

# THE HATED CHILD AN ASPECT OF THE BORDERLINE PERSONALITY

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Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice,  
From what I've tasted of desire,  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.  
*Fire and Ice*, by Robert Frost<sup>1</sup>

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## THE PROBLEM OF HATE

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Robert Frost's poem puts a nice perspective on the gruesome topic of hate. For my own part, I would have to say I've known too much of hate, and wish that I didn't have to learn as much about it as I have.

In two previous presentations I talked about some aspects of narcissism under the heading of sex and self-respect. To rediscover or re-establish self-respect requires thorough exploration of the problems of sexuality. A person who has their sexuality in a strong and alive way will have self-respect. Similarly, the reestablishment of self-respect will lead to a stronger sexuality and sexual identity. Self-respect means respect for the self in the sense that the body is the self, or the feelings of the body are the basis for the sense of self. In the case of any kind of narcissistic injury, the individual must begin healing through the recognition, acceptance, and respect for his real bodily feelings, even as these have always been contradicted by his images and ideals of what he should be and should do. The acceptance of bodily feelings and emotions which may initially be very painful and frightening is the beginning of a path of bodily opening and movement which, if pursued with courage, will lead to pelvic and genital movement and feeling. At this point sexual identity based on bodily feeling can become a reality.

While this direction seemed pretty clear to me for a long time, I have also never underestimated the amount of fear, pain, and resistance that has emerged along the way for most of my patients, nor have I underestimated the length of time that therapy can take, a length of time often measured in years. The present paper emerged as a result of looking more deeply, and being capable of looking more deeply, into that fear, pain, and resistance. At this point, what I see is that many of my patients were hated as children, and I mean that they were hated by their parents. The effects of being hated are all pervasive and devastating to the individual, and there is a very deep resistance to uncovering, seeing, and opening up the effects and the fact of that hatred.

The idea that parents could hate their own child is shocking, and in fact I believe it can only be characterized as unnatural. I use the word "unnatural" because it literally goes against nature to hate one's own offspring; it goes against the survival and flourishing of one kind. It goes against the natural soft, warm response to the infant and child. The whole topic of hate is an incredibly distressing one, in my opinion; and it must be to many others, too. For example, I find no reference at all to hate in two important psychoanalytic works on the borderline personality (Adler 1985; Kernberg 1975). Kernberg uses the phrases "intolerable reality in the interpersonal realm (231)" and "covert but intense aggression (234)" in discussing the etiology of the narcissistic personality; but, besides misusing the idea of aggression, he can't quite call hate by its name.

In some correspondence, Dr. Lowen sent me an autobiographical sketch by a 34 year-old man that is characteristic of the picture presented by a patient who was hated as a child. A few excerpted lines will convey the tone:

For the most part, my childhood was one of feeling 'weak' but not being able to vocalize this to my parents. My first day at school was very traumatic. I cried a lot for my mother. Junior high school was a shock ... In ninth grade I became aware of sexual peer pressures. In compensation for my sexual inadequacy I developed a cynical wit and composed satirical articles for my classmates ... My sexual experiences during (high school) were very clumsy ... I felt there was something wrong because I didn't feel very developed or sexual ... (In college) I could not keep up with the 'professional' atmosphere (of one major) and ... my studies declined since all I cared about during

college was my sexual maturation which was totally or almost totally unsuccessful ... After college my decline began. I attended graduate school. . . only to discover that my dream of becoming a 'great' . . . could not be realized ... (I went to California.) I ended up waiting on tables and playing poker . . . (a few years later) My condition then could be described as 'feeble' — going downhill ... One day I looked in the mirror and I thought I was seeing worms crawling on my face ... I struggled on, holding a succession of jobs.

