

PSYCHOLOGY

Child Delinquency Cause

Lengthy study shows that one or both parents, consciously or unconsciously, are very often responsible when children from "normal" families start misbehaving maliciously.

► WHEN A child from a "normal" family of good reputation takes to setting fires, playing truant, stealing or misbehaving sexually, it very often is because one or both parents unwittingly sanction or indirectly encourage such behavior.

The parents unconsciously get pleasure from the child's bad behavior because it satisfies the unconscious impulses the parents have always had toward misbehaving themselves.

These are the conclusions of Dr. Adelaide M. Johnson of the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn., and Dr. S. A. Szurek of the University of California School of Medicine and the Langley Porter Clinic, San Francisco. They are based on studies over the past 10 years at the Rochester and San Francisco institutions and the Chicago Institute for Juvenile Research, University of Illinois and the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis. The findings are reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (March 6).

Knowledge of this "major" cause of juvenile delinquency should be spread widely, the doctors advocate, with the object of putting up parental conscience barriers against the fostering of misbehavior in their children as a substitute for misbehavior by themselves.

Often in a family of several children, one child will behave badly while all the others are well behaved. The one child has been selected by the father or mother as the "scapegoat." This may be an adopted child, when the encouraged misbehavior can be blamed on heredity rather than parental encouragement. Or it may be the boy who was born when a girl was badly wanted, or the younger of two sons who superficially resembles the younger of two uncles who was "spoiled and no good from the start."

As an example of both the scapegoat mechanism and the parental subtle permission and inadvertent encouragement of misbehavior, the doctors tell about a mother who was alarmed to find her five-year-old younger son playing with matches. He reminded her of her "no-good" brother Ed who also had set fires and who had aroused her jealousy because he was her father's favorite. She warned the son to stop playing with matches, telling him fires should be only in a stove, fireplace, or for cigarettes.

"All was well so far," comment the doctors.

But then she said to the son that "if he insisted on fires we would burn some papers in the sink." Her husband thought that was stupid, but she thought it better

"than burning the house down the way my brother Ed nearly did twice."

The same cause, parental sanction and encouragement of antisocial behavior, is involved in the delinquent and in the psychopath, who is just a delinquent grown older, the doctors state. They point out that it takes considerable effort and skill, usually by two therapists, to detect the clues to parental sanction of antisocial behavior in children.

Treatment of the parents is extremely difficult and may lead to neurosis in them. However, the doctors believe this is better than letting the parents go untreated and the child continue in delinquency and adult antisocial behavior with "its threat of perpetuation through the generations."

Science News Letter, March 20, 1954

PSYCHOLOGY

Says Freud Wrong on Male, Female Symbols

► ONE OF Sigmund Freud's basic ideas, that men and women respond differently to "sex symbols," has been questioned by a University of California psychologist.

Freud believed, and research years ago seemed to prove, that when people are shown sets of symbols, feminine women respond in a distinct fashion and masculine men in a completely different way. The two groups prefer different symbols.

So when a psychologist wanted to determine the degree of femininity or masculinity in an individual, he showed the subject Freudian symbols. Then, for example, if a woman responded according to the masculine pattern, it meant that she had masculine characteristics in her personality.

However, Dr. Irving Morris Goldstein, the California psychologist, thought he saw a flaw in the tests that seemed to prove these ideas. He noted that the subjects of the early tests knew what they were being tested for. Did this knowledge influence their reactions?

Dr. Goldstein devised a test in which the individuals did not know what they were being tested for. He gave it to 200 men and women who were shown to be normal by other criteria.

The psychologist found no difference in the responses of men and women. Both men and women recognized the same symbols with the same frequency, and they consistently expressed the same preferences among the different designs.

The psychologist believes these are the first findings of this nature that are directly contrary to the Freudian hypothesis. The results are not conclusive yet, but do indicate the need for further research.

Science News Letter, March 20, 1954

AERONAUTICS

16 Times Speed of Sound Attained in Wind Tunnel

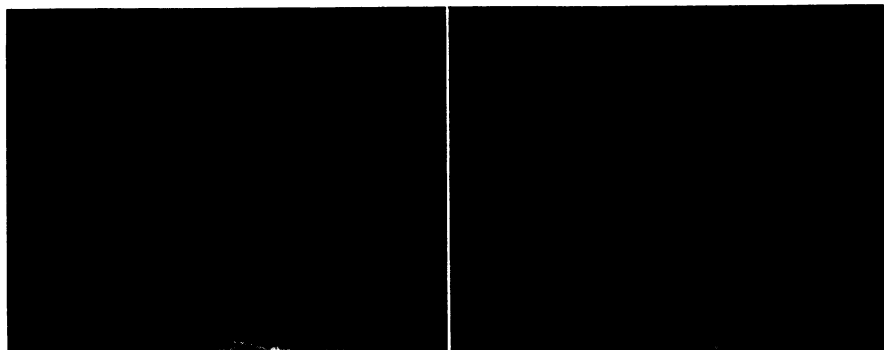
► WIND SPEEDS of Mach 16, equal to about 12,000 miles an hour, have been attained in a hypersonic wind tunnel at the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University, Silver Spring, Md.

Pure helium was used instead of air to test the designs of experimental aerodynamic shapes that may give tomorrow's airplane a "new look." The helium was stored in large tanks at 100 times atmospheric pressure, and was heated to 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Using pure nitrogen, the Johns Hopkins scientists were able to produce air speeds up to nine times the speed of sound, or about 6,750 miles an hour. Each test lasts about 30 seconds.

The research is being conducted because it is believed that in the next 10 or 15 years, flight conditions will be so different from those of today that present aerodynamic designs will be "inadequate."

Science News Letter, March 20, 1954



12,000 MILES AN HOUR—In a wind tunnel at the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University, the effects of design at velocities up to 16 times the speed of sound are being studied. Shown here are a 90-degree cone and a sphere in a helium flow equivalent to 12,000 miles an hour.