

ABUSED CHILDREN AND THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM

Preliminary remark, for Derick, Duncan and Frank.

I hesitated quite long before I began with this new version of the old paper. I had other things to do. I was tired, obviously (not having any holidays is wonderful, because you can do a lot, but it obviously has its disadvantages). After Joke and I went out one day to an old townlet in Germany, Tecklenburg, I got the impulse. It became clear to me, that I should not use from the very beginning the old version, but that I should begin first of all with a new one, much more general, expecting that I would be able to go on with the former version after having written this new piece. So I wrote this “simply” off hand, not first reading all the old materials. If things go well, I can later take all the important parts and things out of them and work them into this new version.

In the text there are many references to my papers. We can have a look what to do with them: Rework them and put them into the text? Something else? Simply forget them?

Another aspect of this text is that it probably reduplicates parts of the other texts, which we already have. In any case there have to be references to these other texts, e.g. 51. Violence in the Family. Maybe at a later stage parts of this new text have to be cut out again. I now “simply” write, not worrying about all this.

Finally here: This text “only” is a rewriting of the old version, (37) Abused Children and the people around them. Nothing of all the notes Derick made in 20 pages is yet inserted. Further, I ask myself if still a chapter about the actual work is heeded. Much of it is already in the text, but nevertheless.

And: the text is raw. I did not revise it in any manner. There certainly are many typing faults, bad sentences.

CONTENTS:

Introduction:

1. THE SITUATION IN CULTURE

1. The abusing of children is a symptom in and of our society.
2. The situation of culture.
3. Our care for the scapegoat.
4. Men and women in culture.
5. Marriage and the family.
6. Children.
7. The role of violence.
8. Scapegoating-mechanisms.
9. Anthropocentrism.
10. Caring and Carers.
11. The necessity of freedom.

II ABUSE IN THE FAMILY

12. The family amidst of other systems.
13. The family with abuse as a system on its own.
14. Abuse.
15. The family with (an) abuser(s).
16. The fascination by the family with abuse.
17. Scapegoating.
18. The abuse comes into the open, becomes public.

III THOSE WHO WORK WITH FAMILIES WITH AN ABUSER

19. Why are we doing this work?
20. The predicament of people working with scapegoats.
21. The words: To care, case, client, to help, to cure, to heal.
22. We work in and with relationships.
23. The necessity of freedom and trust.
24. How can we be free?
25. The dangers for, the threats of freedom.
26. Working in the here and now.

Introduction

Abused children and the difficulties we have with them and with the people around them are in fact just examples of the difficulties are so obvious, so clearly provoking many emotions, they are, besides the importance of what is happening in the battering and abusing of children in their own right, an opportunity, which necessitates to see the difficulties of culture in a more general way. As long as we don't do that, we never will find any solution for the problems, which child-abuse provokes.

Because of this, this paper (book) is divided in a general part, in which the situation of culture generally is described, although with child-abuse constantly in mind. The special part is devoted to the problems and aspects, which especially belong, to child-abuse and with which everybody who is involved, and in fact we all are! Have to cope. Nevertheless, the distinction is consciously, made not very clearly. Child-abuse in fact is a very general problem of our culture, showing the problems of our culture very generally.

This paper (book) is written after Derick Wilson met, in many groups, people from various professions who work with people in whose families there was or is abuse. The content of this paper largely depends on their experiences and their questions, about which they spoke about and told during these meetings.

1. THE SITUATION OF OUR CULTURE

1. The abusing of children is a symptom in and of our society.

1.1 Society, culture, is a whole. Everything has to do with everything. We are altogether for what is happening everywhere. Everything, which happens, is, too, our doing. More or less of course, but we never are wholly out of it. In culture there is no real innocence. There is, of course, extremely much hypocrisy, doing as if we are innocent. Innocence we lost in paradise and as long as we are in culture, we certainly won't get it back.

1.2 Either there is more child-abuse than there ever was, or we only are much more interested in child-abuse. Probably both is the case. There always was incest, child battering, but it might be that there is more of it than there ever was. And in any case we are much more interested in it. It fascinates us. We are annoyed, indignant about it. We are caring. An army of people of the different helping professions, professional and voluntary people, are looking after abused children and their parents. Child-abuse is a cultural, a societal theme and we all are involved. What is happening?

