

The Concepts of Father and Family in Social Aspects

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Abstract. In the article, the concepts of «father», «mother», «family» are considered in a complex psychological and socio-ethical aspects (from the point of view of the theory of attachment by John Bowlby, as well as Oedipus and Electra complexes). The study highlights the influence of both father and mother on the psychological and social development of the child's personality. The object of the study is the concepts of «father», «mother» and «family». The subject of the research is the interpretation of the concepts of «father», «mother», «family» from a psychological and social point of view. The main aim of the scientific article is to consider the concepts of «father», «mother» and «family» in the psychological and social aspects and to identify their role in shaping the child's personality. The scientific novelty of the article lies in a comprehensive approach to the consideration of the concepts of «father», «mother» and «family» from the point of view of psychology and sociology. Using the theory of attachment by J. Bowlby, the Oedipus complex (Sigmund Freud) and the Electra complex (Carl Jung) as an example, it is shown how the psychological development of the child's personality and its main stages that have a direct impact on the biological, cultural and social structure of the family are described. It is substantiated that it is the family that is the most important primary institution for socialization and child care. Therefore, this study provides an opportunity to present a comprehensive concept of the family and the true understanding of the word «parent» from a psychological and social point of view. The creation of a health and an effective family depends on the correct understanding of the father and mother for their own crucial roles in the creating the foundations of their child's individuality and her / his future life.

Key words: father, mother, family, the attachment theory, the Oedipus Complex, the Electra Complex.

Introduction. The importance of the family and the significant roles of the father and mother in the life and formation of the future personality of the child have been studied by many psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists, such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and John Bowlby, whose works became the **theoretical basis** of our study.

Most modern scientists focus on the impact of a child's deprivation or attachment to his parents in a family context. Thus, in J. A. Simpson's work, attachment theory is considered in the context of a modern evolutionary perspective [1]. A new perspective on the issue of attachment in parent – child relationships is proposed in the article of I. Bretherton and K. A. Munholland «Internal Working Models in Attachment Relationships: A Construct Revisited» [2]. The authors of this article identify the main factors influencing the formation of a child's attachment to his father or mother, and argue that initially the influence of both parents on the child is the same and the father's role in upbringing is just as important as the role of the mother. In the articles of Kendra Cherry «What is an Oedipus Complex?» [3] and Saul McLeod «Oedipal Complex» [4] the Oedipus complex is rethought in the context of the achievements of modern psychology.

The scientific novelty of our study lies in a comprehensive approach to the consideration of the concepts of «father», «mother» and «family» from the point of view of psychology and sociology.

The relevance of our scientific article is determined by a number of factors: firstly, the fundamental importance of the concepts of «father», «mother» and «family» for the humanities and natural sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology, etc.); secondly, the intensification of research in the field of family psychology and psychoanalysis.

The Attachment Theory

The word «attachment» is a key concept in the early works of British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst John Bowlby (1907–1990), who emphasizes the consequences of separating infants and young children from their mother in his monograph «**Maternal Care and Mental Health**» (1951). This research leads to the subsequent formulation of Bowlby's outstanding attachment theory. Attachment theory is a psychological, evolutionary, and ethological theory concerning human relationships. This indicates that a young child needs to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver in order for social and emotional development to occur normally. In the framework of the theory of attachment, J. Bowlby claims that: «Infants become attached to adults who are sensitive and responsive in social interactions with them, and who remain as consistent caregivers for some months during the period from about six months to two years of age. During the latter part of this period, children begin to use attachment figures (familiar people) as a secure base to explore from and return to. Parental responses lead to the development of patterns of attachment; these, in turn, lead to internal working models which will guide the individual's feelings, thoughts and expectations in later relationships» [5, p. 14].

