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ABSENT OR MISSING FATHERS AND MALE SEXUAL DIFFICULTIES :
THEIR MANIFESTATIONS IN DREAM SYMBOLISM AND
INTERPRETATION.

A mini-thesis submitted in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree
of
M.A. Clinical Psychology

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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses the individual case method in order to demonstrate the effects of paternal deprivation including variations in patterns of inadequate fathering on a male's psychological and sexual development. More specifically, it shows that father absence is a highly significant factor in the development of serious male psychological and social difficulties.

Much of the material in the text concerns the impact of father absence on male 'sex-role' development. It is, as such, further concerned with showing that paternal deprivation can lead to conflicts and rigidities in the individual's sex-role adjustment, which, in turn, are frequently related to deficits in emotional, cognitive and interpersonal functioning.

Due consideration is given to such family characteristics as the mother's response to the father's absence which generally manifests as pathological and debilitating intrusiveness on the affected son's masculine identity. Other family features considered are the role of older male siblings and father substitutes e.g. stepfathers in the amelioration or exacerbation of these difficulties. An assumption is made that where such substitutes are competent father absence per se can have no more than a limited influence on the son's sex role development and vice versa.

Some dreams from the case are presented for the purpose of viewing how the considered difficulties manifest in dream symbolism. Attention is paid also to the question as to whether such dreams can provide any useful clues toward an understanding of the nature, type and psychological situatedness of the affected people. Consequently, a discussion of a psychotherapy attempt is made to show that a competent understanding and interpretation of such symbolism will have an invaluable healing benefit on these difficulties.

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CHAPTER 11. INTRODUCTION1.1 Purpose of the research

This research aims at doing the following things: to demonstrate the sexual and sex-role adjustment phenomena associated with father absence or variations of negative fathering on those males who have been exposed to this kind of experience; to show how these difficulties manifest in dreams symbolism and finally, to demonstrate how a particular dream interpretation approach is effective in the psychotherapeutic treatment of these cases. This last point is vitally important to this research as it is through it that it wishes to make its contribution to a subject field that has already received adequate scholarly attention, as this chapter will later show.

1.2. How the study was inspired

The author's social concerns were captured by the works of writers like Biller (1976) and Borduin and Henggeler (1982) among others who link various manifestations of male social adjustment difficulties and other forms of society's maladies like delinquency among the youth and crime among the adults to father absence.

In elucidating the negative effects of father absence on society, these authors report the mind-boggling incidence of father absence in American homes which according to them runs in excess of several millions.

According to them low socio-economic status is more frequently associated with the single-parent families than with the other socio-economic classes. Biller (1974) reports that the father absence phenomena are more prevalent among the black families in America (a probable reference to the low-socio-economic status of American blacks).

Biller (1974) and a whole body of other writers (see chapter 3) point to the diverse social complexities and consequences that afflict those destitute populations of sons in the human societies that have known the taste of father absence. In his list occur such social behaviour aberrations as delinquency among the youth and crime among the adults.

Considering the fact that poverty among the South African blacks, in particular is rife, and that the blacks account for no less than 80% of the country's population (Population Census, 1985) if the assumptions concerning the social maladies fostered by father absence are valid, then we can expect to find father absence to be more prevalent among blacks and as such in the greatest segment of the South African population.

It follows that we can speculate with near certainty that there will be a degree of crime in South Africa that could have been done away with were the causes of father absence to be kept at minimum levels e.g. circumstances that encourage poverty or other low economic standards, the migrant labour systems that separate fathers from their families.

There is also the question of the South African divorce rate which is generally believed to be among the highest in the world. For Whites, Coloureds and Indians this figure is about 33% (Central Statistical Services - Report 0307-01, 1986). There are no official figures for blacks, but since poverty is highest in this part of the population we can well estimate that divorce as well as illegitimacy and as such, single-parent homes will be more prevalent here than elsewhere in the society.

A close scrutiny of the causes of divorce is hardly the aim of the present investigation. What is rather its concern is that divorce, if assumed to be related to father-absence, will exacerbate the precipitation of the sex-role difficulties associated with the phenomenon and with that the related preponderance of the unpleasant psychodynamic social and economic consequences referred to above, in our country.

The South African public may benefit from a study like this which may be useful albeit to a limited extent, perhaps, in mirroring

how some unsuspected social dynamics such as father-absence can hurt our society.

1.3 Problem definition

The author considers that the definition of the terms : absent or missing fathers; psychological absence; sex-role adjustment difficulties; sex-role orientation; sex-role preferences; and sex-role adoption will throw more light on the sense in which they are used in the definition of the problem reviewed in this thesis, namely, the effects of father-absence on male sex-role development.

In order to facilitate communication and to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding that may arise from the languaging of the problem of missing fathers and related male sex role difficulties as manifesting in dream symbolism, this chapter will be devoted to describing first the terms used in the definition following which the problem itself will be outlined.

1.3.1 Absent or missing fathers

The term absent fathers, as used here, will refer not only to the physical absence of fathers from their families, but also, and more significantly, to their psychological absence which as the literature in the later chapters will show, is notorious for taking a serious toll on the family's sense of stability and

cohesion and is experienced most adversely by the sons who are, it has been amply established, its most vulnerable victims (Biller, 1974).

1.3.2 Psychological absence

By psychological absence will be meant, the experience by sons that their fathers or father figures (stepfathers) are not fulfilling their sex roles in their families such that they miss out on the opportunities enjoyed by their father-present counterparts of learning through identifying with their father's masculinity, their own appropriate social and sex-type requirements.

The works of Seligman (1986) and Biller (1974) among others doubtlessly illuminate the sense in which the concept missing fathers is used in this text. Seligman asserting the presence of the phenomenon of missing fathers as both a physical and a psychological reality notes: "I need to make it clear that when alluding to the missing father, I am referring to fathers experienced as unavailable both by the mother and by the child." p72, In her cases, she adds, the father was physically present at least until the child's puberty or beyond.

Biller (1974) expresses a similar understanding and talks of paternal deprivation as including patterns of inadequate fathering as well as father absence as a highly significant

factor in the son's development of serious psychological and social problems.

Malan (1979) corroborating the popular view that the term father absence has both physical and psychological connotations explains that father absence refers equally both to father's death or physical absence or to fathers not being meaningfully present to the socio-psychological development of their sons.

Demonstrating that father absence is a fact with a clearly recognizable set of syndromic psychological consequences, Malan explains that whether father-absence is the outcome of the father's death or his physical separation from his son, the experience of his absence is bound to produce negative sexually related consequences the severity of which is determined by the age at which the son was struck by the disaster. If, for example, it happened at a time so early that the boy has hardly any memory of his father, his sexual behaviour is typically that of one whose father disapproves of his sexuality in any form towards whom the suffering son feels the most intense mixture of fear on the one hand and hostility on the other.

If, on the other hand, the father dies when the son is old enough to realize he had a father, particularly if this happens around the son's puberty when he is beginning to grow into a man, this may be one of the most traumatic events of all. The reason, according to Malan is that the natural Oedipal impulses and strivings may become enormously more guilt-laden with the son

faced with the actual feeling of having 'got rid of' his father. A patient of Malan who was in this type of father-absence ended up loving a woman as old as his mother and suffered the most intense anxiety when she showed an interest in another man.

1.3.3 Sex-role adjustment

By male sexual difficulties will be referred not only the problems of masculinity but will be embraced also the entire scope of male "sex role" (Biller, 1971) adjustment difficulties which in turn will comprise psycho-social, sex-type, heterosexual and interpersonal relations.

Elaborating on the concept of male sex role Biller (1974) clarifies that paternal deprivation can lead to conflicts and rigidities in the individuals sex role adjustment, which, in turn, are often related to deficits in emotional, cognitive and interpersonal functioning.

Biller's (1971) definition of the term sex role has attained a general acceptance and is in frequent reference and use in the literature. He has broken the term down revealing that it has three structures which are each related to specific areas or dimensions of the personality. The structures are sex role orientation, sex role preference, and sex role adoption.

Biller's definition of sex role is shrewd in that it exposes in a subtle way how as a consequence of the presence of certain environmental variables particular areas of the personality tend to be less damaged by father-absence than others.

1.3.4 Sex-role orientation

Sex-role orientation is considered by Biller (1971) to represent one dimension of the individual's self-concept. According to him, it includes the individual's evaluation of his maleness and or femaleness. Much of this evaluation, he notes, is a product of learning experiences which take place early in the individual's life. The child, he states, becomes oriented in varying degrees toward assuming the requisites of the male or female role during his first few years of life. Parent-child interaction during this period, according to him is very crucial. He observes that the boys perception of himself as more similar to his father than his mother appears particularly important. A young boy with an inadequate or absent father can be expected to have particular difficulty in developing a masculine sex-role orientation. It is Biller's experience that as the child matures, his orientation becomes more complex and relates to his perception and evaluation of the degree to which his internal standards and overt behaviour approximate general cultural as well as familial expectations (Biller 1971 p. 8).

1.3.5. Sex-role preference

Whereas sex-role orientation relates to an individual's self-perception, sex-role preference is concerned with his evaluation of certain environmental opportunities. Sex-role preference, he states, refers to an individual's relative desire to adhere to the cultural prescriptions and expectations of the masculine and or feminine role. The concept, according to him, designates a preferential set toward symbols or representations of sex-role that are socially defined. It relates to his preference for certain roles, activities, interests and attitudes. Choice and discrimination is implied in such behaviour, and a preference for a given role varies in strength from individual to individual. In this particular regard Biller's conclusion is that it can be predicted that lack of a paternal-role model also retards the development of a sex-role preference.

1.3.6 Sex-role adoption

Sex-role adoption, in contrast to sex-role orientation and sex-role preference, according to Biller refers to the individual's observable behaviour, particularly in the framework of social interaction. According to him, an individual's sex-role adoption relates to how masculine and or feminine members of his particular society view his behaviour. Again, the presence of an adequate father is seen by Biller to be important. He, however, also warns that because sex-role adoption has many facets, simply equating masculinity of adoption with a particular behaviour such

as physical aggression might lead to many errors of classification. In his words: "In terms of masculinity, the degree of the individual's assertiveness, competitiveness, independence, and activity directed toward physical prowess and mastery of his environment should be taken into account... An unmasculine adoption seems represented by behaviours such as passivity, dependence, and timidity." (Biller, 1971 p. 9).

Should one wish to know why it is necessary to distinguish sex-role orientation from sex-role adoption, or for that matter, sex-role preference, while a general consistency among the three aspects of sex-role is expected in many individuals, an equitable explanation by Biller (1971) is that a masculine sex-role orientation predisposes a boy, though it does not compel him, to develop a masculine sex-role preference and sex-role adoption. For example, he explains, a paternally deprived boy may be exposed only to females who encourage passivity and dependency in the first four or five years of life, while later there is much peer and societal pressure for him to behave as a boy.

Explaining the acquisition of sexual identity and awareness and the adoption of appropriate sexual behaviour Ausubel, Sullivan and Ives (1980) point out that this capacity is facilitated by the pervasive and recurrent exposure of boys and girls to differential experiences, treatment, expectations and norms of conduct. According to these authors, some of these differences in handling are obvious: distinctive clothing and hairstyle; separate toilets, games, toys, books, and interests. Other

differences, in valuation by parents, in discipline, and in expectations regarding achievement, conformity, deportment, and emotional expression, they state, are more subtle and no less real. Ausubel et al. (1980) further point out that pressures for learning an appropriate sex-role originate in the home and are reinforced by identification with the like sex parent and older siblings.

Having then made this attempt to define the problem of missing fathers and the related male sexual consequences, it is proposed that we now turn our attention to the following questions: how do these problems manifest in the dream symbolism of affected sons and how can we interpret such dream symbolism that maximum therapeutic benefit can be achieved.

1.4 Review of theoris on dream symbol manifestations : Freud, Boss, Jung and Kernberg

The question of the existence of male sexual dream symbolism is an established matter in the literature. It will thus obviously benefit us to consider the existing evidence.

1.4.1 Freud

Freud's understanding of the sexually anxious male dream

symbolism is effectively illustrated in his interpretation of the 'Wolf-Man's' dream of the seven white wolves. Since this is a popular dream, the author will, as such, assume a common knowledge of its details (see Richards, 1979). He will therefore confine himself to Freud's interpretation of its symbol material. It represents Freud's suggestion on how such dreams are to be understood and their material interpreted.

Freud saw the Wolf-Man's dream symbol material as "unmistakably alluding to the castration complex" (Richards, 1979). In interpreting it, he looked for the historical background out of which the dream material produced by the dreamer was derived. For he firmly believed that the dream context as well as the symbolism which occurred within it was grounded in the person's experience. As he put it : "It [dream interpretation] assures us that some part of the latent material of the dream is claiming in the dreamer's memory to possess the quality of reality, that is, that the dreamer relates to an occurrence that really took place and was not merely imagined" (Richards, 1979 p. 264).

Freud elaborates the anxiety found in males with sexual problems as castration anxiety which is, more specifically, grounded in the fear of the father cutting his [son's] penis in order to have coitus with him, which is, in turn, traceable to the boy's fantasy sexual desire for his father. Once the boy, however, 'realizes' that for this to happen, it is necessary to have a vagina which he sees as a wound his father must make, he is frightened and takes flight from him. The sexual desire for his

father becomes repressed in consequence.

When the flight from the father has occurred, it manifests as anxiety which becomes evident whenever the boy is in the presence of men who he sees as sharing the wolf qualities of his father.

As far as the choice of the dreamer's dream material, Freud believed that the symbols were somehow connected, in the person's fantasies with the sexual problems which give rise to the characteristic castration-anxiety fantasies (Richards, 1979). He maintained that even though the link may often be difficult and take years to find at times, it exists somewhere and is the key to the resolution of the suffering male's problems. Sometimes, even stories from fairy tales supplied the material for these fantasies.

Freud was following his assumptions along this line of reasoning in interpreting the Wolf-Man's white wolves dream that he came to the conclusion that the wolf was a symbolic representation of his patient's fear of his father; the choice of a 'standing' wolf came from a childhood fairy-tale he had heard from his grandfather; the witnessing of the primal scene in which his father stood upright while his mother bent over in a forward position during 'coiton a tergo', according to Freud (Richards) linked up with the strongest wolf which stood up in his grandfather's story; seeing his father's penis which was active in penetrating his mother's passive vagina came to show how

dangerous his father was.

