

The Contribution of Psychoanalysis to the Interpretation of the Incestuous Phenomenon

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Abstract

The article addresses the topic of abuse from the point of view of the main psychoanalytic currents, presenting a synthesis of theorizations which, referring to the psychodynamic vertex, seeks to argue for contrasting explanatory models concerning the etiopathogenesis of the incestuous phenomenon. Consistent with this approach, we wanted to underline how the need to create prohibitions against incest constitute a structural invariant of all human cultures. We also attempted to discuss how the insistence on overcoming the Oedipus complex, although constituting a central theme of the theoretical-clinical development of early psychoanalysis, today, also in light of the studies of Infant Research and developmental psychology, has the need of a more complex reading. From the detailed analysis of the myth itself it is clear that if we attribute a central role to the story of Oedipus' family in the development of the psyche, we assume as a family model a relational reality that is probably already dysfunctional in its very foundation.

Keywords: *Oedipus Complex; Oedipal Conflict; Incest; Brotherly Complex; Etiopathogenesis*

Sigmund Freud starts from an anthropological hypothesis to account for the existence of the incest taboo. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud [7] deals with the origin of moral norms starting from their most ancient precursors: the prohibitions imposed by taboos, present in totemism, are considered a common stage of development in the evolution of all peoples. According to the author, however, the existence of an incest taboo, widespread among both civilized and primitive peoples, and the horror that this act arouses, does not derive from an innate aversion, a natural repugnance, but rather from unconscious desires linked to the Oedipal phase and subsequently hidden by repression. What need calls for creating prohibitions and severe penalties to prohibit incest if the horror of this reality were truly inscribed in man? No civilization prohibits so rigorously what no one intends to do. From the study of infantile sexuality, from analytical work and from comparison with the organizations of primitive populations, Freud comes to affirm that the child's first sexual impulse is of an incestuous nature. In the *Three essays on sexual theory* [11] where he analyzes the development of sexuality, from childhood to adult life, Freud outlines the path of the choice of the sexual object.

Ego development consists in distancing oneself from primary narcissism and gives rise to an intense effort aimed at recovering it. This distancing is effected by shifting the libido to an ego ideal imposed from outside, and satisfaction is obtained thanks to the achievement of this ideal [1, p. 470].

At the same time, the Ego, emanating libidinal object investments, becomes impoverished and becomes richer again only if it obtains satisfaction in relation to objects and reaches its ideal. Once primary narcissism has been overcome and the capacity for alloeroticism has been reached, the child invests his libido in the parent of the opposite sex.

The child's first inclination is for the father; the child's first infantile lust is for the mother [2, p. 239].

Following this inclination, the parent of the same sex is seen as a disturbing competitor to be eliminated: this is how the Oedipus complex emerges. Later in the latency period, the conclusion of the Oedipus complex, the incestuous desire and the ambivalence towards the parent of the same sex succumb to the force of repression. In this phase of relative latency of sexuality, the libido is sublimated and, through reaction formation, barriers against it are formed: disgust, modesty, moral sense and, most important of all, the barrier against incest. The hormonal assault of puberty leads the boy or girl to look for a privileged love object that satisfies the emotional and sexual desires that have been forcefully reactivated and still largely connected to the original objects of childhood. This power of attraction, still exercised by family members, is however prevented by the horror of incest that has been created in the meantime. The intensity of infantile incestuous desire, once again relegated to the unconscious, clearly emerges in the fantasy, dreams and sometimes in the neurotic symptoms of adolescents.

The Oedipus complex is, according to Freud, the natural complex of every neurosis and in particular of hysteria: neurotics, compared to normal subjects, present a more intense inclination towards familiar love objects. The attachment to the incestuous object takes on a particular relevance, for the purposes of pathogenesis, in some of the clinical cases presented by Freud: in the story of Katharina [3], in the case of Dora [4], in little Hans [5], in the wolf man [6]. The anguish from which Katharina suffers in her hysterical attacks is a reproduction of the anguish that manifested itself during the sexual traumas that her father had caused her. Dora's symptoms represent the girl's identification with the women loved by her father, with whom she herself is in love. The attraction towards her father is reawakened following his illness and the neurotic illness is the refuge to which she flees to protect herself from the fascination she feels towards Mr K, who represents a paternal substitute. At the basis of little Hans's phobia and anguish ([5], p. 99) there is a strong sexual inclination towards his mother and an intense hostility towards his father. There are fantasies and dreams present in him in which he is his mother's husband and fathers her children. In the wolf man the unconscious incestuous desire that contributes to the emergence of neurosis is instead directed towards the sister. The love objects chosen following his rejection are for him substitutes for his sister.

In *Totem and Taboo* (1912-13) Freud states that the taboo, sacred horror towards a desire present with notable intensity in the unconscious, is generally motivated by the fear of temptation. In populations that respect taboos there is an ambivalent attitude towards the imposed prohibitions: on an unconscious level nothing would be more welcome than transgressing, but they are also afraid of it; they are afraid of it precisely because they would like it, and fear is stronger than pleasure. The pleasure of transgression, however, is unconscious in every single individual of the population as it is unconscious in the neurotic ([7], p. 66). Freud identifies the most important and oldest prohibitions imposed by the taboo in the two fundamental laws of totemism: not killing the totem and not having sexual relations with members of the opposite sex belonging to one's clan. After having come to identify the totem as a substitute for the father, Freud states that these crimes coincide with the crimes committed by Oedipus and represent the primordial desires of the child. Therefore it is proposed to be able to make it plausible that the totemic system was produced starting from the conditions of the Oedipus complex ([7], p. 182). Referring to Darwin, he believes that primitive man, similarly to higher apes, lived in small hordes, within which the father, domineering and jealous, kept all the females for himself, chasing away the male children as soon as they became potential rivals. One day the expelled sons reunited and killed their father, thus putting an end to their father's supremacy, and devoured him to appropriate his strength. By uniting they accomplish what is impossible for a single individual to accomplish. The children's attitude towards their father was ambivalent: both hatred, motivated by his positioning himself as an obstacle to their claims, and love and

admiration were present. After the death of the father, such feelings make themselves felt in the form of remorse and guilt. All this means that the children spontaneously prohibit themselves from doing what the father himself had prevented with his existence. The father, dead, thus becomes more powerful than in life; the brothers forbade the killing of its replacement, the totem, and gave up the fruit of their action: access to the women of their clan. Indeed, ... the prohibition of incest also had a solid practical basis. Sexual need does not unite men, but divides them. If the brothers had banded together to overpower their father, each was the other's rival with respect to women. Everyone would have liked to have them all for themselves, as their father had, and in the struggle of all against all the new organization would have been destroyed. There was no longer anyone with overwhelming strength that could successfully take on the father's role. So, there was nothing left for the brothers, if they wanted to live together, than to erect the ban on incest - perhaps after overcoming serious disagreements - on the basis of which they all together renounced the women they desired and because of which they had eliminated their father ([7], p. 195-196).