The tone of despair, weakness, failure, sexual preoccupation, bitter interpersonal encounters, decline, unrealistic dreams, and self-loathing pervade this sad document. Nowhere in it is there an indication that this individual has known a carefree or pleasureable day in his life. Elsewhere in this document there is an unspoken theme of hate in the underlying tone of the description of his parents and their relation to him as well as to each other. Dr. Lowen commented in his notes that there is no explicit recognition that his mother hated him, even though he can say that she hates men, nor that, as analysis revealed, she seduced him to be her little boy. It is due to this degree of loss of self and of reality that I would say that parental hatred should be considered as possibly primary in the etiology of the borderline conditions in some instances.

I believe that for any child being hated, especially in any consistent way over time, is utterly devastating to the developing sense of self. What is more inimical to life than hate? Even for an adult, especially if hated as a child, the experience of being hated is awful. The behavior of the person who was hated as a child can be easily summed up: they will spend the rest of their lives doing whatever it is that is necessary to avoid ever being hated again.

To understand the problem of hate, there are four fundamental questions we need to look at. What is hate? Why do parents hate their children? What is it they hate? What are the basic organismic and developmental effects of hate? To begin to find some answers to these questions, we need to look at the face of hate.

## THE FACE OF FIATE

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When I say the parent hates the child, I mean, literally that. The parents' feeling and emotional attitude toward the child is one of hate. Few people can or would acknowledge that they hate their own child. Nevertheless I know it is a common occurrence. I see it any day I'm on the streets or in the shops. Consider this example from every-day life. For a couple of years I would occasionally see a particular mother and daughter on the street near my office. The child was an attractive girl of five or six. My attention would be drawn to this pair because the mother was so frequently directing an attack of such hateful abuse verbally at the child that I was horrified. Passersby however would go their way as if this were an ordinary occurrence, and I'm very much afraid that it is.

If one were able to sit down with this mother, I would be willing to bet that she would deny that she hated her child; yet nothing was more evident. There is one aspect of her behavior that, in a perverse sense, supports that denial: this mother was certainly deeply, and even desperately involved with her child. She was indeed acting in a way that seemed to indicate that everything this child does is desperately important to her. In this desperate involvement, then, there is a love, although expressed along with hate or even through the hate, and in the context of a relationship in which the mother seems to have little sense of the child as a person separate from herself.

Typically, then, the hate I'm speaking of here, is a love-hate, an ambivalence of the worst sort, and it involves a projective identification with the child or some aspect of the child. More will be said about these characteristics later.

Another way of looking at hate and seeing the hate in a patient's background is to see that, whatever the parent felt, the behavior toward the child may be hateful. What I mean by this is that if the parent's behavior toward the child is strongly incompatible with or directly adverse to its developmental needs (the biological expectations, as Jean Liedloff [1975] speaks of them), the child experiences this behavior as hate, regardless of what the parent may feel. Here is another every-day example. A young couple had their first baby some three or so weeks prematurely. Only four weeks after the baby's birth, the young couple decided to take a weekend trip of some hundreds of miles to show it to the grandparents. The couple both had colds and could not leave until after work, so did not arrive until early morning. We felt that this premature infant who needed quiet and holding was essentially being treated hatefully. The behavior was too discordant with its needs. The dislocation of such a trip, besides fatiguing already tired parents, would require of the infant too much of the energy it needed for growth and the establishment of an extrauterine existence.

Now I wish to offer some examples of hate from clinical practice. These show the close association between hate, sex and gender, and oedipal relationships, that is the child's sexual relations to his parents, and his sexual meaning to them.

Carlotta, a woman in her mid-thirties with strong borderline features, was informed by her mother that she, the mother, never wanted to touch her, Carlotta. The mother explained to the child that she was a lesbian, and she was afraid of how she might touch her daughter, that she might affect the daughter in such a way as to make her a lesbian too. The mother's refusal to touch the child is hateful, and so is this manner of informing her. Carlotta was also physically abused by the mother. Carlotta's father, a violent, alcoholic man, was more overt in his hate. Carlotta was seduced by him. He, at least, unlike the mother, was a possible source of warmth, closeness and excitement. She had a desperate need for him. She learned to use her intelligence, wit and charm to amuse him. This "turned him on," but he would turn on her in his drunken rages and had little regard for her needs.

