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The Rise of the Psychopath

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A top analyst of my acquaintance recently remarked, "Today's youngsters have all the sexual freedom they want—they indulge to their heart's content—yet, when I see them on my couch, I find they have as many sexual problems as their counterparts of twenty years ago: frigidity, impotence, frantic promiscuity, sexual frustration, insatiable thrill-seeking. In fact, they may be worse off. The sexual revolution hasn't helped them at all!" These findings parallel the observation of many organomists today. Easy access to sex and contraception has not liberated our adolescents.

What has gone wrong? Instead of sexual freedom with responsibility, there is license. Instead of serious sexual commitment, sleeping with someone has become as casual as sharing a beer. Instead of the resiliency and maturity that comes with orgasmic potency, there is a never-ending tension that drives the frantic organism to seek peace in drugs, withdrawal, or violent discharge in the social arena.

The above picture is a far cry from the self-regulated, genital character that was supposed to have emerged from the sexual revolution. How has it gone awry?

Repression vs. Self-regulation

Let us examine the basic tenets of the sexual revolution as set forth by Reich around 1935 (1): One was protection of the genital rights of children and adolescents, according to sex-economic principles; the other was the replacement of the patriarchal family by the natural family. Both entailed child-rearing practices based on self-regulation and the abolition of compulsive sexual morality. At first, Reich believed such a program was closely allied with the class struggle and the Marxist approach. He quickly became disenchanted with the Marxists and broke with them entirely—an historical fact, despite the new left's current efforts to claim Reich as their own. In 1944, Reich stated explicitly that

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the problem was not a class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat—that there were no class boundaries as far as character structure was concerned. He further noted that social ideology was not a reflection of economic conditions, but that both the ideology and the economics were anchored in the psychic structure of the masses.

Reich was deeply concerned with every facet of human misery but felt that the core problem was man's sick character structure, stemming from energy blockings in the organism. The chief culprits he saw as sexual morality and its handmaiden, religious mysticism, which keep the masses from becoming masters of their fate. In 1949, he warned that the future of the world depended upon the solution of the problem of mass character structure.

The role of blocked energy in the formation of neurosis has been extensively dealt with by Reich. Here, I shall only touch upon a few of the basic concepts by way of clarifying what I see as a latter-day development.

The reader will recall that compulsive sexual morality invokes the use of sexual repression within the framework of the patriarchal family. Freud's libido theory sheds considerable light on this process. According to Freud, every individual comes into this life with a given quantum of psychic energy. At first, it is a purely "narcissistic" energy, entirely focused on the self. Gradually, this energy reaches out, like the pseudopods of an amoeba, and becomes attached to the world of objects (or, strictly speaking, to their "mental representations"). If the process is reasonably successful, the person develops a capacity for satisfactory object relations. This goes hand in hand with a certain maturation and integration of the ego. Some people never get much past the stage of narcissism, and their object relations remain at a primitive, pregenital level, along with their ego structure.

In the course of ego development, the psychic energy must move through various erogenous zones—oral, anal, phallic, and genital—each of which has its own characterological features. Any fixation or regression of energy at the first three zones will leave its stamp on the personality and tie up a certain quantum of psychic energy—now no longer available to the ego, with resultant restriction to it. If the person develops normally, the energy moves naturally from one stage to another, without getting bound up, and genital primacy is achieved: The genital becomes the main channel for the discharge of sexual energy; any pregenital residue is dissipated in foreplay and does not stay imprinted on the character. Genital primacy signals full maturation of the ego.

This ego-unfolding process is deeply influenced by the character struc-

ture of the parents or parent surrogates and is marked by crises of reality-testing, threatened or real losses and separations, mastery and identification conflicts, etc., finally culminating in the oedipal crisis (at age four). How these vicissitudes are handled determines the ultimate personality, and it is on the handling of these vicissitudes that Freud and Reich part company. Self-regulation, not sexual repression, was Reich's answer to the problem of raising healthy children.

In order to appreciate the difference, let us consider the classical concept of repression as a mechanism of defense, whereby the ego bars from consciousness the forbidden impulse or any of its derivatives or fantasies. Once this occurs, the original impulse is buried out of awareness as if it never existed. However, it continues to have an energetic existence of its own and keeps pressing for discharge. To prevent this, the ego expends a great deal of energy in the process known as counter-cathexis. There is a dynamic opposition to the pushing out of the impulse, and the ego pays the price of "bound up" energy and a restricted range of reaction. At first, there is symptom formation, but, as Reich pointed out, the piling up of blocked impulses and counter-cathexes finally leads to a very elaborate superstructure which he called character armoring. The somatic locus of the armoring reflected the developmental stage at which the repression was imposed.