This evolutionary theory of attachment suggests when children are born, they are biologically programmed to form a kind of attachment to others, as this helps them survive [5, p. 19]. It is usually expected that the mother is the main figure of attachment, but we cannot rule out that infants can form an attachment to any caregiver who is sensitive and responsive in social interaction with them. In this regard, J. A. Simpson clarifies the meaning of attachment in this theory: «Within attachment theory, attachment means an affectional bond or tie between an individual and an attachment figure (usually a caregiver). Such bonds may be reciprocal between two adults, but between a child and a caregiver these bonds are based on the child's need for safety, security and protection, paramount in infancy and childhood. The theory suggests that children are instinctively attached to their guardians for the purpose of survival and, ultimately, genetic replication. The biological goal is survival, and the psychological goal is safety» [1, p. 121].

From the qualities highlighted in the above quotation regarding the interaction of the more powerful figure with the infant in the first months of life, one can easily conclude that the biological mother is the usual primary attachment figure. But at the same time, no one can deny that this role can be taken on by anyone who has been reliably maternal for a certain period of time. This means that the father of the baby can also play this role. But can the set of behaviors of the father associated with the process of attachment to the infant be the same as that of the mother? I. Bretherton states that «...nothing in the theory suggests that fathers are not equally likely to become principal attachment figures if they provide most of the child care and related social interaction.... Some infants direct attachment behavior (proximity seeking) towards more than one attachment figure almost as soon as they start to show discrimination between caregivers; most come to do so during their second year» [2, p. 91].

As a fact, Bowlby's theory motivated substantial concern and controversy in the nature of early relationships and gave a strong drive to what Mary Ainsworth described as a «great body of research» [6, p. 97] in what was perceived as an enormously complicated and multifaceted area. Such confusion about the attachment between the infant and the attachment figure who is father or mother or someone else and the significance of this attachment in the development of child's life leads to the presenting other theory like The Oedipal Complex Theory.

The Oedipal Complex Theory

The Oedipal complex is a term used by Sigmund Freud in his theory of psychosexual stages of development, and it is a general term for the Oedipus and Electra complexes. It describes the feelings of a child's desire for his parent of the opposite sex, as well as jealousy and anger towards

his same-sex parent. According to Freud, children view their same-sex parent as a rival for the attention and affection of a parent of the opposite sex [7, p. 21–25].

The Oedipus Complex

In the Oedipus Complex, essentially during the Phallic stage of development (ages 3–6), a boy feels that he is competing with his father for possession of his mother. This concept, which is originated in Freud's «**The Interpretation of Dreams**» (1899) [7], became increasingly important as he continued to develop his concept of psychosexual development.

Freud named this complex after the character in Sophocles' tragedy «Oedipus Rex», who accidentally kills his father and marries his mother. In the Greek myth, Oedipus is abandoned at birth and thus does not know who his parents are. It is only after he had killed his father and married his mother that he learns their true identities.

It is true that Freud assumed that the Oedipus complex plays an important role in the phallic stage of psychosexual development, but he also believes that the restrained desire, brought out of conscious awareness through repression, still had an influence on the child's behavior and played a role in his development [7, p. 34].

According to this Complex, the boy desires to take possession of his mother and replace his father, whom the child considers a rival to maternal affection. The child here is involved in an unconscious sexual attachment to the mother and hostile to the father. Such unconscious attachment leads to fantasies of getting rid of the father and taking his place with the mother, which in turn creates an irrational fear that the father will castrate him as punishment. To succeed against such a rival, the son identifies with his father and adopts his father's attitudes, characteristics and values, personality, gender role and masculine fatherly behavior. Such imitation or adaptation can be interpreted as «creating a role model rather than a rival» [3].

The Electra Complex

The Electra Complex is a theory proposed by Carl Jung in his «**Theory of Psychoanalysis**» (1915) [8]. It states that a girl between the ages of 3 and 6 enters into a psychosexual competition with her mother for possession of her father. This is an analogy with the Oedipus complex, reflecting the psychosexual development of the boy at the phallic stage. According to Jung's classification, the Electra complex has five stages of psychosexual development: 1) the Oral, 2) the Anal, 3) the Phallic, 4) the Latent and 5) the Genital [8, p. 20– 34].