Based on the analogy between taboos and obsessive prohibitions, Freud believes that the former, once manifested, have been handed down from generation to generation, probably becoming part of an inherited psychic heritage, which finds favorable ground for its establishment in the fear of transgression linked to the prohibition of an activity towards which there is a strong inclination. To further underline the desire underlying the incest taboo is the consideration, present in *The man Moses and monotheistic religion: three essays* [8] and in other writings, that incest was a privilege reserved for gods, kings and heroes and taken away from ordinary mortals, and uses as examples the Greek cosmogonies, the legends of the Germanic world and the royal families of ancient Egypt.

Another point of fundamental importance concerns the "seduction theory" that Freud fully supported until 1897, that is, Freud's assertion that the basis of neurosis can always be traced to an episode of seduction or sexual violence that the child would have suffered at the hands of a family member, in particular the father, but also nannies, servants, teachers or brothers. While for hysteria he was thinking of an episode of sexual passivity, that is, an experience undergone with indifference or with a little resentment or fear ([9] p. 300), for obsessive neurosis the episode is active, in the sense of a participation with enjoyment in sexual relations [9] of which the subject would then feel guilty, so the obsessive ideas are nothing more than reproaches that the subject directs at himself due to this anticipated sexual pleasure. Later, after the death of his father, Freud recognized that these were not always traumas actually suffered or acted upon, but that the facts remembered in analysis could also be the result of intense sexual fantasies. Freud, despite having five sisters and a brother, treats the role of the sibling complex only tangentially in his theoretical works. The place that siblings occupy in Freud's work is that of rivals fighting for their parents' attention. He has the merit of having normalized feelings of fraternal rivalry: The older child mistreated the younger, slandered him, stole his toys; the younger was consumed in impotent anger against the older, he envied and feared him ([2], p. 233).

In the clinical history described in *Psychogenesis of a case of female homosexuality*, Freud [10] highlights the importance of fraternal rivalry in determining the choice of sexual object and, more generally, in life choices themselves. In this text, he describes giving way ([10], p.153) as a manifestation of an evaded rivalry, which does not depend only on unresolved Oedipal situations, but also on narcissistic components connected with the paradoxical dynamics of the double, wonderful and disturbing and re-signified through the figure of the brother. In this giving way, the brothers relive various fratricidal fantasies, of mutual delegitimation, of twinship. The most difficult question is whether there can be love between brothers. From the way Freud defines fraternal relationships it seems that any display of love and collaboration must be nothing more than opportunism. Why did Freud neglect the positive aspects of sibling relationships and deny them any role in the child's internal world? He had an intuitive understanding of their emotional impact, and yet his theoretical beliefs led him to reject the idea that they could help shape the structure of the psyche.

In the famous clinical studies on Dora, Little Hans and the Wolf Man, Freud looks with affectionate sympathy at the fact that as children brothers and sisters are linked to each other. In the case of Dora we read: Dora herself had kept in her memory a clear image where she

saw herself, a small child, sitting on the floor in a corner, sucking her left thumb while with her right hand she pulled the earlobe of her brother who sat placidly next to her ([4], p.342).

However, when it comes to understanding the patient's subsequent encounters with male figures, these moments are completely overlooked. Why does Freud take the fact that Dora and her brother had separated during adolescence as proof that their childhood relationship had no psychological consequences? He seems to assume that because the relationship between the two had loosened in recent years ([4], p. 316), they could have no impact on Dora's adult desires and problems. Dora's psychic state must have been caused by jealousy over her father's relationship with Frau K and the desire that Herr K could triumph over all internal obstacles ([4], p. 392). The emotional impact of attachment to a brother or sister confuses the trajectory of Oedipal desire. Freud takes a similar position in the case of the Wolf Man and as a consequence ignores the importance of the relationship with his sister. Freud did not think that his sister's suicide had affected him that much: The patient told me that when he learned of his sister's death he felt barely perceptible pain ([6], p. 500).

Not only that, but he suggested the interpretation according to which the disappearance of his rival had pleased him, given that he would have inherited all his father's lands and wealth. Freud recognizes that the sister had played an important part in the patient's life, but the centrality attributed to the primary scene and the consequent Oedipus complex leads him to believe that the seduction by the sister does not intervene in the genesis of the neurosis. As a child the wolf man was looked after by the nanja, an uncultured and elderly woman of the people ([6], p. 493). During the summer, when he was three and a half and his sister Anna five and a half, their parents left and hired a governess to help the nanja look after the children. In the spring or summer of that year his sister had induced him to engage in sexual practices ([6], p. 497). These consisted of showing each other their butts. Furthermore, his sister grabs his member, plays with it and meanwhile, almost as an explanation, tells him incomprehensible stories about the nanja ([6], p. 498). When his parents returned they found him transformed. He had become discontented, irritable, violent; for the slightest thing he would get offended and, seized with anger, would start shouting wildly ([6], p. 493). Freud tells us that the family tried to explain this change in various ways, but in the end the blame was placed on the English housekeeper, who was fired. Not only had his behavior changed, but the child was now afraid of an illustrated book with the figure of a wolf standing upright, in the act of lengthening his stride ([6], p. 494). His sister enjoyed tormenting him with this image.

According to Freud, in the etiology of neuroses external events are no longer as crucial as the conflict between sexual drive and its repression. Memories are to be seen as the expression of instinctual impulses, not as memories of real events. Childhood trauma remains repressed until some subsequent event triggers an inadequate reaction that is experienced as traumatic. To bridge the gap between an infantile sexual trauma and its memory or reactivation, Freud divides the psyche between the sexual drive and the objects of attachment. We are in the habit of representing the link between the sexual drive and the sexual object in a too intimate way, and we run the risk of neglecting the fact that between the sexual drive and the sexual object there is only a connection given by the normal structuring, in which the drive seems to entail the object. This split allows the two impulses to "float" more freely, until sexual maturity is reached. Only during adolescence do the sexual drive and the object of attachment meet and memory becomes possible.

The sexual drive is probably initially independent of its object and perhaps does not even owe its origin to the stimuli of the same ([11], p. 462).

According to Freud, the child had reacted to his older sister's flattery... with a refusal; but a refusal that concerned the person, not the thing ([6], p. 501). The distinction he places between the thing and the person seems equivalent to that between the object and the sexual drive. This distinction allows Freud to say that the wolf man had never desired his sister, as an object, but only the thing, that is, to satisfy his own drive, and therefore he had rejected her. However, the child was looking for other ways to satisfy him and therefore turned to his

beloved nanja, but this time the response was different and the nanja threatened him with castration: The nanja disappointed him, made a dark face and declared that it wasn't right to behave that way. Children who do these things - he added - get "a wound" in that place ([6], p. 502).

