Martha Harris' Philosophy of Education[i]

> `The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright'
> John Milton, *Of Education*, 1644

The simple vocabulary, yet finely tuned phraseology of these `little books' (as the author refers to them) conveys their counterpoint between practical commonsense and psychological penetration. They are a vehicle for imaginatively considering the true nature of education, comprising as it does both the acquisition of skills and the development of the personality. The interaction between these constitutes the finding of `identity', which Martha Harris defines as the `central task of the adolescent' (Book 3, p. 221); on this achievement rests the wellbeing of both individuals and of society at large. It entails a continual realistic self-appraisal – though not necessarily a conscious or verbal one - testing the boundaries of relationships and of capabilities. In its most sophisticated form it establishes reliance on internal parents and is thus a private matter (as in Milton's description of `regaining' knowledge of God); but in the child or adolescent the search for identity takes place in the context of family life and the first `little society' of school (Book 2, p. 115), under the aegis of actual parents and parental figures, who therefore have a formative ethical role.[1] The evolution of ethics takes place not in a vacuum but in an environment of acquiring skills and learning to appreciate the requirements of others.

It is the central task of parents to facilitate this process: to some extent through practical measures (proper instruction, access to information etc), but above all through emotional means. Acquiring a truly parental attitude to one's child is not something automatic but necessitates an internal reawakening and self-evaluation. For `we can only expect to educate [our teenager] by re-educating ourselves' (Book 3, p. 155). Since adolescence is `a time when our sons and daughters may cause us to think furiously for ourselves and about ourselves' (Book 2, p. 141), the whole tenor of these books consists in formulating the kind of fine distinctions that enable parents to try to distinguish between their received values (those of class or ethnic group, current fashions in child-rearing methods and so on) and the evolution of real values which arise from `thinking about' the interaction between ourselves and the individual child.[2] Ultimately both children and parents may take their place in `the great social class of the truly educated people, the people who are still learning' (Book 3, p. 156).

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i   Published in Martha Harris, *Your Teenager* (new edition of 3 books from 1969), Harris Meltzer Trust 2007, pp. 235-52). Page references are to this single-volume edition.

`Thinking about' our child means making qualitative distinctions at points where, in the haste and confusion of everyday existence, we are liable to see things quantitatively, assuming in a woolly way that a compromise between opposites – but not too much of either of them - is a reasonable solution to the problem. These distinctions occur in the areas of (for example) discipline and punishment; encouragement and overpraising; fairness and rigidity; firmness and authoritarianism; letting go and indifference; love and narcissism; creative and destructive types of aggression; useful and self-indulgent types of worrying; `delayed choice and spineless vacillation' (Book 3, p. 167); protecting and stifling; permissiveness and neglect; liberalism and self-idealisation; manners and courtesy, etc. Thinking about such matters, when stimulated by the real experience of trying to educate our child, means becoming more questioning of our own values and assumptions, more aware of our own hidden bad feelings, and therefore in a better position to encourage thoughtfulness in the child who is in the process of becoming adult. This is Harris's definition of `reason', and it pairs with `realism'. Realism consists in `learning from experience to aim for what is possible rather than only for the unattainable ideal' (Book 3, p. 199), and this is equally true for parents and children, and entails a certain self-knowledge of the `ingratitude, greed and envy' that can cloud our judgment.

The examples given of actual children are not presented as necessarily typical. They are not there to be generalised from, as one might expect if these were simply handbooks listing the features of adolescent mentality. Rather, they are intended to `illustrate the way one would set about trying to get a picture of [an individual child's] situation and of their development' (Book 1, p. 3). A more abstract purpose underlies their portrayal of the pitfalls and assumptions that we are likely to make if we come to automatic conclusions without self-scrutiny. The purpose is to spotlight the nature of developmental thinking. Reading the books carefully can help us as parents to identify our own adult and creative aspects, by means of noticing the feelings aroused in us by our adolescent children. Such turbulent and contradictory feelings mirror the state of the adolescent himself, who is assailed by a renewal of heightened infantile emotionality, yet who may be one day a responsible adult. Through an increase in self-awareness parents can help their child to engage that part of himself (for it is only ever a part) that desires to grow and develop. `By keeping ourselves alive as parents we help also to keep our children's interests growing' (Book 2, p. 88).