The degree to which her father both excited her and drew her in to him and drove her crazy by then turning against her is shown perfectly clearly by some of her overwhelming emotional responses. During her sessions Carlotta can erupt into violent emotional turmoil with a crescendo of rage and screaming, until finally the real rage she feels for her abuse bursts out of her, and then there is a calming. In her daily life, for a period of some months, she was in a turmoil in response to the ambivalence of the man with whom she wished a committed alliance. He would equivocate about what he wanted and whether he really wanted her. This drove her into a frenzy that she felt was just short of making her psychotic. She settled down when she was able to separate from him, say good-bye and grieve. Subsequently he re-opened his offers to her but in a way that seemed more real and grounded to her. Her reaction on this occasion demonstrated an important source and aspect of her frenzy. On the evening on which they got back together, she confronted him about his ambivalent behavior and said to him, "Just tell me if you're afraid." He was able to say, "I'm scared to death, but I want to go to bed with you." She told me that she felt a big, "Phewww," and a letting down deep within her, and she said, "Let's go." She felt safe when he could express his sexual wanting directly. His ambivalence put her into the position she was in with her father: that is hated, tormented, driven crazy and made to feel bad. In her therapy session the following day, she was particularly sane.

Another example illustrates the murderous cruelty that sometimes is evident in parental behavior. It is commonly taken for granted in many families that it is "natural" to want a boy child, especially if girls have already been born. Laura, a cancer patient my wife, Velma, works with, is the second child. She was hated supposedly because a girl had already been born and the parents wanted a boy. The

mother's cruelty to this particular girl actually passes comprehension. This child was a particularly beautiful, blond girl. Her first experience of sexual intercourse occurred in the following manner. On one occasion when the girl was 16 or 17 her mother punished her for some very minor infringements by leaving her in the roughest section of the city which was predominantly black. It was late at night, many miles from her home; she had no money and no idea how to get home. She called a man who had been making advances, and she "paid" him for a very indifferent "rescue" by going to bed with him. When she arrived home the next afternoon, the mother made no inquiries as to how she had gotten home or what had happened. This and other similar incidents indicate that this witch-of-a-mother wished to sexually destroy her beautiful daughter of whom she was envious.

## FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

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What is hate? Why do parents hate their children? What is it that they hate? What are the basic organismic and developmental effects of hate? While these are questions that touch on very basic matters, I believe we can offer some answers, at least of a broad nature. First, I want to put in a personal note. While writing the first drafts of this paper, I realized that I was avoiding asking the question, Why do parents hate their children? That they do hate their children and in great numbers, I have little doubt. The large numbers of borderline individuals in our society is proof enough of that for me. When I came up with the phrase "unnatural parents," that helped, but I still found myself timid about asking this question. Why? Is it because there are so many reasons for such hate that to ask the question would only pose the job of cataloguing a monumental list of human ills? Or is it that one is not supposed to know? And is it that the question isn't asked because in some bizarre way it is assumed in society that parents have the right to hate their children—in the same way they have the "right" to kick their dog—after all, it's "their's" ? As to these last questions, I suspect the answers are all "yes." Given all this however, there are still some significant things to say about it.

What is hate? Lowen has relevant comments about hate in both *Language of the Body* (381 ff) and *Pleasure* (178 ff). Here, I wish to point out that hate is love turned against. Hate in every case is thus derived from love. There cannot be hate unless there has been love. But the love has been turned against, primarily by the very person who is loved.

What is it in the child that is hated? Example after example points to the same thing. What is hated is the child's sexuality. The child has a natural movement, a softness, beauty, and innocence of expression that can be a delight and can melt us. A parent whose own softness was violated and destroyed, who had to harden and turn against it in him or herself, will inevitably turn against it in his child. It is the pulsation itself, the aliveness itself, that is hated. The parent hates in the child what he hates in himself. A father or mother who cannot tolerate the softness and bodily movement in his own feelings of sexual surrender will hate that quality in the child and set out to destroy it in some degree. This is why parents hate their children.