Freud's conclusion is that when the fits of anger began, he was seen to be really angry with her ([6], p. 502), not with his sister, as a more naive theory might suppose. Despite the nanja's refusal, the child did not give up and began to secretly look for another sexual object. The seduction had indicated to him the passive sexual goal of having his genitals touched ([6], p. 502). Freud goes on to say: It is as if the seduction by his sister had pushed him to take on the passive role and had assigned him a passive sexual goal. Under the persistent effect of this event he had completed the sister - nanja - father journey, he had gone from a passive attitude towards woman to a passive attitude towards man, although thus reconnecting to his previous and spontaneous evolutionary phase; the transformation of the active attitude into a passive one was the result and sign of the seduction that had occurred in the meantime ([6], p. 505).

He seems to return to his previous theory of neuroses. He also hypothesizes that the Wolf Man had suffered a trauma that was then forgotten, a trauma revealed by a dream he had when he was three and a half years old. Freud's interpretation was that the child had witnessed the primary scene at the age of one and a half and it was this experience that brought his passive sexual orientation into play. Yet during adolescence the wolf man tried to seduce his sister. She rejected him and he then turned to a peasant girl who served in the house and who bore the same name as his sister ([6], p. 500). Freud goes on to state that this and the many other maids with whom he continued to fall in love were substitutes for the sister who had rejected him ([6], p. 500), and yet he would have us believe that the sister had no part in his neurosis. The fact that incestuous fantasies came into action both during childhood and adolescence suggests that brother and sister turned to each other in search of that emotional confrontation that they did not obtain, as they should have, from other sources. Perhaps Freud significantly underestimated the wolf man's attachment to his sister, probably because it came into conflict with his theory of drives which he was developing at the time and with the centrality which he attributed to the Oedipus complex. By ignoring the importance of real attachments between siblings, probably also due to the complexity of his relationships in his family of origin, he makes a real about-face [12] with respect to the crucial role of the environmental factor in the etiopathogenesis of mental disorders.

Unlike Freud, who sees the desire for incest as a primary phenomenon connected to the Oedipal experience, Carl Gustav Jung considers the presence of the incestuous complex, triggered by a need for psychological adaptation, as a secondary and non-causal phenomenon, while the fact primary would be the fear of man in the state of nature faced with any kind of effort ([13], p. 224). Faced with an arduous task, for which the subject feels inadequate, inertia can prevail, causing the subject to close in on themselves and regress towards the unconscious: The renunciation of certain tasks should therefore be explained not on the basis of the fact that the man prefers the incestuous relationship, but in the sense that he forcibly regresses, because he fears the effort ([13], p. 224).

The libido, which has retreated in the face of the current object, returns to invest the infantile object: the parent of the opposite sex or another family member. In this way incestuous fantasies are elaborated, even in people who did not know their biological parents, but were raised by adoptive parents. Regression reactivates parental images and childhood experiences, which are thus emphasized. It is useful for understanding the patient's internal situation to ask what obstacle the subject is trying to get around through regression. In a case reported by Jung in *Psychology of the Unconscious* [14], a young woman by giving up marriage, a source of intense conflicts for her, she "returns" to the family and invests in her father the desire she has for a man. In the *Essay exposition of psychoanalytic theory* [13], Jung presents the case of an eleven-year-old girl who suddenly begins to feel ill at school. She tells her mother that she has a favorite teacher for whom she feels sympathy, but lately, due to negative school results, she fears she has lost his respect. At this point the incest complex appears in fantasies and dreams: when faced with an external object that is difficult to reach, the libido regresses towards the previous object, the father. According to Jung, by limiting ourselves, on these bases, to a phenomenological and concrete reading such as the Freudian one, the further, symbolic and more authentic meaning that desire and fantasy express is lost. The implementation of

incest occurs, according to Jung, when the symbolic value of the relationships between parents and children is distorted, often due to incestuous desires not integrated into the personality of the father or mother in question. The author underlines the risks, for children, of an excessively rigid defense in the parent in the face of his incestuous desires. Attitudes characterized by detachment, indifference and total denial of Eros compromise the psychosexual development of the child, in particular as regards the father-daughter relationship. The mother has an emotional bond with her offspring that is more permeated with physicality, since pregnancy, and is generally more accustomed to physical contact and the erotic components that this entails. The father, on the contrary, especially if he takes little care of his children, delegating to his wife all the care they need to grow, may be incapable of dealing with the sexual components that are activated, in particular, towards his daughter, and therefore putting in place defensive mechanisms such as mocking her femininity or even excessively limiting her freedom, thus preventing her from establishing romantic ties outside the family. Oedipal incest is but one of the particular representations of the universal archetype of incest [15] which plays a fundamental role in the history of the spirit. This archetype, widely present in myths and alchemical elaborations, is a symbol of the union of opposites, (*coniunctio oppositorum*) (*ibid.*), of the violent attraction of the parts and of the powerful resistance that keeps them separate; it is a symbol of a combination of related elements, but of a different nature. Furthermore, it is an expression of the union of being with itself, of becoming, of the manifestation of the self and, given the importance of this process, it exerts a remarkable, often disturbing fascination. Divine hierogamies are full of incestuous relationships: Isis and Osiris, Horus and Isis, Apollo and Diana. The same goes for fairy tales, for example the Icelandic fairy tale of Finna and Geir or the Russian one of Prince Daniel, in the central part of which the dolls recite: Prince Daniel ordered it: / He wants to be married to his sister. / Earth, open up, come on / Welcome her down ([15], p. 230).

In both fairy tales incest appears as a nefarious event that is not easy to escape. As an endogamous relationship, incest corresponds to a parental libido ([15], p. 231) which has the function of keeping the family together. In the *Mysterium coniunctionis* [16] he states that alchemy is also full of incestuous symbols: the “chemical wedding”, the supreme act that completes the opus, is represented by an incest whose actors can be the Sun and the Moon, the King and the Queen, the wingless lion and the winged one or others. Jung states that reading the Oedipus complex solely from a sexual (Freudian) perspective is reductive and partial, both because the spiritual and symbolic components are left out and because the role that the parents’ attitude plays in its emergence is neglected. According to the author, any incestuous tendencies are linked to the psychology of the parents, by whom the child is influenced. The child responds to the mentality of adults, which is projected onto him, with a complementary attitude, which is unnatural for him. In cases where parents do not project sexual desires onto their children, the endogamous tendency of the child, who easily invests his libido in family members, as immediately available objects, is overcome without major difficulties in the course of evolution, leaving room for the search for external objects. The terms used by Freud should therefore be read metaphorically: the difficulty of moving away from the father and brother, for the girl, and from the mother or sister, for the boy, would be linked to the difficulty of separating from the object on which they were projected Animus and Anima respectively. In the regression towards the unconscious, the libido clashes with the incest taboo which originates, like every other taboo, in the superstitious fear of primitive man for whom, to allow it to express itself, bypassing the obstacle of defenses, displacement mechanisms with respect to the mother or father. In solar myths and in the myths of rebirth, for example, the mother is transformed into another being or rejuvenated: in this way, the obstacle posed by the prohibition of incest increases the imagination and stimulates creativity, opening new possibilities of imagination to the libido and making it a promoter of spiritual life. This process is at the basis of the formation of religious systems, in which a symbolic translation of the parental images has taken place. In the work *Symbols of Transformation* [17] Jung explains his interpretation of the incestuous fantasy present in the myths: What actually happens in the incestuous and uterine fantasy is an immersion of the libido in the unconscious, in which on the one hand it causes infantile reactions, affections, opinions and personal attitudes, on the other it also activates collective images (archetypes) to which a meaning belongs therapeutic and compensatory possessed by the myth since time immemorial ([17], p. 408).