Thus in this way, according to Freud, all the link's to the Wolf-Man's sexual problems had been made and once this had been done and the patient had then understood the real reason for the difference between a man and woman's sex organs his anxiety abated.

We thus see, in conclusion, that for Freud, sexual anxiety was quite literally anxiety about sex as such. And it was for this reason that he drew upon himself the strongest criticism from Boss and Jung, most significantly.

1.4.2 Boss

Boss (1977) expresses a vigorous impatience with Freud's indiscriminating ideas of sexual essence in every dream. Assaulting Freud's ill-founded 'scienticism' Boss notes that Freud derived this underlying sexual significance from a postulated common root of language and sexuality. For him the word sex, was a vehicle of sexual desire, before it was anything else" (Boss, 1977). Boss was, at any rate, vehemently rejecting of the very idea of dream symbolism.

1.4.3 Jung

According to Hall (1977) Jung's criticism of Freud springs

essentially from the Freudian idea that dreams were disguises designed to conceal something (sexual), was made on the strength of his [Jung's] discoveries in his own work from which he had found that the value of dreams is that they present images that are not consciously construed but arise spontaneously. Therefore, according to Hall in Jung's view, the dream has an objectivity: "it comes from the patient and reflects the internal state of his functioning but is not created by his conscious activity" (Hall 1977 p. 127). Jung (1969) defines the dream as a spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation, of the unconscious.

Hall representing Jung's views notes that the symbolic nature of dream images means that they provide the most adequate representation of the state of the mind at the time, its self-portrait. Jung according to Hall took a most serious view of the dream's symbol-making function. Calling it the transcendental function he, according to Hall meant to show that through symbol formation the dream is able to transcend the tension of opposites that cannot be solved in the conscious terms in which their opposition is experienced before it is evoked. (Hall, 1977 p. 128).

Jung therefore saw the value of symbolism in dreams as vested not only in its potential for exposing the tensions and conflicts existing between the dreamer's unconscious life and his conscious attitude but also as resourceful in pointing out the direction in

which individuation opportunities lie.

As pointed out by (Hall, 1977): "The process of individuation involves co-operative interplay of the conscious and unconscious forms of the mind, with neither predominating to the detriment of the other " (p. 124).

Making a critical reference to Freud's reductionistic sexual symbolism, Jung (1964, p. 42) observes: "It is obvious that if you assume the dream to be symbolic, you will interpret it differently from a person who believes that the essential emerging thought or emotion is known already and is merely 'disguised' by the dream. In the latter sense," he continues, "dream interpretation makes little sense, for you find only what you already know."

Jung's views on the compensatory function of dreams are well known and adequately documented in the literature. Hall (1977) writes that, according to Jung, the conscious attitude of the dreamer exists in dynamic relationship to the constellated form of the unconscious but each does not follow the other automatically. Not only is the unconscious compensatory to the conscious state, the contents of consciousness are relative to the active images in the unconscious.

Jung (1969) indicates elsewhere that it is possible to consider the principle of the compensatory nature of dreams as being congruent with the continuation, during sleep, of concern with

the problems dealt with in consciousness - the dream motif supplying additional material that was relatively unconscious during the waking state . "For this reason," he states, "it is necessary to know the conscious attitude of the dreamer in order to understand his dreams".

Jung's disenchantment with the Freudian sexual determinism led him on to a speculation that even if there may be dreams whose symbolism is clearly sexual what the dreams as such could be communicating about the person may not be known at all until the dreamer himself has indicated what it is about sex he wished to make a statement.

Hence Jung (1964) expresses a fervent need to stay close to the dream material during the interpretation. He notes that he has found that it is often not about the frustrations or pleasures of his sexual life that a dreamer's dreams may be communicating as they may, instead, well be telling of his sex-role problems influencing any or all the areas that Malan (1979) and Biller (1971) have talked about earlier in this chapter relating, for instance, to sexual, as well as to other diversities of being a male social being in one's world.

In Jung's (1964, p. 12 & 14) words: "Almost everyone knows, for example, that there is an enormous variety of images by which the sexual act can be symbolized (or one might say, represented in the form of an allegory). Each of the [(symbols)] images can

lead, by a process of association, to the idea of sexual intercourse and to specific complexes any individual may have about his own sexual attitudes." Sometimes, he states, this might even lead him to discover that it is not the sexual act at all that is represented, but some quite different psychological point.

Jung (1964) advises that we stay very close to the dream material if we wish our interpretations to be more than not very helpful speculation. Demonstrating that the sexual symbolic possibilities are diverse he offers for consideration a dream a male patient of his brought. Here follows his uninterrupted narrative of it: "The patient had dreamed of a dishevelled vulgar woman. In the dream, it had seemed that this woman was his wife, though in real life his wife was totally different. On the surface, therefore, the dream was shockingly untrue, and the patient immediately rejected it as dream nonsense" (p. 14). Jung explains that if he as the patient's doctor, had let him start a process of association, he would inevitably have tried to get as far away as possible from the unpleasant suggestion of his dream. In that case he suggests, the patient would have ended with one of his staple complexes - a complex possibly that had nothing to do with his wife - and people should have learned nothing about the special meaning of this particular dream.

What the patient's unconscious was trying to convey by such an obviously untrue statement, Jung explains, was clearly that it somehow expressed the idea of a degenerate female who was clearly

connected with the dreamer's life; but since the projection of his image on to his wife was unjustified and factually untrue, he had to look elsewhere before he found out what this repulsive image represented.

Explaining what he means, Jung notes that long before the physiologists demonstrated that by reason of our glandular structure there are both male and female elements in all of us, it was said that every man (carries) a woman within himself. It is this female element in every male, he explains, that he has called the anima.

Throwing more light over what he means by it, Jung (1964) further explains that this feminine aspect is essentially a certain inferior kind of relatedness to the surroundings and particularly to women, which is kept carefully concealed from others as well as from oneself. "In other words," he explains, "though an individual's visible personality may seem quite normal, he may well be concealing from others - or even from himself - the deplorable condition of the woman within." p. 17.

Regarding his patient Jung (1964) notes that the same thing applied. In his explanation, he observes that the patient's female side was not nice. His dream, according to him, was actually saying to him "You are in some respects behaving like a 'degenerate female' and thus gave him an appropriate shock." p. 17.

An example of this kind Jung however, warns, must not be taken as evidence that the unconscious is concerned with "moral" injunctions. The dream, he accordingly explains, was not telling the patient to "behave better" but was simply trying to balance the lop-sided nature of his unconscious mind, which was maintaining the fiction that he was a perfect gentleman throughout." (Jung 1964, p. 17).

For this reason, Jung points out, he has always told his pupils to learn as much as they can about symbolism and to forget it all when they are analysing a dream.

Such advice, according to him, of such practical importance that he has made it a rule to remind himself that he can never understand somebody else's dream well enough to interpret it correctly. He has done this, he further explains, in order to check the flow of his own associations and reactions, which might otherwise prevail over his patient's 'uncertainties and hesitations' .

Jung (1964, p. 42) further sternly cautions that as it is of the greatest therapeutic importance for an analyst to get the particular message of a dream (that is the contribution that the unconscious is making to the conscious mind) as accurately as possible, it is essential for him to explore the content of a dream with the utmost thoroughness.

1.4.4 Kernberg

The author incorporates the object-relations dream theory in the discussion, not because it furthers the illumination of the problem of interpreting male sexual difficulties dream symbols manifestation as such, but because he has found, quite by chance, that he has shared a similar understanding of the nature of dreaming which, for him, developed quite spontaneously while he was working with his case client with the object-relations theorists.

Thus, as will be observed in Chapter 4, the psychotherapy of 'lending courage' (as the author calls it) develops from the recognition and the acknowledgement of the sexually maladjusted dreaming male's willingness to dialogue his problems in a manner that suggests he has an idea of what they are, and what he ought to be doing in order to achieve solutions. The author calls these engagements conflicts or conflict-states. And had made the comment to the client on occasion that he himself 'chose' what he dreamt about and made his own symbol choices as well as what the symbols did in the dreams. He found that comments like these, couched in appropriate terms, of course, captured the imagination of the client and caused him to smile - a kind of smile acknowledging he had been found out and was willingly surrendering.

The object-relations theorists, represented by Fairbain (1931)

cited by Kernberg (1980) believe in a similar way that conflicts motivate dreaming. They come to a similar understanding as the author's (but their's is, seemingly even more astute and succinctly communicated) in that they see the conflicts as being "personified" in the symbols. In this way follows the 'dialoguing' of the problems in the form of 'person-symbols' (author's own terminology). This idea is similar to the author's own discovery of the willingness of his subject to dialogue his problems.

The author recognises another even more interesting discovery made by the object-relations theory namely, the splitting of the same object following by a concerted splitting of the ego so that it relates to the same object in a split-off way. In this way the object -relations theorists have conveniently termed the products of this ego splitting "central ego" and "idealizing ego". They say that therefore, they have seen evidence of a preconscious or conscious ego. The implications of the preconscious ego are clearly a trademark of a psychoanalytic understanding that the ego is working at solving problems even during sleep. Thus this resonates with the author's recognition that dreamer's with male sexual difficulties (and probably also dreamers in general) are working at their conflicts.

Thus did Fairbain, according to Kernberg (1980) discover the psychodynamic schizoid state of the inwardly anxious people which

manifests superficially, as apparent quiescence. It is rooted in ego splitting and is a dissociation which when sufficiently precipitated will decompensate into hysteria thus revealing the other side of object-relatedness.

Hence the dreams of these anxious males (because the author thinks now that they are split-off) are very dramatic or hysterical. There is a surge of activity in dreaming (see Chapter 4) which flies in the face of the apparent timidity observable in their waking life.

The object-relations theory implies that schizoid people dream about themselves in relation to their problems. This resonates with the author's belief that sexually depressed father-absent males reveal their psychological situatedness or psychical states in dreaming.

To quote Kernberg (1980);

"Fairbain at first saw personifications of objects (what I would call object representations) and the related personifications of aspects of the ego (or self) in dreamers as the expression of intersystemic conflict, with each personification standing for the superego, the id, or the ego. Gradually, however, he reached the conclusion that the most precise and clinically most relevant formulation to account for these characteristics of dreams was a conception of the patient's ego as divided into a preconscious ego that related to a conscious or preconscious idealized internal object, in contrast to two repressed unconscious, subsidiary ego segments that related to a prohibitive or rejecting "antilibidinal" object, and an exciting, gratifying "libidinal" object. All personification in dreams could be sorted into representations of these three self and object

Hall (1977) reports that he has found that the object relations

theory's sense of what happens in dreaming is similar to the Jungian conception of the intra-psychic compensation function. According to him the object relations theory's view on it is that "It is a corrective contrast to the interpersonal emphasis on personal relationships or the final arbiter of the dream" (p. 50).

Hall further reports that by comparing object representations in dreams and projective tests, Krohn and Mayman (1974) found that the manifest dream expressed the individual's range of internalized relationship models.

Knowing about the work that has been done on dreams and dreaming in general and about sexual dream symbolism in particular will benefit the worker in this field of investigation at least to the extent that it acquaints him with already existing ways of understanding. His own work can then either represent a contribution to such existing body of knowledge or may be a confirmation of its practical values.

In his own investigation, the author of the present research has been greatly influenced by Jung's and the object-relations theory as already outlined here. There will, however, be evidence of his own unique and individual experience while working within the broad framework of the referred schools.

He therefore subscribes to the Jungian and the object relations views that if male sexual symbolism appears in a dream, it has to

be supposed to be making some psychological point concerning the dreamer's unbalanced unconscious attitude toward some heterosexual relations situation. As the object relations theorists cited by Hall (1977) above also expressed it: "it is a corrective contrast."

The author, furthermore also subscribes to the Jungian view that the actual point itself may not be known until the dreamer himself has indicated what it is about sex he wished to communicate. This therefore means that while there may be some male dream symbols which are known to be consistently related to males with sexual problems associated with father-absence, for instance, there ought to be an open-mindedness on the part of the therapist, to the idea that there may emerge a completely unexpected or anticipated point when the dreamer has opened up. Hence Jung (1964) as mentioned above says that he taught his pupils everything about symbols but also told them to forget it all when it came to the actual interpretation of the dreams themselves.

1.5 Case-study method

The case study method will be used as a research method of choice precisely for the reason that not only does it have an unmistakable role in demonstrating the phenomena related to father-absence but it also has the capacity to show the clinical

effects of psychotherapy on a person with a history of the problem and also one in whom the sex-role syndrome as defined by Biller (1971) and by Malan (1979) in his constellated masculinity problems syndrome had been clearly established.

CHAPTER 22. THE CASE STUDY METHOD AND THE PROBLEMS OF METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter can best be summarized as follows: to expose by means of definitions or explanations the true nature of the case-study method and how it cannot easily be dispensed with in the study of human personality; to review the nature of the criticisms that have been levelled against it and the responses of the case-study users to them; and finally, to review some suggestions regarding what would constitute fair judgement or evaluation of the case-study method.

2.1 Selection of the case-study method

The explanation for the selection of the case-study method for the investigation of the problem examined in this thesis namely, the maladaptive psychosocial effects of the father-absence experience as manifesting in male sexual dream symbolism.

2.1.1 Clinical decisions and implications for the individual

In this respect, the selection of the individual case method is indicated by the fact that fundamental clinical decisions regarding suitable intervention strategies for the client's

presenting problems must be taken on the basis of the strictest consideration concerning the uniqueness of the peculiarities likely to be found in the circumstances precipitating the problems as well as the individual's predisposing developmental conditions in his history which can be expected to be idiosyncratic at least , in some ways. Another research technique would likely not to be able to honour all these aspirations.

2.1.2 Case method indicated for the study of dream symbolism

A study of dreams is indicated for the individual case method if, for no other reason, it at least affords us the opportunity of keeping track of dream phenomena related to a single individual who is in psychotherapy, so we can formulate impressions concerning the person's psychological situatedness at the start of therapy, during its course and termination. Have there been psychotherapeutic shifts or movements? If any, in what direction? We can also then formulate opinions concerning the effects of the psychotherapy. What seemed to work and what did not, and so on. On the other hand, a study of many dreams from groups of individuals as it would be in large samples, is likely to be cumbersome and confusing and would therefore be contraindicated.