What is the effect of hate on the energy dynamics? Basically, hate stops the natural movements of the child, and on a deep level they remain stopped into adulthood. What does it mean to say the energetic movement is stopped? Obviously the individual does not stop walking, breathing, and even living in the world. Again, I want to introduce a personal note. I thought off and on for a long time about how to describe the energetic effects of hate. I considered the concept of shrinking, the overall effects of blocks, contraction, and the withdrawal of energy from the periphery. None of these concepts

captured closely enough what I have observed. What I have observed, indeed, what I've experienced myself, is that the energetic movement in some deep way is stopped. Basically it is stopped at the sexual level, that is through the floor of the pelvis and genitals.

Remember that we are talking here about people who may go year in and year out with little or no fulfillment in life on a bodily level, who may say, as Carlotta said recently, "My life is passing me by." Indeed, the cry, "You stopped me!" is often heard in therapy when the rage starts to open. In couples, the rage may erupt when one partner feels that the other will turn against his excitement or love. Recently a patient flew into a murderous rage at me and told me I had "stopped" him. What had actually happened was that he had to wait a split second while I changed pillows for him during the course of some hitting. His reaction indicated the enormous pain and rage at being stopped in his excitement.

Even more to the point, the individuals I am talking about have very little if any good body feelings and they seem almost incapable of having them, no matter how hard they try. Or, if they have them in some aspect of their life, it is by denying another aspect, especially sexual. One of the results of being hated as a child, I am saying, is an incapacity for pleasure, for any good bodily feeling. As an illustration of this, in the seven years that I have known and worked with Carlotta, she has been literally unable to rest well, so great is her chronic tension. As an aside, I want to make a theoretical observation. I believe the basis for Adler's (1985, 17 ff) ego psychological concept of the developmental lack of the "holding-soothing introject" as well as the concept of lack of "evocative memory (22)" lies in this fact, that is the incapacity for good bodily feeling. Good bodily feeling depends on an energetic pulsation that moves through the body from head to tail, that can be experienced as sexual feeling and pleasure generally. The development of sexual identity, in my view, depends on the energetic movement entering, filling and pulsating through the whole genital structure, pelvis and pelvic floor. The feelings that result from this energetic development are the basis for an identity as a man or woman. It is just this movement, I am saying, that is stopped in the hated child. It is clear that the pelvic contractions play a key role, although not the only role, in this stopping. It is also clear that all kinds of problems in sexual identity and expression arise when the full movement is stopped.

Something else is going on in the organism with radically limited ability to experience good feelings. Movements within the body that would ordinarily be experienced as pleasurable are no longer experienced in those terms. The child's sexual excitement itself and even more broadly, the basic expansive, reaching out movements of the organism come to have, in the child's own feelings, a bad, negative, and dangerous quality. Expansion itself comes to be experienced in some negative way as a form of unpleasure, and it is soon terminated. The basic feeling the individual is left with is one of badness. As another theoretical aside, if this is correct, it ties this discussion in with Reich's (1945, 255 ff) critique of the death instinct theory (an "unpleasurable perception of the increase of sexual excitation") and Lowen's comments about it in "Self-Expression vs. Survival" (1973, 11, 14).

The bodily appearances of individuals who have been hated as children are extremely varied. Not long ago, a man in his mid-thirties appeared in my office who looked like he had just survived a World War II death-march. A large head bobbed on a thin, emaciated neck and scrawny, twisted shoulders while the lower half of the body looked curiously more healthy and alive. Another patient has a body more characteristic of the phallic narcissist, with the exception of a lined, haunted look, and there is a notable prominence to his buttocks. The adult who was hated as a child may be in a long term state of chronic shock. In addition to the indicators of horror that have been described in the literature, I would add ugliness. Ugliness is one of those things that we do not like to look at and see in others, and if we do see it, we don't talk about it. However, there is a kind of ugliness that is the result of being hated as a child.

