child makes the demands of society its own, its ego is transformed. It gradually ceases to be a pure pleasure ego and adjusts to reality. In the beginning, this adjustment is based entirely on pleasure gains, although these are moderate, more altruistic, and socially more significant. We
now easily understand that what is so very important is not whether the demands of civilization take root in the child, but how this occurs and whether the denials are such that they are able to form a viable compromise with the striving for pleasure. It follows that a lack of love in the upbringing will only result in an artificial adjustment to reality. The inhibitions arising from austerity will always create a basis for conflicts in the psychic organization and obstruct the integration of the personality because they remain alien elements.

The compulsion to educate is expressed not only in unnecessary denials but also in the manner in which the educators undertake necessary drive restrictions. Here we may differentiate between two basic approaches:

a.) The child’s drive manifestations are strictly repressed from the very beginning. The parents consider every primitive impulse as pathological or a sign of wickedness and, by the measures they take, cause the child to develop a pathologically inhibited character. This is marked by paralysis of sexual and social emotional life, difficulties in the struggle for existence, and inhibited sublimations. Since instincts must first develop before they can be sublimated, i.e., directed toward cultural goals, such early denials are injurious socially.

b.) Negligent supervision or pampering allow the child’s instincts full development. Since the necessary denials were lacking at the beginning, the child’s demands grow to the point of detrimental intensity. Usually the education of “pampered” or “unruly” children begins with a vehemence when it is too late. The child’s increasing “unruliness” demands increasingly brutal and austere measures. These are useless, while they create within the child a severe conflict, distinguished by uncontrollable drives, hatred toward the parents’ brutality, as well as love for the parents. This state of affairs may be seen most clearly in impulsive psychopathic characters.²

Neither total drive inhibition nor denial that comes too late and is thus necessarily brutal bear any witness to parents’ understanding of the conflict between child and world. The best solution — for the moment, theoretical — would be a mode of intervention that would allow the drives to develop to a certain degree and then gradually introduce denials that are constantly supported by a good relationship with the child. If serious mistakes have been made during the first two years of the child’s life, very little can be corrected later. The task of education begins at birth.

Not complying with a child who refuses to leave the park in the evening or will not eat its meals regularly belongs among the necessary denials. These differ from unnecessary denials in as much as they are not only in the interest of society but also of the child. If children were to remain as primitive and egotistical as they are at birth and continue to strive solely for pleasure, they would not survive in the struggle for existence. Children should experience at an early age the fact that they are not alone in the world and that they must be considerate. Later, they will need self-control for their own well-being. As long as education is practiced under the heading of an elusive, supposedly “objective” morality, the necessary denials, if not brutal, will nevertheless be ineffective. But what are the necessary denials? Only those meant to limit and transform those drives in children that would disturb their social integration. For example, a child’s natural cruelty³ must be transformed partially into a sense of pity and partially into social activity.

However, little can be done with the concept of “social integration” as an educational goal. It immediately becomes apparent how vague this concept is when one considers that the rich would necessarily view it differently from the poor and that educational goals in general vary according to class, place, and era. Here the “world view” makes the practical decision, and we have to admit that each individual is correct, seen from his own egotistical standpoint as an adult. In this respect, we are unable to reach an agreement on children.


³This statement represents psychoanalytic thinking at the time and would be repudiated by Reich’s later understanding of primary and secondary drives. [Eds.]
the situation changes when the question of education is considered from a medical standpoint, for instance, the problem of preventing neurosis. To the extent the present findings of psychoanalytic research can be reviewed, no means has yet been determined to avoid neurotic conflict. It does not depend upon economic conditions, class, nation, or race. It arises through far more primitive circumstances present in the child-parent relationship (Oedipus complex). Only its result, neurosis, depends, with regard to form and severity, on the nature of accidental experiences and particularly on the parents' characters. In very general terms, the severity of mental illness is proportionate to the number of necessary and unnecessary denials and the austerity with which they were imposed.