2.2 Definitions and descriptions of the case-study method

There exists, as such, a wide, informed and extremely persuasive body of terms or concepts used in the explanation of the case-study method. We cannot exhaust them all.

2.2.1 Case-study as defined by Bromley

Bromley (1986) defines a psychological case-study as an account of a person in a situation. Of course, he is quick to point out, there is usually something interesting or problematical about the person, the situation or relationship between them.

In his words, " A case-study deals with a relatively short, self-contained episode or segment of a person's life. The episode is usually important in that it is formative, critical, or culminant - the sort of episode one would regard as a life-event worth mentioning in a life-history. A case-study can be regarded as a close view of one important life-event.

Case studies, according to Bromley incorporate not only a narrative account of a person's actions, experiences, personal qualities, and circumstances but also a causal analysis which attempts to explain the facts and events described.

The usual purpose of a case-study, he explains, is to find a solution to the person's problem. This, according to him, often

means making an analysis without having all the information one would like, and arranging some course of action to be taken, the outcome of which is certain.

Case-studies may have other purposes, explains Bromley further. They can be used to demonstrate 'typical' or representative states of affairs or to illustrate a range of phenomena. For example, case-studies can be used to demonstrate a psychological condition such as anxiety or to illustrate different sorts of reactions to stress.

The term case-study, according to Bromley, can also very generally refer to any singular case or example or incident, the description and analysis of which is thought to contribute to our understanding of an area of inquiry - an accident or near - accident in transport studies, a patient in medical and nursing studies, a cultural event or artefact in anthropological studies, a battle in military studies, the production of a textbook in commercial publishing and so on.

The essential and common feature of all these different sorts of cases, Bromley notes is that they are irregular, naturally occurring events in the world. They are not, he emphasises, experimentally contrived events or simulations.

According to him, "it is important to realize that even individual experiments, simulations, and surveys are themselves

cases in the general sense provided they are studied as real-world events in their wider context" (p. 2).

2.2.2 Suggested criteria for evaluating case-studies - Laskov

Laskov (1987) has offered a list of useful criteria according to which the scientific value of a case report may be meaningfully appraised. The case-study worth its salt must meet the following

1. Provide "insight" into the person, clarifying the previously meaningless or incomprehensible, suggesting previously unseen connections.
2. Provide a feel for the person, conveying the experience of having known or met him or her.
3. Help the reader to understand the inner or subjective world of the person, how they think about their own experience, situation, problems, life.
4. Deepen sympathy or empathy for the subject.
5. Effectively portray the social and historical world that the person is living.
6. Illuminate the causes (and meaning) of relevant events,

experiences, and conditions and

7. Being vivid, evocative, emotionally compelling to read.

In addition, according to Laskov, if the case-study is carried out in a clinical context, it might be evaluated in terms of criteria such as:

8. Delineating the "problem" requiring decision or action;

9. Identifying the need for collecting additional types of information

10. Suggesting possible goals and courses of action and

11. Sensitizing the reader to the likely consequences of alternative courses of action.

2.2.3 Rules for evaluation of case-study - Bromley

Bromley (1986) similarly, notes six basic rules which, according to him, can guide case-study evaluation.

Rule 1: Truthful reporting on the person, his life circumstances and accurate in matters of detail. Relevance and importance of any particular fact is established by rational argument and not by resorting to rhetoric or special pleading.

Rule 2: Aims and objectives, explicit and unambiguous. Case-studies, according to him, vary in content and organization depending upon the purposes they are designed to fulfil. A psychological case-study, Bromley explains, is usually carried out in order to understand and influence a person's reaction to a predicament.

Rule 3: Contains an assessment of the extent to which the stated aims and objectives have been achieved. The point of this rule, Bromley points out is that for practical or other reasons, it may not be possible to investigate all the psychological and environmental factors that seem relevant, or it may not be possible to conceptualize the person satisfactorily i.e. to make sense of his or her behaviour.

Rule 4: If, as is often the case, the inquiry deals with episodes of deep emotional significance to the person, then it can be carried out properly only by someone trained and equipped to establish and manage, a close, fairly long, and possibly difficult personal relationship. The reason for this Bromley explains, is that the disclosure of any private thoughts, feelings and desires requires trust which can usually be built up only over a long period of time.

Rule 5: The person is seen in an 'ecological context', that is to say, a full account is given of the objects, persons, and

events in his or her physical, social, and symbolic environment. A case-study, Bromley explains, is usually undertaken either because the personal qualities of the individual are unusual or because the surrounding circumstances are unusual or both.

Rule 6: The case report is written in good plain English in a direct, objective way without, however, losing its human interests as a story. Bromley, therefore, cautions that the writer should present the individual's point of view rather like a barrister presents his client's case in a court of law. He writes: "this can be done with sympathy and imagination and with due regard for high standards of evidence and argument" (p. 25).

2.2.4 Standards of preparation for case-study - Pigors

Paul and Faith Pigors (1961) expressing sentiments similar to those of Laskov and Bromley assert that good case-studies are in fact, possible. They postulate the following standards for their preparation, the success or failure of which can constitute the criteria for their evaluation and judgement.

1. Case-studies are historical. They are written by students who rise above or fall short of writing mere novelist stories. Such students, according to them, maintain the integrity of the reports by adhering strictly to accurate reporting and by restraining themselves from "doctoring " some of the facts with the purpose of achieving "improvement".

2. Case-studies are picturesque: They show more than they tell. They are pictures rather than lectures but they are stereoscopic pictures with depth. The goal of ending them at such a level being that readers should be left the scope of deriving insight and forming their own opinions from each source of information.

3. Case studies indicate relationships: They picture people acting or reacting. For this reason they create the impression of non-static pictures. They state: "Every human relationship is constantly changing, being strengthened or weakened by feelings and purposes which have been expressed in words and in action " (p. 19). And for this reason, among others, these authors suggest;

4. case-studies must depict motion: In portraying outward events, they show that "facts" are in process. Some are in the making. And each fact in their view is turning into something else. They are not to be written, as some cases are, to leave the impression that people and events are relatively static. In reading such cases, the Pigors suggest "it may even look as if the situation stopped - at the end of the report - or at least as though all difficulties for misunderstanding had been removed." (p. 19). Such reports, according to these authors, can be misleading.

5. Some of the motion that is pictured in good case reports,

according to the Pigors, depicts the world of inner events, where outward happenings are transmuted into experience. A reporter, according to them, can provide that kind of case material by giving verbatim excerpts from what people said or wrote and describing expressive tones, gestures, and other indications of personality in action.

6. Case reporting can have integrity. A case reporter can and should avoid the temptation of telling more than he knows, even though, as a character sketch, an honest report may show that the reporter did not thoroughly understand his subject. According to these author, for a novelist it's permissible to tell what people thought (but did not say) and what they felt (but did not outwardly reveal).

2.3 Criticisms of the case-study method

The wide scope of the criticisms that have come up against the case-study method are ably summarized by Laskov (1987) who begins by pointing to the degree to which the case study method has been the subject of considerable controversy among the social scientists themselves. He notes that it has often aroused the strongest scepticism even from the personality psychologists, historically its strongest supporters.

The most classical criticisms against the case-study method are embodied, according to Laskov in the following questions: How

can the case-study possibly contribute to a science of psychology? Put more bluntly : If you can't generalize from these case studies, what's the point of doing them?

Such criticism is the typical repressive representative of the classic nomothetic view which, according to Levey (1970) cited by Laskov (1987) enshrines the goal of psychology as "the development of generalizations of ever increasing scope, so that greater and greater varieties of phenomena may be explained by them, larger and larger numbers of questions answered by them, and broader and broader predictions and decisions based upon them" (p. 3). To this extent, Hempel (1965) cited by Laskov has noted that progress should be sought through the development of generalizations as wide in scope as possible, which can then be applied in a deductive nomological fashion to explain and predict particular behaviours.

The criticism against the non-generalizability of the case-study method is embodied by Ausubel and Pergrouki (1977) who caution us to be careful about drawing conclusions from particular individuals to the population in general. In their view, the case studies may be used only as illustrations or examples, or as material from which we might devise hypotheses. These authors contend that the data of the case study cannot be used as a test of a hypothesis or a theory, nor can the conclusions derived from a case study legitimately be applied to human behaviour in general. The data from case studies, according to them, are

often times based on individuals who were systematically selected by an experimenter precisely because they illustrate some theoretical proposition. Thus, according to these authors, case studies, are not only small samples, (N=1) in addition, comparisons with other individuals are rarely made. Therefore, they argue, it is impossible to know if the particular inter-relationship of characteristics in one individual is typical of all individuals, or if it is unique and idiosyncratic.

A similar criticism was made by Lundberg (1926) cited by Laskov (1987) that (1) the case study is not in itself a scientific method at all, but merely the first step in the scientific method; (2) individual cases become of scientific significance only when clarified and summarized in such form as to reveal uniformities, types and patterns of behaviour; (3) the statistical method is the best, if not the only, scientific method of classifying and summarizing large numbers of cases (Laskov, 1987 p. 12).

Such criticisms have prompted often irate direct responses and, at other times, clear and persuasive ones. At another level they have drawn a flood of definitions and descriptions of what the case-study method is into the arena of argument which has been accompanied by suggestions of how the contribution of the case-study method can be assessed.

Laskov himself was prompted to respond in a polite and extremely didactic fashion. He wrote, "There is ... an alternative

picture of the internal structure or organization of the field of personality psychology, a picture based in part on Kluckhohn and Murray's classic dictum 'Every man is in certain respects (a) like all other men, (b) like some other men, (c) like no other man (Kluckhohn and Murray, 1953 cited by Laskov, 1987 p. 12).

Laskov further points out that what we should be concerned with in the study of personality are the ways in which persons are or are not similar to other persons. His view, more clearly, considers that the goals of personality psychology are threefold. They are to discover: (1) what is true of all human beings; (2) what is true of groups of human beings (distinguished by sex, race, social class, culture and other characteristics) and (3) what is true of individual human beings (such as particular public or historical figures or clinical patients).

In view of such assumptions Laskov argues that there is order or regularity in the world at each of these three levels, and there is a need to develop universal generalizations, group-specific generalizations and generalizations applying to specific individuals. Following this argument, Laskov has come to the conclusion regarding the field of psychology that, it is concerned with the five tasks of describing, generalizing about, explaining, predicting, and intentionally changing behaviour at each of the three levels of persons in general, groups of persons and individual human beings.

He accordingly, points out that anyone who attempts to interpret a case study solely in terms of universal generalizations soon becomes aware of the limitations of this approach. In many instances, in his view, explanation and prediction of the individual's behaviour depend crucially upon the knowledge available only at the particular individual level. According to him explanation at the individual level often occurs, not through the deductive application of universal generalizations, but rather through processes, such as searching for the individual's reason for acting in a particular way, through collecting as much information as possible about the individual and looking for idiographic within it, and through organizing information about the case into an intelligible narrative (Laskov citing the views of Drey, 1971; Gallie, 1964).

Bromley's (1986) response to the criticism is similar to Laskov's where he points out that the study of individual cases is the idiographic aspect of personality study. According to him, it can be contracted with the study of individual differences in the nomothetic aspect of personality. He observes; "It is sometimes supposed that the idiographic approach is concerned exclusively with particular, unique individuals.... This is incorrect.... Individual cases can be described and interpreted only in terms of a general conceptual framework within which other cases can also be described and interpreted (Bromley, 1986, p. 6).

The scientific character of the idiographic approach, according to Bromley is derived from the abstract concepts which enable us

to make sense of individual cases. This becomes particularly clear when we need to make comparisons and contrasts between individual cases. The two approaches (nomothetic and idiographic) according to him, have a common aim - the advancement of scientific knowledge about human nature. The idiographic approach, according to him, is via the intensive study of individual cases in the expectation that detailed description and analysis will gradually lead to deeper understanding and to practical applications in more and more areas of interest, while the nomothetic approach is via the extensive psychometric study of samples of subjects in the expectation that individual variations can be averaged out to reveal basic factors common to all or to certain major classes of people. The basic factors, explains Bromley can then be investigated experimentally with a view to discovering their origins and mode of operations.

Kvale (1983) noting the 'vices and virtues' of the psychoanalytic research as an individual case method, highlights these following strengths of the approach: the intensive study of the individual cases which may give comprehensive understanding of individual development; the open-mode of observation making possible the discovery of unexpected phenomena; the interpretation of meaning which gives access to a depth of human existence; the historical dimension which gives an extraordinary temporal context for the formulation and the testing of interpretations; the human relationship which allows the trust necessary for a disclosure of

the deeper levels of personality.

Kvale in frustration has deplored the apologist attitude of a case-study method like the psychoanalytic one in the face of unreasonable onslaughts and demands of its critics that it align itself with the laboratory methods of investigation. Calling this psychoanalysts attitude 'identification with the aggressor', he argues that the psychoanalytic approach has allowed its own excommunication as a scientifically justifiable approach from the field of research. Therefore he writes: "With psychoanalytic therapy excommunicated from the scientific establishment and the excommunication tacitly accepted by psychoanalysts, the attempt has been made to verify psychoanalytic knowledge by established scientific methods such as experiments, questionnaires, etc. (Kvale in: Giorgi and de Koning, 1986, p. 169).

Demonstrating that the individual case study method by nature, does not lend itself to evaluation through the means of the laboratory techniques, Kvale has further noted that the results of the attempts to verify psychoanalytic knowledge by traditional methods are in general rather inconclusive and questionable. Many of the phenomena studied in psychoanalysis, he points out, only exist in a close personal relationship, in contrast to the deeper levels of personality disclosed in the personal trust of the therapeutic relationship, the replications attempted in the laboratory may only yield knowledge of a surface level of personality.

Ausubel et al. (1977), albeit his devaluing of the scientific status of the case-study method as shown earlier (see Chapter 1), has admitted to the following unique properties of this approach. According to him the case-study method involves a careful description of the behaviour of one person and achieves a depth of information not usually available with other methods of data collection. From the intimate knowledge thus gained of the interrelationships among significant aspects of an individual's developmental history, personality structure, and overt behaviour, it is often possible to acquire valuable insight into the nature of personality development and behaviour adjustment.

Bromley (1986) noting the solemn determination of the case study users, never to compromise the standard and quality of their own science, has observed the evolution of sound, systematized knowledge of the case study as a scientific body of knowledge.