## HATE IN THE OEDIPAL CONTEXT

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To offer therapeutic help to those hated as children we need to understand some further aspects of their development. In particular, I want to look at hate in the context of what Reich calls the “characterological resolution of the infantile sexual conflict.” Freud surely established the Oedipal myth as central or in some way paradigmatic in our civilization. With its themes of infanticide, incest, paricide, hubris and self-destruction, it should not be hard to find a place in it for our theme of hate, especially when we consider that, in Lowen’s (1980) words, the oedipal complex is a “fact of modern life.”

Every child usually has a sexual relationship with both its parents. The more strongly those relationships take on an incestuous quality, the more strongly hate enters the picture. When can a relationship between parent and child be considered incestuous? There is overt incest. There are also those situations which we could call “emotional” or perhaps “covert incest.” What makes a relationship an incestuous one in this sense? First, it is not simply that the child feels a strong sexual love for the parent. This occurs in normal development. The relationship becomes incestuous when the parent responds with his or her adult sexuality to the child’s love. This circumstance is very common, perhaps more common than otherwise. There need not be overt sexual contact in this situation. However, in all likelihood, there is some kind of physical contact that, in addition to the emotional tone of the relationship, is sexual. A very pretty young woman, for example, came with her therapist to see me for a consultation. She clearly had an hysterical character with some borderline features. She described to me how her father would have her lie with him on the couch while he watched television. His embrace was so intimate that he would even wrap his leg around her. Can we imagine that she did not feel his genitals pressing against her, even though they were clothed? Is this overt incest? Not exactly, but would anyone deny that this is an incestuous relationship for the daughter?

The “incestuous relationships of everyday life” are readily observed. One hot summer day Velma and I were at a county fair watching an event from some bleachers. We also watched with even more fascination a 15 or 16 year-old girl who sat right between her father’s knees in the row just below him. We watched as their bodies grazed each other in an unconscious dance. She was restless and would jump up from time to time to run after a shirtless boy selling ice cream, only to return to her father’s knees. A younger boy sat by his father’s side, looking disconsolate and confused.

The incestuous quality causes problems enough for the child, but on top of that the incestuous child is also inevitably hated. He or she is not only hated by the parent that is, so to speak, left out of the incestuous relationship. He or she is also hated by the very parent who is excited by and excites him or her; he or she is hated for the very aliveness and excitement to which the parent is responding. In my opinion, hate always has to be looked at in the context of the sexual, that is, the oedipal relationships with the parents. Children in these situations are both hated and driven crazy, and the destructive impact on the developing self is massive.

Here are two brief examples of covert incest where the child was also hated. David bathed with his mother until the age of 13, and also observed her nude around the house until then. When he innocently mentioned these baths amongst schoolmates, their derisive laughter suggested to him that something was amiss. This mother’s abandonment, neglect, and outright exploitation of David from the beginning were extremely hateful. In another case, that of a woman whose incestuous relationship was with the mother who was a violently unpredictable individual; she would lie in bed with the mother, having to caress and kiss her. At other times she was subject to the most vicious and cruel verbal and

physical attacks one can imagine. I would use the word “unnatural” here, too, to describe these two parents.

People who have had experiences such as these arrive in adulthood with an underlying, often conscious feeling of being bad, of having done something terribly wrong, but not knowing what, and of a constant expectation of catastrophic punishment. The feeling of badness that I am referring to is both very deep and all pervasive. It is not usually consciously attached to sexual feeling or behavior, but practically everything that the individual says and does indicates this to be the case. Highlights of two other cases will show further aspects of hate in the oedipal context and the resulting feeling of badness.

I think it is common knowledge that many girl-children are hated for being born female and not male. It is taken for granted in many families and many cultures that it is “natural” to want a boy-child, especially if a girl-child has already been born. Girls in such situations are given to understand the perfectly crazy idea that they are less valuable than they would have been “if they had been born boys.” The devaluation of the girl is hateful. Much of the hate Celia experienced seemed couched in these terms, and she is a particularly striking example of it.