As for the mother’s second question: was the child’s reaction pathological? In this form the question is unanswerable. The spiteful reaction was natural and logical in itself. It is merely the intensity of the reaction that might be considered “neurotic,” although we must take into account the fact that the child had been vexed and that her spite had been intensified by her mother’s own spite. In this case, due to an acute conflict, the mother had simply not been capable of understanding the situation. In other instances it is a basic characteristic of parents, as well as educators in general, to judge children by their own standards and to expect from them an adult degree of insight into the fact that all their wishes cannot be realized. They therefore view all expressions of the pleasure principle as either pathology or misbehavior. Obviously, each drive manifestation in children reminds the parents of their own repressed infantile desires, and the children’s instinctual behavior poses a threat to the maintenance of the parents’ own repression. This danger is warded off by educational proscriptions that clearly bear the stamp of education compulsion.

Another important role is played by annoyance with the child. Even a neurologist who is unacquainted with analysis may, for example, become annoyed with an hysterical woman and have her faradized for what he claims to be therapeutic reasons. Basically, however, he may feel that she is cunning-

ly trying to stimulate him and he punishes her for this. He has failed to understand her, is unable to empathize or “identify” with her. The mother mentioned above felt her child was neurotic, i.e., malicious, and she became annoyed for the same reasons as the old-school neurologist. Both were unable to cope with a situation in which they were expected to take action. In such cases, people tend to be easily annoyed with the person who has put them in the unpleasant position of recognizing their own ignorance or unacknowledged emotional impulses. Although most parents have no knowledge of children’s idiosyncrasies, they are expected to take action, or at least they believe they must. Hence annoyance with the object creating the perplexity is expressed in the way in which necessary denials are imposed and in the number and nature of unnecessary educational interventions.

Furthermore, anything unpleasant or uncomfortable for adults is viewed as pathological or improper. Thus parents use interest in their children’s well-being as a pretext when attempting to resolve their own affects (whatever the origin) in educational measures. No matter how much the children are loved, they are occasionally also felt, consciously or unconsciously, to be a tedious burden. One then becomes annoyed with a child and may easily do him or her an injustice. The sense of justice that children, in keeping with their personalities, develop from a certain age is usually underestimated. The analysis of adults has revealed that children at a very early age, around two years old, are able to distinguish between unjust and justified adult demands, even if their reaction to these denials remained the same in both instances. In the first, they felt entirely within their right to resist, while in the second, they were aware they were being obstinate.

Children sense injustice, for example, when parents forbid them to do something that the parents themselves do in their children's presence. A child is simply incapable of understanding the prevalent argument employed in such circumstances, namely, “You are still too little.” How are children to grasp the fact that they are not allowed to move a pencil across a piece of paper as their father does when, at the same time,
their father is portrayed as an example? On the one hand, children are supposed to be "good," i.e., grown-up, quiet, modest, and obedient. On the other hand, whenever they attempt to make other adult privileges their own, they are told they are still too little. This is based upon two analogous attitudes in parents. They wish to realize their own demands in their children, in other words, to have them become adult as early as possible. However, they also require that their own privileges remain undisturbed.

Unsatisfied parental ambitions are one of the most significant motives for the compulsion to educate. It is only necessary to observe the behavior of a governess toward her charge in a park, or that of mothers during a consultation with a doctor to be convinced of this. One cannot escape the impression that educators believe they must do something or educate someone, even when there is nothing to educate. They feel it a personal insult, a poor testimony to their educational ability, when their victims do not behave "in an adult way." "Sit up straight," "Don't misbehave in front of the doctor," "Sit still," "Look at the doctor," "Say 'good day' to him," "Get away from that," "Come here," "Fix your dress," "Don't get your hands dirty," and this goes on and on incessantly. If an adult were subjected to such an educational bombardment, he would not be able to maintain the stoic equanimity of some, already neurotic, children. Let no one be amazed when healthy children put up lively resistance.

In *The Psychology of the Infant*, Bernfeld offered plausible evidence to support the fact that the motives for infant care are hate impulses toward the newborn child. However absurd that may sound, it appears to be correct for the simple reason that few of the usual educational measures do not bear the mark of hate or rape. It would be worthwhile to write a special treatise to prove that a vast majority of educational interventions are in the nature of unnecessary denials and that a child's sense of having been treated unjustly has a basis in reality. An analysis of education as a neurosis equivalent among adults has also not been undertaken. All known conflicts, such as thwarted ambition, sexual dissatisfaction, marital strife, that is, everything that otherwise belongs to the inventory of a neurosis, has an effect on the education of children. It is especially important to realize that this primarily involves hate, which emerges strongly in neurosis, as in every conflict situation. Whether the hate emerges as the brutality of an alcoholic father or the extreme concern of a neurotic mother is more or less unimportant. In both cases the children are inundated by unnecessary denials.