2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, then, we may say that this chapter has made an attempt to show that much will be lost if the study of personality is allowed to pass, in entirety, into the hands of the laboratory investigators. They will be describing populations in which the individual will be implied but they will probably be sure to sacrifice some unique idiosyncratic peculiarities that are applicable solely to your particular client and to no one else in the studied population samples. And

yet that which made your individual different may not only constitute what would, perhaps, have to go into your management strategy of his particular case, but might even be the most vital aspect of the management plan.

This chapter has also attempted to show that the users of the case-study method have a different view of what this method is and they are satisfied with the belief that there is nothing less scientific about their conception of this subject and have developed their own set of criteria according to which, they argue, the case-study method ought to be evaluated. One can also see that if the critics of the case-study method do not accept these criteria, there may be endless arguments and conflicts or even the mutual agreement to be different. And yet this may even be uncalled for since both the study of the phenomena and the study of the individual cases have definite roles to play in the study of personality as such.

Following from the explanations and definitions of the case-study method, its place and what it can offer in the field of personality study, the author is satisfied that it is the most indicated for the study of the problem as stated in the introduction of this chapter namely father-absent male sexual dream symbolism. It is appropriate and is the only approach known to personality study that can offer an in depth understanding of the individual psychological state. The individual case method and its achievements is offered to the

public with no more ambitious claims than that it is simply suitable for the study of the idiosyncratic individual peculiarities.

CHAPTER 3

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is written in two parts. The first, will be an attempt to review, analyze and integrate a large body of diverse data concerning the possible linkage of variations in fathering to male behaviour. Relevant data will be drawn from different fields including sociology, social work, child development and family relations, education, psychiatry as well as several different areas of psychology.

The second will be an attempt to review psychological theory linking the psychodynamic and developmental background of father-absence to the development of male sex-role problems.

3.1 Part one: abnormal male sex typed behaviour

Literature linking a great variety of male sex-role related problems to father-absence is clearly abundant. The author has found the works of Biller (1971, 1974, 1976) in frequent use by a number of workers in this field. His definition of sex-role (see Chapter 1) seems well received by many who became interested in this subject after him.

Lamb (1976) deeply contemplating the role of parents in the

upbringing of their children, has posed the following question: if fathers and mothers are both important persons in the life of the infant, are they functionally distinguishable? He however quickly, concedes that there is widespread agreement in the literature that mothers and fathers play different roles in the socialization of their children.

With respect to the role of fathers in the psychosocial development of sons, Lamb observes that boys, as a rule, are notable for the tendency to prefer playing with their fathers and in so doing gain exposure in masculinity models. It is Lamb's view that male role confusion, for instance, is a phenomenon more typical of the middle classes where the fathers' occupations are less concretely defined than it is of the lower classes.

Lamb's social class related male sex role development is corroborated by Biller's (1974) work. Citing Altus (1958) he reports that father-absent middle-class university boys were likely to manifest more masculinity difficulties as indicated by their interests and attitudes in the masculinity-femininity scale of the MMPI than their father-absent lower-class university counterparts. Another study also by Altus (1958), cited by Biller (1974), with similar college subjects revealed that middle-class college boys were likely to remain relatively low in masculinity of sex role preference throughout adolescence.

3.1.2 Family functioning and other psychosocial variables

involved in the development of male sex-role problems.

Many investigators researching the effects of father-absence have noted the methodological shortcomings typical of research that overlooked the overall family interactive patterns that were obviously related and or contributing to the development of male sexual problems (Biller, 1971, 1974, 1976; Lamb, 1976; Harper and Ryder, 1986; Freud, 1972) to list but a few.

3.1.2.1 Family functioning

Biller (1974) for instance, reports that a frequently researched factor in family functioning is the amount of father or mother dominance in decision making. He points out, however, that dominance is not an all or none phenomenon, as sometimes one parent will have authority in mundane day-to-day decisions while in actuality the other parent has the final say on major decisions. Biller also observes that there are many different areas in which a parent may be dominant, but, according to him, usually the same parent is not dominant in all dimensions of family life. He notes in addition that in general, evidence does suggest that there is a relative equality of sharing in most marriages and that in non-egalitarian marriages the fathers are more likely to dominate than the mothers.

In Biller's (1974) words, "In the present discussion the focus is

not on the issue of whether the father or mother is generally the most dominant parent, but rather how differences in degree of father dominance are related to variations in children's personal adjustment" (p. 73). In this particular regard he cites evidence from research depicting family satisfaction and equilibrium (including wife) in those families that are father-dominated.

Biller (1971) cites some studies which reveal that a high paternal involvement in decision making is uncommon in families in which there is a severely disturbed son. In families with non-disturbed sons, the fathers were most often the dominant figures, and mutually acceptable decisions were much more common.

Another study by Alkaline (1969) reported by Biller (1971) notes that fathers usually dominated in families with normal adolescents but mothers dominated in families with disturbed adolescents. Other research, according to Biller (1971) has pointed out several sub-types of inappropriate fathering. Paternal hostility toward the child and mother, and lack of open communication among family members were very common.

Harper and Ryder (1986) have found that boys from families where the father was absent through divorce or separation were lower in self-esteem and saw their parents especially the mother as less caring and more overprotective than did their peers from intact families or those whose fathers were deceased.

3.1.2.2 Sibling factors

According to Biller (1974) older brothers as well as fathers can provide the child with a masculine model. Even so, however, he states, there still exists a greater need to understand the potential effects of ordinal position and sibling status which calls for a systematic consideration of interactions among the quality of parent-child relations and the various dimensions of family structure. Advancing argument in support of this point he notes: "For example, paternal deprivation may have a much different effect on a five-year-old boy who has two older brothers who themselves were not paternally deprived in early childhood" (p. 51).

3.1.2.3 Peers

Pointing out the relevance of peer group influence on the development of masculine behaviour on father-absent boys, Biller (1974) explains that "in a social class or subculture in which instrumental aggression and physical prowess are very important as a means of achieving peer acceptance, many father-absent boys are likely to emulate their masculine peers" (p. 52). Citing studies by Miller (1958) and Pope (1953), Biller (1974) argues that peer models seem especially important in lower class neighbourhoods. According to him, Miller (1958) emphasized the centrality of such traits as toughness and independence in the

value system of lower-class adolescents while Pope (1953) noted how aggressiveness is important to lower-class than to middle-class boys and also how one of the types of boys most admired by lower-class boys is the aggressive, belligerent youngster who earns their respect because of toughness and strength. Biller (1974) further points out that the focus on masculine behaviour in the adolescent gang provides the father-absent, lower-class boy with many substitute masculine models. In this respect he draws from Miller (1958) who, according to him, emphasized that "for boys reared in female-based households the corner group provides the first real opportunity to learn essential aspects of the male role in the context of peers facing similar problems of sex-role identification." (Biller, 1974 p. 52).

3.1.3 The role of anxiety in father-Absent boys sex- role identification

Anxiety has been noted by Biller (1971, 1974) and Malan (1979) to be prevalent and pervasive in the drama of the lives of father-absent boys in so far as it clearly features in their every facet. As Malan so aptly pointed out: "There is a group of problems in men in which anxiety, often severe, is aroused by a wide variety of situations, some of them obviously related to one another and some apparently unrelated" (p. 52). Such situations, according to him, are as follows: competition and rivalry between men, particularly in triangular situations involving a woman;

heterosexual situations, particularly if guilt-laden; hostility towards, conflict with, or disapproval by, male authority, particularly in situations involving sexuality; being put to the test (e.g. exams); failure, downfall, punishment, retribution; physical injury, real or symbolic; success; the death or downfall of other males, especially authority figures, or injury to them, or other forms of triumph over them; taking another man's place; being let down or rejected by men; and finally stealing something that can be seen as symbolizing power, strength or masculinity.

A study by Mc Cord, Mc Cord and Thurber (1962) cited by Biller (1974) analyzed social workers observations of 10 to 15 years old, lower-class boys. These authors came to the conclusion that father-absent boys manifested more anxiety about sex than a matched group of father-present boys. Another study by Stephens (1961) also reported by Biller (1974) asked social workers about their experiences with father-absent boys. They described them as being more effeminate and anxious about sex than were father-present boys.

Similarly, Biller (1974) has found that a high level of anxiety is often an outcome of inadequate sex-role development. According to him various investigators have found that males low in masculinity and or those with inappropriate sex-role preference are highly anxious.

Biller (1974) reports that inadequate fathering is often

associated with a high level of anxiety in children.

3.1.4 Specified areas of psychosexual difficulties

Biller (1974) draws attention to the following father-absent boys psychosocial dysfunctional areas. In many ways they resemble Malan's (1979) father-absent males sexual difficulties constellation.

3.1.4.1 Vocational adjustments

Biller (1974) as well as several other investigators he cites, finds that the type of work in which the father engages can influence the personality development of his children.

Miller and Swanson (1958) cited by Biller (1974) have suggested that fathers who are entrepreneurs, those who take risks and individual responsibility in their business ventures, encourage the development of self-control, self-reliance, and assertive mastery of the environment. These authors, according to Biller are of the opinion that fathers who are engaged in bureaucratic occupations take few risks and encourage more conformity behaviour in their children. Gold and Slater (1958) cited by Biller (1974) report evidence suggesting that fathers with entrepreneurial occupations are more likely to be dominant family

decision makers than are fathers with bureaucratic occupations.

Contending that the father in his work role can certainly provide an important model for his son, Biller (1974) asserts that the amount of opportunity the son has to interact and observe his father is the initial variable. He warns that fathers in many different occupations have very little to do with their children.

Biller (1974) further makes the following generalizing summary on this score that males who have experienced inadequate fathering are likely to have vocational adjustment problems; frequent opportunities for observing a competent adult male in a variety of problem-solving situations are important in the development of the child's maturity and responsibility. Achievement motivation may be stifled by fathers who are over-involved or under-involved with their children.

Similarly Shinn (1979) has suggested that financial hardship, high levels of anxiety, and in particular low levels of parent-child interaction are important causes of poor performance among children in single parent families.

3.1.4.2 Cognitive development

Shinn (1979) cites studies by Carlsmith (1969) and Furkestein (1963) which suggest that growing up in a father-less home leads to a "feminine pattern" of relatively low quantitative and high

verbal scores on aptitude tests. She also cites studies, carried out with elite samples (Students from Harvard College and Stanford University). that "did indeed show the quantitative-verbal difference score phenomenon" (p. 314).

Biller (1971) also refers to the Carlsmith (1964) study from which he highlights the finding that paternal deprivation is associated with cognitive functioning deficits. He further reports a study by Blanchard (1970) in which the effects of father-absence were investigated by accompanying similar samples of father-present and father-absent boys. The subjects in the Blanchard (1970) studies according to Biller (1971) were third grade boys of average intelligence from working-class and lower middle-class and were investigated for academic functioning. Subject matching across four groups (early father-absent; late father-absent; low father-present; high father-present) was done in terms of age, IQ., socio-economic, status, and sibling constellation. Class grades and academic achievement test scores were examined, and it was found that the academic performance of the high father-present group was much superior to the other three groups. The early father-absent group boys were generally underachievers, the late father-absent and low father-present boys usually functioned somewhat below grade level, but the father-present group performed almost a year above grade level (Biller, 1971, p. 59).

Biller (1971) stresses the point that boys from high father-

present families are more likely to actualise their intellectual potential than are boys from families in which the father is absent or relatively unavailable. He further informs us that highly available fathers can be models of perseverance and achievement motivation. The father, according to him, can be an example of a male successfully functioning outside of the home atmosphere. Furthermore, according to him frequent opportunities to observe and imitate an adequate father contributes to the development of the boy's overall instrumental and problem solving ability. However, having a competent father, warns Biller (1971), will not facilitate a boy's intellectual development if the father is not consistently accessible to the boy, or if the father-son relationship is negative in quality e.g. if the father is generally critical and frustrating. According to him, when the father has intellectual interests, a positive father-son relationship particularly stimulates a boy's academic achievement. If the father's work involves cognitive tasks such as reading, writing or mathematics, it is likely that the boy will develop skills in these areas. It is Biller's (1971) conclusion in respect of intellectual development that frequent exposure to a father who enjoys intellectual pursuits can do much to further a child's cognitive development. However, if the father does not enjoy such activities, he observes, the child is less likely to excel in school (Biller, 1971, p. 59).

3.1.4.3 Self-esteem

Miller (1984) reports research findings of father absence to the effect that where paternal absence exists in the home situation, the level of self-esteem tended to be affected more for males than for females; where the father was absent in the home, males tended also to have lower levels of self-esteem than females; where self-esteem of the child and core-facilitative conditions in mother were correlated significantly ($p < .05$) male self-esteem was likely to be affected negatively.

Another study by Harper and Ryder (1986) concerned with parental bonding, self-esteem and peer acceptance in 46 father-absent male adolescents aged 13 to 15 years and a matched group from intact families found that boys from families where the father was absent through divorce or separation were lower in self-esteem and saw their parents especially the mother as less caring and more introspective than did their peers from intact families - or those whose fathers were deceased.

Harper and Ryder further found that lowered social-economic status results in loss of self-esteem; parental conflicts result in poor self-concept; parental deficiencies force the child to seek reason and he may see the deficiencies as lying in himself with the consequence that that he loses his self-esteem, and develop identity problems and other personality deficiencies.

Biller (1974) himself cites studies whose conclusions link the development of self esteem in boys to various facets of paternal

behaviour. According to him, such studies have included the following findings: father's consistent participation and interest in sons seems to encourage self-confidence and self-esteem; fathers involvement in limit-setting is associated with high self-esteem while boys' low self-esteem seems to be associated with limit-setting exclusively by mothers. Boys who could confide in their fathers, Biller reports, were likely to have high self-esteem while it was found that boys with inaffectionate relationships with their fathers were particularly likely to feel rejected and unhappy. This was found to be the case also among college students whose self-esteem was discovered to be negatively related to paternal rejection.

On this score, Biller reports his own finding to be that the unnurturant father is an inadequate model and his consistent presence appears to be a detriment to the boy's personality functioning. He further observes that this finding was discovered to be consistent with evidence he had gathered in an earlier investigation namely, that father-absent boys often have a better personality adjustment than boys with passive ineffectual fathers (Biller, 1974 p. 56).