2. The situation of culture

2.1 Nowadays we all participate in the big fight for happiness and fulfillment. Our ancestors were, generally, happy, contented with the place they had, in which they were born, doing what was expected from them. They had their small joys, often their big difficulties, but they knew who they were. And generally they felt safe in the hands of God. They were waiting for a better life. In the meantime they took life upon them. Its hardships, its celebrations.

2.2 We wish to be happy. To have a "fulfilled" life. In fact, to be. We left the places where our ancestors lived. Not only the geographical places, too the places they had in culture, with its obligations, duties, compared with ours very small possibilities. Just because we left them we all are fighting for a place and, when we have it, very often again for a new one. We left the religion, or the faith of our ancestors. We left transcendence. We are our own gods. That means that we cannot let us give being and so a real future. We have to give it ourselves to ourselves.

Being is on this earth in short supply. In fact it is absent. We surmise time and again that people around us, important, interesting people, that they have it. So we are fighting with them to get it.

The paper 79, Happiness, might be important here.

2.3 We all leave our place, at least we try to leave it. We all are struggling for having a place on our own, to be, in some manner, important. We leave, in this fighting everything behind us: the place where we were born, the upbringing we got, our parents, our relatives, our friends, our spouses, our children, our profession(s), our faith or our religion. Because on all these culture once was found, we leave culture itself behind us.

2.4 Culture came into existence, giving people their place, their religion, rituals, prohibitions, their rights and duties, giving them in fact being, the sense to be amidst of others, in order to make life, human life, possible at all. Culture came because otherwise anthropoids, animals on their way of becoming humans, would destroy each other totally.

Here a reference of the Way of Freedom and, if it is published, the public lecture, Freedom in Relationships, might be useful. Further a very general reference to the books of Rene'. Maybe we should further look, which of the papers are important and in how far we use them here.

2.5 Now we are leaving behind us everything in culture which prevented the outbreak of violence. This means that violence is now again all around. We are all very afraid of it. We all, hypocritically, are afraid of the violence of others. We forget that that we are as violent as all the violent are. So in fact we are very afraid of the violence ourselves as well as of the violence of others. We deny our own violence and can only try to get rid of it by seeking our violence in others, by making them responsible for the violence all around, our own included.

2.6 We all are hypo critic about violence. We are living in a cultural lie, by seeking the violence (only or mainly) in others. We are fascinated by these others, because we see ourselves in them. We are doubles of them, being convinced, as all doubles always are, that we absolutely different from them, the total opposite. We are drawn to them, recognizing ourselves in them. We hate them because we hate in ourselves what we see, without acknowledging it, what we know to be in ourselves. We find these violent people bad, eventually very bad, because they threaten us. Not in the first place physically (as abusing parents in fact hardly ever do), but existentially: They bring our possibilities into the open. We loose our self-respect and in fact we never are sure what we once will do ourselves.

Here are some paragraphs out of The Way of Freedom, about fascination, might be useful. But maybe this, what is said here, is already enough.

2.7 So, just because we are fascinated by them, because they are our doubles, we despise violent people and in the same time we are drawn to them. Our depiction we show by writing about them in papers etc., and relishing it. Our being drawn to them we disguise in care.

3. Our Care for the scapegoat

3.1 Culture never could do without scapegoats. The scapegoats were the supposedly very bad people, the causes of all the violence and havoc in the group. They were driven out, killed, taking with them all the bad possibilities of everyone, put upon them, and so peace was, for the time being, restored. This process was repeated ritually, in the feasts, in order to maintain peace, to maintain cultural order.

3.2 We still cannot cope without scapegoats, because we are still exactly the same our first ancestors were: We cannot cope with our violent possibilities and we scapegoat

others for them. Only, we cannot any longer get rid of them. We cannot kill them any longer or send them to the colonies. So they stay with us and although we still are very sure that they are bad, anyway worse than we ourselves are, they are a problem. They are in a deep sense the result of our doing and in some manner we know about that. They give us a bad conscience. They take the contentment with ourselves away. They make our life insecure. Furthermore they are a societal problem in the broader sense. They are criminals, drug-abusers and neurotics, making havoc in their families e.g. abusers.