Martha Harris's philosophy of education was formalised in psychoanalytical terms in the tract written in collaboration with Donald Meltzer a few years after writing these books, *A Psychoanalytic Model of the Child in the Family in the Community* (Meltzer & Harris, 1994).[3] At about the same time she wrote her description of `The Tavistock Training and Philosophy' which is likewise, on one level, a vehicle for her personal views on education and how to facilitate it within a particular group, or group-within-a-group. For there are in her view many parallels between learning to be a parent and learning to be a psychotherapist or analyst – especially in terms of the mental qualities to be cultivated. In each case, `it is not enough to love one's

own children'; a particular type of generosity needs to be opened up which goes beyond possessive love.[4] Parenthood, like psychoanalysis, is to be understood as an `art-science' (Harris & Bick, [1987, p. 277; 2011, p. 20]).  The central quality which needs to be developed is to focus on the task in hand - to observe the minute realities of the child's situation, to relinquish judgement and ambition and instead to `acquire a capacity to delay, or rather to refrain from asking for, immediate satisfaction from the patient [or child] himself' (Harris & Bick, [1987, p. 276; 2011, p. 19]). This is Keatsian `negative capability' or `living in the question' (Harris & Bick, [1987, p. 267; 2011, p. 9]).

In the Model, the family is described as an `educational institution' (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p. 453); it is the place where intimate learning-from-experience can meet up with acquiring social skills and quantifiable knowledge `about' the world. A psychoanalytical model of mental development envisages the personality as a complex field of possible states of mind, ranging between the mind-stretching orientation of `learning from experience' and the more superficial or imitative modes of acquiring knowledge (projective, adhesive, scavenging), with tyrannical and gang-like attitudes operating at the destructive extreme. All these various personality structures, and their equivalent family structures, can be found somewhere in these books – either referred to or described through examples. These mental states are the context in which learning difficulties occur, or are overcome. Since everybody – of whatever age - has both adult and infantile aspects to their character, and will at times oscillate between them, it is necessary for purposes of self-scrutiny to have an overall view of the possibilities. This is the `epistemological dilemma of the individual' as described in the Model: the two opposing value-systems of `understanding the world' (the adult attitude) and of `controlling the world' (the infantile attitude) (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p. 411). Here, however, I will focus on the `adult' aspect and on the principle of how to nurture it in one's child.

As stated in the Model the `adult part' of the personality begins to form early in childhood, indeed infancy (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, pp. 436-8); it is not a question of chronological age but of mental orientation. Indeed, the progressive part of a child may cause `dislocation' in a family bonded together rigidly through behavioural patterns (projective identification) as tends to happen in strict ethnic, classbound or ideological communities.[5] But it is `those who have failed in childhood to become reconciled to being children' (Book 2, p. 136) who are most liable to sink into the antithesis of adulthood - namely gang mentality - owing to having no means of self-awareness, no internal objects securely established.[6] The concept of `work' has been lost, a concept which, like `thinking', depends on transference to internal objects. For the adult state of mind `has a sense of purpose and regards every activity as a form of work, in relation to transference figures (teachers, parents) or to those depending on it' (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p. 437). How can this be encouraged to predominate over infantile states so that the individual's education may progress?

As Martha Harris points out (citing Melanie Klein) `play is a child's work' (Book

2, p. 95); the distinction between work and play is a false one and would be incomprehensible to the young child, who has not yet lost touch with the joyous aegis that Wordsworth called `the master-light of all our seeing'. Work-play is an absorbing activity that engages the developing mind-body and draws it onwards (e-duc-ates). It contrasts with the `shades of the prison-house' - the conformity of feeling like a drudge, a cog in the machine, `overworked' – in short, the claustrum of basic-assumption values.[7] It is to alleviate the pressures of the claustrum that we all seek some form of `drug… to sweeten reality':

> Forms range from smoking and alcohol to daydreams, flattery and reassurance. The harmfulness of the drug depends on the degree to which we rely on it, and on how much it is used as a substitute for self-awareness. (Book 3, p. 226)

Thus it is motivation, rather than quantity, that clarifies the nature of a drug.[8] Adults, she writes, may tend to be `guilty about their pleasures' (Book 2, p. 95); and this is associated with more infantile states of mind. But the adult state of mind is in itself pleasurable and playful and requires no drugs. Ultimately self-fulfilment is the same thing as service to the world, and as Blake was always saying, its energies and potentialities are `infinite', not subject to excess or rationing. You cannot have too much of a good thing – at least not in spiritual terms.