3.1.4.4 Interpersonal relationships

Biller (1971, 1974) argues that the father-infant relationship can have much impact on the child's subsequent relationships. According to him, there is research evidence which shows that

infants who had little contact with their fathers were more likely to experience greater separation anxiety from their mothers and more negative reactions to strangers. From this observation he argues that the way the father interacts with the child presents a particularly potent modelling situation which the child is apt to generalize to his relationships with others. He cites various studies which suggest paternal deprivation to be an important reason in the development of unsuccessful peer relationships.

3.1.4.5 Moral development and impulse control

Biller (1974) reports that he has observed that the quality of the father child relationship seems to have particular influence on whether the child takes responsibility for his own actions or acts as if his behaviour is controlled by external forces. In his view, children who have a warm relationship with a competent father who can constructively set limits for them are much more likely to develop a realistic focus of control.

A study by Merevloo (1956) cited by Biller (1974) found that the father represents social order and that his adherence to time schedules gives the child an important lesson in social functioning. It is, further, Biller's (1974) view that the paternally deprived boy may find it very difficult to follow the rules of society. In his words: "Antisocial acts are often

impulsive as well as aggressive, and there is evidence that inability to delay gratification is associated with inaccurate time perception, lack of social responsibility, low achievement motivation, and juvenile delinquency." (Biller, 1974, p. 66). He has further more found that the boy who has experienced paternal deprivation may have particular difficulty in respecting and communicating with adult males in positions of authority.

3.1.4.6 Delinquency

Lynn (1974) cited by Miller (1984) has addressed the undesirable consequences of father-absence in the American home and reports a high correlation between father-absence and juvenile delinquency. Other studies (Farrell, 1974 and Pleck, 1975) also cited by Miller (1984) have found that delinquency in adolescent males who come from single-parent homes where the father is absent could also result from masculine protest against feminine domination, inadequate child-rearing supervision and lack of a male model (Miller, 1984 p. 294).

Biller (1971, 1974, 1976) notes that juvenile delinquency can have many etiologies, but that paternal deprivation is a frequent contributing factor. According to him, many researchers have observed that father-absence is more common among delinquent boys than among non-delinquent boys.

3.1.4.7 Sexual and marriage relations

Biller (1971, 1974, 1976) states that a positive father-child relationship can greatly facilitate the boy's security in interacting with females. According to him, the boy who has developed a positive masculine self-image has much more confidence in heterosexual interactions. Referring to longitudinal studies by Kagan and Moss (1962) he notes that a boy who has developed a strong sense of masculinity in childhood is likely to be successful in heterosexual relationships in adulthood.

Biller (1974) points to the existence of considerable evidence suggesting that the male's adjustment to marriage is related to his relationship with his father and his parent's marital relationship. Such evidence, according to him, concurs that difficulty in forming lasting heterosexual relationships often appears to be linked to paternal deprivation.

According to Biller, a great deal of the heterosexual difficulty that many paternally deprived, lower-class males experience is associated with their compulsive rejection of anything that they perceive as related to femininity. Proving that they are not homosexual or effeminate, is according to him, a major preoccupation of many lower-class males. They frequently engage in Don Juan patterns of behaviour, making one conquest after another, and a stable emotional relationship with a female may

not be formed even during marriage, (Biller 1974). The fear of again being dominated by a female, as they were as children, contributes to their need to continually exhibit their masculinity by new conquests, he notes further. Biller (1974) concludes his point by noting that "the perception of child-rearing as an exclusively feminine endeavour also interferes with their interaction with children and helps perpetrate the depressing cycle of paternal deprivation in lower-class families" (p. 76).

3.1.4.8 Sexual inadequacy

Biller (1974) cites Masters and Johnson (1970) who reported paternal deprivation to appear with some frequency in the background of the sexually inadequate individuals they treated.

Discussing primary male impotence, Masters and Johnson (1970) according to Biller (1974) note three specific instances of overt mother-son sexual encounters (genital stimulation by the mother) and add that in all these cases the father was either absent or minimally available.

Masters and Johnson (1970) according to Biller (1974) also reported cases of impotence associated with paternal over-control. Such fathers, according to their report, seemed to demand all their wishes be met but had no sensitivity for the needs of their wives or children. These authors according to

Biller stress that "unopposed maternal or paternal domination, irrespective of its etiology, can undermine the boy's sense of masculine competency" (p. 77).

3.1.4.9 Homosexuality

Biller (1974) writes that as a group, homosexuals tend to have more psychological problems than do heterosexuals, but that many of their conflicts are exacerbated by social rejection.

According to him, no systematic studies have been done concerning the rates of homosexuality among father-absent males. Some investigators, he reports, have, however, suggested that father-absent males are more prone than father-present males to become homosexuals. He cites studies by West (1959) and O'Connor (1964) which reported that homosexual males more often than neurotic males had histories of long periods of father-absence during childhood. In his words, "The paternally deprived boy's search for a father figure can often be involved in the development of homosexual relationships" (p. 78).

West (1967) cited by Biller (1974) presents an excellent review of data pertaining to the antecedents of male homosexuality in which he notes that males who as children are father-absent or have ineffectual fathers, together with being involved in an intense close-binding relationship with their mothers, seem particularly prone to develop a homosexual pattern of behaviour.

A close-binding sexualized, mother-son relationship seems more common in father-absent homes and may, along with related factors, lessen the probability of the boy entering into a meaningful heterosexual relationship. According to Biller (1974) West (1967) furthermore reported that "a significant proportion of homosexuals during childhood were more discouraged by their mothers from participating in masculine activities and were often reinforced for more feminine behaviour" (p. 78).

3.2 Part two : psychological theory explaining the anxiety of father-absent boys

3.2.1 Malan

Malan (1979) has come to the conclusion that the anxiety found in sons ultimately comes from Oedipal fears of being hurt by the father for being in competition with him over the mother. He acknowledges that this idea was first postulated by Freud.

Malan points out that his own claims are based on empirical; evidence deriving from his patients' responses to interpretation, the emergence of hitherto suppressed feelings and therapeutic effects. He accounts for male anxiety in the following terms: "It is an empirical fact that many patients respond with confirmatory material to the basic interpretation that both the competition and the hostility are ultimately directed against the

father... since the relation with the father is likely to involve far more intense and deep-seated feelings, than, for instance, that with bosses or rival peers, this ultimately begins to make sense of the intensity of the anxiety and - where present - the accompanying feelings of guilt" (p. 55).

Malan reports that the male anxiety syndrome (as described above) in the chapter seems to contain four main components.

- (1) Symptoms (usually anxiety in some form)
- (2) Difficulties over competition and/or achievement.
- (3) Difficulties in relation to male authority figures.
- (4) Inhibitions or anxiety in relation to the opposite sex.

Two questions, according to him now spring to mind:

- (1) What is the underlying reason for the clustering together of these four components?
- (2) What on earth is the source of the anxiety which is frequently so severe, and so apparently out of proportion to the often comparatively trivial and every day of precipitating events?

The cases he cites from which he draws evidence of material alluding to the syndrome, all had exaggerated responses in the

presence of sexually related stimuli which rocked the very foundations of their sense of personal security and safety.

The answer to the first question according to Malan comes from a consideration of the second and third of the four components of the syndrome, namely, (2) problems of competition, and (3) hostility towards male authority. In his own words: "It is an empirical fact that both the competition and the hostility are ultimately directed against the father" (p. 55).

He explains the phenomenal anxiety as deriving from the Oedipal fear of castration in which the son unconsciously fears that his father wants to cut off his penis. Difficulties concerning competition with men, he points out stem from the difficulties his unconscious fantasies harbour against competing with him or to out-perform him. And he has a terrible fear of failing.

Malan however, also informs us that the son still loves his father and feels guilty about the urge to compete with him. Thus, according to this author, in cases where the father is perceived to be weak, the son experiences guilt about successful competition with him which induces the inability to compete which at the same time, instigates fearsome secretive competition. Where the father is absent or, has died as pointed out earlier (see Chapter 1) the Oedipal strivings are severely guilt-laden with the son faced with the prospect of having 'got rid of the father.'

3.2.2 Freud

Freud (1955) maintains that little boys' animal phobias are actually a displaced fear of the father. In his view, the anxiety is a symptom of fear which gives rise to functional inhibition. According to him, what is apparent in little boys is not just any fear but specifically the fear that the animals will bite them.

3.2.2.1 Freud - Little Hans

Phobias in Freud's (1955) view represent an idea which endeavours to withdraw from consciousness and gets itself replaced by an unidentified phobia in which only anxiety and its object still appears.

If we want to understand the source of the boy's anxiety, Freud suggests, we have to consider the little boy's physical situation as a whole as it comes to light in the course of the analytic treatment. In this respect, he cites the case of 'Little Hans' who had horse phobia. All the time, reports Freud, the boy was in the jealous and hostile Oedipus attitude towards his father, whom, nevertheless, except in so far as his mother was the cause of the estrangement, he dearly loved.

Freud then explains that what faces the boy is a situation of conflict due to ambivalence - a well grounded love and no less justifiable hatred directed towards one and the same person. And his phobia is an attempt to solve it by displacing the affect towards the hate object onto an animal.

Freud, furthermore reports, he and his co-workers were able to establish another point with certainty namely, the instinctual impulse which underwent repression in 'Little Hans' was a hostile one against his father.

Explaining the origin of the connection between the phobic animal and the fear of the father, Freud (1959) points out that children do not as yet recognize, or at any rate, lay such exaggerated stress upon the guilt that separates human beings from the animal world. In their eyes the grown man, the object of their fear and admiration, still belongs to the same category as the big animal who has so many enviable attributes but against whom they have been warned because he may be dangerous.

The choice of a specific animal, such as the horse, in 'Little Hans' case comes from the fact that as a baby his father used to play with him at horses and the doubtlessly explained the origin.

For Freud, therefore, the anxiety arising from animal phobia points to an immense fear of the father by the son who dreads the prospect of being devoured by him. For in both of his famous cases 'Little Hans' and 'Wolf Man', Freud found the fear to be

not just of animals but of being bitten by them. However, he at the same time reports what he designates as an even more significant finding is that there is tenderness or love in the son towards his father which is developed to the genital-erotic zone. Thus the fear of being devoured is translatable to be a fear of the father making sexual advances towards him. And according to him, this sexual feeling is traceable to the feeling of love and tenderness.

But, according to Freud (1959) as the fear is immense, it has the effect of resolving both the love feelings towards the mother as well as the homosexual feelings towards his father. In other words, the anxiety about what the father could do has the effect of resolving the anxiety.

3.2.3 Jung

Jung (1969) explains the anxiety arising from the fear of the father in the following way: "The father is the representative of the spirit, whose function is to oppose pure instinctuality.... That is his archetypal role, which falls to him regardless of his personal qualities; hence he is very often an object of neurotic fears for the son."

Noting the unwillingness of the archetypal mother in the woman to allow her son to be individual, Jung (1956) observes that the

greatest achievement of the son is overcoming the mother and with it, victory over incest. Were such a victory fail to be achieved, an incestuous relationship at a psychological level, would indeed prevail, according to him.

Jung (1969) states that, accordingly, the monster to be overcome by the son frequently appears as a giant who guards the treasure. An excellent example of this is the giant Humbaba in the Gilgamesh Epic, who guards the garden of Ishtar. Gilgamesh, according to the epic, conquers the giant and wins Ishtar, whereupon Ishtar immediately makes sexual advances to her deliverer.

Jung explains that by overpowering the mother the hero becomes equal to the sun - he renews himself. He wins the strength of the invincible sun, the powers of eternal rejuvenation.

Jung therefore comments: "We can now understand the scenes of pictures illustrating the Mithraic legend on the Heddernhein Relief. First we see the birth of Mithras from the top of the tree; the next picture shows him carrying the conquered bull. Here the bull has the same significance as the monster and may be compared with the bull that was conquered by Gilgamesh. He represents the father-who-paradoxically-enforces the incest prohibition as a giant and dangerous animal."

Jung's writing is interesting. It represents how the son through the presence of his father overcomes his mother's love. By

conquering both his father and mother the son is able to attain independence as well as sexual freedom by being like the sun-father. Where the author considers Jung's contribution as being even more interesting is in showing that the whole father-mother-son triad is an archetypal arrangement and the normal psychodynamics occur in the relationship where the people variables require the presence of all, or absence of any for certain psychological problems to exist - the absence of the father, for instance, for the son to develop sexual problems deriving from an "incestuous relationship with the mother".

In this way, then, we see how the need for the presence to develop victory over the mother occurs or becomes inevitable. For it is from the fear of the father that the son leaves the mother and in so doing achieves the status of the 'sun-god' - the father.

Commensurate with the 'sun-god' status is normal male sex-role orientation in which the son will have normal sex-role disposition whereby he will have normal sexual relations from which he will be able to 'rejuvenate' himself through his sexual relations with other women having given up his mother. And that is how, father-absence, will then quite understandably foster the development of sexual problems.

Throwing more light on the father's activities in his prevention or protection of his wife from his son's incestuousness, Jung

(1969) refers to the symbolism of the snake coiled around a tree, so frequently a phenomenon occurring in the dreams of individuals with sexual problems. The snake guards the mother and installs fear in the son thus discouraging him from approaching her.

According to Jung (1969) the threatening of the new-born infants by snakes (Mithras, Apollo, Hercules) is explained by the legend of Libith and Lamia Python the dragon of Leto, and Poine, who devastated the land of Crotopos, were sent by the father of the newborn. This fact, according to Jung, points to the father being the cause of the fear in the son.

Jung further states, "The paternal law is directed against instinct with all the violence and fury of uninhibited instinct."

One of Jung's most significant contributions as far as the author is concerned, is in pointing to how the son's fantasies about the mother and father originate from within his own unconscious. He is already archetypally predisposed to have the experiences talked about, namely of developing incestuous fantasies towards the mother but of having them solved by the presence of the father whereby the greatest ideal becomes achieved namely, of attaining social maturity. The parent in real life then becomes invested with these fantasies of the unconscious.

Thus the son's potential to love his mother and hate his father is instinctual.

3.3 Conclusion

In the author's judgement there are no real or serious conflicts in the contributions of Malan, Freud and Jung. Their approaches may have been different but at least insofar as this subject of the development of male sex problems, their stories are the same - alluding to the father-mother-son triad showing that the father's absence is invariably the cause of the anxiety that negatively affects or inhibits the boy's sexuality.