To clarify the above I shall cite several examples drawn from analytic practice in which we learn to understand, analytically, not only the patient but his milieu. One female patient had never been allowed to play with other children because her mother, who showed all the signs of a compulsion neurotic syphilomorphic, was afraid her daughter would contract a disease. In cases of such exaggerated concern, the opposite, namely hate and a wish for the child's death, are never absent as motives. In this instance, it was particularly clear because the child would always side with her father who lived with the mother in an unhappy marriage. The mother had repeatedly cursed the restrictions imposed by a husband and daughter. The father of another female patient had always forced her to eat when she succumbed to the neurotic eating disturbances that children usually suffer. Even the food she vomited had to be eaten and if she refused she was put into a dark closet and beaten with switches. Here also the marriage was desolate and full of hatred. The mother was a weak, resigned woman and the father was a pronounced sadistic character. In another case, a male patient had been forced to study law by his father. He was to be called "Doctor" because his father had not been allowed to acquire this title.8

During the analysis of the woman who had been so cruelly forced by her father to comply with "eating regulations," I discovered some information on the motives which lead people

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8Translator's note: Academicians who completed their studies with the doctorate were addressed as "Doctor".
to become educators. This patient wanted to make amends to other children for what had been done to her. However, her unconscious revenge impulses toward her father hindered her from executing her conscious plans to such a degree that she behaved in a clearly sadistic manner toward her charges. Unconsciously, she had identified with her brutal father. The incentive to correct one’s own childhood may be one of the most typical motives for the desire to educate. For primitive, unconscious thinking, however, the correction of one’s own childhood can signify nothing but revenge, so that the will to educate is augmented by an unconsciously based, sadistic compulsion.

In other individuals we find a denied desire for a child (which had emerged in early childhood) as the motive for the compulsion to educate. Such women are relatively good educators because they will accept a strange child in place of one of their own. However, it is frequently observed that the desire to be an educator wanes when the desire for a child is fulfilled in reality.

Thus conscious motives prove to be secondary rationalizations. This results in the great difficulty of solving the problem of education. There is no way to convince educators of the true meaning and motives of their activity other than through individual psychoanalysis. How would one convince the mother who isolated her daughter from the social community, or the ambitious father who psychically raped his untalented son, that hate and egotism determined their behavior? As protection from themselves they must feel convinced that they thought “only of the child’s welfare.” One might say that those were only exceptional instances, but the example we chose as an introduction would provide second thoughts about this. Here, an analyzed, happily married, and prudent mother made a serious error in child-rearing for unconscious reasons. When this error is compared to what may be observed in general it is hardly worth mentioning and yet it had already produced serious consequences. Only prompt insight and correction of the mistake prevented the spite from becoming fixed. Who could be optimistic enough to hope that a similar degree of insight and awareness will ever take place within the masses of those who raise children? Such optimism would allow us to hope that adult neurosis and its equivalents, such as self-inflicted social exigency and unhappy marriages, will actually cease to exist. But the question of education cannot be separated from that of the social system and from the problem of neurosis.

I am aware that pessimism does not lend itself to a solution of the present question of “How should one raise a child?” But does something else exist that is better suited to the task? Alfred Adler’s school approached all questions of education optimistically and believes it has done justice to the problem with its formula of encouragement, or rather avoidance of discouragement. But can this really change the basic situation? What good is all the encouragement if a mother who is dominated by her own masturbation anxiety is immediately frightened when she sees her child masturbating and does exactly the wrong thing, namely, attempts to sow fear in the child as well? If an adult is dominated by his own infantile masturbation anxiety, no suggestion from a physician will convince him that masturbation at a certain age is a normal phenomenon. He will simply not believe it. And how is one to advise a mother when one is not exactly sure oneself of how and whether normal childhood masturbation is to be approached?