The work I’ve done with Celia covers the longest time—about 10 out of the past 15 years—of anyone I’ve worked with. A big woman, when she first started her bioenergetic therapy she had deeply bunched-up, contracted, high shoulders, a heavy, soggy pelvis, and a delicate, fine-boned face. Every expression of anger was “wrong” and she would go into terror at the slightest hint of any contact with her pelvis. There was, in other words, a terrible fear of any sexual feeling. She has not married to date, at the age of 50, although she has had several affairs in which she has loved deeply and enjoyed sex. Her affairs have been with married and otherwise unavailable men and often occurred on trips abroad. She has advanced degrees and succeeded in not one but two fields largely dominated by men, and was something of a ground-breaker for women in one of these.

When I talk with her about being a woman, she says vehemently, “I’d rather be neuter.” Or, when I say something to the effect that, “You are after all a woman,” she says, “That’s the worst thing that anyone could say to me.” In a recent very strong session, the feeling emerged that all her life she has worked as hard as she could “to prove that I am not less than.”

She said this in the course of working very deeply, with deep crying and anguish. Her anguish and crying were evoked largely at that moment because I had suggested that she twist the towel as she lay on the bed and say, “I don’t need to prove anything to anyone anymore.” This frightened her; she could not conceive of it; it was giving up all she had struggled for all her life. While we had looked at these themes many times before, we had reached a deeper level. On this occasion, I was struck by her feeling of having to prove herself. Why did she have to prove herself again and again all her life? After all, hadn’t she already proved that she was as good as any man in her two professions? I thought about it myself for a moment and came up with a fantasy that suggested to me that one might wish for the chance to prove oneself again if one felt he had betrayed a trust. So I said something like this to her and asked her who she had disappointed so deeply and how. Without hesitation she said, “I disappointed my parents by being born a girl.” While such a feeling from her was by no means new to me, I was stunned by the way she said it and the deep feeling out of which it emerged in this instance. And one of the qualities of this woman’s development that I can see very clearly is that both her parents, to a remarkable degree, simply refused to acknowledge her femininity on any level or in the least measure. They both responded only to her “neuter” ego achievements. The degree and consistency to which they maintained this position with her strikes me as remarkably cruel and unnatural. It is hateful behavior toward the child as surely as if they had stood before her every day and said, “I hate you.”

Even all this does not explain her spinsterish life and the length of her therapy. The most painful and difficult part of her experience to uncover has been her beloved father’s hateful behavior toward

her. She dearly loved her father and disliked her controlling, cold mother. However, only now, after so much long, hard work is the depth of her unbearable and hopeless wanting for him emerging. She often tells the story of how he lost his own mother when he was three, and she has always felt a deep, heartfelt sympathy for him. In this way, he unconsciously evoked her longing for and closeness to him, but betrayed and turned against that and her excitement for him, as he'd had to turn against it in himself as quite a young boy thrown into a cold world and made to earn his way. His unconscious cruelty in these matters forced her into living out a lot of her life for him and a relinquishment of her sexuality.

In the case of Louis, too, it is the hate of the exciting, beloved parent which is the most difficult to unearth and the most traumatizing. His feeling of badness was experienced for many years as a feeling of having poison in him, a poison that he located just above the pubis and which prevented him from being close to a woman. He also lived out this feeling by occasionally frequenting prostitutes and massage parlors. Like other hated children, he really grew up in an atmosphere of hate, listening to and observing his parents' angry fights, fearing that his father would actually kill his mother in his rage, seeing an older brother destroyed by schizophrenia, and so on. He was able to recall and feel the depth of his mother's seduction after six years of therapy. He remembers having explicit sexual fantasies about her in adolescence, and had always remembered spying on her to see her naked. Recently he has been able to see the hate in her eyes as well. He had originally come to therapy because of his seeming inability to sustain a relationship with a woman. He had a strong, athletic body, a lined, haunted expression on his face, and a distinct hypomanic tendency. He went through a very long period of depression and turmoil after starting therapy.