CHAPTER 4

4. CASE PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In this presentation the author will discuss clinical material from the analysis of a young man of 31 years of age - a university graduate who was studying towards a senior degree in his own field. He presented with sex-role difficulties such as are described by Malan (1979) in his anxiety-ridden relationships as constellated in his masculinity problems syndrome and Biller's (1974) behaviour difficulties as outlined in Chapter 3, e.g. delinquent behaviour earlier on in his youth. He was seen once a week for 15 months.

The client's clinical history and transference behaviour during the psychotherapy established fairly certainly that he did suffer father-absence. In his case, as in Seligman's (1984), the father had been at home but owing to his own psychopathology had not been available for him. His subsequent death further complicated the client's issues, evidently true to the pattern described by Malan namely, of guilt, incredible loss and longing for him.

More specifically then, this case presentation will focus and emphasize the salutary and deleterious effects of the client's

developmental relationships with his primary objects - father, mother, siblings, and to a lesser extent, stepfather, in early adulthood. The purpose of doing this will be to expose for consideration the .cp5 interplay among these family members , relationship variables and what in them seems to constitute the pathology that gives rise to the development of the difficulties in boys.

To demonstrate the presence of the difficulties in his case, the client's characteristic behavioural idiosyncrasies will be reviewed and discussed or presented here in the form of themes.

4.2 Key features of the psychotherapy

There will also be a presentation of dreams first, as a demonstration of the intra-psychic nature of the difficulties in sons, affected by this problem and how it manifests symbolically in dreams and secondly, how such dreams can disclose the sexual and psychological situatedness of the dreaming male with sex-role problems associated with the father-absence experience -so to speak is his condition improving or worsening as a result of psychotherapy.

The author will also show how he interpreted the client's dreams where possible pointing out the psychotherapeutic discretions (silences, reflections, interpretations, etc.) that guided his

stance in the moving course of the psychotherapeutic process.

In short, the client was enabled through the activation of his developmental issues to reconsider their detrimental impact and influence on his psychosexual development. The insights he gained into his behaviour, gave him relief from , especially on presentation, a characteristically anguished anxiety; resolved the sexual problem he presented with and leased or offered him a new capacity to form healthier interpersonal and heterosexual relationships.

As the author has already indicated, the analysis was done on two levels - behaviour analysis and dream interpretation.

4.3 The case

4.3.1 Presenting problem

The client, David, presented with heterosexual and interpersonal relationship difficulties which manifested through an inability to form and maintain normal sexual relationships on account of being plagued by premature ejaculation and being uncomfortable in relationships with men while showing a preference for female company. The net result was that although he was 31 years of age at the time of presenting for psychotherapy, he had no girlfriend

(his last relationship having ended a few months earlier) and hardly a single male friend.

David's sexual problems seemed to have first surfaced at High School when he noticed that his interest was turned off from a girl he might have fancied the moment he heard she had sexually experimented with certain individuals at school and was not pure as he might usually have imagined her to be. In this specific regard, for instance, the only reason he allowed himself to continue in his longest relationship of four years, after finding out that his highly regarded girlfriend was not a virgin, was because he had told himself, she had been too young at the time to know what she had been doing and therefore her responsibility for her actions could be waved. He had, otherwise, been terribly disappointed. He felt "fatherly" towards the girl and considered himself her "protector".

David described the relationship with this girl as having been "pathological". While he was in love with her, he explained, she had ceased to exist. He had had her "wrapped around his forefinger". He decided what clothing she would buy and what she would wear on certain days. He arranged cinema bookings and made the telephone calls she, herself, should have made.

He had felt good about it all. So good, in fact, that he took for his own, not just her, but her whole family. In the process he had completely forgotten about his own.

When she terminated with him, David reflected sadly how much loneliness and pain had been precipitated in him. He decided never to give himself as wholesomely as he had done to a love relationship again.

David's appearance at the clinic was precipitated by the failure of his second important relationship. He had been astounded by his own behaviour towards the girl over the two years that the relationship lasted. He had been one pointed in his resolve to maintain a distance between him and her. He was not getting any closer so he could "burn his fingers again." If the girl had dared to question him on anything he would swiftly have reminded her she was free to leave by the following minute.

When she eventually did leave him, having realized how much he had actually loved her all the time, a severe terror had been precipitated as the prospect of never getting married loomed. He had always thought of himself as the "marrying type."

The question David brought to psychotherapy then concerned: what he might do in order to have a family of his own.

4.3.2 Background

4.3.2.1 Family history

At the time of presenting for psychotherapy, David was living alone - his "male" dog having been his only company. The significance of this male dog was that it represented the only easy relationship he could have with males.

4.3.2.2 Original family

The client's family comprised his father, mother, two older brothers (the eldest, his senior by four years, the younger by two years) and a sister, two years younger than himself. The parents had planned their children leaving two years age gaps between them.

4.3.2.3 Father

His father died when David was 21 Years of age. In his life time he had worked for the S.A.B.C. as a technician responsible for manning the FM radio satellites. This job meant that the family never stayed in one place much longer than a short while when David was a child.

The client described his father as a kind man. But, no sooner had he rendered such a description than he hooked on to an irritated and elaborate attack of his father's weak personality.

This weakness, kindness, apparently, was known to other people as well e.g. his work colleagues. For then they took advantage of it by asking him to do their Christmas calls for them.

David criticized his father for staying in a job with a low status all his life. His job could never earn the family esteem or enjoyment of a higher socio-economic status. He expressed a feeling that all the debt the family found itself paying today was his father's debt.

David then turned to a discussion of the false, make-believe life his father lived - and got very irate and angry in the process. According to him, his father was a very weak man who knew he was weak and then "spent his life trying to prove how strong he was." He blamed his father's preoccupation with the ideas of power and strength as the things that deprived him of a happy childhood. He was expected to be this strong little man in order to compensate for his father's weakness. He cited an incident when, on hearing from his wife how David had nearly fainted at the dentist, his father had cried out that "no son of [his] could faint at the sight of blood." He added that when he asked for something his father had always told him to "stop whining."

Feeling that he himself was weak in the world, he expressed a feeling that he must have inherited his weakness directly from his father. He wondered whether such things as weakness of the personality could be passed on biologically to children by parents.

Bent on showing his father was weak, David told the story of his father's death. According to him, when his heart problem began to get the better of him, his father had continued to pretend that nothing was seriously the matter. He defied everyone's opinion, including doctor and wife that he rest at home. He collapsed one day at work and ended up at Groot Schuur hospital. On hearing of his families arrival to visit him there, he had cried but because he did not want his children to discover his weakness he had barred them from coming to him before he had regained his composure.

When it was clear that he was dangerously ill, David who was in the army at the time, requested a transfer from the local army command to his home town so he could be near him. The army there had allowed him to spend his nights at home.

David reports that he spent these nights by his dying father's bedside. He had sat there expecting him to open up and talk about his life or pending death. But his father never did till death did them part. David felt his father had been too cowardly to talk about his death which he knew was coming.

At an earlier time during the psychotherapy David had regretted his father's death which he said had come before "amends had been made between them." He also regarded it as "lost opportunities." He expressed that he felt he missed his father and needed him to

see what advances he had made in his life. He felt that his father would have been able to appreciate what he was doing today and would have been proud of him.

He talked about having been so numbed by his death that he had not cried at his funeral. He had, curiously, also started to see himself as a loser and subsequently expected never to win in anything. So deep was this belief in David, that if he chanced to lose or mislay an article, he used not to bother to take the trouble of looking for it for he expected never to recover the lost thing. Thus the change of this belief and behaviour became one of the measures by which he felt certain that psychotherapy had helped him.

His birth having been the third of yet another boy when his father had been so desperate to get a girl, had made him feel rejected on sight by his father. The client had therefore experienced his father as absent for him from the very beginning of his life. The birth of his sister two years later had widened the gulf between them. His father had "absolutely doted" on her and resented him getting in the way.

It was because of the harsh treatment meted out by his father that David developed an intense hatred of his sister. She could play with his toys, break them or give them away to her friends. He was not allowed to protest. If he hit her, then he had "evoked his father's wrath." And he did receive many a good hiding.

David was the only one in the family who discovered his father's weakness for members of the opposite sex. No one knew that his father read sex novels and kept photographs of nude women, but him. He enjoyed staying at home and sneaking up into his parent's bedroom in order to treat himself to these books and the victory of having discovered some important secret about his father which no one else knew about when the others went out made him feel in possession of some important knowledge - and triumph over him.

4.3.2.4 Mother

When he had to give a history of his mother, David went into a fit of rage proclaiming his wish that his father were alive. For had he been alive today his father would have been able to appreciate and enjoy his academic achievements and would have been proud of him as has already been mentioned.

His mother was not able to do this. Hers was an elusive spirit which no one could apprehend. She lived the life of a "pretender." She was not exactly a liar yet there was a great falseness about her. She pretended she had cooked 'Chicken a la King' when all she had prepared was no more than most ordinary chicken. If one asked why she said she had cooked Chicken a la King. she answered that she knew a friend who prepared it the

way she had done.

No one in the family could ever apprehend her spirit! If she said the pair of scissors you were looking for were in the drawer, everyone knew that's where, for sure, you would not find them! She was a housewife whose life balanced precariously "on a thread." She was sustained by psychotropic drugs. He did not know the condition she was treated for. He had felt a lot of anger towards her.

Two years following his father's death, David's mother had taken a second husband - "much against everyone's wishes."

This marriage, as far as David was concerned wrecked the family up and caused him a lot of pain. He received a raw deal treatment from his stepfather. At the slightest or no provocation at all, the man would be threatening to cancel his financial support and so forth. His mother could never stand up for him. All she was able to do was sneak letters of apology under his pillow. It was at this time that David resolved to leave home to be on his own. Anyway this man, too, died.

David felt that his mother had a lot to do with his sexual difficulties. She had been domineering as a person and had significantly discouraged his masculinity. To demonstrate her impact, David cited an incident that took place when the family was manning a radio satellite in the countryside: It was in the evening and David was beginning to fall asleep on his back in the

tent. His parents slept in the caravan. As he fell asleep he began to get an erection. His mother happened to walk in just then. And on sighting this erection had expressed disgust saying she would tell his father. He had felt very ashamed. To further demonstrate his mother's negative impact on his masculine development David brought forward a dream which we shall review under the appropriate section.

4.3.2.5 Siblings

David felt that both his two elder brothers did nothing to mitigate his father's harsh treatment of him. If anything, they had exacerbated his difficulties. They had, instead, excluded him from their company and imposed restrictions on his movements dictating where he would or would not go. They called him "slack" and useless - especially when he failed a standard once at High School. Their eyes were closed and they could not see he had difficulties.

However, it does seem as though his two brothers, too, had unhappy childhoods. The eldest one did not finish matric; was once involved in a delinquent scandal that nearly caused a train collision. The police would have been upon him were he not saved by the good family name. He is married today and is dominated by his wife. He lives in another town where he is "job-hopping."

The second brother had clearly a difficult childhood although David did not recognize this before he was in psychotherapy. In his childhood, he had been, according to David, "the angry young man of the family." He banged doors at home or left them open so that strong wind could blow the house into a mess. At school he saved the skins of everyone else by martyring himself through accepting punishment for noise he had not made. It was after the reoccurrence of this behaviour that his teachers decided he could not have been responsible for the noise. In this way, the saga of the little hero ended. Otherwise he had been this frail-looking thin face whose spectacles seemed totally out of proportion whom David feared, respected and hated. Dreams in which David "fought" this brother also became a measure of the extent to which psychotherapy had helped him as he had been too terrified previously to contemplate a prospect like this.

David's sister was spoiled by his father. She dropped out of school early and manifested early antisocial behaviour. David had heard it rumoured that his sister was terrible and would not have believed them had he not seen her himself standing on the corridor of the primary school where they both attended, swearing and cursing hell and damnation! Today her choice of company clearly illustrates that she lacks self-esteem. She was married once to a man who "spent his life in a pub" - against everyone's wishes and was soon divorced. She fell in love with a 'hunch-back' who she bore an illegitimate child. When she went to hospital to deliver this baby, doctors diagnosed her a psychopath and made unsuccessful moves to dispossess her of the child.

David hates her passionately for all the hurts of childhood.

4.3.3 Personal development history

Under this heading only the main themes of the client's intrapsychic experience as manifested in behaviour will be followed. So to speak, where his anxiety interfered with and inhibited his normal interpersonal functioning. The behaviour exposition will be accompanied by a brief statement of how it was interpreted or understood in the psychotherapy.

4.3.3.1 Sexual intercourse difficulties

Anxiety in this area manifested through apprehension about sexual intercourse. The client expressed it through the sexual inadequacy of premature ejaculation. This haunted him especially during sexual intercourse with women he considered to be unsafe. He considered a woman safe if she "would not tell" or talk about her sexual relationship with him. With the consequence that his first sexual intercourse came when he was already 21 years old. The partner was 'safe' in the sense that she had been his oldest brother's ex-girlfriend whom he knew well and had confidence in.

Psychologically, premature ejaculation was understood to be the metaphor communicating his fears of his mother's injunctions

against his sexuality. So he had to be quickly in and out of the woman before she had 'seen' him. On another level sexual failure as well as any failure was intolerable because then his father would have regarded it as a weakness and would have disapproved. Remember - 'no son of mine can faint at the sight of blood' - or, 'stop whining!' Or his brothers would have called him 'useless.'

So we see that it was all in the family dynamics. These "scripts" were so powerful that even though he understood later why he had been so anxious was because he had no 'good' internalized primary objects, they still effectively kept him away from his family whom he resented. He merely acknowledged his understanding adding that it was too late then to do anything about it and he would go his separate way i.e. after having understood that his brothers too must have had father-absence that they could not make his childhood better.

4.3.3.2 Fear of physical injury - real or imagined

The client had an incredible fear of punishment by men, the source of which puzzled him. He explained that since school days it had always seemed to him that punishment was much greater than it really ever could be. He talked about it in "annihilatory" terms. In his school days it used to make him survey the country side on Sunday afternoons searching for "safe places" where he could hide from the punishment he imagined he might receive from his teachers the following Monday for having committed no

offence.

When he was in the army, he lived in fear of a fellow soldier who was not superior to him in any way whatsoever. He still wondered when he talked about this in psychotherapy how this fellow could have wielded so much power over him.