To Freud, "psychic energy" was a metaphor; while to Reich, it had a physical objective existence as "orgone energy," which he was able to demonstrate experimentally. Reich reasoned that for a person to maintain health he must have an orderly energy metabolism, which entails periodic discharge through genital orgasm. The capacity to do so signified emotional maturity (genital primacy) and freedom from somatic armoring (pulsatory motility). In the absence of this capacity, libidinal energy became dammed up in the organism (stasis) and constituted the somatic core of the neurosis. Sexual repression he saw as the main cause of this stasis.

With this view, Reich departed radically from the analytic framework (though he retained a large part of Freud's theory of psychosexual development). It is also this view that has most given rise to the distortions and misinterpretations of Reich. Whereas Freud saw the child as an impulse-dominated beast who must be tamed through sexual repression (frustration of the oedipal incest wish), Reich felt that sexual repression was at the root of man's illness.

One of Freud's monumental contributions was the discovery of sexual impulses in childhood, a disclosure that brought the scientific world

down on his head. These impulses included not only all manner of "polymorphous perverse" tendencies but also the famed and shocking disclosure of the Oedipus complex whereby the four-year-old desires the parent of the opposite sex and wishes to eliminate his rival, the same-sex parent. He further held (though not all analysts agreed with him) that destructive drives, along with the sexual, were also innate (that is, primary). Therefore, he reasoned, repression is absolutely necessary to avoid the creation of hedonistic savages totally devoid of built-in moral deterrents. Culture and ethics could not exist without it.

Reich, on the other hand, had a Rousseauistic view: Man in a state of nature is inherently good. If one raises man in harmony with nature, the outcome will be good. But this requires a unitary view of man, uniting his dual aspects, psychological and physical, into a single totality governed by energy functions. Man is a pulsatory creature, whose energy continually activates psyche and soma, core and periphery. Moreover, he is continuously generating an orgone energy field which resonates and interacts with that of others, as well as with the atmospheric orgone.

With this in mind, Reich's concept of self-regulation to supplant sexual repression becomes more understandable.

Basic to this concept is the acceptance of a sex life for children at an age-appropriate level. Reich believed that allowing children to discharge their sexual energy with peers would divest the oedipal wish of its libidinal charge. With decathexis of the wish, there would be no need to repress it. It should be clearly understood that Reich never advocated sexual activity between children and adults, incestuous acting out, parental masturbation of children, or the salacious promotion of childhood sexual activity by adults. Rather, his concept entailed the non-interference with, as well as the protection of peer-related sexual expression as part of the natural life functioning of children. Thus, children were to be allowed privacy to masturbate, to embrace, or to explore each other sexually. They should not witness adult intercourse or adult nudity, since they lacked the energetic capacity to tolerate them; but, if they came upon them accidentally, no fuss should be made. Above all, a wholesome, non-pornographic attitude of the parents was important here. Sexual matters were to be treated with delicacy (not prudishness), seriously (not jokingly), and, above all, with a sense of responsibility.

Infants were to be fed on demand; routine circumcisions were taboo; children were to be allowed to eat what they wished and toilet train themselves when ready. The basic need for loving contact was to be met, but not the willy-nilly gratification of every whim. Children were to be

taught to respect the rights of others, measures for their own safety, and freedom with responsibility.

All of the above stands in sharp contrast to the harsh regimen imposed upon the young through sexual repression, ranging all the way from scheduled feedings, rigid toilet training, and masturbation verbots to the absolute taboo on childhood and adolescent sexual activity. The end product could be only a guilt-laden, insecure, impulse-inhibited neurotic.

A New Trend Emerging?

Let us return to our original question as to what went awry in the sexual revolution. By chance, some thoughts on this question came to mind while I was in the process of translating Reich's *The Impulsive Character* (1),¹ a classic monograph, written in 1925 yet still meaningful and timely today. In 1925, no fashionable analyst ever had an impulsive character walk into his office. The analysts of the day dealt mainly with repressed neurotics; but in the free clinic which he headed, Reich had his first exposure to the indigent classes. This led to an in-depth study of a type of character disorder that he dubbed "impulsive" and that bears a strong kinship to the psychopath. Though some of Reich's cases could scarcely be distinguished from the schizophrenic, the character disorder is generally regarded as an intermediate type between a neurotic character (e.g., hysteric, compulsive, etc.) and a psychotic. Be that as it may, Reich's study of the genesis and structure of the 1925 impulsive has greatly enriched our understanding of the psychopath of today.