So these books encourage parents to seek for enjoyment in the work-play of bringing up their child. The period of adolescence, from the first stirrings of puberty onwards, is a time not only of stress but also of opportunity for children and parents to grow together. On the verge of their teenager's `leap into adulthood' the parent may be tempted to lapse into feelings of obsolescence and redundancy (Book 3, p. 163); but the author repeatedly suggests that if we can learn to make certain `realistic' distinctions this reciprocal turbulence in ourselves can be channelled towards the rejuvenation of our own life and relationships. Then, most importantly, these may in turn reflect back onto the teenager: for the evidence of our continuing emotional growth is critical to the teenager's own quest for identity. The most valuable gift we can offer is to model the process that Yeats described as `remaking oneself'. Only if the parental model does not `depend on the children for its vitality' can the children `use it as a basis from which to develop their own' (Book 3, p. 213). This means, the model provided in psychological reality by the parental figures – not just their creed. For `to have given up learning as so many of us adults have is not an inspiring example to the young learner, and to have so much knowledge that we never use except to pass it on to our children is equally dispiriting' (Book 3, p. 149).[9] And, the author reminds us, the teenager will know the facts of our feeling: `the tie between parents and adolescent child is such that we cannot hide our feelings though equally we rarely verbalise them. But they emerge and are noted' (Book 3, p. 164).

It follows that it is no use if our interest is not genuine – interest in our work, in the world around us, above all in the child – because the adolescent, like Hamlet,

knows the difference between `is and seems', and his adult part wants to know what will `denote him truly' in the context of all this.[10] Genuine interest is not proprietorial but is a type of wonderment at the astonishing fact of nature that is the adolescent mind. Interest acknowledges the existence of our unpleasant feelings of irritation, anger, guilt, and can tolerate rather than immediately expel them. As explained in the Model, interest is of powerful therapeutic value;[11] as exemplified in the case of Edward with his prison-dream (Book 1, p. 8), or of Steve and the headteacher (Book 1, p. 38), it is capable of penetrating the sense of self-imprisonment and drawing the prisoner out into the world of reality. Hence the need to continually monitor and discuss the `indicators of physical, social, intellectual and emotional development' of the various family members (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p. 427). Through our interest we can teach by example how to scrutinise scientifically the evidence for our opinions, and demonstrate the possibility of changing one's mind on the basis of new evidence. `The topics must matter to us too, and the education will follow automatically' (Book 3, p. 155). Interest enables us to hold approval and disapproval in abeyance while we consider more closely. We may, for example, disapprove of too much TV, (or computer games), apparent rudeness or uncivilized behaviour, or indeed of competitiveness or sports-obsession - depending on the social group to which we consider we belong. If we withhold judgment but continue to observe closely we may discover, for example, that the significance of the TV for a particular child at a particular time is to provide a cocoon `less troublesome than silence' to protect his privacy (Book 2, p. 98); or that undesirable material in his reading or entertainment may have likewise no penetrating power.[12]

For in the intimate area of emotional growth, learning takes place `through identification' (`with parents, friends and teachers', [Book 1, p. 13]) not through precept, reward or punishment.[13] Once the concept of identification is established, it becomes clear why `do as I say not as I do' does not work. Teenagers will be affected by what we mean, rather than what we say; and `We may hold broad and generous views meanly, and stern opinions with tolerance' (Book 3, p. 154). As with the question of hypocrisy versus sincerity in religious matters, it is not our social carapace but our real intentions and behaviour that count. Reliance on a veneer of respectability is merely the other side of delinquency, as in the reformed adults who become `pillars of society and castigate their own children for acts which they don't care to remember having committed themselves' (Book 2, p. 138).[14] Antisocial behaviour derives from hidden or secret delinquency in the parental attitude, and is associated with tendency to blame others (Book 1, p. 34; Book 2, p. 109). By contrast, `real courtesy takes into account the needs and potentialities of the child' so will be imbibed (eventually) by a species of reflection of our actual values, not just of our self-image.[15] `Much patience, and much self-awareness, is called for if courtesy is to become an inward growth and not an imposed hence unreliable regulation' (Book 2, pp. 117-20).