No. Giving advice is not easy because psychic development is immensely complex and also because the consequences of allowing masturbation can be equally good or bad. Thus optimism is no solution; it merely allays the adult’s conscience and is itself a symptom of the compulsion to educate. Over a longer term, justified pessimism may still be more fertile as it forces self-control upon us and this leads us to ask valuable questions. Optimism in the question of education merely masks the difficulties.

One such difficulty is that education, if it is to be meaningful, must cater to the masses. Society will remain basically unaffected if five or even fifty children are raised correctly in a city of several million. The most desirable solution, namely a purely factual, affect-free evaluation of the objectives of
education, is only possible at this time through analysis of the educator and is therefore impossible for the masses. For the moment, it is merely a utopian idea that educators who are fully aware of themselves could succeed in spreading understanding among the masses of educators. When parents and educators realize the actual reasons for and purposes of education, when the controlling authorities stop believing that their efforts are directed solely toward the “welfare of mankind,” when the masses realize that the relationship between children and adults constitutes a clash of two different worlds, then, perhaps, it will be possible to consider active educational measures.

And until then? Except for the admonishment to recognize and understand our errors, the futility of all current educational measures and the fact that whatever one does it is wrong yields only a negative rule: extreme restraint in education, restriction of educational measures to only the most necessary denials, and a demand for awareness of the fact that, for very natural reasons, one not only loves one’s children but also hates them. And what about the dangers of being permissive? These can hardly be greater than the hazards of compulsive education. We must bear in mind that the original life force which compulsive education attempts to tame once gave rise to civilization from within itself. We may lay great trust in this force. Is it too daring to maintain that life itself is able to create the necessary forms for its own existence?

THE PARENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARD INFANTILE MASTURBATION

In our discussion of parental compulsion in child rearing and its unconscious motives, we also mentioned, among other issues, the fact that the expressions of a child’s instincts frequently pose a threat to the maintaining of adult sexual repression. The parents then protect themselves, either by completely ignoring the drive manifestation or by condemning it as “abnormal misbehavior.” Among these early manifestations, masturbation holds a particularly important place. Whereas other manifestations are viewed as natural misbehavior, infantile, or even pubertal masturbation is considered a “pathological abuse” which must by all means be prevented.

How has it been possible for this attitude to take hold and for so much prurient literature to be written on the subject? Why do all the explanations that masturbation at a certain age is a natural phenomenon have no effect? Even notable authorities in the field of hygiene and sexology share the same erroneous views. Except for the unsupported ethical considerations they bring to bear, all the alleged damage from masturbation may be traced to other sources. Whenever rigid, unalterable, and grotesque notions are encountered we are sure to find unconscious motives which have caused them. It is to Freud’s credit that not only the nature of masturbation but also the motives for its evaluation as a pathological abuse have been clarified.

This is not the context in which to probe the nature of masturbation. A brief survey however of the relevant findings of psychoanalytic research will facilitate understanding of the inadequacy of the customary methods employed by parents in dealing with it.

Masturbation is a reaction to physical excitation of the genitals. Its immediate cause is a sensation of tension or itching. These sensations are removed by scratching or rubbing which produces pleasure. Once this has been experienced, masturbation is practiced for pleasurable purposes. We may differentiate between three periods of masturbation: 1.) Infantile masturbation. This is frequently observed in the form of involuntary rubbing of the genitals and is probably due to coincidental external stimulation (cleansing, etc.). 2.) Masturbation during the oedipal phase (ca. age four to six). For this period a physical basis for genital stimulation has not yet been confirmed, although the regularity with which masturbation flourishes allows us to assume stimulatory

somatic processes. 3) *Pubertal masturbation.* Here the physiological basis lies in the rapid thrust of genital maturation.

The general opinion that only children who have been seduced practice masturbation is entirely false as masturbation is a manifestation of internal developmental and stimulatory processes. The well-known practices of “playing doctor” and of mutual handling and examination of the genitals are the result and not the cause of stimulation, although they do produce a secondary increase. Occasionally, itchy rashes or worms pose the actual inducement, but the notion that these coincidental phenomena are the cause of masturbation is also erroneous. It is much more likely that scratching of the genitals originally produces the irritation and this in turn intensifies the urge to masturbate.