In today's setting of apparent sexual freedom, the old restraints are giving way—but the emerging character structure is far from genitality. I believe a new trend of emotional illness is unfolding in our society: Today's practicing psychiatrist may be witnessing a different breed of patient in the making—a transitional form between the impulse-inhibited neurotic and the impulse-driven psychopath. It is the latter type that shares some common features with the impulsive character described by Reich. One has only to watch the telecasts of the movies of the '50s to see the striking change in culture that has unfolded within the past two decades. The young, clean-cut people in those films look like "squares" to the jaded eyes of the "cool cats" of today. The former are the impulse-inhibited neurotic types, the ones who grew up in an atmosphere of sexual repression, while our cool "hipsters" of today typify a looser

¹Soon to be published by World Publishing.

psychic structure, ranging from mixed, transitional types to full-blown psychopaths among the extremes.

I do not mean to imply that the majority of today's young people exemplify this trend. However, there are two groups in our society where I feel it is observable: the urban collegiate group and the disadvantaged. Here one may see a broad spectrum of transitional types, everything from neurotics with a touch of psychopathy (whose children or grandchildren may show increasingly impulsive features) to full-blown, impulse-driven psychopaths clustered at the extreme pole.

Reich's Impulsive Character

The term "psychopath" means many things to many people. Perhaps the most popular notion is that of the unscrupulous hedonist who goes about discharging his impulses with nary a guilt feeling or qualm. In reality, the picture is much more complicated, often admixed with other diagnostic types. Here Reich's monograph can shed considerable light on the etiology and salient features of this type.

According to Reich, the hallmark of the impulsive is a serious defect in his capacity for using mechanisms of repression. He contrasts this with the impulse-inhibited neurotic who relies heavily on repressing mechanisms to defend against the breakthrough of unconscious wishes. The latter type can bind up anxiety, the former cannot.

But the capacity to bind anxiety, though often at the service of neurosis, still bespeaks a certain amount of ego maturation. Herein lies a second distinguishing feature: The impulsive character suffers severe developmental defects of the ego. Thus, most of his libidinal energy is arrested at a very primitive stage of development, and he retains an inordinate amount of narcissism. While all pregenital stages through to the phallic are reflected in his structure, he shows an extreme instability and brittleness, quite unlike any other type. The capacity for meaningful object relations is not developed. What objects exist are simply purveyors of supplies. The neurotic likewise shows many pregenital components but, because of his capacity to bind energy, does not suffer the extreme instability of the impulsive. The impulsive is bombarded by secondary (*i.e.*, sadistic, destructive) drives, which his immature ego structure cannot contain, while the neurotic is able to invoke reaction formation, which prevents the breakthrough of antisocial impulses.

Because of the ego immaturity, the impulsive operates mainly on the pleasure principle, *i.e.*, instant gratification. His tolerance of frustration is very low. At the same time, because of the disordered libidinal economy, he lacks the capacity to discharge tension effectively. As a con-

sequence, he suffers from inordinate amounts of tension, which he can neither bind up, like the neurotic, nor dispel. Acting out then becomes his only avenue of discharge.

In *The Impulsive Character*, Reich studied the genesis of this disorder in great detail through case histories of his clinic patients. At that time (1925), he was still within the psychoanalytic framework (though glimpses of his departure are already discernible in the monograph). Thus, explains the youthful Reich, impulse repression and sublimation are the cornerstones of culture. The infantile pleasure ego must undergo denial in order for maturation to take place. With this comes the establishment of reality-testing and the formation of object relations. But every denial leads to a splitting up of the libidinal energy. For example, offering an infant the breast and then withdrawing it represents the duality of impulse gratification and impulse denial—the earliest model for ambivalence. (At that time, it was generally held that without ambivalence no psychic development could take place.) Reich suggested four possible courses the ambivalence could take, with all but the first yielding a pathological outcome:

1. With a loving nurturer, the infant experiences partial impulse gratification and partial denial, and through this gradually develops some capacity for repression. The child can tolerate the denial because of its love for the caretaker; partial repression, then, leaves room for substitute impulse gratification.

2. The child undergoes full (rather than gradual) impulse frustration right at the start, for example, through harsh weaning or total restraint of masturbation. This leads to total repression, with the ambivalence weighted in favor of the hatred. The capacity for love is severely impaired and a compulsive character results.

3. At the earliest stage, there is a total absence of impulse frustration. For example, the child grows up with no supervision and with unrestricted impulse activity, only to come into severe conflict with the environment later in life. From such a background come the criminal types.

4. Extensive, early, unrestricted impulse gratification is opposed by sudden, belated impulse frustration of a brutal, traumatic nature. This gives rise to the impulsive, who usually has a history of inconsistent upbringing and early exposure to adult sexuality.

In the impulsive, sexuality is stimulated and acted upon at an abnormally early stage. This is not to be confused with the self-regulation approach of allowing the expression of childhood sexuality at an age-appropriate (and energetically appropriate) level. It is obvious from

the case histories that Reich's impulsive patients experienced a pornographic sexual environment in which the caretakers or outsiders offered hyperstimulation and doled out sexual abuse, including incest. They were, therefore, very overcharged and overstimulated sexually. However, there was no question of healthy genitality here but rather an explosion of pregenital impulses and polymorphous perverse tendencies.