In the same way the child will perceive intuitively any attempt we make to deceive him about his real capacities; and our own motivational confusion will create a dis-

abling confusion in his mind.[16] As parents, as with therapists, we need to beware of all `impediments to accurate observation' (Harris & Bick, [1987, p. 268; 2011, p. 10]). When are we really treating the child as an attribute of ourselves, `to do us credit in the eyes of others' (Book 1, p. 44)? When, believing we are protecting or encouraging him, are we really protecting ourselves from our own fears of failure, or sexual furtiveness?[17] `The child does not wish to be caught in a commercial transaction in which if he delivers the goods (success) he will be loved, but if he does not deliver, he will be despised'; though this is to be distinguished from glossing over failure, which is equally unhelpful (Book 2, pp. 85-86). This failure in our own self-knowledge derives from a quantitative definition of `success'.[18] Several examples are given of parents coming to terms with `disappointment in their own unrealised ambitions' which they have attempted to live through their child, or in other ways use the child as their instrument.[19] Neither guilt nor pride is `useful' since both involve blinding oneself to the individual nature of the child – the need to respect his `spark of uniqueness that was in him from the day of his birth, and that sets him apart as a separate human being' (Book 1, p. 26), as in Keats's formulation of the `spark of identity' in the `Vale of Soul-making'. The key to igniting the spark is `realism' – how to encourage the child's realistic capacities – and that entails being realistic ourselves, not idealising or dismissive or domineering. This is the strenuous art-science of parenthood. One part of the child may stimulate our `overpraising', but once this is distinguished from encouragement in our own mind, and recognised as tyrannical, it is easier to resist the child's demands for it, and to ally with the more realistic adult part of the child that wants `to be understood and to relate to the world and themselves truthfully' – to become educated (Book 1, p. 38).

   The main function of a parent, according to the Model, is to share and thereby to modulate the child's developmental pains:

> The essence of service is the sharing of someone else's pain with a view to lowering it within the bounds of their toleration, while going beyond this limit produces indulgence and overprotection… containment of mental pain is the central concept for examining the educational functions of the family under this model. (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p.411)

- where `pain' is the Negative-Capability cloud of uncertainty, not-knowing – as in Edward's `prison of not knowing anything, the terror of feeling lost at school and deprived of identity' (Book 1, p. 10). The parent can usefully `take on the worrying part of the excitement' of any new challenge (such as that of starting secondary school – marking as it does, in formal terms, the `end of childhood' [Book 1, p. 15) but in such a way as not to deprive the child of the `real experience' of the challenge by demeaning it. So another of the distinctions we need to keep in view – in order to make turbulence profitable – is that between self-indulgent and `useful' or `creative' worry. Worrying usefully is a parent's `work and pleasure' (Book 1, p. 3). By clarifying what is meant by `useful' worry we can learn to distinguish between persecutory

anxiety and that belonging to the joys and pains of development - the vitality of living in the question (Book 2, pp. 75, 86). Similarly our own justifiable anger and irritation becomes more containable when we realise that `the qualities that irritate us most strongly are likely to be qualities in ourselves that we don't like' (Book 1, p. 26), or that `children like adults have an aggressive component to their nature which helps them to survive and to create' (Book 2, p. 118). This is to be distinguished from the type of aggression which is really `timorousness' and which is generally directed against those who seem different (in class, sex or ethnic group).[20] The principle is to try to harness the child's innate vitality usefully into facing the challenge of life, rather than to deny the natural role of competitiveness and aggression (including towards ourselves), in a way which will only lead to rebellion and the idealisation of `freedom' or far-away places later on.[21]

Behind all the specific life-challenges of new schools, public exams, new friends, etc, lies the New Idea of adolescence itself – a catastrophic change like a `second birth' (Book 3, p. 163).[22] Puberty with its new body heralds the unknown idea of one's future internal shape or identity. `This change and protection against this change' is what prepossesses the adolescent mind from around age eleven onwards (Book 1, p. 15). As in infancy, this phase uncovers the `thrust for development' that varies in strength between individuals but is `present in all who live' (Harris & Bick, [1987, p. 267; 2011, p. 9]). The adolescent has `too many unfamiliar stirrings of growth …to have his feelings taken other than deadly seriously' (Book 1, p. 36). Hence his `extreme snail-like sensitivity' (Book 3, p. 152).[23] For the tomboyish girl who senses the dawn of womanhood, `a sense of reality convinces that the best must be made of a bad job' (Book 1, p. 55). We can empathise with the child's resistance to the New Idea, even `mourn' our own lost childhood again, for according to the laws of identification `our attitude of mind is probably more important than what we actually say' (Book 1, p. 52).

