

Family Determinants of Homosexuality: A Case Study

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Abstract

Deficiencies in the parental relationship—emotional dismissal or actual disappearance of a parent—may cause a traumatic situation to arise within a family unit. Often such events will cause a child to make efforts to replace the missing parent by becoming a surrogate partner to the remaining parent. Three elements—the absence of a bond between parents, the undervaluation of the father, and erotic entanglement—appear to be constitutive to homosexuality. From their existence appears a wealth of varying symptoms which cannot be eliminated without rebuilding the constitutive elements. In an environment suffused with emotional and erotic entanglement, homosexuality may provide protection against incest.

Keywords: family relations, fusion, entanglement, homosexuality.

Introduction

The goal of this article is to present a typical case study of a young homosexual man in his natural family context, and the stages of the restoration of his original orientation and identity as a heterosexual. Howard Gruber, a famous American researcher of creativity issues, favored case study over other methods of research (1980). He simply avoided the laboratory, where things can be analyzed (i.e., $n = 30$, $n = 60$, etc.), and concentrated on case study where $n = 1$, because the individual case is worth knowing. Gruber's research concentrated on analyzing notes, diaries, and manuscripts of such great personalities as Vincent van Gogh, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein.

In accordance with case study methodology, exhaustive efforts have been made to provide answers to the question regarding *how* the given environment and situation came to be (Yin, 2009). A further question can be investigated, namely, what is the probability of observing this same outcome for other men or *repeated occurrences* of homosexuality where similar family dynamics exist. This would give a basis for *generalization* (Lee, 1989; Darke, Broadbent & Shanks, 1998) as well as opposition to the opinion of Freud in terms of homosexuality. Freud regarded homosexuality as irreversible. Take, for example, a letter written to the mother of a homosexual (Freud, 1951): "*Question: can I presume that you are thinking that I can replace homosexuality with heterosexual behavior? The answer is that, taking things in general, we cannot promise that this is possible.*" Knowing the conjectures of biographers suspicious of Freud being a homosexual (Gay, 1995), it is understandable that Freud's response appears to dismiss and trivialize the problem. Socarides (1995) endeavors to deter contemporary psychiatrists from taking such a stance. Freud's followers include the relationship with the object in their considerations. Modern scholars of homosexuality focus on the study subject's bad relationship with his father (Bieber & Bieber, 1979) or overprotective mother (Fitzgibbons, 1999).

Family Determinants of Homosexuality: A Case Study

Nicolosi and Nicolosi, a married couple, (2002) differ from most other authors with a more comprehensive look at the problem. They go the furthest with regards to the prevention of homosexuality, without losing sight of the whole family and by making the connection between homosexuality and a deficit in the parents' bond. My observation over forty years of family and marriage counseling is that an understanding of the family contributes to a richer and fuller process. The connection between the parent's bond and homosexuality is an important issue I write about comprehensively in my recently published book (Szopiński, 2016).

Case study allows for a straightforward construction of a model of homosexuality. The development of homosexuality stems from skepticism towards forming satisfying relationships between a man and a woman (Fitzgibbons, 1999). This may result from experiencing a lack of good relationships and bonds between parents, perhaps precipitated by an absent or unappreciated father, or an unsatisfying mother/father relationship which causes the mother to seek an emotional, erotic intimacy with her son. A woman who loves her husband is happy when her little boy runs to his father. It would never occur to her to tell (even non-verbally) the joyful child running to his father, "Stop, don't go to your father!"

Three important elements are generally present in homosexual men: the absence of a bond between parents, the undervaluation of the father, and erotic entanglement. Their existence nurtures a wealth of varying symptoms which cannot be eliminated without rebuilding these constitutive elements. While Freud brings much to psychology, the intra-psychological concept of the Oedipus complex constrained his thinking by disallowing him to take the next mental step to something worse, i.e., that homosexuality has the function of defending the son against incest. However, systematic observation of the family as a whole is capable of supplementing this theoretical limitation.

Deficiencies in a parental relationship, specifically emotional dismissal or the actual disappearance of a parent, may cause a traumatic situation to arise within a family unit. For example, when disturbed by some troubling interaction between parents, a child may attempt to

fill the emotional void in order to help them. In effect, the missing parent is replaced by the child who becomes de facto the surrogate partner of the remaining parent. Entering such an entangled emotional and erotic relationship with one of the parents leads to the development of defense mechanisms which facilitate the child's survival in this strange and unnatural framework.