So intense was his fear of physical injury that he could never watch two men fighting. At the termination stages of psychotherapy he was just beginning to be able to do this.

If conflict threatened between men where he was involved, his immediate reaction was to diffuse the situation by playing the role of the simply honest pacifier who played that things were as normal as they could ever be - that there was never a fight threatening.

Psychodynamically, this was understood to be the fear of his father. All that was interpreted was that it seemed to be quite intense. The dream section will expose the extent of this intensity. But to the extent that it was calamitous for him it does seem to make sense of Freud's and Malan's castration-anxiety and Jung's archetypally powerful fear of the father and being in secret competition with men.

The awareness of such fears caused the client never to like the company of men. In his own house he has never kept a man as a

tenant. According to him, whenever two men meet competition and conflict are bound to ensue.

Psychologically this was understood to be competition with his own father. After all, he is the one who had passed the judgement of "weak" on him at a time when his intellectual skills were too weak to be able to mitigate it.

Thus the secret competitiveness represented a desire to compete in order to prove he was strong but it also had to be secret because he did not want the other man to be aroused into an open conflict for fear of his own weakness being exposed and the imagined fear of failing. If this happened he would then, once again, be at the mercies of his father's views on weak sons.

4.3.3.3 Fear of failure as such

That the client could not handle failure became quite apparent when his academic work became due for evaluation. His became very weak and disoriented on these occasions that he even forgot to come to his psychotherapy sessions. It made no difference if the critique had been positive or negative. Again this was psychologically understood to be fear of failure coming from the fact that his father had allowed no room for it in his life.

4.3.3.4 Constant search for love and approval

Some people made him a leader because he bore those qualities of love, compassion, patience and understanding. No one could ever have suspected the extent to which David resented this for the sacrifice of his own interests he was aware of making to render it possible.

Psychologically this was understood to be a search for his father's love. Having understood it, he is today no longer available. He will please someone "because he had a good reason for doing it."

He has asked some people if they have noticed any changes in his personality. They have, they say. He has become talkative and monopolistic in discussions. He laughs and says they have had their turn over the years. It is now his.

4.3.3.5 Stealing something that could be seen to be symbolizing manhood

Having understood about his constant aim to prove what a he-man he was, David bemusedly talked about how on a holiday with some loved one in the country recently, a puffadder had appeared and made his way for the cottage. He had jumped around, closed doors and made arduous preparations to kill the snake. By the time he was ready to do it, it had vanished into the bushes. The point

here is that David was aware that to kill a snake was quite a masculine thing! His father himself having been a snake catcher in his own lifetime, had modelled masculine strength on the ability to deal with snakes. The woman in the house could never have suspected that the fervent activity surrounding the killing of the snake was meant to prove to her that he was a superman.

Let us leave the client's life-preserving activities now which are clearly underlined by anxiety and turn to his dreaming life.

4.4 Dream analysis

Under this section, the climax of this report , the author will be inviting therapist and general reader alike to a review of an arbitrary selection of dreams with sexual symbolism from a number the client presented. In particular he will be addressing himself to such questions as the following: are those people like Boss correct when they deny the reality of symbolism? Are there such things as sexual symbols? If there are, how do they manifest in the dreams of males who have masculinity or sex-role difficulties? How does one interpret the material coming from such dreams in order that maximum healing benefit may be attained?

Let us rather allow the dreams to demonstrate their psychotherapeutic power themselves.

4.4.1 The snake dreams

In passing let it be observed that, Freud and Jung are convinced that the snake is a sexual dream symbol.

The client's first mention of a dream dominated by a snake came quite early in the psychotherapy. The author shall pre-empt the question of whether there are such things as sexual symbols, by making an early statement that, the client's immediate talk about snakes showed that this animal, one could almost say, sat at the tip of his tongue or was, at any rate very close to the conscious level and must have symbolized almost everything that his anxiety was about. As he put it, "a snake was always sneaking around somewhere in both his waking and dreaming life." If he dared to look where he thought he might see one in his dreams, it came out charging with a clear resolve to "annihilate" or destroy him! The dream about snakes was constant and only altered in its form and settings.

For instance, in the first snake dream referred to above, the client dreamt that he was walking in a waste land when he came across a beautiful vase of antique origin (He really adored things from the old days). While still so thrilled by his find, he made to look inside. And guess who was sitting in there? To his horror, there sat coiled in the bowels of this beauty the "terror", the snake.

The author understood that that was his father sitting there guarding his wife against his son's incestuous intentions as Jung (see Chapter 3) has suggested. He did not, however, interpret this dream. He was listening to both the story and theory at this stage. It was clearly, too early to interpret anything.

Now after a year the client had been in therapy, he came to a session and having seated himself quite comfortably in his chair raised the question: "what do snakes mean in dreams?"

After a brief moment of silent reflection the therapist decided there was something behind this question since it was coming so many months following the client's first mention of a snake. He therefore decided to look at the client with the face that said: 'You tell me.' The client shifted to a new position of comfort and started: "Freud says snakes symbolize the phallus and to dream of them is to dream of sex or something like that."

He was clearly questioning this view of Freud or that it had made no sense to him.. The therapist's face wondered on. The client went on and said that as far as he was concerned, snakes meant a "terror." He carried on and explained that he knew that snakes are poisonous and that they bite. But what he feared was not just the bite. For him the bite meant "annihilation" or destruction. This was what the terror was about and it embraced all types of snakes including those he knew were harmless.

Now from theory the author understood that the fear of snakes was castration anxiety (see Chapter 3) and that the phobic animal, in this case the snake, was somehow the symbolic representation of the father. He sat and waited to 'discover' how the link was made. He was thinking if it was as Freud had suggested it was (see Chapter 3) he would have more faith to draw from the theory in the understanding of the client's experience.

It occurred to the therapist to think that castration and death might be the equivalent of the same thing. Since to be castrated is to die - in manhood - in a way. He however said nothing to the client but decided to check for a further validation of the theory from him i.e. the basis for the selection of his own phobic animal.

Without saying anything else, the therapist simply asked the client how the snake had come to be the animal so symbolic of his fears. To which the client responded by remembering, to his own surprise, that he had not thought of it earlier, that his father had been a snake catcher in his lifetime. He went on and related that in his snake-catching hobby his father had brought many snakes home when he was small. The house had been full of snakes since his middle brother, the one he feared, respected and hated, had also been catching his own snakes.

His father had explained to his children about which snakes were dangerous and which were not. But he also admitted, that all his

knowledge about snakes could never ameliorate his intense fear of them. The poisonous ones had made them all terrible to him.

From this the client went on to explain his immense awe of his father. He said it came from what he must have perceived as his dominance and power over these creatures he dreaded.

As he got insight, he expressed an opinion that it must have been from this perception of his father's snake catching role that killing or catching a snake became the acid test of manhood for him.

And in this way his father must have therefore become a super-man for him, he went on to reflect. And, in fact, the association between his father and snakes must have vested the snakes with even greater power than they had naturally, having derived it from his father. And in this way snakes and his father must have become one - in annihilatory power!

It was at this point that the client himself made the discovery that his immense fear of snakes was, in fact, the fear of his father that must have been so great as to cripple him sexually and charging him with the fears.

This monumental discovery which the client himself made, marked the beginning of the understanding of all the anxiety that bedevilled his life - the incredible fear of his father!

The client was very relieved by his discovery and went on to relate another snake dream to show himself and me that he had understood.

4.4.2 Father and snake dream

After having not dreamt of his father for a long time, the client related that he had dreamt of him and the whole family together in a kind of a reunion.

A snake had made its appearance somewhere in the middle of the family's happy meeting. Everyone was dancing around with fear and fuss over it. The client had thought, in the dream, that all that would be required to end the drama, would be for his father who was not with them on the scene at the time, to come and catch the snake. He had been happy and disappointed at the same time that his father had come to do this. He had been disappointed because in doing it, calling his family's handling of the snake a fuss, his father had been irritated.

The features of this dream are clearly as follows: the client wants to be a child of his father; desires friendship and favours from him; wants his father's 'permission' to enable him to catch his own snakes' or to deal with his own problems e.g. his father's thought that his handling of the snake was no more than a fuss.

Confronted with these possibilities the therapist made the decision that to interpret the first two options might cause the client unnecessary hurt and embarrassment. He therefore selected to interpret the last option in which he reflected that his father had acted in a friendly way in obliging by catching the snake for him but that his irritation had seemed to mean that what he was saying was that, he, David was now old enough not to need him but to deal with his own problems himself - so to speak, catch his own snakes!

What has happened here is this: The therapist has followed the assumption that the dreamer's dreams communicate about his own struggles to overcome his problems. And therefore the solutions that seem implicit in the dreams are actually his very own.

[The author's impression about dreams is that they have an abstract and a concrete solution. Solutions come from their abstract dimension while the concrete keeps the dreamer connected to what the problem is.]

What the interpretation seemed to achieve was to acknowledge the client's efforts, strength and will to deal with his own problems. He lighted up when he realized that he still had the capacity to fight left in him - that he himself seemed to know what his problem was and, was in fact, dealing with it.

He kept saying subsequently that the understanding he had derived

had been very healing.

[The author's view on interpreting the dreams of such people is that the psychotherapy must be forward-looking. These people want to move forward and conquer their difficulties so that their masculinity is attained. The therapist must therefore be on a constant vigil for opportunities of acknowledging the achievements and where necessary participate in the client's efforts to find the most beneficial solutions. The main bulk of the work lies with the client, apparently.]

The client took up this theme and affirmed his awareness of positive changes occurring.

4.4.3 Intellectual-father dream

To show that his life had changed or was changing the client told of a dream he had, had perhaps, two years prior to entering therapy. In the dream he had been visiting a university in a town where he had worked at an earlier time. Because of the university, he had always associated this town with the intellectual. He dreamt then that he had heard it rumoured that his father was a highly regarded intellectual who would be giving an inaugural address at this university. He had felt very proud of him and had hoped to bask in his intellectual prominence on the day of glory. He was to be disappointed. His father who sat

rocking a girl about his age on his lap had simply ignored his presence. And David had been hurt!

After a brief silence the therapist merely reflected that it did seem quite clear that he [David] had suffered some disappointments in his father. And said no more.

There are other possibilities that therapists would ordinarily be able to see in this dream. For instance, this dream seems to be a re-enactment of the whole family scenario in which his father in rejecting him had, shown a preference for his sister since the father and girl on his lap is the usual father-daughter image with which we are well-acquainted.

But such interpretations the therapist chose not to make. For sensing there had been, in fact, quite a fair degree of movement since the dreaming of this dream, the therapist considered that it would only have been detrimental to the client to remind him of things he was doubtlessly working on overcoming by interpreting them. Nor had the client himself been saying he needed this dream to be interpreted. He had instead been saying he was recalling it as proof he had moved forward.

4.4.4 Family dream - empowering and recognition of maturity, manhood and responsibility

The next dream the client brought was one in which the family was

together once again. His father was in it and he clearly occupied his place as the head of the family. Its setting was Europe and his father had, apparently been, a man of immense wealth.

From his wealth he had bought the family riches whose qualities were not really material - but which were experienced by the client as of a "sumptuous" nature.

His father had bought the family a "luxuriant caravan" whereby they were travelling across the continent of Europe. The wealth, warmth, love and cohesion overwhelmed beholders. And what it was doing for David was incredible. The pride he felt in his family, just then, had been quite massive!

And everyone did take turns to drive the caravan. All had faith and confidence in the skills of everyone else to drive them safely.

Then the caravan entered a German city at sunset and travelled under the golden rays of the German sunset. Trees cast their shadows as the caravan meandered gloriously under.

In this town the client and the brother (who caught snakes) he had grown up hating, entered a chemist where the two of them bought some things. Among the things they bought, he chuckled mischievously, were condoms. He had also packed into his bag, a

gadget he had not paid for because he had stolen it.

Having entered his room where the family had booked, the client started to unpack his bag. And doing this, it had seemed to him that lots and lots more stuff was coming out than he had packed in.

The therapist interpreted here by interjecting a remark that lots of happiness, before unknown, seemed to be coming out when he was with his family. Why did he say that, one might ask? This was said for two reasons: first, to show that he was still there and listening; secondly, to point out this emotion of happiness which must have been the client's experience in the context of a dream like this. At any rate we all know the good feelings that one has when one is in a hotel and one has just returned from town where one has done lots of shopping. In other words, not to let the opportunity slip of showing him, he is capable of happiness in circumstances involving his family.

The client said nothing, after contentedly lifting his eyebrow a little, he moved right on and told how on unpacking the gadget, the most wonderful and amazing thing happened. The gadget started to grow and just kept growing. When it had grown to its full size, it turned out that it was a river canoe.

The next thing the client knew was that three of the family males, his father and himself included, were each navigating a canoe down a river. They would, at times, sail through dangerous

passes. David felt in the dream that the people involved were more like friends than father and his sons. He had felt certain of safely navigating his own canoe. But then, he soon came in view of some rapids. A slight apprehension arose in him but he somehow also had faith that he would make it. Now, instead of sliding down these rapids a miracle happened. The river rose to the level where the canoe was sailing. And so he was in safety. It occurred to him to look at the bottom of the river where the canoe might have descended and saw through the water, as if through a window, fish, resting.

Prompted by the client's 'naughty' expression when he talked of stealing condoms, and also by a feeling that a lot was happening in the area of the his feeling good about his body, the therapist ventured to ask about the status of the premature ejaculation. The client's answer was that it had "virtually gone." The therapist had sensed that the client had wanted to talk about this anyway.

When the therapist asked about what the client might have made of this dream, he had answered that he did not know adding that he thought this was, perhaps, where psychotherapy might help him.

The following is a summary of the interpretation and insights agreed between the therapist and the client of the dream: that once he was happy within his own family he felt well disposed to people outside of the family as well and that it seemed,

therefore, that a happy family background seems to be at the basis for the formation of normal, friendly interpersonal relationships. (This, of course, is a reference to the statement that the canoe riders were more like friends than father and sons). The canoe and caravan drives were both seen to be power experiences - in that they seemed to speak of his need to feel empowered and confident in order to relax - that the family setting itself seemed to be the source of such experiences in the first instance. Thus, if he felt empowered and confident, he could drive his own canoe - or take charge of his own life. (Feelings of having no confidence and being de-empowered, of course, came from within his family when his father called him 'whining' and his brothers - "slack" and "useless"). So the therapist put it to him that the dream seemed to be saying that he was willing and wanting to take charge of his own life if only they would let him (implied in this is a message that he has to free himself from those debilitating ('scripts') from his family).