Martha Harris captures the poignant precariousness of the adolescent child, `caught between lost childhood and unrealised adulthood' (Book 2, p. 118). Balanced between moving forwards and gazing nostalgically backwards, the child senses `the shadow of the future cast before' (as Shelley put it), the `undiscovered country' of his future self (as Hamlet put it).[24] So `the responsible thoughtful young adult of one day can suddenly be the heedless infant of the next' (Book 3, p. 193). It is a testing time for the parents since previous modes of regulation no longer work, and it becomes apparent whether or not the child has imbibed some sense of self-responsibility. We need to be in touch with their `despair' of ever growing up, of possibly feeling `let down by themselves' (Book 3, p. 193), and to `feel ourselves back into that contradiction of arrogance and abasement that the teenager experiences and presents himself as being' (Book 3, p. 165).

The books map out the various sections of a child's social life in which he can explore and get a feel for his growing identity: living out internal emotional dramas amongst friends, siblings, the `little society' of school, schoolwork, and the comple-

mentary work of playing - interests, games and hobbies. All of these are fields which offer opportunities for gauging the qualities of the developing inner self – or equally, for denying, evading, or acting out. Like the games-field they can all potentially draw forth `the loss of self-consciousness that brings success' (Book 1, p. 17). The adolescent child's `play' is described as a `barometer' for watching the child's condition – to see when they need help `venturing out', or when `storms are brewing' (Book 3, p. 175). Thus, in terms of the teenage boy's sexuality, he may have an `idealising' relationship with his bike (or, these days, very often his electric guitar) that does not have the `dangers of the mocking, assessing and demanding glances of a real girl' (Book 3, p. 172). Emotionally, he may be pursuing a search for an `ideal partner' in this way.[25] The eleven-year-old may learn from the experience of owning a pet about responsibility towards others and about the individual life of another creature (Coleridge's `one life'), also in preparation for intimate human relationships (Book 1, p. 16). The boy watching a leaf fall as he fishes in the river may drink in semi-consciously recollections that will `refresh him for all his life' (Book 3, p. 175); the experience of feeling part of a larger world – of nature - will contribute to shaping his own identity, his sense of the bounds of his existence.

In the process of imagining-into the child's emotional state the author's language takes on a metaphorical even poetic quality at times. Thus she describes the young teenager climbing a cliff: he begins as a child, but `when he gets to the top it is as a man, and it is the sort of climb which, in one form or another, all our children have to make' (Book 2, p. 97). The climb of forward development entails `seriously tasting a little of the flavour of death', without the `safety net of fantasy' of a younger child. We cannot empathise with the struggles of development without recognising its real dangers; growing up is a serious business. Our role as parents is to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary dangers, avoiding both the `indifference which will result in foolhardiness' and the `overprotection which will result in rebellion against our clinging refusal to let them grow up' (Book 2, p. 97). Nonetheless, self-scrutiny is not an infallible tool, and (in the interests of realism) it is acknowledged that, just as life may hold tragic circumstances which we cannot foresee or forestall, a situation can arise where the most helpful thing a parent can do for their child is to tolerate the pain of watching them make serious mistakes – even though the easier option would be to disown or abandon them emotionally.[26] Correspondingly there can be a situation where a child wishes for `safer parents than his own' and finds ways of engineering this (Book 2, p. 111). The cliff-climbing aspect of the child is his adult self, the escapism (drugs, opting out etc) his infantile self. One is driven by `competing with oneself', the other by envy of internal parents. They can both end in `death' but the motivation - the danger – and so the meaning, is different.

Again, the child exploring his own identity by playing and quarrelling with his friends `gets a feeling of his own qualities and learns that they are to be found in his friends and in himself' (Book 2, p. 133). Some relationships are exploratory; others pander to that part of the child which would prefer never to grow up. Only individ-

ual thinking will alert us to the distinction. A child may choose a particular friend `to express anti-social tendencies which he himself has harboured secretly' (Book 2, p. 137). Or, an initial diagnosis may need to be reversed on closer inspection: as in the case of Sam where the anti-developmental tendency lodged not in the evident sibling rivalry, but in a more hidden collusion with his eldest brother and apparent protector (Book 2, pp. 106-107). The distinction between the kind of acting-out which is an attempt to evade inner emotional conflicts, and the kind of playing that expresses and so helps to resolve them, is illustrated by the example of Mark, who emerged from his prolonged infantile state by `playing out the rivalry he had with his sisters in a wider field [of sport]… where the same rules apply to all' (Book 1, p. 18). He needed the kind of status earned in an area where all are treated equally, to develop his sense of values and identity.