During the oedipal phase the child approaches the itching sensation innocently and rids himself of the feeling through scratching or rubbing, as long as parental prohibition, threats, or fantasies do not complicate matters. Childhood masturbation is a sign that the genital phase of libido development which belongs to normal psychic development has been attained. Thus, it is not masturbation itself that is pathological, as is commonly assumed, but rather its absence.

Physical sexual excitation, however, is only one aspect of the masturbation process. The urge toward physical gratification of excitation is also accompanied by the urge to draw near to the loved object, usually someone of the opposite sex. Some children become highly aggressive during this stage and frantically demand to be embraced, kissed, or to be taken into bed. Even more or less disguised sexual attacks are not infrequent. Only now does a severe conflict begin. The child soon learns that the genitals are a subject that is not discussed. If, in addition, masturbation has been prohibited, the genitals, along with all desire produced through their stimulation, become “taboo,” and even manual contact is forbidden. Here the seed is sown for later sexual rejection and repression. The parents establish a genital taboo but in their ignorance they overlook the fact that certain everyday necessities, such as children’s play or even their own sexual desires, increase genital desire the more they are repressed.

How parents enjoy taking their children into bed with them in the morning or in the evening playing “Ride-a-cock-horse,” or giving “piggyback rides.” Both, however, have a direct stimulating effect on the genitals, as does the necessary daily washing of these organs.

Without realizing it, parents often increase genital stimulation through facetious or serious threats. The child’s tendency toward anxiety is enormous, especially during the critical oedipal phase. It is known that the excitation caused by anxiety is easily transferred to the genitals where it produces a sensation called “Angst-lust,” a pleasure sensation that is experienced with anxiety and is equivalent to masturbational excitation. Let us point out the sudden urinary incontinence resulting from the anxiety produced by severe fright in children. The fact that many children greatly enjoy listening to horror stories proves that these experiences are pleasurable; they are willing to bear the fear for the sake of the accompanying genital sensations. There is no need to prove that frightening children, threatening them with the “bogy-man,” and relating weird horror tales are common practice.

Further, there exists the harmful practice (a necessity of course among the poor) of having both children and parents sleep, if not in the same bed, at least in the same room. There is hardly a child who escapes the effect of hearing its parents copulate. Two typical reactions to this may be seen in the analysis of adults. The child’s first reaction is fear; naturally, he fears the strange, unfamiliar occurrence in the dark room. He imagines a struggle, and the panting and sighing and perhaps even the mother’s resistance give rise to the “sadistic concept of coitus.” The anxiety experienced usually arouses genital excitement which equals sexual excitement spontaneously produced. Gradually, the child begins to grasp the approximate meaning of the nocturnal scenes as a pleasurable process and the genital excitation, originally induced by anxiety, now emerges in its true nature. The child begins to masturbate while consciously or unconsciously identifying with one of its parents. Numerous cases of nocturnal anxiety (favor
nocturnus) and bed-wetting are based on this excitation.

We have mentioned only a few of the many external factors which, due to the parents' ignorance, have an intensifying effect on already existent genital excitation. Children would certainly masturbate even if these factors were eliminated. However, masturbation would remain within physiologically prescribed limits and children would not suffer the effects of inconsistent measures taken against masturbation, namely, the parents' efforts to eliminate the results of masturbational stimulation instead of the causal factors which they unknowingly intensify.

The greatest deficiency in child rearing today lies in the fact that it employs fear and thus produces obstinacy. Both fear and obstinacy can intensify the masturbation conflict. Fear achieves this through its ability to arouse genital sensations while simultaneously leading to a struggle against these same sensations. This results necessarily in a pathological compromise.

The obstinacy caused by the prohibition of masturbation also heightens the inclination to masturbate, due to the additional "appeal of the forbidden." This mechanism functions in many chronic masturbators; they masturbate to excess particularly when they have been denied something. Frequently, this is accompanied by unmistakable and even conscious intentions of ruining themselves to spite their parents.

Masturbation prohibition further leads to more or less extensive character malformation. If anxiety is unsuccessful in suppressing masturbation completely, the children take to covert forms of masturbation which the parents neither see nor discover. They then no longer masturbate in bed but on the toilet. They no longer masturbate by hand but, for example, by pressing the thighs together, by pressing the genitals against something, by squeezing the penis between two objects, etc. The furtiveness of masturbation produces general timidity, mendacity, and deceit. What educator has not noticed the children who always isolate themselves, never look one straight in the eye and have a timid glance or a pinched facial expression? Everyone recognizes the "facies masturbatorica" of a

pubertal boy oppressed by masturbation guilt. Such children later exhibit a paralyzed ability to love and to function genitally; they become impotent or frigid and demonstrate reduced social achievement.