Obviously satisfied with the interpretations, the client then asked, "but why did I steal it (boat)?" to which the therapist responded with the question, "but when do things get stolen?" It did strike home. Things get stolen when one is denied them. Because he had been denied the experience of feeling empowered at his home, he stole power. Again he nodded. The therapist then made the observation that the dreams had a rich content and seemed to speak of noticeable improvements in his life. To which the client swiftly responded that he had had a terrible dream as

well - a nightmare, as he called it. [The reader's attention is drawn to the familiar and conversational style prevailing at this stage of the psychotherapy.]

4.4.5 A visit to mother's house dream

In this dream, David had gone visiting to his mother's house. On his arrival there he found, to his extreme disturbance, some dagger-wielding men waiting to kill him. He had heard or had a sense that a child had been murdered in that house. He left feeling driven from it and betrayed by his mother. She could have warned him about the presence of such people.

The interpretation of this dream was that it was as if by driving him away from her, his mother was meeting his need to be a man out there in the world away from her. By using men to drive him off, it was as if manhood as such was disapproving of his being in her house as a child - hence the sense of a murdered child. The therapist then put it to David that what he seemed to be saying through his dream was that a part of him seemed to be speaking of his desire to go to or be a child in his mother's house. But that he seems also to be saying that in order for him to attain his own manhood he had to give up wanting to be a child. So to speak, kill his childhood. The client was silent and apparently brooding.

He returned to the next session saying that after the last

session, he now understood why he had felt so anxious in his life and why he had adopted his ex-girlfriend's family. It was because he had not had a family of his own, he said. And it was precisely because of that, that he had "taken the full brunt of the world - with nothing behind him to fall back on." As he said these words, he gestured with his hands and body. His whole emotional aspect and tone said he had understood.

The author proposes that we leave the dreams here now.

4.5 Concluding discussion

It is now time that we consider what we have learned from the therapist's experience with his client. For example, the questions that the therapist felt were necessary to be addressed prior to a consideration of what happened between him and his client as a sensible therapeutic attitude or stance are the following:

- have these dreams taught us anything about the concept of symbolism?

- are there such things as male sexual symbols?

- is psychotherapy or analysis with or (without) dream

interpretation of father-absent males any different from our normal therapeutic attitude or stance?

In response to the first question, the author has this to say: the process of symbol-formation as explained by Freud and Jung (see Chapter 3) seems well accounted for by this case, namely, the early association of the father with snakes (horses in 'Little Hans'). We have also seen how the phobic animal gets invested with the father's negative or castrating power. Freud seems valid to this extent (Where he is questionable is in generalizing sexuality to everything). What the author is wanting to say then is that if symbols are formed the way Freud explains the development of the symbolic association between Little Hans and horses which result in his horse phobia (see Chapter 3), then there must be symbols. In this instance the phobic animal, the horse was a symbolic representation of the father.

With respect to the second question as to whether there are such things as male sexual symbols, in other words, whether one can get a clue from the symbols that the dreamer has problems of masculinity or not, the author wishes to make the observation that the symbols that both Freud and Jung said were typical of males with masculinity difficulties e.g. snakes, etc. have appeared once again, perhaps with reasonable consistency in the client's case.

Is psychotherapy with father-absent males any different from our normal psychotherapeutic attitude?

The answer to this question may be a little difficult. However the author has found, in the case of his own client, that positive interpretations aimed at helping the client to understand but in a manner that points him in the direction of moving forward toward his goal of achieving manhood, did not harm. On this score the author can, perhaps, add that this attitude is not in conflict with the widely accepted principle of psychotherapy that, unless the interpretation will serve a useful purpose and is well-timed, the therapist must choose not to interpret. The author would, perhaps, make the comment in this regard, that negative interpretation ought to stay out of the picture when psychotherapy with father-absent males is the question.

By negative interpretation it is meant impulsive 'pad-man' interpretations which develop spontaneously and uncannily arouse or remind the client of the source of his hurt, and service no particular therapeutic goal. A fine example of this would be remarks which keep reminding a client, like the author's, of the hurts he suffered at the hands of his family at a stage of the psychotherapy long after this has been understood and it is otherwise quite evident from the client's dreams that his struggles are now about attempting a reconciliation with his family.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter will draw the strings together by reviewing what the author has learned about the derivation of anxiety that inhibits normal sexual adjustment in those males who have been affected by father-absence. As Seligman (1984) amusedly put it the 'Half-alive' ones. This will be followed by a consideration of what the goals for psychotherapy seem to be in the case of these individuals. In other words, what will seem to be the implications for a better living in their case.

Freud (1955) and Malan (1979) (see Chapter 3) have seen castration anxiety to be at the roots of father-absent boy's difficulty to form and participate in healthy interpersonal and heterosexual relations. More specifically, these authors say that it is the fear of being castrated by the father that grips these boys. According to them, it is not just the fear of the animals that is the question for them in animal phobia, it is rather that the animals will bite them.

Thus this explains the fact that it is not just the fear of the father these boys have. It is rather that the father will castrate them. And the tension comes from the boys Oedipal sexual fantasies and desires for their mothers and as such a fear of the father.

Jung (see Chapter 3) seems to see the situation also much along similar lines. He does not, of course, mention castration anxiety, but he does unquestionably believe the anxiety to derive from a massive fear of the father. According to him, it has the "unbridled" power or force of an instinct. (see Chapter 3).

In Jung's case, instead of talking of biting phobic animals, he talks of the father sending dangerous animals, like snakes, to guard his wife against his son's incestuousness. Thus to the extent that the animals serve a common purpose namely the symbolic representation of the father against incest there seems to be no conflict among all the theorists - Freud, Jung and Malan. And to the extent that Malan has recognized (see Chapter 3) that even boys who have never seen their fathers have the same massive fear of him, there does seem to be an agreement even on this score, in so far as Jung (see Chapter 3) will say that the father is entrusted or invested with the power to prohibit incest whether in reality he does that or not.

5.1 Has the author learned anything from his own patient about the fear of the father?

The author's own client described his own feared animal, the snake (see Chapter 4) as a "terror" that had power "not just to bite but to completely destroy or annihilate him."

The author examined and found during the psychotherapy that the extent of the fear could find equivalents in themes of death. Thus therapists can expect to find themes of death emerging during their own psychotherapy with father-absent boys which might ultimately be linked to this picture.

5.1.1 What of the interpersonal and heterosexual difficulties?

It emerged from the analysis of the client's behaviour that came to view during the psychotherapy that his father was still very alive for him; that his avoidance, pacifist and apologist attitude were all efforts aiming at pleasing his father and in so doing winning his love. He did it all while he secretly felt very resentful of it.

He believed, at the same time, however, that he despised his father and to this extent mustered evidence to prove what a weak man he was. (see Chapter 4).

His dreams, however, contradicted his waking beliefs in every way. They were showing that he loved and wanted his father and felt hurt by his rejecting attitude.

5.1.3 What are the apparent health implications for father-absent sons?

For the author, it seems that psychotherapy must have as its main focus, the development of the capacity to relax - about the disappointments this type of client suffered at the hands of his father and mother. And what does this mean?

Let us consider first, the father. The question of feeling relaxed about a father who rejected and hurt you and then died before reparations between the two of you were made, even though you might have spent your precious days sitting at his dying bedside waiting for him to propose the hoped for amends, as in this case, was admitted in through mourning.

The suffering son has to be helped to come to terms with the fact that the father he loved had rejected him; that other than this obscuring the fact, did diminish his love for him no less. If the worse thing has happened, namely, the father's death before all the hurts had been redressed, the son has to be helped to come to terms with both losses i.e. lost love and "opportunities to make amends" as the author's client had put it.

Let us now look at the mother. The client's behaviour towards his mother gave the impression that he was quite angry and wanted little or nothing to do with her. He recognized, resented and begrudged what he believed, probably correctly, to be her negative impact on his masculine development.

But actually, on presenting for psychotherapy the client had

expressed an urgent wish or need for psychotherapy to help him so that he could "make amends" with his mother lest she died before this was done, as had happened with his father. He feared that as she was a sickly person she might die.

Thus we see that despite the avoiding behaviour he evinced towards his mother, the client still wanted and loved her. The avoidance behaviour was thus a defence against her intrusiveness against his sexuality. A girlfriend had once expressed a thought that his mother manifested a strange sexual attitude towards him. He too thought that she seemed to be right. Thus Biller's (1974) linking of the avoidance behaviour to the son's fears of mother's sexual intrusiveness seems justified.

But one can also see that wanting and not wanting his mother must place the son on the pressure axis the avoidance behaviour cannot solve. In Jungian terms this behaviour is attempting the impossible - the bending of nature.

The psychotherapy revealed that he did not resent his mother; that he, instead, loved and wanted her.

According to Jung (see Chapter 3) this is natural. And relaxing in this sphere seems to be that the son should be relaxed with the feeling that he is his mother's child. And to forego of the need to prove is a man all the time. The author thinks he has noticed in himself the remembrance of his mother's house when hardship strikes and things seem hard to endure. Thus it would

seem that the development of the thought in circumstances of hardship is normal. One need not go to cry on one's mother's shoulder but one will probably at least think of her during such times. The thing which gives rise to problems, seemingly, is that when one has caught oneself doing this one punishes oneself and becomes anxious about guarding against these feelings and consequent superego punishment.

Relaxing in interpersonal situations seems to be foregoing the struggle to prove how good one is in the same way that one had to prove to one's father how good one was especially if one's father called one "whining" or one's brothers called you "slack" and "useless". Probably the people one would want to prove anything to, are not even in the least aware of one's struggles. They misunderstand and misinterpret them. In the case of the client, people seemed to take it at face value that he was kind and compassionate. So they made him a leader in various settings. But since this was not the purpose he was doing all this for, he felt unduly strained. But he has changed now and people have described him of late as having a tendency to be dominant in discussions. He enjoys this and says that it is his turn to talk. They have had theirs over the years.

Relaxing in heterosexual relations is foregoing the need to prove how masculine one is (remember the author's client's puffader killing scenario? - see Chapter 4). The client's premature ejaculation has gone. It has been replaced by a voracious sexual

appetite. He admits that it comes from an insatiable satisfaction to prove, to himself that he can. It is both from such a need and pleasure of knowing that he could be this potent that he comes on as he does. And he also has the same point to prove to all the women he seduces. He enjoys this and is not willing to give it up just yet. But at least he knows where it comes from.

5.1.3 The manifestation of the father-absence sexual difficulties through sexual inadequacy.

In this regard, the author would like to make the comment that, apparently depending on the predisposing family dynamics the sexual incompetence consequence can take any form. It would seem, for instance, that homosexuality is widely held to be the usual consequence in the literature. And this is quite understandable since the boy would then be seeking his father's love in relationship with men.

But what seems to be happening in instances where sexual inadequacy expresses itself in the form of premature ejaculation?

In the case of the author's client, premature ejaculation was a metaphor the client used to express his anxiety about his mother's punitive sexual injunctions (see Chapter 4). The client had also had a dream which proved that he had experienced his mother as discouraging of his masculinity.

He had dreamt that he and a large magnificent brown bull lay down on the ground together. At least he sat at the rear end of the bull and was stroking it gently. And as he did so both he and the bull gained an erection. The client had described this as a thoroughly enjoyable experience. While the pair sat, in this bliss, suddenly a sense of foreboding developed in him. He had become aware of a third presence. He turned to look over his shoulder, and there, sure enough, was his mother above them. Fear gripped the client and the enjoyable erection disappeared.

Since the bull symbolizes the father according to both Freud and Jung, we might say that the client was enjoying identifying with his father's masculinity which his mother seemed to discourage, according to this dream, nevertheless.

Thus in the case of the client was premature ejaculation not just a symptom of the father-absence sexual difficulties manifestation but meant also anxiety about the mother. So he had to be in and out of the woman - quickly. But since to perform sexually like this was to fail, which he knew his father could not accept or tolerate, participation in the sexual act was a doubly frightening experience. The net effect of this understanding, solved the premature ejaculation in the case of this client. And gave him, in regaining his sexual competency, something "with a value higher than gold!"

5.2 Some comments about the psychotherapy

The author is not quite sure how the relief came. Perhaps it was from identifying the source of the anxiety.

The psychotherapy conducted with the attitude of lending courage by acknowledging the client's efforts and achievements in working for the conquest of his masculinity difficulties, might not be the best indicated for working with this problem. But it did seem to achieve the effects that were satisfactory in the case of this client.

Another feature of this psychotherapy that deserves highlighting is that the client himself seemed willing to do most of the work. Curiously enough Freud (1955) found the same feature in his psychotherapy with the Wolf-man.

There exists, however, the possibility that the client's own personal qualities might be seen to have been a significant variable in the development of the psychotherapy. It would be difficult for the author to say yes or no to this except, perhaps, to remark that, that is a question that research might solve.

As far as the interpretation of the dream symbolism itself goes, the author would like to observe that he has found much use and benefit in following the attitude of staying close to the

material of the dream itself (the attitude proposed by Jung - see Chapter 3) and having faith in the client to provide useful clues in their understanding. This is a way of working in the transference-counter-transference situation which has the good effect of making the client whose life is dominated and dogged by feelings of inadequacy and incompetence, feel empowered.

When the therapist realizes that the client has transferred to him the role of father, the importance of empowering his son-client becomes even more easy to understand.

Regarding the question as to whether the dreams themselves can offer any useful clues concerning the effect of psychotherapy on the person with the difficulties discussed here, so to speak, have any changes apparently occurred over the two psychotherapy stages of presentation and termination, this case showed remarkable consistency between the progressive amelioration of the dream material and the resolution of the psychosocial difficulties reviewed under the themes section of Chapter 4.

A comment on the use of the case method in a study: The individual case method has proved once again, very effective in understanding and solving a problem like this. Whether a different approach might have had a similar effect is frankly, doubtful in light of the what we have learned in Chapter 2 concerning the technique of other forms of inquiry.

This case seems to have proved that not only is the concept

"absent fathers" a valid one but also that where fathers are absent or have chosen to be absent, they invariably leave the way wide open for mothers to be intrusive and to interfere with their son's psychosocial development.

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