For the ethos of a `couple family' (states the Model) requires `the growth of all members' (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p. 427); where there are scapegoats there can be no sense of security, and the family slips into shades of gang mentality.[27] Martha Harris cites the old dictum of `to each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities' (Book 2, p. 115); while reminding us that `an appropriate share may not mean an exactly similar shape' (Book 1, p. 27). A fair share is not something externally visible, but something that can be known only through self-scrutiny, once one is alerted to the distinction between share and shape. In the same way it is `not generally considered clever to cheat' where the teacher is fair-minded. `If we play fair with the child, and with other people, we strengthen that side of them which recognises and upholds justice and fair shares for all' (Book 1, p. 47). As in other matters, the child will sense what is genuinely a fair share (of attention) and this will help to establish the `couple' aegis in terms of internal parents. Because the school has a semi-parental ethos, playing for the school (as in sport or music) or simply feeling part of the school has for the young teenager the sense of carrying responsibility for the family name, and is a means of earning self-respect.[28]

The sports field is just one of the areas that can act as a `theatre of fantasy' (the term used in the Model) for the contradictory emotions of the adolescent, who needs `war games' to develop. In the drama of the `internal wars' parents, like other figures, are not solely, or always, themselves in the eyes of the child, but move in and out of their transference role. `We can act as a sort of listening post where they can hear themselves speak' (Book 2, p. 134): hence the attention paid to encouraging family discussion, where different aspects of the child can voice themselves experimentally, testing the boundaries of the self and its contrary inner voices. `Playing with ideas', writes Martha Harris, is `as important to the adolescent child as free imaginative play is to the three to six or seven year old' (Book 2, p. 100); and parents are required to stand in for facets of the child's self:

> For many of his arguments and rebellions against his parents are really arguments against himself and, though he and you may not know it, he is often really asking for his saner and more reasonable

self to be supported. He is looking to you for arguments that can be used against the voices that tempt him to despise and turn away from his parents and from consideration for others. (Book 2, p. 114)

There are many forums for playing with ideas - home, school, formal lessons and `gossip'. The parental role-playing is not merely a case of being used by the child, nor of providing technical expertise in argument that may help them to stand their ground in the world; it is an exercise in reality testing, demanding the evidence for their views. It will not be effective unless there is a genuine possibility (however small) of modifying our own opinions, thus demonstrating we have been `stimulated to take a fresh look at our reasons' (Book 1, p. 35). It is associated with the more sophisticated concept of `speaking well' – not to convince others, but to know oneself and the grounds for one's own opinions, the opposite of arrogance.[29] For the adolescent is not only a tangle of feelings but also a `rational being', and the parental role is to provide `a space where reason can operate', founded on this theatre of fantasy (Book 3, p. 166). That space is defined by the parent-child interaction.

The vitality of the inner theatre of fantasy is essential to the process of being drawn out into the wider world, the world of work and working relationships that will put to the proof the child's `realism'.[30] In the later years of school many academic subjects can take on an emotional charge, in the same way as relationships to teachers have always done. Subjects involving time and history, for example, may trigger in a stormy way the teenager's new sense of being `part of a much larger world, a world which has a history, which is much nearer and more real to them as they become more aware of having a personal history' (Book 2, p. 83). By his later teens he will have acquired `that signal possession of adulthood – a past'; he is then liable to `blame us for the world we have made for him' (Book 3, pp. 163-65). When this is happens, the teenager will require an expansion in the capacity of his internal objects in order to contain the sense of urgency springing from the clash between idealism and reality. Reality has expectations of him, ideality does not. Hence the `panic about wasted time' that often underlies later teenage impatience and may result in breakdown or in foolhardy actions (Book 3, p. 230).