As regards the situations in which incest is acted out, Jung speaks of a morbid phenomenon, also in this case secondary, to be traced back to the tendency of some neurotics to act out their fantasies. It is therefore useful for the analyst to identify these cases early, generally indicated by the first dreams, which reveal an explicitly sexual meaning, and carefully explore the patient's sexual problems, analyzing his childhood relationships with parental figures, brothers and sisters.

Karl Abraham, Freud's student, takes up Freudian hypotheses by conforming to the master's point of view. It supports the presence of the desire for incest in childhood, a structuring element of the Oedipus complex which, during latency, is sublimated giving rise to the love and overestimation of parents, feelings which, on the level of consciousness, appear free from any sexual connotation. With puberty, sexual desires are awakened which, due to the barrier of incest, move from family members to foreign objects but in the unconscious the repressed infantile inclination retains an important influence ([18], p. 47) and manifests itself in dreams or in the adolescent's object choices. In neuropathic subjects the evolution of this evolutionary process is disturbed. The abnormal intensity of attachment to the infantile sexual object hinders the normal development of the libido, making it difficult to transfer to people outside the family. Another consequence of liking a close relative is that he will be reprimanded by the prevailing morality. Faced with this intense conflict, the neurotic activates a violent repression of drives. In cases where such repression fails, incest is acted out. Abraham supports the fact that from the anamnesis of neurotic subjects, it often emerges that in their childhood there were sexual acts between brothers and sisters. A compromise solution between instinctual repression and actual incest is the choice to marry a relative: in this individual the characteristics present in the father and brother or in the mother and sister respectively are more easily found. Incestuous fixation is at the basis of sexual disorders already identified by Freud, such as psychic impotence in men and frigidity in women. Through his observations, Abraham highlights others: for example homosexuality. In some cases, subjects turn away from their mother and turn to their father. In other cases there is no interest in women because a dependence on the mother develops through a spiritualized, sublimated love. Furthermore, he states that in the case of accentuated neurosis the hysterical symptoms often express the patient's desire to identify with a particular loved one. Expanding on Freud's statements, the author states that there is a strong inclination towards incest even among patients suffering from dementia praecox. Some chronically mentally ill people construct a delusion that represents the union with the person they loved in childhood as having been accomplished ([18], p. 52). Abraham reports a patient's delusional fantasies centering on a sister who had died when he was ten. Other dementia praecox sufferers demonstrate the reversal of the excessive transference into negativism and delusions of persecution towards the person once loved ([18], p. 52). Incest can be acted out in another abnormal situation not linked to chronic mental disorders, that is, alcoholic intoxication ([19], p. 40): alcohol, when certain intoxication thresholds are not exceeded, increases sexual desire and eliminates resistance, causing the incest barrier to fall. According to Freud, the obscene joke that is inseparable from the intake of alcohol represents a psychic denudation. As repressed sexual impulses re-emerge, a man's normal sexual activity is at the same time increased, and a feeling of heightened sexual performance capacity results. Alcohol acts as a stimulus on the virility "complex" ([19], p. 41). From the analysis of creation myths, the profound rooting in man of this complex of greatness emerges. Both the generative force of man and the creative force of god are identified in the myth and are used one in place of the other. Stories relating to its origin and to the drink of the gods are found in Indo-Germanic mythology, in Indian myths in which the drink of the gods, which finds its expression in the concept of amorous intoxication, has the same characteristics of human seed: for example, the legend of Prometheus, the first human being, the birth of the god of wine Dionysus. The incestuous fixation of the libido is also responsible for locomotor anxiety in neurotic individuals who constantly need to be accompanied by certain people, the mother or another person who is equally familiar.

He knows well that every attempt to separate himself spatially from the love object means for the unconscious of these patients an attempt to detach the libido ([20], p. 62).

Every violation of the "law", established by neurosis, is experienced as an infidelity towards the desired object and transforms the pleasure, associated with movement, into locomotor anxiety, fear of the road and open spaces. What symbolically satisfies the incestuous

desire is their walking as a substitute for sexual activity, accompanying themselves with what was the infantile sexual object. Always connecting to Freud, the author underlines the universality of the Oedipus complex, and therefore of incestuous desire, noting it as the basis of the rules of totemism of primitives, of religious feelings and representations, of the myths of the sun, of rites such as the Day of the Atonement of the Jews and the works of some artists, such as, for example, Giovanni Segantini. Having the same vision as Freud, Abraham is on a different wavelength than Jung, who he accuses of mysticism. He criticizes the Jungian hypothesis as the replacement of the Oedipal fantasy with the unconscious fantasy of sacrifice, or the intention of renouncing infantile desires, maintaining that at this point Jung effectively ceases to be a psychoanalyst and becomes theologian ([21], p. 753).

Sandor Ferenczi adheres to the Freudian theory regarding the natural tendency towards incest present in the child and then removed to adapt to the needs of the superego and, subsequently, to social rules. The formation of the barrier against incest relegates the desire in question to the unconscious, allowing it only to express itself in myths and dreams, generally accompanied by pollution, or in symptoms. Confirmation of this evolution of the sexual drive would be the situation to which progressive paralysis leads, characterized by the decline of the personality and the re-emergence of the previous phases of the libidinal organisation. Ferenczi observes an overbearing tendency towards incest in these patients. The clinical material is enriched by what was previously stated by other authors regarding the relationship between incestuous fixation and the genesis of male psychic impotence and female frigidity. Ferenczi addresses this problem in the Analytical interpretation and treatment of psychosexual impotence [22] and introduces an innovative element that has particular relevance in the current debate on the definition of incest: he equates the adoptive bond with the natural one: The repressed libidinal thoughts in childhood that condition psychic impotence do not necessarily refer to the closest relative; it is sufficient that the infantile sexual object is a so-called "person of respect" who for some reason commands respect ([22], p. 29).