The term «Electra complex», which reveals the psychosexual conflict between daughter and mother, comes from the Greek play «Electra» by Sophocles. The mythological character Electra,

together with her brother (Orestes), plotted a matricide revenge on her mother (Clytemnestra) and their stepfather (Aegisthus) for the murder of their father (Agamemnon). The Electra complex is a term used to describe the female version of the Oedipus complex. This complex describes a girl's (age 3 to 6) unconscious sexual attachment to her father and increasingly hostile to her mother. Such a complex explains the development of the super-ego and its sexual role in the girl, which begins with her feeling of identification with her mother [5].

Gradually, the girl starts the motivation to abandon her father as an object of love in order to return to her mother. As a result, girls' identification with their mothers is weakened, which in turn weakens the female superego, and their identity as separate, independent individuals is less developed. As a comment on this point «the female's weaker superego», M. L. Hoffman, who analyzes Freud's Oedipus Complex as «the central phenomenon of the sexual period of early childhood» in relation to morality, says that «as measured by children's ability to resist temptation, girls, if anything, are stronger than boys» [9, p. 722].

Many psychodynamic theorists criticize Freud's Oedipus complex and point out that Freud overemphasized the role of sexual jealousy and exaggerated the influence of instincts, especially the sexual instinct, in his description of the development of the personality of children, whom Sidney Mullen describes as: «Children are in the collective unconscious until they acquire a small consciousness of their personality, until they say "I," or "me," or their name. They are rooted in the collective unconscious and are uprooted from it by the flood of impressions from the outside» [10, p. 23].

Describing the stages of a child's psychosocial development under the influence of sociocultural and historical factors other than biological is a study without an endpoint. And the meaning of father and mother in the life of a child is a topic that is relevant in various works, including literary ones.

The Concept of Family

Family can be defined as love, shelter, peace, fidelity, belonging, and healthy attachment. This is the understanding of the family in its traditional emotional context. Simply, the family is the smallest social unit, which conventionally consists of a father, mother and children, but in recent times the word family does not necessarily mean the presence of children. There are certain adults these days who consider their friends or pets to be members of their family. But this study focuses on the traditional family structure and emphasizes its enduring true function to help the child make his next life worth living and be an active and effective person in society. The family is a vital

social institution that performs a variety of functions in human society, the main of which is the educational role.

Of great importance is a correct understanding of the role of parents in the upbringing and education of children. Parents must understand that their role is not simply to meet the physical needs of their children. They should do their best and be active and strong teachers at an early age of their child, since the healthy development of a person's personality depends to a large extent on his early childhood. Moreover, parents should idealize their relationships and adopt a high moral style in their behavior in the family, since the child forms his first behavior from the present environment and environmental situations that exist in the family context.

In fact, a child's early learning experience affects his adult life as a whole. In other words, family relationships are very remarkable, especially the deep emotional relationship between parents and their child.

Remarkably, parents are the example of behavior for their child, and their roles take different forms according to the stages of the child's development: the prenatal, the new-born baby and toddler, the pre-school, the junior school, the pubescent, the adolescence periods.

It is true that the role of the mother in certain periods, such as infancy and early childhood, is more important than the role of the father, but the fact is that the child needs both parents during all periods of life development.

So a good mother or a good father can be described not by a certain list of characteristics or qualities that (s)he should have, but by their true and good attitude towards their child. The commitment of the father, as well as that of the mother, is essential to building the foundations of their child's personality and is the elementary way of his/her future life. Both parents play a key role in shaping the character of the child, but no one can deny that the mother is the cornerstone of the family and the entire household. She is also the emotional contextual base for her husband and children. Mother is security, love and home for all family members.

Conclusion. Family is the smallest social unit whose simple conventional meaning indicates the existence of biological relation among the father, mother, and children in a unique emotional context. The creation of a health and an effective family depends on the correct understanding of the father and mother for their own crucial roles in the creating the foundations of their child's individuality and her/ his future life. In brief, father/ mother is a unique piece of humanity that prove parenting is not a mere biological experience but a sum of a noble actions and lovely deeds.

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