Scars are inevitable and they persist. Sometimes the mechanism may present as an inability to grow and mature. At other times the more serious form (e.g., homosexuality) becomes apparent. This level of entanglement has been well known for centuries. The peculiar relation between mother and son was discussed long ago in ancient literature. Consider for example, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. In recent times, it has not only been a subject of interest for psychiatrists and psychologists, but also in art (e.g., Rafal Olbiński, *Oedipus Rex*) and in film (*Savage Grace* from 2007¹; *The Decalogue after the Decalogue* from 2008; and *I Killed My Mother* from 2009²).

The basic components of this kind of entanglement will be outlined in this article. The impact upon a child caught in this situation will also be considered. Both aspects will be illustrated by the case of a 28-year-old man who, during a two-year-long process of psychotherapy, identified an erotic entanglement with his mother and how, for him, homosexuality served as a defense against this entanglement. In this case, having the opportunity to establish clear boundaries in family relationships during therapy allowed him to return to his heterosexual identity.

¹This film shows the psychological truth and faithfully reproduces details of the process of entangling the son by the mother, who provokes and seduces him sexually and has sexual relations with him. Afterwards the son kills his mother, stabbing her in the abdomen, and sits down on the floor next to her body while eating sandwiches. After psychological in-patient treatment, he comes back to his grandmother who takes care of him. In a short time, he also kills her with a knife. The film is based on a true story.

²The director does not try to conceal his homosexual orientation. What is most striking in the film is the excessive and realistic exposition of homosexual sex, with the concealing and masking of the erotic relation with his mother. The film may be a visual illustration of the homosexual theme for psychology students; only the possibility of therapy is missing.

Elements of the Mother/Son Entanglement

Insufficiency of the Parents' Bond

Aspects of the Oedipus complex may emerge when difficult situations erupt between a married couple. Mothers deprived of emotional support from their husbands are known to look for that support from their children, especially their sons (Szymczyk, 2013). At a very early age, even in the first or second year of life, a child will begin to identify the quality of the relationship between the mother and father (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975). For example, a child will notice when parents, although living in a shared home, have separate lives and spend decreasing time together. They may argue or almost completely ignore one another and drift apart. A wife may be dominated by her husband or a husband may assume a childlike role rather than that of a true partner.

Less rancorous scenarios better accommodate a child's self-identification process (Urbaniak, 1996). The process will be more positive if a clear and accurate understanding of the dynamics within the family setting is established, namely, the assumption of parental roles appropriately referenced to each other and to the child.

The basic components of this kind of entanglement will be outlined in this article. At the beginning of therapy, the 28-year-old man noted:

As I started to mature and become physically similar to my father, I began to shave. Then my mother began to reject me, so I started to want to more resemble a girl, so as to not lose her love but rather gain her acceptance. Thoughts came to me about how my father was bad, a drunk, violent, he didn't wash, he smelled, and I didn't want to be that kind of man. Today I know that those judgments were not my own, but my mother's, who pushed her husband away.