Referring to Schopenhauer, when in the letter addressed to Goethe, Ferenczi writes [23] that even in a scientist the greatest resistance towards an examination of reality free from prejudices is not of an intellectual but of an affective nature. Even the scientist is subject to human weaknesses and passions: vanity, jealousy, moral and religious prejudices which, when faced with an unpleasant truth, tend to blind him, and he finds it all too easy to take errors as truth which however are in agreement with his personal system of ideas ([23], p. 196-197). Ferenczi interprets the figures of Jocasta and Oedipus as symbolic representations of the pleasure principle and the reality principle respectively. The Jocasta present in each of us, who begs Oedipus, for the love of the gods, not to go any further in his search ([23], p. 199-200), pursues only the achievement of pleasure and the avoidance of any displeasure as much as possible. Oedipus, on the other hand, who tirelessly pursues his investigation in search of a revelation about his terrible destiny, even when he guesses the frightening horror that will come to him from the answer ([23], p. 199), that of the desire to kill his father in order to sexually possess his mother, wants him to be subjected to reality testing. Ferenczi enriches the analogy stated by Schopenhauer, between Oedipus' thirst for knowledge and the attitude of the scholar who wants to define himself as such, supporting that a man of science, to fully realize his potential, must know how to confront, without fear, his own unconscious on the desire for incest. He therefore recommends a personal analysis to every psychologist. Ferenczi delves into the myth of Oedipus by analyzing the protagonist's name etymologically: Oedipus means "swollen foot" in Greek and for psychoanalysis it is a symbol of the erect virile member. Therefore, the myth identifies with a phallus the man who carries out what is considered monstrous and superhuman at the same time, namely sexual intercourse with the mother. As a consequence, the act of blinding oneself occurs which can be read symbolically as self-emasculatation, through a mechanism of movement from bottom to top. According to the author, the interpretation of myth can be read as the nuclear complex of the unconscious or parental complex ([23], p. 201), and he outlines the process of myth formation by referring to Otto Rank's discoveries concerning mythopsychology: poets, endowed with particular creative abilities, give expression to the universal symbols present in every man as symbolic substitutes for unconscious psychic complexes. This is what happens with the myth of Oedipus, which symbolically represents the fear of paternal reprisal and the self-punishment implemented in an attempt to silence feelings of guilt. In Confusion of languages between adults and children. The language of tenderness and the language of passion [24], in addition to reevaluating the traumatic

importance of external reality, Ferenczi, through a theoretical reflection based on his own clinical experiences, examines the Oedipus complex itself from a new perspective, whose theme is approached in an innovative way by considering not only the fantasies and behavior of the child towards the parent, but also those of the parent towards the child, evaluating the consequences that the adult's attitude has on the development of the Oedipus complex and its processing. Conflict and Oedipal anxieties can intensify following the parent's seductive behavior, particularly when the latter misunderstands the emotional requests of his or her child. Speaking of the relationship between adults and children, Ferenczi distinguishes a language of tenderness and a language of passion (ibid). In children, traces of object love manifest themselves only as requests for tenderness. They may demonstrate attitudes towards a parent that are reminiscent of adult sexuality, but are fundamentally an expression of their infantile needs, such as affection, comfort, security, protection, serenity. Children play at taking the place of a parent, but only in fantasy. If they are actually replaced by an adult, they can experience an anguished and disorientating experience. Responding to infantile behavior with a psychological or physical attitude of passionate love, that is, confusing the language of the child's tenderness in a request for adult love, exposes the child to equally serious traumas as mistreatment or lack of affection. A child, therefore, can address the parent with a sexual language that imitates that of adults, but expresses needs for tenderness and protection; the parent, especially if he is disturbed, can misunderstand his behavior by mistaking it for a request for adult love and indulge in abusive and traumatic behavioral acts without evaluating the consequences. This confusion of languages is at the root of traumatic incestuous seduction. In these cases, the traumatized, physically and psychically violated, disoriented and frightened child, finding himself defenseless, has no other remedy than to identify with his aggressor, or better said with the aggressor's introjection, submitting to all his desires to ensure some chance of survival. The traumatic event disappears as an external reality and from extrapsychic it becomes intrapsychic and unconscious. In this way the sensation of tenderness is maintained on a hallucinatory level, although the adult's feeling of guilt is equally introjected. The child is simultaneously innocent and guilty and ceases to trust his senses. The aggressor, for his part, driven by the need to absolve himself, denies the facts, increasing the child's guilt with an attitude of moral rigidity. Ferenczi speaks of the terrorism of suffering ([24], p. 99) as an adult's means of binding children to himself: to maintain a relationship capable of receiving tenderness and security, the child is willing to take on the faults of adults and becoming complacent in compared to their desires. By identifying with the aggressor, the child in turn manifests a confusion of languages which, lasting over time, can lead him to become a perverse adult or an abusive parent himself, as demonstrated by much clinical experience. Ferenczi describes a particular split that manifests itself in the personality of the abused child. In part he regresses to an infantile state by distancing and forgetting what has happened to maintain a good relationship with the parent, who continues to be loved despite having been the object of suffering. At the same time, a traumatic progression occurs ([24], p. 98), that is, a part of the personality develops early, acquiring characteristics of pseudo-adulthood on an emotional and intellectual level, which lead him to take on the problems of his unsuccessful parents. The object relationship is transformed into a narcissistic relationship. To illustrate this split, Ferenczi uses a series of particular images: one which concerns the fragmentation ([24], p. 99) of the party killed by the violence of the shock, which allows the "surviving" party to lead an almost normal life, but with a piece missing and incorporated within the personality. Under the effect of repeated shocks, multiple splits can occur, which in the most serious cases lead to the atomization ([24], p.99) of the personality. The trauma itself is not necessarily such, but it can become so if it is later ignored by the people on whom the child depends and above all by the mother. At the beginning what occurs is both the effect of surprise and the repetition of traumas, then emotional carelessness or neglect, hypocrisy, blame, rejection and lies take over which make the trauma pathogenic. These aspects recur within the therapeutic relationship. Ferenczi supports the importance of the analyst defending his own authenticity in the clinical relationship and speaks of a frequent hypocrisy of professional work: If at this point of the analytic situation we induce the patient to also reproduce the trauma, this condition becomes unsustainable for him, and we should therefore not be surprised that nothing different and better could have arisen from it than the reproduction of the original trauma. Conversely, if we are able to recognize our mistakes and not make them again, if we authorize criticism towards ourselves, we gain the patient's trust. This trust is that something that establishes the contrast between the present and the intolerable traumatogenic past, indispensable so that the past can be relived, rather than as a hallucinatory reproduction, as an objective memory ([24], p.94).