Parents who are trying realistically to evaluate their own lives in the world can help protect their teenager not so much in practical ways (which become increasingly limited as they get older) but from the overwhelming impact of their own feelings of guilt and destructiveness. Older teenagers who sense their parents have constricted their own lives - supposedly on their behalf - may develop `a grudge towards inward parents, leading in turn to an inner expectation of being deprived of fulfilment themselves' (Book 3, p. 231). The guilt requires not denial (expurgation), but modulation; however we cannot hope to modulate their pain unless we have sufficient internal reserves to rely on to modulate our own pain and uncertainties. We have a duty to our adolescent children to enjoy the work-play of our own lives, so that they can climb the cliff of their adulthood, no longer reliant on their actual parents but fol-

lowing that more abstract pursuit of regaining their gods within – `the privacy which in the end, can exist only in the mind' (Book 2, p. 98). They can become educated in the self-knowledge that makes all other forms of knowledge meaningful.

Notes

1.   Parental figures include at times teachers, relations, or friends of the family, etc. They are those with whom the child may form a 'transference relationship' that can strengthen their internal parenting. The concept of 'parents' thus covers single-parent families and stepfamilies. The idea of the parental couple, or of parents and teachers, 'pulling together' relates to the establishment of an ethical system internally within the child's mind. Ultimately, it is the internal family, with its male and female components, that must guide the adolescent in his future life. At the same time, relationships with guiding figures that are less emotionally charged have another type of usefulness; e.g., family friends may be able to offer advice that would be rejected if it came from the actual parents, whose function then becomes one of 'taking the heat off the advice' (Book 3, p. 166).

2.   Martha Harris changed the title of her book on infants from *Understanding Infants and Young Children* to *Thinking about Infants and Young Children*, in order to make a connection with the work of W. R. Bion, where 'thinking' is a term of precise psychological significance, rather than being synonymous with such terms as 'suppose', 'belief', 'assume', 'wish', etc., as it frequently is in everyday usage.

3.   This paper is based also on work carried out in schools in collaboration with Roland Harris. It was written in 1976 at the request of Beresford and Ruth Hayward for the Organization of Economic and Cultural Development of the United Nations, and published in English for the first time in *Sincerity and Other Works: Collected Papers of Donald Meltzer*, ed. A. Hahn (Karnac, 1994), though it had been published earlier in Italian, French and Spanish. The paper, like these Teenager books, is essentially psychoanalytical rather than sociological in its approach, while dealing with the growth of the individual in society and with the evolution of ethics. The 'six forms of learning' are described on pp. 393-394 (see Appendix II of this book, pp. 253-54).

4.   Martha Harris, "The Tavistock training and philosophy', in *Collected Papers of Martha Harris and Esther Bick*, ed. M. H. Williams (Clunie Press, 1987), p. 277 (new edition *The Tavistock Model* [Harris Meltzer Trust, 2011], p. 20).

5.   In the 'Dolls House' type family, according to the Model, 'dislocation may occur if, as the children grow older, their educational and social skills begin to exceed those of the parents' (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p. 442). The same possibility is discussed in the *Teenager* books under the heading 'When a child does better than his parents' (Book 3, p. 156). This kind of dislocation, which means the family is insufficiently flexible to accommodate new ideas, is to be distinguished from the egocentric 'idealism' (standard in adolescence) that fails to adapt to 'reality' (see for example Jane, Book 1, p. 37; Julia, Book 3, pp. 194-97; Richard, Book 3, pp. 199-201; Matthew, Book 3, p. 215, etc.). Such a distinction – in family life – has its parallel in social life, in terms of 'the problem of distinguishing the revolutionary expression of a new idea from the rebellion of the disgruntled who cannot master the old idea' (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p. 453).

6.   The 'adult' mental structure is defined by its 'aspirational' identification with teachers and mentors: 'identification with the combined object being a precondition for creative mental functioning' (Meltzer & Harris, 1994, p. 398).

7.   Bion's term for our unthinking obedience to given creeds or 'myths' as they are called in the Model (Meltzer & Harris 1994, p. 403).

8.   Referring of course to psychological harm, rather than to physical harm, which is quantity-related.

9.   An example of the book's teaching method of packing its punches slantwise, in brackets or subordinate clauses.

10.   See *Hamlet* I.iii.84. Hamlet is the archetypal adolescent, and there are many implied references to the play in these books.

11.   The Model states: 'One task of the analyst is to find his way into the world inhabited by his patient, but this is just as true of parent or teacher. A person or part of the personality trapped inside an object can usually be helped and enticed out… given at least one person interested enough to seek him out in his claustrum' (Meltzer & Harris 1994, p. 408).