Energetically, once such impulsivity is given full rein, it cannot be fully contained. Severe defects in ego development ensue. And we know, economically, from Reich's later works, that the unbridled discharge of secondary drives begets more tension than it releases. Hence the unbearable internal bombardment and incessant acting out. As Reich later pointed out, the impulsive's unformed character structure represents the very opposite of armoring. The impulses, especially sadistic ones, are not held by reaction formation but used as a defense against the impulses themselves and the imaginary danger threatening from the impulses.

The impulsive is characterized by extremes and excesses. There is a grotesqueness of symptoms, with behavior expressed in undisguised, primitive drives. Such behavior is not seen as illness by the patient except in rare moments of insight. He is often very lively and outlandish in his mode of relating to the outside world. Undisguised perversions, especially sadomasochistic, are common. The incest wish is usually conscious.

A high degree of ambivalence is the rule, according to Reich, and shows the following features: constant hatred and fear of the nurturers; unrestricted impulsivity, occasionally reinforced by stubbornness; unsatisfied longing for love, opposed by hatred of the same intensity; a marked incapacity for love. Unlike compulsives, these patients do not displace their ambivalence onto substitute objects but retain the original object in full awareness.

To better fathom the impulsive, Reich studied the superego in great detail. In the analytic sense, the superego is the incorporation of the moral precepts (usually the verbots) of the parents. Its main functions have to do with approval or disapproval of actions on the basis of one's notion of right or wrong, self-criticism, self-punishment, expiation and repentance, and self-approbation for good behavior (3). (The popular idea of the voice of conscience is an oversimplified version of this.) It develops through a process of identification, which has its precursors in the earliest stage of formation of object relations. At this stage, the process is known as incorporation and the model is one of oral ingestion. This must unfold within a framework of good mothering if the individual is to develop in a healthy manner. Reich felt that these earli-

est identifications were of prime importance in determining how the child handled the Oedipus conflict and the later vicissitudes of life.

Superego formation bears a close relationship to ambivalence. It will be recalled that every frustration of a libidinal drive causes a splitting up of the drive into the antithetical components of ambivalence. The harsher the circumstances of the frustration, the greater the ambivalence, hate, and guilt, and the more punitive the superego. At the time Reich wrote the monograph (1925), superego formation was viewed as a normal and necessary part of psychic development—and seen as a bulwark against the unbridled discharge of instinctual impulses (the child as a savage beast idea). Only a too-punitive superego was considered pathological. Though superego formation has its roots in the earliest stages of object cathexis and impulse denial, it really begins around age 4 and is internalized by age 9 or 10. It is mainly evoked as a defense against the incest wish of the Oedipus complex and is always based upon *secondary* (sadistic) drives. It functions largely at an *unconscious level* (unlike “conscience,” which is in awareness).

Reich later found that superego formation was functionally identical with armoring—thus the parental attitudes are incorporated not only psychically, but somatically as well. In a sense, we “wear” our parents—particularly their negative aspects. Though one identifies with both parents in the process of superego formation, the major identification is usually with the aggressor (that is, the harsher, more restrictive parent). Identification with the positive aspects of the parent figures also occurs, of course, but does not constitute armoring.

In the impulsive, the superego development is markedly defective—in contrast to the neurotic’s, which is well elaborated. Energetically, this harks back to Reich’s observation that once an impulse is fully developed, it cannot be fully repressed. Furthermore, the ineffective superego tends to take on the contradictory, inconsistent aspects of the nurturers. Reich postulated that under the stress of their irresistible urges for instinctual gratification, impulsives can “isolate the whole superego,” thereby removing it as a deterrent. Guilt feelings are always present in this character type, as with all ambivalent types, but they are displaced onto trivial situations rather than attached to the appropriate object.

Another hallmark of the impulsive is psychosexual confusion. The neurotic, too, suffers from this—though to a lesser degree—since all character types except the hysteric and genital characters have the stronger identification with the parent of the opposite sex. In the 1925 monograph, Reich expressed the view that the impulsive could not be classified according to a libidinal fixation point, analogous, say, to the

compulsive's fixation at the anal stage. Rather, he saw him as a chaotic mélange of all pregenital impulses, "like a bull in the china shop of libidinal development." In a more recent study of character types by Dr. Elsworth Baker, the psychopath is seen as a very poorly integrated phallic. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that this type has many pregenital traits, poor ego cement, and a high degree of narcissism. The psychosexual confusion, then, is a logical consequence of the very immature ego structure. Frank homosexuality is not uncommon in this type.