In her first writings (1932) Melanie Klein appears very convinced of the effectiveness of brotherly love in psychic development and attributes much more importance to it than Freud. This contrasts sharply with his way of seeing the relationship between parents and children, because here we find, very firmly, the Freudian conviction according to which the death drive instinctively organizes the intensity of the object relations of the child's internal world, now connoting them with aggression, time of envy depending on the distortions made by the unconscious fantasies. Klein argues that sibling relationships promote emotional development and help the child in the task of distancing himself from parental figures. Emotions such as jealousy and fraternal rivalries have, for the author, only a partial role in the experience lived by brothers and sisters and do not constitute the essential foundation on which the relationship between them is built. A crucial importance is brotherly love and not being able to receive or give it can emotionally distort subsequent relationships. Unlike Freud, Klein does not believe that a strong fraternal bond is necessarily the consequence of the disappointment caused by the fantasy of having had an unfaithful mother. The author makes a distinction between incestuous fraternal attachment and Oedipal conflict, and writes that the existence of sexual activity between children, especially between brothers and sisters, is very common in the first years of life ([25], p. 271-272). The Oedipal conflict can imply incestuous desires but is not fueled by the desire for sexual relations between parents and children. On the contrary, it is predominantly the impulses of hate that give life to the Oedipal conflict and the Superego and which regulate the earliest and most decisive factors in their formation ([25], p. 172). This conception conforms to the Freudian theory of drives, according to which hate, as a relationship towards the object, is older than love; it arises from the primordial repudiation that the narcissistic ego opposes to the external world as a source of stimuli ([26], p. 34). Furthermore, Klein in *The Psychoanalysis of Children* [25] feels the need to underline that: My conception, according to which the Oedipal conflict begins under the pre-eminence of sadism, seems to me to complete what Freud says; in fact, a second reason is identified why hatred is at the basis of object relationships: the fact that the child establishes his own relationship with his parents, which is so important and decisive for all his other object relationships, in the period in which his sadistic tendencies have the greatest intensity ([25], p. 173n).

Klein tends to counterbalance this hatred with brotherly love. Children need to love and it is through the presence of brothers and sisters, and companions in general, that envy and jealousy of the mother's breast can be repaired and the intolerable exclusion from the parents' bed can be mitigated. However, there is also something more complicated and controversial in his considerations on the topic of brothers. The author cites many cases in which these relationships had a destructive character. For example, that of Peter, aged three, who at a very young age had had sexual contact with his younger brother, aged nine months, or that of Gunther and Franz, aged six and five respectively, who practiced mutual fellatio, masturbation and touching the anus with the fingers ([25], p. 148), as a result of excessive anguish and a feeling of guilt relating to sexual relations between the parents. Analyzing the fantasies that accompanied these acts, according to Klein they not only represented destructive attacks, carried out on the younger brother, but that he, in turn, depicted Gunther's father and mother joined in the sexual act ([25], p. 148). Gunther's sexual behavior was conceived as a reactivation, albeit in a mitigated form, of sadistic masturbatory fantasies against his parents. Furthermore, through his sexual behavior, sometimes using force, the child attempted to ensure victory in the dispute against his father and mother. The terror of his parents increased his instinctual need to destroy them, and his imaginary attacks on them increased his fear. Furthermore, the fear that his brother might betray him intensified his hatred for him and the desire to kill him through sexual practices. Gunther's sexual life was characterized by a considerable amount of sadism and the absence of positive elements. These are the reasons that, for Klein, constantly aroused persecutory anguish in his relationship with his brother and contributed to increasing the difficulties that had led to an abnormal psychosexual development. The unconscious of his younger brother, Franz, perceiving the hidden meaning of these sexual practices, and consequently the terror of being castrated and killed by his older brother, kept every slightest indication of his relationship with his brother secret. The terror that such activities aroused in him pushed him to react with a serious masochistic fixation and a feeling of guilt, even though it was he who had been seduced ([25], p. 149). By identifying with the object, his brother, who instilled terror, Franz obtained both the gratification of his own sadistic tendencies, which are one of the sources that fuel masochism, and the mastery of the anguish he felt. So, he was now the aggressor and his id was the enemy that won. At the same time it was the internalized brother's penis that represented the father's penis considered

as a persecutor, the Superego. The internal persecutor can thus be destroyed thanks to the attacks that were inflicted on his body. The case of Ilse and Gert, aged twelve and thirteen and a half respectively, reveals the same deep root causes as the previous one although differing in some details. Ilse presented some schizoid characteristics and her intellectual level was poorly developed. In childhood Ilse had been the active partner and later took on only a passive role. The brother displayed an obsessive personality. In early adolescence they performed acts similar to coitus... Both suffered from an overbearing sense of guilt that forced them to repeat sexual acts in a compulsive manner from time to time ([25], p. 152). In all these cases Melanie Klein insists on the fact that the sexual relations between siblings were destructive because they were fueled by excessive fantasies towards the parents united in coitus. Such fantasies produced strong feelings of guilt about masturbation with the result that the guilt was too strong to allow the children to give up sexual activities. For example, Gunther and Franz were prisoners of this sexual relationship because Gunther was driven by the desire to kill his brother, and at the same time Franz unconsciously felt his murderous desire and thought that their behavior could save him from death. According to Klein, behind these sexual activities there is the mixed fear of the desire that the parents could die during coitus. In some cases, early experiences of this kind can be very harmful, in others they can have a general beneficial effect on psychic development since, in addition to satisfying the child's libido and his desire for sexual knowledge, they exercise the important function of decreasing his excessive sense of guilt ... the knowledge that the forbidden fantasies, directed against the parents, are shared by another, gives the child the impression of having an accomplice and this considerably lightens the burden of anguish in him ([25], p. 154). Furthermore, Klein states that where positive and libidinal factors predominate, this relationship exerts a favorable influence on the child's object relations and on his ability to love ([25], p. 155). But, in cases where, like that of Gunther and Franz, both coercion, at least on one side, and destructive impulses dominate, the relationship can seriously compromise the child's entire development. The same ideas are further elaborated for The sexual development of the girl child ([25], p. 240-289): An excessive fear of the two parents, and the influence of certain external factors, could have caused an Oedipal situation detrimental to a correct attitude towards the opposite sex, and could have constituted a serious obstacle to the maintenance of the female position and the ability to love of the little girl; instead, the fact of having had sexual activities with a sibling or sibling substitute in early childhood and that the latter showed her true affection and was her protector made it possible to lay the foundations for the heterosexual position and for the development of ability to love ([25], p. 272).

This radical idea modifies the resolution of the Oedipus complex in an interesting way. The author seems to implicitly go so far as to argue that a little girl can have a difficult Oedipal relationship with her parents, to the point of compromising the development of a normal adult sexual life, but if she has a sexual relationship with her brother, or his substitute, this can restore his capacity for heterosexual love. The factor that makes the sexual relationship between brother and sister "good" rather than "destructive" is the degree of sadism existing between them. If it is not excessive, the relationship can only increase the capacity to love. Klein reports the clinical case of a little girl who: had two types of love objects: one representing her severe father and the other her tender brother... The girl's sexual activities with her brother do not only serve as reality proof that testifies to the existence of the "good" penis, but also contribute to strengthening his faith in the "good" introjected penis and alleviating the fear of "bad" introjected objects ([25], p. 272).