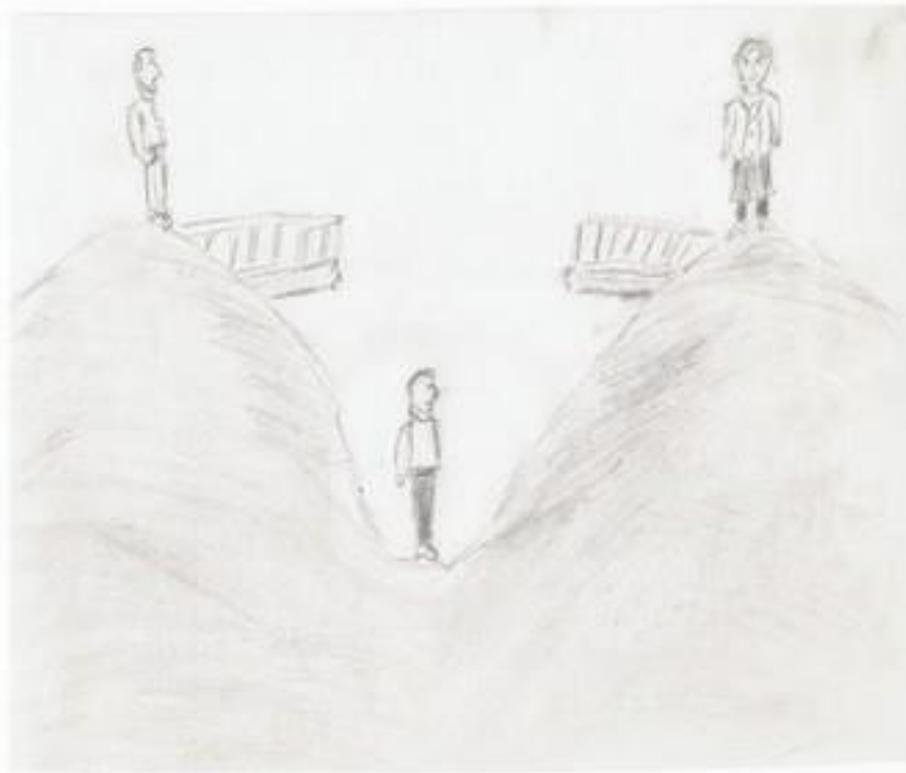
It is hard to decide if the mother, having lost the bond with her husband, always builds a bad image of the father, or if she only makes it sharper. However, being guided by her own interest, she by no means straightens it out. A dynamic develops here where an adolescent son may want to compensate for his mother's loss by replacing his impaired father, but this situation stirs up two opposite emotions in him. On the one hand, he wants to give his mother more than

his father can give, but on the other hand, guilt may arise for having mentally annihilated his father. Participation in shaping the involvement of both the mother and son should be emphasized. Indeed, the deficient bond with the spouse does not have to be an objective fact. The adolescent son can subjectively judge the father as too cold to show feelings for the mother, which is why he takes this role.

Bion (1959) introduced the concept of an attack on the bond. He described how a psychotic personality attacks the importance of thoughts and survives by destroying the connections between them. This process is described in metaphorical form as an attack on sex between the parents. Britton (1989) believes that the mental denial of sex between parents has serious consequences: the inability to form relationships and an explanation of the causes of sterile sex manifested (for example, in masturbation, pornography, and homosexuality). This mechanism is made graphically clear by a client's drawing (pictures 1 and 2) during therapy sessions entitled, "My parental relationships."³

³NOTE: The illustrations included in this article are not all associated with one individual. They are used to further explain aspects of the entanglement mechanism.

Family Determinants of Homosexuality: A Case Study



Picture 1



Picture 2

A Bad Image of One's Father

Socarides (1975) writes: "*The homosexual consistently describes his father as weak, passive and distant; or as angry, cold, and brutal*" (p. 145). With this premise in mind, it is argued that the father's absence or *emotional*—not necessarily *physical*—elimination from the parental relationship takes place. This contributes significantly to entanglement. His being simply cast aside beyond the borders of the relationship creates a 'vacant space' beside the mother, which the growing boy feels obliged to fill in order to compensate for her existing situation.

Compared with the intrinsic and extrinsic conflict generated by the serious boundary issues associated with an Oedipal complex (Kutter, 1998), the erotic-type bonding that may occur in any mother/son relationship results in something much less. A stronger feeling of dependence rooted in the early-childhood mother/child relationship appears to ameliorate the issue. By way of highlighting this dichotomy consider the following comment made by my client: "I felt in that moment a vague fear, and at the same time anger, that my mother was not allowing me to grow, that she was creating a conflict between my father and me."

He also noted:

My mother did not respect my deep, real feelings. I remember as a 10-year-old in the bathroom taking a bath, in my father's presence my mother tried to check the mobility of my foreskin in order to rule out pseudo-phimosis. It was difficult to avoid having an erection.

This event from his childhood must have weighed upon the client since he revealed it early on during the first therapeutic session. Possibly the presence of both his mother and father at that moment could have been for him a form of showing his mother that, like the father, he could also have an erection and fulfill her.