The Ghetto Impulsive

Though Reich's cases are extreme and grotesque, his formulation of the impulsive helps us understand the structural changes unfolding in our young people of today. As noted above, I believe the trend toward psychopathy is largely confined to the urban collegiate and the ghetto. It is mainly the former group that has its etiological roots in the misfired sexual revolution. The latter (ghetto) group is genetically tied to socioeconomic conditions (as were Reich's impulsives), plus some ethnic factors that are unique to their contemporary culture. The description that follows is taken mostly from Minuchin's study (4) and my own observations in a mental health clinic in the Brownsville area of Brooklyn, New York, to which I was attached for some years.

How does a ghetto child become an impulsive? A major factor is an extremely unstable home environment. The child lives in "a kaleidoscope of moving and shifting stimuli." He may not sleep in the same bed twice. Meals are rarely at an appointed hour and may be a feast one day and a famine the next. There are multiple, erratic caretakers who also give him a feast or famine of stimuli—one day he will be showered with attention, the next completely unattended and unsupervised. A steady stream of maternal paramours leaves scarcely a suitable model for identification. Object constancy, then, is almost totally lacking. In such a shifting frame of reference, the child never develops a capacity for meaningful object relations. We see this lack constantly in the impulsive.

Another salient feature of the child-rearing is parental inconsistency. The parent figures function as a kind of "traffic cop," and their directives to the child are geared according to their mood of the moment. If they are in a good mood, the signal is "go"; in a bad mood, it is "stop"—reactions bear no relationship to the issue or to right and wrong. It also means that the controlling power for the child is always external; he never has a chance to internalize his impulse control or

master it. Impulse discharge becomes motoric and global, and goes hand in hand with a poor attention span. In school, these youngsters cannot pay attention or sit still in their chair for two minutes. The ego structure is too primitive to allow of introspection, self-scrutiny, or the capacity to empathize with another human being. They are very narcissistic and live mainly in their secondary drives.

Self-esteem is also minimal, as their individuality is never honored. One child is called by another child's name, or all the children are lumped together in a pejorative term by the mother. Bedroom and bathroom privacy are non-existent. Cultural patterns favor a punitive matriarchy where the mother figure carries the major responsibility for survival of the family. The male, having been reared by a harsh matriarch like his wife, commonly avenges himself by desertion. The male children generally undergo a severe and castrating upbringing that does little to train them for fatherhood, adult responsibility, or self-esteem as a male. The girls tend to emulate the mother's harshness and may become viragos to their own mates.

The use of language also reflects this primitive approach to child-rearing. Language is used mostly to signal relationships between one person and another and not to transmit data. Real conversations are rare among such families. Rather, what one hears are multiple monologues escalating in volume—with no expectation that anyone will be heard or given feedback related to his verbal productions. A theme is neither developed nor carried to conclusion, nor is it usual to review and recover information. Hence a sense of past and future is poorly developed: Everything is present-oriented, with instant gratification stressed. There is little sense of postponement for a long-range, better goal.

The language code itself has a very low level of conceptualization and is mostly centered around power transactions; with the loudest and toughest child establishing himself as boss. Communication is often just a series of escalated threats and counterthreats—"I'll bust you in the nose. I'll break your back."—with which they establish their place in the power hierarchy. Thus, communication serves to define the status of relationships, not transmit information.

The discharge of affect is also a matter of extremes: They react on an all-or-nothing basis, with no nuances or gradations of feeling, no delicacy, merely "kiss or kill." The parents tend to model this with a complete polarization of affect—total involvement or total disengagement. To convey any affect, they go to extremes, without modulation, and it all depends on their mood rather than the merits of the case.

In addition to the above observations, mostly derived from Minuchin,

I should like to emphasize that these children are exposed at a very early age to adult sexual activity, as well as to sadistic treatment by adults and peers. They live in a world of violence, secondary drives, hypersexual stimulation, and shifting frames of reference. The result is an explosive, primitive, impulse-driven individual, suffering not only from severe defects of the ego, but also lacking the effective tools of communication and conceptualization. All this takes place in a setting of dire overpopulation (hence overburdened mothers with too many offspring to care for), poverty, alcoholism, and drug addiction.

The Middle Class Transitional Type: Genesis and Social Setting

Bearing in mind the above formulations of the ghetto impulsive, we are now in a position to take a closer look at some transitional types among our contemporary urban collegiates. Let us consider first the genesis.