This positive sexual relationship that children can have with each other helps to overcome anguish and can make them feel less alone in their confrontation with their parental figures. This "secret complicity" alleviates in children the deepest anguish due to their sadistic masturbatory fantasies which were originally directed towards their father and mother because they have now become accomplices to the same crime ([25], p. 272-273). In conclusion, Klein argues that children can have a true pregenital sexual relationship with each other and that this can be a positive factor when there has been excessive aggressive investment in parents. This statement undermines consolidated certainties of object relations psychoanalysis as it suggests that we can find a way to circumvent the Oedipal conflict with parents, if they have been too disappointing, as long as one is lucky enough to have a brother or sister who he doesn't want to dominate us. Furthermore, she states that if excessive anguish or particular objective conditions do not allow his Oedipal objects to become good imagos ([25], p. 271), or if the fantasy of the parental couple in coitus arouses too strong sadism, then a 'loving sexual relationship with a brotherly figure in order to repair and restore the "good" penis within oneself.

Jacques Lacan, reinterpreting the Freudian unconscious through structural linguistics, focused on the theme of incest. The author underlines the importance of overcoming the Oedipal experience in order to access the symbolic level. The symbolic function is recognized in the name of the father ([27], p. 271) who identifies his person with the figure of the law. This conception allows us to distinguish the unconscious effects of the symbolic function from narcissistic relationships or from the real relationships that the subject sustains with the image and action of the person he mirrors. Overcoming the Oedipus complex, therefore, would be carried out in the name of the Law of the Father which establishes the prohibition of incest. In this perspective, the child is forced to exit the dual relationship with the mother, replacing the symbol with the object and recognizing himself as other within the family and, subsequently, within society. Lacan shares Lévi-Strauss' statement [28] according to which the prohibition of incest therefore acts as the foundation and safeguard of kinship relationships which, in turn, establish the social structure: The primordial law is therefore that which, by regulating the alliance, superimposes the kingdom of culture on the kingdom of nature, at the mercy of the law of mating. The prohibition of incest is therefore nothing other than its subjective cornerstone, laid bare by the modern tendency to reduce the forbidden objects to the subject's choices to the mother and sister, without giving any afterlife permission ([27], p. 270).

From an individual point of view, the prohibition of incest is the basis of psychic balance which presupposes the overcoming of symbiotic immediacy and therefore access to symbolic mediation. He who does not cross this line of demarcation sinks into psychosis, that is, the name of the father who never arrived in place of the Other is called in symbolic opposition to the subject.

The defect of the Name-of-the-Father in this place, due to the hole it opens in the meaning, triggers the cascade of reworkings of the signifier from which the growing disaster of the imaginary proceeds, until the level in which the signifier and the signified are stabilized in the delusional metaphor ([29], p. 573).

The objects of delirium manifest the primordial constitutive characteristics of human knowledge, such as formal identity, affective equivalence, iterative reproduction and anthropomorphic symbolism, in fixed forms but accentuated by the absence or cancellation of the secondary integrations which are, for the object, its mobility and its individuality, its relativity and its reality.

The limit of the reality of the object in psychosis, the point of cusp and regress of sublimation seems to us to be given precisely from the moment that for us it indicates the aura of the Oedipal realization, that is to say from the erection of the object that is produced in the light of amazement ([30], p. 55).

In this reproduction, the superficially assumed conformism, through which until that moment the subject masked the narcissism of his relationship with reality, collapses. This narcissism translates into the form of the object. A form that can be produced in progression on the revealing crisis, as the oedipal object is reduced to a structure of secondary narcissism - but here the object remains irreducible to any equivalence, and the price of its possession and its virtue of prejudice predominate over any possibility of compensation or compromise: it is a real "delirium of vindication". Or the form of the object can remain suspended at the peak of the crisis, as if the imago of the Oedipal ideal were fixed at the moment of its transfiguration. Here, however, the imago is not subjectivised through identification with the double, and the Ideal of the Ego is projected iteratively into exemplary objects, but whose action is entirely external, rather living reproaches whose censorship tends towards omnipresent surveillance: it is the "sensitive delirium of relationships". Finally, the object can find again on this side of the crisis the structure of primary narcissism where its formation stopped. In this last case the Super-Ego, which has not undergone repression, not only translates into a repressive intention in the subject, but arises as an object feared by the Ego, is reflected under the decomposed features of its formative effects and, following threats real or imaginary intrusions, is represented by the castrating adult or the penetrating sibling. This is the syndrome of interpretive persecution, with its object having a latent homosexual sense. A further step the archaic ego manifests its disintegration in the feeling of being spied on, guessed at, revealed, a fundamental feeling in hallucinatory psychosis. Here the double in which he had identified is opposed to the subject, both as an echo of

thoughts and acts in the verbal auditory forms of hallucination, whose contents of self-defamation indicate the evolutionary affinity with moral repression, and as a mirrored ghost of the body in certain forms of visual hallucination, whose suicidal reactions reveal archaic coherence with primordial masochism. Finally, it is the substantially anthropomorphic and organomorphic structure of the object that comes to light in megalomaniac participation, in which the subject, in paraphrenia, incorporates the world into his ego, affirming that he includes the Whole, that his body is made up of the most precious, and that its life and functions support the order and existence of the Universe. According to Lacan, family complexes play a considerable role in the ego, at the different stages at which psychosis arrests it, both as reasons for the subject's reactions and as themes of his delirium ([30], p. 56). In psychosis, the morbid reactions are determined by familiar objects with a decreasing function of the reality of these objects and in favor of their imaginary scope. In this way the object constituted by the family relationship reveals a progressive alteration: in its affective value, when it is reduced to being nothing more than the pretext for passionate exaltation, then in its individuality, when it is misunderstood in its delirious reiteration, and finally in its own identity, when it is no longer recognized in the subject except as an entity that escapes the principle of contradiction ([30], p. 57).

As regards the family theme, its expressive scope of delusional consciousness appears to be a function of a growing identification of the Ego with a familiar object, to the detriment of the distance that the subject maintains between himself and his own delusional belief. The more the relationships are related to ghosts and the more the theme of delirium becomes objectified, the Ego tends to get confused with the expression of the complex and the complex to express itself in the intentionality of the Ego. Those who, on the other hand, after having overcome the prohibition of incest, try to restore the previous situation and develop a neurosis. In this case the symptoms do not show any relationship, if not contingent, with some familiar object. However, family complexes perform a causal function, the reality and dynamism of which are diametrically opposed to the role played by family themes in psychosis. The role of the family in the genesis of neuroses is due to the dual task of the Oedipus complex: the structural completeness of the ego due to its casual influence in the narcissistic process; determines a certain affective liveliness of reality, for the images inserted into this structure. The regulation of these effects is concentrated overall in parallel with the rationalization of the forms of social communion of our culture, a rationalization which the complex determines in turn by humanizing the Ideal of the Ego. On the other hand, the disorder of these effects appears due to the increase in the demands imposed on the Ego by the culture itself in terms of coherence and creative impetus.

The risks and vagaries of this regulation grow to the extent that social progress itself, making the family evolve towards the conjugal form, subjects it more to individual variations ([30], p. 68).