I mention both Celia and Louis to illustrate how difficult it may be to open up the crucial element of having been hated by a beloved parent, how long it may take, and the depth and influence of the bad feeling. Their cases also illustrate the peculiarly passionate nature of the hating relationships I am talking about here. Earlier I said that hate is love turned against. It would be equally or even more accurate to say that the hate of the sort we are looking at here results when the sexual aliveness of the organism is turned against and stopped. This accounts for the passionate nature of the hate. The organism is seeking an avenue for self-regulation through its expressions of passionate hate; it is an organismic driving for a sexual outlet but in a distorted, perverse way.

## THERAPY: CHARACTER AND RESISTANCE

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The natural reaching-out movements of the child are met with hate and often a hateful environment. This is an unbearably painful experience and in the face of it there is a shrinking back and contraction which becomes the chronic state of the organism. Its movement is stopped on a deep sexual level. The characterological compensations, which become the individual's "second nature," develop as a result. Any natural movement within the organism is then experienced as dangerous and negative in some way, such as bad or dirty. Such individuals will have lost nearly all capacity to experience their bodies in a pleasurable way or to build their lives on a pleasurable bodily orientation. They "know" they are hated on almost any occasion of human contact. They basically live their lives in the expectation of being hated and trying to ward off hate. If the individual is able to work or be socially productive at all it is on the basis of a rigid ego-drivenness and equally rigid ego-ideals. For example, a hard-working person will repeatedly tell the therapist how "lazy" he is at the least sign of letting down. They set out to "do" life and to *make* it work. The rigidity and resistance to change of this drivenness

rests on the fear of being hated and the conviction that one is hateful and deserves to be hated. There are six problem areas of character and therapy I'd like to mention without any suggestion that this is comprehensive.

## 1) Hate and Rage

It is no mystery that the hated child becomes the hating adult. Unfortunately, the hatred is usually unconscious. It is lived out in all kinds of potentially destructive, self-destructive, perverse, or distorted ways. The impulses behind these movements are intensely murderous. The problem is to help the individual experience and cathart the murderous impulses. To do so requires that they know that neither they nor the therapist will be destroyed.

I believe that much of the "flooding" and "loss of boundry" which people may experience arises when these impulses start to move or break through, and the individual has been unable or unwilling to acknowledge their existence. Further, we would have to acknowledge that for the adult some of the feelings of badness, dirtiness, evilness, and so on, are based on an unconscious perception of their own hate. Many adults hated as children have worked very hard on a conscious level to never be like a hateful parent, but as a result, the unconscious identification with that very parent is even more strongly influential in the personality.

## 2) Denial

The parental hatred most damaging to the child is inevitably met with denial in the adult. To break through this denial, the eyes must be opened to the hate.

## 3) Shock and Repression

The adult hated as a child for its sexual aliveness may be in a state of chronic shock that began in childhood. More typically, recent adult experiences, usually in the context of painful experiences with a lover, will throw them into shock. They may easily be sent into shock by the therapist. Shock is, in a sense, a very strong repression. The incestuous sexual experiences are usually repressed. Even where the individual can remember, the feeling and sexual meaning of an experience is often repressed. While Louis has always remembered spying on his mother, it was only after several years of therapy that he remembered actually having had explicit sexual fantasies about her in his 'teen years.

Some children have been used sexually very early, even before four years of age. The conditions which would allow the recall or reexperiencing of such traumas are very difficult to establish, although not impossible. In any case, what is essential is very long and hard work on the individual's own part with their body. They have to work through very terrible bodily feelings which have no words and whose meaning seems almost entirely unintelligible to the person himself.