12.   'For that matter, there has always been plenty of unhealthy and sadistic material in children's … entertainment' (Book 1, p. 22).

13.   Of course this book was written before our current conceptions of social correctness regarding corporal punishment. But in terms of the principles involved, we should note that reward and punishment ('whether corporal or otherwise' as Harris states) are described not as wrong but as 'not useful' (Book 1, p. 35). The Model points out that any educational system will to some extent be – and will certainly be experienced as – 'bestowing and withholding' and thereby rewarding and punishing (Meltzer & Harris 1994, p. 453). In so far as the family is an 'educational institution' it falls into this category; but not in so far as it develops reliance on internal parental objects for the benefit of all the mind's children.

14.   Another example of the author's 'slantwise' penetration.

15.   This does not mean that manners should not, additionally, be straightforwardly taught – simply that if they are only a carapace, it is not ultimately enough: 'There is a sort of mirror in society, wherein "please" and "thank you" reflect "thank you " and "please" '(Book 2, p. 120).

16.   As in the case of Christopher, whose mother's sympathy took the form of 'identifying with him some inadequate side of herself that she did not know how to help along' (Book 1, p. 68).

17.   The confusing influence of parents' or teachers' own hidden infantile sexual anxieties is frequently discussed: for example in Book 1, p. 50; Book 2, p. 125).

18.   Martha Harris writes that the 'educational system' is responsible for many teenagers having a 'poor opinion of themselves' by the time they leave school (Book 3, p. 162). This is the result of a quantitative definition of success: a failure to harness natural competitive energies into the service of 'competing with oneself'.

19.   See for example Book 1, p. 31; Book 3, pp. 162-63, 179.

20.   In order to define an object of hostility without taking responsibility for exclusion, the group merely 'alters the definition of members' (Meltzer & Harris 1994, p. 416).

21.   See for example Book 1, p. 43; Book 3, pp. 195-99.

22.   'Catastrophic change' being Bion's term for both major and minor growth points in the developing personality. The Model summarises: 'The view taken here is that "learning from experience" occurs where a new idea is assimilated by the internal combined object, which then helps the self to master it and the emotional upheaval that attends its advent' (Meltzer & Harris 1994, p. 398).

23.   A reference to Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* ('The snail… Shrinks back into his shelly cave with pain') and Keats's comment on it: 'He has left nothing to say about nothing or anything… you know what he says about snails' (letter to Reynolds, 22 November 1817).

24.   As in my interpretation 'The undiscovered country: the shape of the aesthetic conflict in Hamlet', in *The Apprehension of Beauty* (Donald Meltzer & Meg Harris Williams, Clunie Press 1988, pp. 84-133).

25.   The Model mentions only the 'masculine infantile' aspect of machines as an extension of the body (Meltzer & Harris 1994, p. 443); Harris here suggests another possibility that would need to be differentiated in the individual case.

26.   As in the case of Rosalind (Book 3, p. 187).

27.   This applies of course not necessarily to literal 'couples' but to the dominant ethical aegis of the family. The 'benevolent community of the combined object' on the other hand maintains its attitude of benevolence only by excluding bad or destructive members 'as if they were in fact members of some paranoid community who had wandered or slipped across its borders' (Meltzer & Harris 1994, p. 416). The Model then distinguishes between this 'mythic area' of cosy basic assumptions and the 'work-group' area that regards itself as comprised of a collection of distinct individuals.

28.   See the Model's distinction between 'status' and 'self-respect' that exists in relation to the 'family name' of the couple-family (Meltzer & Harris 1994, p. 427); below, p. 258). Loss of self-respect results in loss of respect for the school (Book 3, p. 153).

29.   What Milton called being 'competently wise in one's Mother Dialect', as distinct from being either tongue-tied or a Babel-tongued linguist (*Of Education*, 1644). In the same context, it is interesting to remember the description by Donald Meltzer of Martha Harris's own way of speaking: 'She had a particular way of talking that often seemed at first a stutter but was in fact a complicated process of accommodation between the complexity of her thought and the minute responses of her audience' (Harris & Bick, *Collected Papers*, 1987, p. vii).

30.   As in the 'honest basis' for life that became promising in the case of Elizabeth (Book 3, p. 217).

31.   See also Book 3, pp. 210, 229.

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