The form of degradation which is the common effect of both the traumatic incidences of the complex and the anomaly of the relationships between its objects depends on this "anomia" which favored the discovery of the complex. Transference neuroses and character neuroses correspond respectively to these two causes. A substitute form of the degradation of Oedipus that is observed more frequently in children is the phobia which has the animal as its object, as the large animal represents the mother as a pregnant woman, the father as threatening and the little brother as an intruder. In this form of phobia the subject finds, for his defense against anguish, the same form of the Ego Ideal that is recognized in the totem and with which primitive societies ensure a less fragile support for the sexual formation of the individual. Nonetheless, the neurotic only follows the immediate feeling that man has of the animal as a model of the natural relationship. Occasional incidences in the narcissistic process determine the other transference neuroses: hysteria and obsessive neurosis. Their manifest action, sexuality, like every psychic development of man, is subjected to the law of communication that specifies it. Seduction and revelation play their roles as the subject, in his process of narcissistic re-establishment, composes them therein through identification. Depending on the side of the subject's existential activity, such as assumption of separation or affirmation of identity, this process will be eroticised in sado-masochism or scopophilia. As such, it will be predisposed to undergo the repression correlative to the normal maturation of sexuality and in which it involves a part of the narcissistic structure ([30], p. 69), a structure that hinders the fusion of the Ego and the return of the repressed responds to the constitutive effort of the Ego to unify. Therefore, the symptom simultaneously expresses the defect of the fusion of the Ego and the effort of composition of the Ego in the primordial need to escape from anxiety. In

Janet's clinical analysis, Freud interpreted the symptom in the personality in a dramatic understanding of neurosis, as a specific struggle against anxiety. Here the anguish is hidden through a mutilating sacrifice - paralysis, anesthesia, pain, inhibition, scotomization - and the effort to restore the ego is characterized in the fate of the hysteric with a repetitive reproduction of the repressed. As regards the obsessive symptom, in which Janet had recognized the dissociation of the ego's organizing behaviors - obsessive apprehension, obsession-impulse, ceremonials, compulsive behaviors, obsession with rumination, scruple or obsessive doubt - it takes meaning from the displacement of the affect in the representation. The symptom manifests itself most frequently in the form of guilt. The effort to restore the ego translates into the obsessive's destiny in a tantalizing pursuit of the feeling of one's own unity ([30], p. 71).

Therefore, it is precisely the impact of the trauma in the narcissistic progress that determines the future formation of the symptom with its content. According to Lacan, if the trauma is of an exogenous nature it will temporarily affect the passive side before the active side of the narcissistic progression, and every division of the conscious identification of the Ego would seem to imply the basis of a functional fragmentation. But when the first effects of the trauma affect one of the aspects of the existential drama, such as the assumption of separation or identification, the type of neurosis will become accentuated. A parent's excessive tenderness as well as inappropriate severity can play the role of traumatic seduction, while the aroused fear of losing the parental object or a fall in prestige that affects his image can be revealing experiences. Lacan states that no variant of the complex can be defined by constant effects. Furthermore, one can generally notice a homosexual component in the tendencies repressed by hysteria and the general sign of aggressive ambivalence towards the father in obsessive neurosis. After all, they are manifest forms of the narcissistic subversion that characterizes the specific tendencies of neuroses. The so-called character neuroses, on the contrary, reveal some constant relationships between their typical forms and the structure of the family in which the subject grew up. They translate into widespread impediments in the person's daily activities and imaginary impasses in relationships with reality. The relationships of character neurosis with the family structure depend on the role of parental objects in the formation of the superego and the ego ideal. A first atypicality is represented by the conflict that the Oedipus complex implies in the relationships between father and son. For Lacan, the pathogenic reinforcement of the Superego in the individual is produced in a dual function: by the rigor of patriarchal domination and by the tyrannical form of prohibitions that arise together with the matriarchal structure from any stagnation in domestic ties. Religious ideals and their social equivalents easily play the role of vehicles of this psychological oppression, as they are used for the purpose of exclusivist control by the family group and reduced to signifying the demands of the name or race. In these circumstances, cases of destiny neurosis arise which manifest themselves with a great variety of behaviors, failure, inhibition, decline. A second atypicality of the family situation is defined in the dimension of the psychic effects that Oedipus ensures as it presides over the sublimation of sexuality. The interest that the subject reflects on his own person translates into an imaginary game, which can refer to his physical integrity, his moral value or his social representation. It is to the sexual disharmony between the parents that we must relate the prevalence that the weaning complex will maintain within a development that can be characterized in various neurotic ways. The subject will be condemned to endlessly repeat the effort of detachment from the mother. The multiple types of compulsive behavior from childhood escape to wandering impulses and chaotic breakups that characterize behavior at a later age. Or the subject will remain a prisoner of the images of the complex and subjected to both their lethal agency and their narcissistic form. A third atypicality of the family situation selectively affects the function of ensuring psychic sexualization, i.e. a certain relationship of conformity between the imaginary personality of the subject and his biological sex: this relationship is inverted at different levels of the psychic structure, including the psychological determination of patent homosexuality. The inversion occurs, at least in the male subject, by a triple mechanism. Sometimes an affective fixation on the mother emerges into consciousness, almost always in an observable way, a fixation that involves the exclusion of another woman. Deeper is the narcissistic ambivalence according to which the subject identifies with the mother and identifies the love object with his own mirror image. In this case the mother's relationship with himself provides the subject with the form in which the way of his desire and the choice of his object fit together forever, a desire motivated by tenderness and education, an object that reproduces a moment of his double. Finally, at the bottom of the psyche, lies the castrating intervention with which the mother gave an outlet to her own virile claim. In the woman's virile protest we can see the ultimate consequence of the Oedipus

complex. In the hierarchy of values that constitute a culture, one of the most characteristic aspects is the harmony that this hierarchy establishes between the male and female principles of life. Lacan equates the brother complex with the intruder complex and argues that the brother can be experienced as the disturbing rival, who satisfies the desire of the mother's desire. The brotherly complex cannot be reduced to a simple derivative of the Oedipus complex, nor to a simple displacement of parental figures onto the brothers, but it has a structural importance. Each subject has a specific Oedipal structure, a mixture of positive and negative Oedipal complex, and at the same time suffers the destructive and/or evolutionary effects of the brotherly complex.

Conclusion

I conclude by saying that the proposed observations articulate the complexity of the incest phenomenon (acting out) and the variety of dynamics that originate and underlie it. It is not possible to present the typical perpetrator or the typical victim: on the contrary, these are probably stereotypes that need to be deconstructed as they hinder a reading, free of prejudice, of the situation one faces and the subjects one encounters. Each is a fact in itself that requires to be approached in its specificity. Alongside the peculiar characteristics of each person and each family involved in incest, there is no shortage of recurring common elements. Every man is unique in himself and, depending on the aspects taken into consideration, he can be similar or different from all the others.

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