These youngsters often come from parents who grew up in the depression and were reared in a climate of more or less sexual repression. Such parents often go overboard in the direction of hyper-permissiveness. They are much torn between their intellectual convictions of a sex-affirmative nature and the automatic sex-negative attitudes that have become structuralized and internalized. Intense guilt and resentment (usually covert) are harbored against their own parents. The more neurotic they are, the more contactless they are. In trying to apply "modern" ideas to their child-rearing, they do things by rote, without the proper feeling-tone or "gut feeling" that a more open individual would have. For example, a woman of my acquaintance knew from her reading that she should not interfere with her 4-year-old son's masturbation. One day the child had an erection and proudly displayed it to his mother with the announcement, "Look, mommy, my dinghy is so *big*!" The woman, knowing enough to silence her automatic protests, nevertheless froze. The child immediately contracted. Had she said warmly, "Oh, isn't that nice, dear!" and gone about her business, the child would have felt fine. At the other extreme, and with even greater contactlessness, is the mother who acquiesced to her young son's request to masturbate him when he proudly displayed himself to her. According to self-regulation principles, this mother could have said in a pleasant, relaxed way, "That's very nice, dear, but mommy is too big to play with you that way. Children and grownups don't play that way, but it's very nice and mommy loves you very much."

It is usually the excesses like that of the second example that do the most damage and tend to give rise to an impulsive structure. Hyper-

sexual stimulation plays a big role here. In the course of my practice, I have obtained histories of shockingly contactless child-rearing practices performed in the name of self-regulation. They include the following: Children taken into the parental bed while the parents were performing intercourse; a mother who masturbated her children at a very early age and then pushed them into a sex life rather than letting nature take its course; a father, highly educated and intelligent, who played sexually with his prepubescent daughter despite repeated admonitions from a physician to desist. These, of course, are the extremes.

A more controversial area is the matter of adult nudity. My personal opinion, based on the complaints and fantasies of child patients over the years, is that this, too, creates an excitation that is too much for the child's energy capacity to handle. I have had considerable difficulty with seductive, hysterical mothers, with unconscious exhibitionistic tendencies, who persist in parading nude or lightly clad in front of their sons. They protest that it is all "natural" and have no insight into their own unconscious motivation or the children's neurotic symptoms that result. I do not know how harmful adult nudity would be in a perfectly healthy society of unarmored parents and children; perhaps with an orderly libido economy, it would be quite natural and harmless, and the attitudes would be truly wholesome. It may be of interest to note that the Trobrianders (whom Reich felt typified a society close to sexual health) discouraged nudity unless there was a functional reason for it, like bathing (5). Bathroom privacy was also scrupulously observed among the Trobriand Islanders. I believe this is another area in which our misguided modernists sorely transgress.

The neurotic practices cited above stand in sharp contrast to the basic principles of self-regulation, the cornerstone of which is the right of children and adolescents to a wholesome, age-appropriate sexual life. Under such conditions, one does not repress the sexual drive in children: Stasis and armoring do not develop; the oedipal wish remains uninteresting and without charge; the energy is free to flow along optimal developmental channels toward maturation of the ego, creativity, and the capacity for good object relations.

In an armored society, the situation is not so simple even among sensitive parents. Armored parents tend to produce armored children. This is probably due to the unconscious attitudes of the parents over which they have no control, and which, in turn, are reflected not only in their behavior but in their energy fields. The latter will inevitably be weakened and contracted in the areas of armoring. The child's field, resonating with the parental fields over a long period of time, undoubtedly

senses the areas of contraction and may contract in the corresponding areas of his own field. I have seen this happen even in small babies with very well-meaning parents. Nevertheless, it is my feeling that educating parents to wholesome child-rearing practices can help produce a generation less armored than their forebears, and so on until a relatively healthy society emerges, based on sex-economic principles.

Hyper-permissiveness in non-sexual matters is another pitfall of modern child-rearing. For emotional health, the child does not require instant gratification of every whim and wish. Many parents who are incapable of real warmth lavish material supplies upon their children as a substitute contact. They fail to teach the child to be considerate of the rights of others. They also abdicate from guidance or instilling a sense of responsibility. The child grows up a self-centered little monster who thinks the world owes him a living without his having to exert himself in the slightest. He has been overindulged, but at the same time has never experienced any real, meaningful contact, so is love-starved at the core, tense, and miserable with his horn of plenty, without even knowing why. This is a far cry from the self-regulation proposed by Reich, where basic needs are met but limits are set. Here the very opposite prevails.

The rise of pornography is another strong indicator of an aborted sexual revolution and has a profound influence on the social scene, despite the assurances of its apologists that it is harmless. Children get an early exposure to sexual hyperstimulation through comic books, films, and the contactless attitude of their parents. But is this genitality that is emerging? On the contrary. Pornography always stimulates the pregenital drives and therefore, from a sex-economic point of view, begets more tension than it dispels. In this situation there is always an energetic residue between the buildup and discharge of tension. This makes for constant preoccupation with and pursuit of sexual sensation, but no real satisfaction. It is analogous to a person's being constantly hungry and always thinking about food.