In this situation, the boy is compromised by his mother's action. It makes it difficult for him to enjoy a less conflicted mother/child relationship, which may, in turn, have allowed more typical sexual development. In light of his experience, the following comment from him is

interesting: “I noticed that computer games protected me from entering into a sexual relationship with my mother, because thanks to them I could feel like a little boy.”

Experience has shown that a person seeking therapy is, initially, more easily able to express unequivocal negative emotions with respect to the bad parent. Expressing perceptions regarding a toxic relationship with the good parent is more difficult and occurs at a later stage of the therapy. In any event, for the most part, the mechanism will be the same: regardless of the child’s age or maturity, it is formulated by the hand of the other parent—an **idealized mother-woman**. In fact, a symmetric relationship develops in which the child is idealized by the mother. In this case the client admits: “I love my mother. I fell in love with her, she is beautiful. She is my goddess. I want to always be there for her, I never want to leave her, I always want to be at her side.”

The question arises here of whether the man in the street may be dreaming about sex with a goddess. Indeed, he could sully her. This subtle and delicate barrier on the one hand allows remedying the faulty relation of the mother and the father, and on the other, efficiently defends against completely assuming the role of the mother’s sexual partner. This form of idealization prevents realization (Freud, 1912; Klein, 1989).

It has to be stressed that in European literature similar trends can be seen: those of idealizing the woman-wife, writing poems venerating her while having “dirty sex” in brothels. The mother on the other hand is saying, in front of others, *My little son. He is very clever.*

Successful therapy in such cases is not possible without healing both the child/father and child/mother relationships. The work must proceed collaterally as resolution is especially complicated in the case of an Oedipus complex, given the need to relinquish exclusive sole possession of the desired parent (Britton, 1989).

Erotic Entanglement by the Mother

The third element is a specific, hidden erotic entanglement by the mother. Intimate or private actions in the company of her son cause a certain type of situation. For example, disrobing

or bathing with the door open; sleeping in the same room while the father sleeps in another room; bringing breakfast in bed; and wearing new clothes bought with the son's approval, may promote patterns of behavior characterized by *pursuit* and *escape* (Miller, 1981). The 28-year-old male wrote:

No! I didn't do that, even though I know that I loved her (mother)! Isn't it terrible? I feel as if I loved and love my mother with my whole male sexuality and for this reason chose homosexuality. This awareness led me to extreme arousal and orgasm. I know that thinking this way about one's mother I had to masturbate and look at pornography because there was no other choice . . . that is, incestuous sex with my mother! How is it possible to love such a woman, dream of her, of her breasts, hips, her soft, warm, sweet-smelling and rounded body, and not desire to be united with her, to be in her? This is indeed how I love my mother. It's true!



Picture 3

This *pursuit* and *escape* situation is not only restricted to the mother/son relationship (Picture 3.). It becomes an overarching pattern of behavior in the young person, appearing in many spheres or sometimes in all spheres of his life. It may even be observed in non-verbal body language. It is amazing that by blocking an erotic relationship between mother and son *all* relationships may also be blocked (Lowen,1990). Examples of this phenomena may include

studies at university may be dropped before graduation, or dreams of, and efforts towards starting, a business are squashed before any success is achieved. Sometimes psychological immobility (i.e., a weakness and inability to make decisions) is accompanied by significant agitation and great physical activity, perhaps manifested, for example, in aimless walks for hours around town.

The first time I missed one of my university classes, because I had not prepared (I had been playing on the computer for a long time), I didn't know what was happening to me—instead of being better, it seemed to me to be worse!

Although this article is largely focused on the mother/son relationship, it is important to note a co-existing factor for daughters in an erotic entanglement with their fathers. There may be negation and contempt of their own physicality along with serious psycho-physiological concerns such as erratic menstruation, anorexia, and bulimia, as well as self-harming behaviors such as cutting. The form of young women's escape from their corporeality and sexuality that I have encountered as a counselor is their depicting of themselves in their relation with the father as an angel. Maybe also transsexualism is such a form of escape from their gender that is perceived as dangerous.

In entanglement situations where the father is rejected by the mother, in the child's world, the relationship with the mother is *the* preeminent relationship. It is experienced as the source of life. Consequently, when it becomes threatened, the child feels he may lose his life (Britton, 1989). Erotic relationships do not develop in a vacuum. The impact of this intensely powerful single erotic relationship is particularly influential at the time of sexual maturation. In these situations, *woman* and *mother* fuse into one in the emotional life of the growing boy.