Certainly not all children who later become neurotics experienced a prohibition of masturbation, and many who did nevertheless developed into healthy and able individuals. Masturbation prohibition is only one part of the overall upbringing, and mental health or illness is always over-determined. This, however, must not induce us to underestimate the negative effect of prohibiting masturbation. It can be observed in the analyses of adults that later sexual disturbances assume forms corresponding to earlier masturbation prohibition and that the pathological formation of the entire personality is proportionate to the ascetic strictness and the inconsistencies of the upbringing. Especially to be avoided are the standard measures taken against masturbation, such as threatening to cut off the hands or the penis, warning the child that the penis will fall off or that a fatal illness will occur, that an evil spirit or the devil will fetch him or, further, spanking, tying the hands, bandaging the genitals, etc. These senseless and disgraceful measures merely cripple the child's personality at the very peak of its development and, in addition, accomplish nothing. Natural sexual excitation will either be forced to find pathological outlets or, more frequently, the masturbation period does not pass but becomes fixated for numerous reasons, some of which have already been mentioned.

What is responsible for all of this? Why don't parents allow a natural process to run its course? Here, again, it is the parental compulsion which, in this case, is unconsciously determined by the parents' own masturbation anxiety. The following example, which is by no means an exception, will illustrate the origin of parental fear of masturbation.

A thirty-two-year-old woman, the mother of a twelve-year-old daughter and an eight-year-old son, fell ill with acute hypochondriacal anxiety hysteria. She was tormented by the fear, or rather the compulsive idea, that she and her son might die of tuberculosis. Analysis revealed the following reason
for her illness. The previous year her son had looked ill. The physician she consulted had found nothing wrong with him and simply advised her to feed him well so that tuberculosis would not develop. At approximately the same time she had observed her daughter masturbating in a semi-somnolent state. This severely frightened her and she could not free herself of the thought that her daughter might induce her son to masturbate also and that he would then succumb to tuberculosis and die. But why did she transfer the masturbation anxiety to herself and her son when it would have been more logical to fear for her daughter. From the age of four to sixteen she herself had masturbated excessively (both alone and with other children). Later, when she married and incestuous desire arose due to an unhappy marital life, she suppressed masturbation desire for fear of the supposed results (tuberculosis, syphilis) and was entirely successful for a time. When she saw her daughter masturbating, her repressed desires were rekindled, although without becoming conscious. Her dreams betrayed not only the masturbation desire but also the tendency to play with her son’s penis. Thus she once dreamed that the boy was pulling a hand-cart back and forth (“pulling a hand-cart” is a vulgar expression for masturbation) while she ran “back and forth” behind him as if to stop him because it was dangerous. Until she entered analysis she had slept in the same bed with the boy, lying behind him and placing her hand over his genitals. All of this requires no further comment. I should only like to mention that she transferred all the love she once bore for her father to the boy, and since the father had died of tuberculosis, this constituted a further reason for her fear that her son might die of the same disease. Furthermore, as a child she had slept in the same bed as her father until the age of twelve and had once been caught masturbatings and scolded. “The boy and I will die of tuberculosis” had the emotional value of the repressed desire: “My (father) and I will play with each other (masturbate).” As punishment for this she feared a grave illness and death.

The deep roots of masturbation anxiety, even in enlightened adults were observable in one rational, level-headed mother who, upon seeing her small boy masturbate, screamed out almost involuntarily, “Get your hand away from there!” Afterward, she simply could not believe she had said it.