## 4) The Self-Hate System

In the personality of the adult who was hated as a child one inevitably finds what I call the self-hate system. As I understand it, the self-hate system is an active part of the ego. It is not simply a matter of the person hating themselves; that is there and it's bad enough. But further, the individual's ego

perceptions are actively determined by the self-hate system. This has a very important implication for the therapy situation. There may be times when no interpretation or energetic intervention of the therapist will escape being introduced into the self-hate system and interpreted in its terms - none. For example, even in the course of trying to be helpful and relieve the patient of his self-hate, the therapist may point it out to him with the obvious intention of demonstrating its unreality. The self-hating patient will understand this as one more thing that is wrong with him and use that awareness to hate and beat himself. The therapist may understand this as a peculiar kind of resistance, which it is, since it is indeed the characterological reaction of the patient. However, the therapist will not be drawn into being hateful towards the patient if the self-hate reaction is understood for what it is: a characteristic reaction of the ego. Within this context also, any physical or energetic intervention, even a simple suggestion that the patient stand up and feel his body, may be experienced as a punishment. Where both hatred and incest were very strong elements of the child's experience, the therapist's interventions may easily send the patient into a spasm of self-hate and deep shock.

While the self-hate system is an aspect of the ego and is really a system of perceiving and organizing experience, the feeling of badness is a bodily experience - this is how the person feels. It seems understandable enough that the hated child becomes the self-hating adult, but it is not as simple as might appear. If we only said, "The child hates himself because his parents hated him," this would be correct, but it would overlook an important mechanism of the ego. Oddly enough, the child comes to hate himself really because, for all his efforts on the ego level, he is not able to win the parents' love and approval. If we could put the development into a "logical" set of thoughts, it would be: "My parents hate me, there must be something wrong with me, I am bad, I will try to be better (development of an ego ideal) and live up to that ideal, I am trying as hard as I can to do so, but they still hate me, so I am hateful after all."

In this way, the self-hate system is built up in the ego on the underlying base of a deep feeling of badness and fear. The self-hate system of the ego is, in part, a way of making sense of something that otherwise is beyond reason. "I can't believe it;" disbelief, is a characteristic and understandable reaction to being hated as a child. In a recent session, Carlotta was able to vigorously begin to express her resentment and rage at her mother who was so inhuman to her. She was doing this lying on the bed and twisting a towel. After some moments of this she became frightened and confused. I commented that it has been very hard for her to believe all this about her mother and her childhood. She agreed and began to cry, saying, "That's what I always say to (her lover): 'I can't believe you're doing this to me.' ... I guess I'm just taking it in." The way in which the self-hate system "makes sense of" being hated and the underlying feeling of badness can be seen by an analogy with another unthinkable kind of experience-suicide. Suicide is an active gesture, however much there may be an underlying feeling of helplessness, hopelessness, and despair. We also can assume that underlying the suicidal motivation there is a worse feeling of wishing to die and the fear that one will die if he lets go of the will (Lowen 1982). Paradoxically, then, suicide may be a seemingly active choice which defends against feeling the helpless and terrible feeling that one might die in spite of all one can do. Similarly, the active self-hate of the ego actually defends the individual against awareness of the unnatural and unbelievable hatred of the parents and his own terrible feeling of being bad and deserving of terrible punishment.

## 5) Homosexuality

Dr. Lowen, in his talk (this volume), mentioned a case in which the homosexual attitude of the parent toward the same sex child was a crucial link in understanding that person's oedipal situation, and I could add similar clinical observations. Such attitudes are important in understanding the hatred that the child receives.

## 6) Chaotic Self-Regulation

A child exposed to the love-hate of two parents is exposed to diverse and contradictory excitations. He develops tensions and tendencies to excitation of diverse and contradictory kinds which make self-regulation and satisfactory discharge through an ordinary, stable, heterosexual relationship almost impossible. Driven by an organismic need for discharge and attaining some kind of steady self-regulation, such an individual may be driven through life in all kinds of more or less wild ways.

These last two factors have been mentioned very sketchily, although they are very important and deserve further attention. The topic of hate is unfortunately, and to our great sorrow, a vast one. I hope that by bringing it up and talking about it for what it is I have not added to our sorrows but have helped us to understand an important aspect of the development of many of our patients and that, in the long run, looking at the face of hate and knowing it, its vast ugliness and destructiveness will be even slightly diminished.

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