In an earlier meeting when I was talking about my mother, I was talking about my mother, but in my feelings, there was only a little of my mother; it was 90% about a woman. I did not understand how to achieve a division in myself of woman-mother.

It is important to note in the narrative above that in the man's impressions, even in his wording, *woman* and *mother* are fused. It is also revealing of a certain opposition or bipolarity in

the psyche (i.e., an adult man mature enough for sexual relations, and a little boy who will not allow himself to grow up since growing up might end in catastrophe). Here the great price paid by the adolescent son attempting to remedy the mother/father relationship should be pointed out. By merging the relationships of the mother and the woman, a grown man must give up having sex with women. However, since the sex drive has not been wiped out, some other form of fulfillment needs to be found.

When I was a little boy, I loved my mother as a mother, but after a certain experience I began to treat my mother as a woman, so that when I felt sexual desires, I directed them towards my mother as a woman, and since I could not allow this, this is where the homosexuality came in as a solution.

It should be said that not all men experience this entanglement in the same way. As they mature they may pursue and commit to marriage. However, problems of a sexual nature may arise, for example, an inability to consummate the marriage or maintain normal sexual relations (Malachowska, Jakima, 2007). Giving up erotic relationships links with the loss of his mother. The client wrote: *"I understood and experienced that there is a feeling of guilt in leaving the woman-mother."* In order to create a pure relationship with the mother and an openness to sexual relationships with other women, a conscious division of these two roles is intrinsic to psychotherapeutic interaction in such a case.

A situation of erotic entanglement can lead to the raising of numerous barriers which impede imagined sexual contact between mother and son. Although not exclusively so, homosexuality is one such barrier. The following statements from men trapped in this entanglement indicate other physical and/or psychological barricades:

- Physical abuse of small boys
- Fear of bad sex or of having no sex
- Creating their own virtual world via the internet and/or computer games
- Becoming introverted, solitary, withdrawn from other people.

Erotic entanglement does not preclude sexual relationships with other women. However, in the subconscious of the young man, to partake in a sexual relationship with a woman there exists a fear of a loving union with the woman-mother. It may prevent the fully satisfying co-mingling one with another, or promote undefined feelings of guilt.

I feel strange, because even though I like women, I keep having feelings of guilt, not to betray my mother. I think that if I brought a girl home and introduced her to my mother she would be glad and would not criticize her—contrary to my father. However, I would have a strange feeling that I have another woman on the side.

Emotional and Physical Manifestations of Entanglement

The world of external manifestations and the world of the unconscious do not keep in contact. That which a client experiences and that which he does to veil his fear and frustration are two separate things. Alongside the absence of internal space, obsessive thoughts appear, which are meant to absorb the mind. They can take on the form of mental compulsions (e.g., continual repetition of some action, incessant deliberation or uncertainty and hesitation), which, in effect, leads to an impediment to thought and action (Nicolosi, 2009). Compulsive behavior shifts the emphasis to another pain, for example self-injury, phobias, masturbation (Coleman, 2009) perfectionism, continual house-cleaning or washing. Obsessive thinking allows the person to remain in a state of ignorance and protects him from experiencing an Oedipal situation (Kubiak, 2013).

Guilt feelings continually accompany me like a nightmare. I think that I am escaping through the guilt feelings to masturbation. I feel that these two things are connected. That is to say, when my guilt feelings become unbearable, I cannot stop thinking about masturbation, because then it seems to be the only way to relieve the stress.

Obsessive certainty is characterized by rigidity, not admitting other points of view. Doubts are not allowed (Sodre, 1994). Obsessive defenses include a firm adherence to some idea together with a need for rituals meant to prevent any type of encroachment on the resolve, because every new idea, every other point of view, is felt as a *third wheel*, an intruder which must

be immediately eliminated for the preservation of the present exclusive relationship with the one parent. To go fluidly from one thought to another, from one opinion to another, permits the sustaining of a permanent triangular situation, in which no one side is excluded. It facilitates both evasion and an unpleasant feeling of being on the outside, and the feeling of guilt in excluding someone else (Kubiak, 2013). Making a decision and persevering with it, continuing uninterruptedly in one idea, is possible only when there is the acceptance of both parents remaining in an intimate relationship (Aronson, 2010). As this client expressed it: "Don't I want to be homosexual? Am I supposed to leave my parents' bed? Am I not supposed to feel guilty? I don't know; now I am all muddled about everything."