Scapegoating as we do, is abusing people We ourselves, indignant about abusers, of people, of children, of drugs, of other people's property, are the big abusers, the origin of all abuse. This is not meant moralistically, but factually. In the same time: The fact is clear. Those who are on the sidelines, looking at all the horrible things in this world and being (extremely indignant about all that, they are the scapegoaters, they are the real abusers, the abusers of innocent people, at least as innocent as they themselves are.

3.3 So we care, with a very good (or not so good?) conscience, with the results of our own doing, our scapegoats. This care is very hypocritical: The evildoers do as if they are good. "We are fascinated by you, because you are mirroring us, showing us who we are. You are of our doing, being on the wrong side, culturally, as a result of our trying to be or remain on the right side. And now we are again doing as if we are good, hiding our fascination, our bad conscience, our hypocrisy, by caring, by doing as if we are good, better than you are.

3.4 As long as caring people don't know and accept this, don't accept that they are not any better than the people they are caring for, don't accept that they are part of the problem, all this care only makes things worse. The hypocrisy and the violence both are growing.

The carers in fact are meta-scapegoats of society. I wrote about that already several times. Is it useful, to repeat that here, stating that carers have to know that too, in order to find freedom as carers in this society? It is a very general theme, and a very important one. I did not elaborate if in this manner until now.

*These introducing chapters are for people who don't know the model, very short anyway. And I think the best is to make a reference to *The Way of Freedom*.*

4. Men and Women in Culture

4.1 Culture only can exist when there are differences between people. If there are no cultural, structural, differences, we all fight till we have and just because we fight to have differences, we destroy them nowadays more and more, gliding into violence.

4.2 The most important difference, resting upon biological ones, always was the difference between women and men. They had different places in culture, different rights and duties. One of those, and in fact a very important one was, that men did the allowed violence, the “good” violence of rituals, punishments, wars, the women were the onlookers. The men did, perpetrated, the violence of both, the women and the men, the women were out of it, not doing it and time and again not in that manner hit by it, not being killed when the men were.

4.3 Just because of these cultural roles the myth could come into existence that the men are violent, women are not. Men act out the violence of women as well as their own, but just because of that women look (more) peaceful.

Of course there are biological reasons why men took the violent role upon them. Another aspect of all this is that obviously women have more difficulties to cope with violence. they don't have the cultural training. This already is the case in the primates. Cf. F. de Waal: Peacemaking among Primates. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989. Females are slower in resorting to violence and slower in making peace. This might be an important aspect of violence in the family and amongst relatives. Women very often are more “fanatical”.

4.4 The breaking down of structures in culture nowadays has probably its deepest consequences in the relationships between women and men. Both feel extremely vulnerable. Both try to be, or become strong. There is a, often ferocious, fighting going along between women and men and, consequently, of women and of men between each other because of the issue. Because this fight is about the very core and in the heart of our being, the violence, which arises out of all of this, is, although of course statistically normally contained, enormous.

4.5 This violence “simply” is, between people, between men and women. It has to be located somewhere, in order that it does not destroy us altogether and utterly. So we resort to the old cultural means. We seek our scapegoats and put it on them, in order to be able, after that, to blame them for it.

4.6 The victims of this fighting, of this huge violence, the scapegoats in fact, are the dropouts of society, who cannot endure the fighting. The drug-addicts. The neurotics. More directly it is those people, who exercise the violence, which is all around, in all of us, in their lives, in their families. It is the wife (and husband), the child-batterers. They in fact are carrying our violence. We all together are responsible for the violence going around. If we don't recognize and accept that, we are hypo critic and deepening the difficulties. And certainly we cannot be of any help.

4.7 Of course this does not mean that we have to go back to the old differences between women and men. That certainly is impossible, reactionary, and would consequently again provoke incredibly much and destroying violence. We have to go in, but if possible, certainly not in the manner we now are doing. We have to find ways to go together into the future, instead of fighting for each other's place, as is now happening. A first necessary step is, to find, every one of us, peace on the spot we now, actually, are.