Along with this is an abysmal ignorance of sex-economy and the role of genital primacy on the part of so-called experts who disseminate a great deal of misinformation about sexual matters via their best-sellers. Even worse is the wholesale promotion of out-and-out perversion and pregenital sexual practices. These are misrepresented as "healthy" and "normal"—a way of giving some spice to the sex act. One of the more grotesque examples is *Penthouse Magazine's* advice-to-the-lovelorn column authored by a well-known madam. Here the inquiring reader can receive explicit directions (couched in plain Anglo Saxon) on how

to perform homosexual acts, *ménage à trois*, group sex, anal intercourse, spanking, tying up the sexual partner, and the erotic use of enemas, vibrators, and other paraphernalia. The message, implicit and explicit, is that anything goes, anything is acceptable, sexually healthy, and "normal." One of my female patients recently reported that a former lover showed up one night with a miscellany of gadgets, including riding crops and leather thongs, purchased at a store specializing in such items and designed to enhance the sex act. She showed him the door.

Closely allied to this undermining of genital primacy is the trend toward "unisex" in men's and women's fashions. The blurring of sexual boundaries and psychosexual confusion that comes with pregenitality is clearly seen in the rise of the many androgynous singing idols in vogue today—with their tight pants, high heels, spangled vests, and flowing locks. Teen-agers find them easy to worship because a unisex façade is much less sexually threatening to them than a frank symbol of virility.

Still another aspect is the overthrow of the vaginal orgasm by Masters and Johnson (6) in favor of the theory that "an orgasm is an orgasm" no matter what triggers it. This approach completely negates the sex-economic value of genital primacy and the clinical observation that only total genital orgasm can regulate the energy economy and maintain freedom from armoring and neurosis. Instead of "genital orgasm," "multiple orgasm" has become a highly sought-after signpost of sexual prowess. Sex economists, on the other hand, are well aware that multiple orgasms simply reflect the inability to achieve the complete orgasmic convulsion that goes with orgasmic potency.

Another related trend is the changing attitude toward homosexuality by clinicians. There are many psychiatrists today who take the stand that a homosexual is "perfectly normal"—again showing an abysmal inability to distinguish pregenital from genital sexuality. Failure to view so serious an aberration as pathological is sheer evasion, and does great disservice to the homosexual himself, who needs professional help and understanding, not apologists.

Perhaps most contactless of all is the severe breakdown of privacy in personal matters, which all healthy people cherish. I am not referring to false modesty but to the sense of delicacy in love-making shown by those who are really capable of love. It is perhaps epitomized in the attitude of the Trobrianders regarding intercourse between a man and his wife. The greatest insult one can make to the Trobriand male is to tell him to "have congress" with this wife, which is, after all, a foregone conclusion between marital partners. This is because the Trobriander resents the outside intrusion into something very precious and dear to

him and sees it as a violation of privacy. This is in sharp contrast to the grossness, exhibitionism, and voyeurism of group sex and wife-swapping practices, where the sexual embrace has become a casual gesture, devoid of any deep feeling or sensibility. Of interest in this connection is Reich's observation that during the sexual act orgasmically potent individuals do not joke or use four-letter words to each other.

All of the abuses discussed above represent—not sexual freedom with responsibility—but license. The repression is lifted—not for the expression of genitality—but for the explosion of all manner of pre-genital manifestations, sadism, secondary drives, perversion, inversion, etc. The loose and defective ego structure that such a social setting fosters does a great disservice to our impressionable, up-coming generations. It destroys their capacity for true sexual happiness and breeds a state of intolerable tension.

The wide-spread abuse of drugs is another alarming offshoot of contactless permissiveness, which is license. The frank addict is, generally, a full-blown character disorder with many of the features signalled by Reich in his study of the impulsive. He is "extraordinarily regressed," as Fenichel (7) puts it, and the libido remains a "very diffuse mixture of pregenital tensions." Genital sex is uninteresting to him, but the drug fulfills a deep and primitive desire more urgently felt than sexual longing in most people. He is mainly oral and skin-erotic. Therefore, the drug is felt as food and warmth and also affords an extraordinary elevation in self-esteem, closely allied to elation in the manic depressive. Object relations are tenuous and objects are seen as purveyors of supplies. There is an extraordinary intolerance of tension.

In addition to the hard-core addict, there are many individuals who use the so-called "soft drugs." Among the urban young, the figures indicate a staggering increase in users over a relatively short time span. Social attitudes are particularly permissive concerning marijuana usage and there is a "pot lobby" working for its legalization. Even if there were no other objections to it, its psychological effect on the young teenager should give one pause. For the process of maturation to take place, these youngsters need to develop coping mechanisms and problem-solving techniques for dealing with the harsh realities of life. Marijuana, by dissolving anxiety, discourages the elaboration of such life skills at a most critical time in their development, when they most need to develop these capacities. "Dropping out" rather than coping and striving becomes a way of life, and they remain infantile, geared to the pleasurable gratification of the moment, untouched by any sense of responsibility for their fate. Those with a disorderly and defective ego

structure are, of course, the most prone to take this way out, since they are bombarded by an inner tension they cannot handle. The repressing mechanisms are defective and the structure too immature for the satisfying release of tension.