A person capable of perceiving that he both hates and loves one and the same person, feels the authenticity of human relationships. If, however, the **feeling of ambivalence** is removed in order to establish a division between relations with the completely good parent and with the completely bad parent, then the feeling for truth is distorted in the process. In the Oedipal relationship, it can happen that a clear separation between the good parent and the bad parent extends to the entire good and bad multi-generational family, as well as to all spheres of activity. Whilst this division is very clear to the external observer, the person endeavors, at all costs, to maintain only one dimension of these relationships. Freud called this the conflict between love and hate. Love does not extinguish hatred but only displaces it to the subconscious. On the other hand, hatred in the subconscious can not only survive, but also grow. For these varied feelings toward a parent to be an integration, they must be tolerated by the child. A mother who is seen as nurturing and loving must also be seen as a sexual mother, the sexual partner of the father and, in this role, unavailable and thus also frustrating (Klein, 1989). Combining these various truths about the mother is not easy, and consequently it is not uncommon to encounter a distorted image of woman. A subtle form of distorting her image may also be idealizing her as a woman. The developing child, who defends himself against the awareness of any kind of negative feeling towards his mother, is torn by an unsolvable quandary.

Therapist: In your last email you wrote that you feel anger towards your mother.

Client: Yes, because she permitted a situation which has broken me for life. I feel anger that she transferred her feelings about her husband onto me.

T: Are you glad about this?

K: [laughing] I am angry that in my presence she humiliated and offended my father, because I took it as if she were trying to turn me against my father and bind me even more strongly only to herself.

T: You are talking about being angry with your mother, but at the same time you don't express it to her. And now, recounting it, you laugh. Could it be that you don't feel a difference between anger and love?

Irrespective of whether it is psychological or erotic entanglement, sexual abuse and, or molestation, all are associated with the manipulation of a more powerful, wiser, more mature parent who is looking for support and understanding from the weaker child (Garber, 2005).

When I started to mature, my dad noticed that there was "something wrong" with me, that I was a little "womanly." He tried to take me to the gym—typical manly things like that. It didn't have any effect though, because I told my father that actually I had a hernia. I remember as if it were yesterday how he answered me more or less like this: "Oh, yes. I forgot. Too bad." But in his face I saw defeat, disappointment, and helplessness. When I write about it, I feel like crying because I see now how my father fought for me, for my masculinity, and I didn't see it. I remember too, that my mother defended me from my father—when he perceived that I was too "soft" and was strict, my mother would protect me. Why?! She wanted to have her little boy!!! And she rejected my father! How blind I was! How greatly I wounded my father. Unknowingly but I wounded him! And on top of that I was grateful to my mother for protecting me from my father!

In conclusion, Britton's (1989) words deserve to be repeated, that the Oedipus complex is concurrent with depression, and also that **resolving an Oedipus complex is not done once and for all, but rather sometimes certain life situations will activate vestigial aspects of it. It**

must be worked on throughout the whole of our life. This thought may awaken internal resistance in us. My first publication treating this problem, *The Oedipus Complex and Professional Rivalry* (Szopinski, 1998, pp. 39–54), is connected to the conviction that there may be definitive closure after long-term therapy if the client has married, had children, functions in his profession.

However, I presently observe that this particular client has been unemployed for a long time.

After resuming contact in the context of therapy, at the first meeting dedicated to ways of looking for work, his erotic relationship with his mother was very clearly manifested. When I asked him if a picture represented his looking for a job, he answered, "*For me it reminds me of the breasts of*

an old woman.” At the same time, I also noticed a kind of inability, an absolute stupor, in discussing the current relationship with his wife.

We understand now that unresolved Oedipal emotions of early childhood neither ebb away nor disappear, but remain, steadily becoming stronger as the youth matures and grows. A sort of reversal of the configuration then takes place. For the child, the parent couple is creative; for the elderly, they are the younger generation. One generation is replaced by the next, and in later life, a feeling of having lost position accompanies this. Identifying with the achievements of the younger generation, however, can ease the feeling of being left out. Identification with the happiness of his parents can help a child alleviate the painful Oedipal fears stirred up by his awakening to the realization of his parents’ sexual relationship which excludes the child (Balfour, 2009).