Only meeting in peace, the own peace, there are ways into the future. And, because of our theme, then we don't need any longer the scapegoats for our own violence.

In this context, the papers 36 and 39: The Freedom of Men and the Freedom of Women, and 65: Men meeting Women, Women meeting Men, might be important. Maybe we should have a look at them. I am asking myself anyway now, if we should use this opportunity to publish, reworked in the manner necessary, several of the papers which are related.

5. *Marriage and the Family*

5.1 The cultural difference between women and men was, and probably still is the most important distinction for the building up of culture. Marriage and the family were, as old as culture is, its main building stones and culture still is not imaginable without them. Without them there is no care for the offspring and thus there is no future.

5.2 So culture took care, as long as it lasts, to keep, in very different manners, these realities, institutions, in order the tasks, the rights and duties, the possibilities and impossibilities, everything was clearly regulated and as clearly related to the other aspects, realities of cultural life. Culture too took care to regulate who should marry and who not and how both married and not-married people could or should cope with life.

5.3 All this is fading away. The intermingling of marriages with the rest of life has, in the Western world, nearly utterly disappeared, although there are still remains of it. Marriages become free floating. They don't have any longer a real function in the whole of society. They become in fact the area of the powergames of the partners. Love is disappearing and is replaced by fascination, which we now call love and which in fact is a beautiful, aesthetic world for powergame. We don't marry any longer, to fulfill together our task in society, which once people, consciously or unconsciously did. We marry because we like to marry, although time and again we ask ourselves if we really like it. Married people are jealous of the not married ones and the reverse.

See the paper 82, Single and married People.

Jealousy is one of the big themes in our culture. Not having a safe place, always being threatened in our place, always, in the same time, desiring to have a better one, a real one, one which ensures being for us, we all are full of jealousies. Jealousy means desiring. Desiring means violence. Violence against the other, that in our phantasies a more powerful one. Violence against the object of the rivalry. Violence against ourselves. Jealousy is one of the central themes in violence in the family and in partner- and child- abuse. See paper 108: Where jealousy is, there is no Love.

5.4 Thus violence in modern marriages is common. Mostly it is under the surface. It is hidden, only surfacing in the fears, which partners have for each other. We play games, make jokes, hide with the reverse sentimentality (which certainly is very violent in fact).

We try to overcome it by lovemaking, the ritual which gives, if things go well, gives peace.

The theme violence in the family is elaborated in paper 51, Violence in the Family. Further we should have a look, if paper 97: Difficulties in the family and elsewhere can be of help.

5.5 In fact we are fascinated by sex and love-making. It is the main battlefield in the powergames between women and men, if they are married or not. It is, in orgasm, the main possibility, if it at all succeeds, to find, anyway temporarily, (something like) peace.

5.6 So, again, people in whose lives violence and the powergames of sex are very apparent, are our doubles. They mirror us, in our possibilities. We are drawn to them, because they do what we, off course in our manner, would like to do, and we hate them, because they show the dangers of our very doing and being. We scapegoat them and thus, as we do with our scapegoats in modern society, we give them care. We try, in a deep sense, to solve our problems, by solving theirs, but our caring is so full of violence, that our caring will never succeed.

5.7 To put in still another manner: We are desperately striving (!) for happiness, a reality which only can be given. We are fighting with each other for happiness, instead of waiting till we get. We are hopelessly meddling up happiness and (real) love.

Paper 99: Happiness might here be a help. I ask myself now generally if we should not make a book, in which several of the papers, rewritten, are included as separate chapters or as appendices.

5.8 There is a constant discussion going on about adulthood. Do we nowadays become adults at all? The very fact that this discussion is going on is, of course, a proof that there is a real problem. We can't, in fact, become adult without structures. These more and more missing, we remain as long as we live at worse small children and at best adolescents, fighting with and against each other for adulthood, for being. Any time we see with clear eyes that batterers and abusers are no adults (which again means that they cannot be made really responsible!), we see, because we see ourselves. The mirroring and so the fascination is again going on.

If we would stick to this point, the paper 104: Adolescence and Longevity, can be helpful.