Why is masturbation viewed generally as a culpable abuse? A superficial reason is that parents assimilated this attitude unquestioningly in their childhood and exhibit the same behavior toward their own children. The second reason has little to do with external influences and is purely of internal origin. The analysis of the masturbation conflict, found without exception in all our patients, demonstrates that, although they are conscious of masturbational manipulation, they are not conscious of the fantasies that create guilt feelings and anxiety. It is these fantasies upon which the above mentioned evaluation of masturbation is based. In early childhood, genital stimulation was coupled with sexual desires directed at the parent of the opposite sex. In psychoanalysis, these desires are summarized under the heading of the “Oedipus complex.” Boys wish to “marry” their mothers and for this reason to eliminate their fathers; in girls, the situation is reversed. The guilt feelings later accompanying masturbation stem from the hate that developed toward the parent of the same sex who, however, was also loved. Since the emotional content of the fantasized crime (elimination of father or mother) and the resulting guilt feelings are then transferred to the incest wish and the associated masturbational manipulations, the latter become criminal acts. Masturbational guilt alone remains conscious after repression of oedipal desire. Once the masturbation desire is repressed, the guilt is transformed into the view described above, namely, that masturbation is a culpable vice. Since no one escapes the fate of the Oedipus complex and since at least masturbation desire is a universal phenomenon, it is understandable that everyone suffers from masturbation guilt and that this accounts for its transformation into such a well-established prejudice.

The question still remains as to whether and to what degree masturbation is really harmful and, further, whether masturbation would become habitual if it were not restricted. These questions would be answered conclusively only if numerous
cases of children who were not influenced by their parents in this respect could be observed. Isolated observations allow us to assume that the masturbation period passes of its own accord. The guilt feelings from the Oedipus complex alone have sufficient repressive power to bring this about. Nevertheless, data on this question are sorely needed in the interest of a reliable decision.

According to clinical findings in adults, protracted masturbation is not so much physically as psychically injurious because of the exhausting conflicts. It also paralyzes the capacity to court real sexual objects. With regard to injurious physical effects, neurasthenia has been observed as a result of excessive masturbation although there are also numerous excessive masturbators who have no complaints. A comparison shows that in the first case the course of physical excitation is directly disturbed by guilt feelings and that this results in acute physical discomfort.

On the whole it must be said that the disadvantages of customary sexual upbringing far outweigh any possible disadvantages of permissiveness. Since we may expect nothing worse than what is being brought about today, permissiveness is an experiment we must not allow to remain untested. In principle, corrections are always possible.
Projeto Arte Org
Redescobrindo e reinterpremando W. Reich

Caro Leitor
Infelizmente, no que se refere a orgonomia, seguir os passos de Wilhelm Reich e de sua equipe de investigadores é uma questão bastante difícil, polêmica e contraditória, cheia de diferentes interpretações que mais confundem do que ajudam.
Por isto, nós decidimos trabalhar com o material bibliográfico presente nos microfilmes (Wilhelm Reich Collected Works Microfilms) em forma de PDF, disponibilizados por Eva Reich que já se encontra circulado pela internet, e que abarca o desenvolvimento da orgonomia de 1941 a 1957.

Dividimos este “material” de acordo com as revistas publicadas pelo instituto de orgonomia do qual o Reich era o diretor.
01- International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research (1942-1945).
02- Orgone Energy Bulletin (1949-1953)
03- CORE Cosmic Orgone Engineering (1954-1956)

E logo dividimos estas revistas de acordo com seus artigos, apresentando-los de forma separada (em PDF), o que facilita a organizá-los por assunto ou temas.
Assim, cada qual pode seguir o rumo de suas leituras de acordo com os temas de seu interesse.
Todo o material estará disponível em inglês na nuvem e poderá ser acessado a partir de nossas páginas Web.

Sendo que nosso intuito aqui é simplesmente divulgar a orgonomia, e as questões que a ela se refere, de acordo com o próprio Reich e seus colaboradores diretos relativos e restritos ao tempo e momento do próprio Reich.
Quanto ao caminho e as postulações de cada um destes colaboradores depois da morte de Reich, já é uma questão que extrapola nossas possibilidades e nossos interesses. Sendo que aqui somente podemos ser responsáveis por nós mesmos e com muitas restrições.

Alguns destes artigos, de acordo com nossas possibilidades e interesse, já estamos traduzindo.
Não somos tradutores especializados e, portanto, pedimos a sua compreensão para possíveis erros que venham a encontrar.

Em nome da comunidade Arte Org.
Textos da área do funcionalismo orgonômico

Texts from the area of Orgonomic Functionalism.

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