Oedipal illusions are fantasy defenses meant to obscure psychological reality. In a situation where illusion reigns, curiosity leads to catastrophe. In the tragic situation existing in the Oedipus context, the uncovering of the Oedipal triangle is experienced as the death of the two parents. Britton (1989) expresses the conviction that we all sometimes believe in such notions. In feeling the sorrow of the loss of an exceptional relationship, we can understand how the Oedipal triangle doesn’t kill the relationship itself, only the image of it. A characteristic of entanglement is, in the end, a rigidity in outlook on the topic of the existing relationship. Its elements include a conviction about the immobility of such a form of relationship and the impossibility of changing it. Each change in the relationship is considered destructive. The rigidity manifests itself not only with respect to the familial relationship but also by the way it influences thought processes in situations of confrontation with differing ideas on social and political issues. An unresolved Oedipal relationship is passed on to the next generation. This statement is not surprising when we look at the family as system.

I saw that my father was also very strongly attached to his mother. He didn’t know how to express either anger or opposition either to his mother or to his

wife. I have had the experience that this is not only my own history playing out, but also my father's.

Work with this man lasted two years. We were working directly, through psychotherapy meetings and, because my client was living abroad making regular meetings impossible, virtually by Skype. His last letter expressed his happiness that now. After discovering the erotic entanglement with his mother and leaving it, he finally has the power to do what he really wants.

Conclusion

The emotional union with one's mother is an entanglement easy enough to diagnose as it has certain very distinctive characteristics. Most frequent and clear in the client's narratives is the division between good and bad parents. During the course of therapy, other hallmarks spring to the eye: indecisiveness, guilt feelings, ambivalence in activity characterized by simultaneous effort and avoidance, reluctance to grow up, inability in developing relationships with the opposite sex in addition to phobias or compulsive behavior. Compulsive behaviors assume a variety of forms. For example, religious people carry many devotional items, starting from a T-shirt with Michael the Archangel struggling with the devil, to crucifixes, rosaries, and other sacred images. When I counted ten of them, the client opened his wallet and showed me several other examples. The impression may be that the function of these items is not to protect him from compulsive masturbation, but rather expiation.

Coming out of entanglement can sometimes take several years. In retrospect, I have observed various degrees of entanglement which appear to dictate the length of the coming out process. Entanglement will range from a purely emotional dependence to a deeper and more erotic entanglement, about which, at a certain stage of therapy, a young man will loudly and unequivocally tell about his hitherto suppressed sexual desires regarding his mother. More often, for obvious reasons, men come to me for help. This does not mean it is a problem unknown between fathers and daughters.

Finally, the question arises as regards to why one child in one family pays a very high price for undertaking a “mission impossible” to repair the relations between his parents, while another child, perhaps in similar familial circumstances, grows up without any disturbances. It must be stressed that perceptions of the poor bond between parents triggering the child’s compensative behavior is not always an objective fact. While parents may be functioning correctly and subjectively satisfied with their relationship, their child may interpret it differently (e.g., a son interprets his mother as a warm person and his father as exacting and tough). A child idealizes and takes more from the parent considered to be “better.” The child may consider him or her “his own,” and thus give more to that individual than the “worse” parent.

An accumulation of internal and external factors may be noticed in the creation of this peculiar situation. It may be said that all these behaviors are characterized by an underlying antagonism exacerbated by the son’s anxiety about being close to his mother, his will to integrate the family, the will to give the mother more than the father gives her, while at the same time desiring more from the mother than from the father. This antagonism is destructive for the patient but is efficient in keeping the permanent balance of trying to be close to the mother while yet avoiding the closeness—it efficiently protects against incest.

Final Words

We owe a lot to Freud in psychology, but if we remained faithful to him today, we would have to experience helplessness against homosexuality. Infidelity to the father of psychoanalysis has turned out to be a blessing. Fortunately, we have gone further today. But Socarides (1995), the famous continuator of Freud, encouraged looking for the deepest causes of homosexuality in further research. I hope that this article is faithful to his ideal.

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