Energetically, too, the effects of all psychedelics—pot included—are very harmful. I have discussed this in detail elsewhere (8), but simply wish to point out here that the use of any psychedelic causes a wide diffusion of the orgone energy field reminiscent of the schizophrenic's. The term "spaced out" is indeed accurate here. The net effect is one of convivial "pseudo-contact," but to the energetically sensitive observer, the person is simply not in the room. The user becomes a kind of detached observer, cut off from any resonance with another person's field. (For any kind of contact to occur between two or more individuals, their energy fields must interact and resonate.) Since psychedelics have a cumulative effect (the active component in marijuana stays in the system about eight days), the individual sustains the state of contactlessness far longer than in naturally-induced altered states of consciousness² and probably with chemical insult to the brain and other tissues, as well. (This is still under investigation.)

There are many drug subcultures where "turning on" is a way of life. Children raised by such parents are starved for contact: The sparse parental energy fields offer little to resonate with, and the offspring turn into little, withdrawn automatons. My middle class child patients whose parents occasionally smoke pot have expressed oppression and distress at the atmosphere of the home at such times. They had a sense of vague, undefinable anxiety that they could not understand or grapple with—as if they were fighting phantoms. Children, in general, are much keener at sensing emotional vibrations in the atmosphere and seeing energy fields, until the grownup world talks them out of it.

Finally, there is a political aspect to the consequences of contactless child-rearing. Because of the intense inner discomfort, the young hate their nurturers, who indeed share a large burden of responsibility for the internal maelstrom. The hatred is often projected as hatred of the fatherland, and the child, in his suffering, identifies with the underdog.

Herein lies the long-range danger. The child has been reared with the illusion of freedom but suffers intolerable tension which he cannot

²While most people can tolerate and even benefit from altered states of consciousness, e.g., the parasympatheticotonia accompanying biofeedback control of alpha brain waves, even here caution must be exercised with borderline psychotic individuals who cannot withstand the dissolution of their ego boundaries by such techniques. How much more vulnerable are they to psychedelics!

comprehend. He is therefore driven to quiet the turmoil within himself by aligning with causes that freeze all movement from without. (This is the essence of the emotional plague—to still the movement of energy at every level—to freeze everything into a monolithic society, where even motility of thought is taboo.) Such a youngster falls ready prey to the cynical totalitarian who uses him to seize power while preaching social justice and relief of the oppressed. Because of his disordered energy economy and his poor ego integration, such a youth is unable to discharge tension effectively. This capacity comes only with a certain maturation of the ego. To have any comfort at all, he must refrain first and foremost from “rocking the boat” energetically. Unconsciously, he seeks out the most rigid totalitarians (*e.g.*, Chairman Mao, Che Guevara) to implement a social milieu where regimentation is maximum and freedom (motility) is minimum. At the same time, he has a need to rationalize such a program as liberation of the oppressed (really himself, a victim of his own disordered libidinal structure).

In the most extreme case, he surrenders entirely to his secondary drives and seeks discharge through social violence. Here inner tension is at a maximum and explosiveness inevitable. The campus rioters and bomb-throwers belong in this category.

In summary, we see that Reich's shining dream of a sexual revolution that would free humanity from its orgasmic impotence has not come about. Sexual repression is indeed giving way, but license—not freedom with responsibility—has been the outcome. This is due to the distortion of self-regulation and sex-economic principles by armored man. I believe such contactless child-rearing as described above will lead to a growing number of disorganized and primitive ego structures reminiscent of Reich's impulsives of 1925. The distorted permissiveness and tolerance of pornography and drugs can greatly hasten this process. In the ghetto, poverty and harsh mores are wreaking similar damage.

The emergence of tension-ridden, suffering youngsters, products of the misfired sexual revolution, has dire political implications. They are among the most plague-prone of all the character types, and their inner misery, which is all too real, becomes the target for restrictive ideologies that will quell the inner maelstrom by controls imposed from without.

It should be clearly understood that I do not advocate the return of sexual repression, nor indifference to social injustice. I believe each succeeding generation must educate its young for true sexual freedom based on responsibility and self-regulation as outlined above. Our main arena is not political, except insofar as we have to stem the tide of the collectivism of the left, which poses the biggest threat to human free-

dom today. Our thrust rather is "radical" in Reich's sense of the term and, through sex-economic principles, aimed at the very core of armored man.

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