

# The Search for the Father: The Adolescent Boy's Obtrusive Identification with the Inner Father

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## Introduction

From Childhood to Puberty: Elsa Morante's Novel *Arturo's Island*

One of the most beautiful and touching father-son stories in world literature was written by a woman: the novel *Arturo's Island*, by Elsa Morante. Arturo, the hero of the story, lost his mother at birth and was consequently raised by Silvestro, his father's goatherd, since the father himself was frequently away traveling. Arturo's foster father was in fact more of a foster mother (he even refers to him as his "wet nurse"), and Arturo's actual relationship to him is scarcely mentioned in the novel. But of his own father, the hero says, "My childhood is like a blissful country, and he is the absolute ruler of it!"<sup>1</sup> This "blissful country" exists mainly in the imagination of the boy, who has grown up motherless. There are highly poetic descriptions of Arturo's lonely life on the lush Mediterranean island, and of his psychic reality, which is completely domi-

nated by his idealizing fantasies about his father. The latter always turns up quite unpredictably on the island, stays for a few days or weeks, only to leave again just as suddenly and, for Arturo, as inexplicably. Arturo never finds out what his father actually does in external reality when he leaves on his travels. He imagines, however, the most exciting adventures and heroic exploits, and elaborates a highly idealized father image: his father becomes a figure of towering stature, of beauty, brilliance, and power, just like the legendary King Arthur, with whom the boy has identified. He constantly yearns for the fleeting moments of happiness he can spend with his father. Says Arturo:

*He was always just stopping off, always just about to leave; but in the short intervals he spent in Procida, I followed him like a dog. To anyone meeting us we must have looked an odd couple! With him striding on ahead like a sail in the wind, with his blond, foreign-looking head, his full lips and hard eyes which never looked anyone in the face, and me running after him, my black eyes roving proudly left and right, as if to call out: "Procidans, my father is passing by!" ...Every word he spoke seemed to have been newly minted and fresh, and even my own Neapolitan words, which he used often, became newer and bolder when he uttered them—like in poems....His every gesture, his every conversation took on something dramatic and fateful in my eyes. He was the very essence of certainty, and everything he said or did was like the ora-*

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*cle of a universal law, from which I derived the first commandments of my life. That is what made up the supreme enticement of his company.*<sup>2</sup>

Arturo's identification with the "universal law" and the "commandments of my life" can be considered typical of the state of mind of a boy in transition from latency to pre-puberty. The archetypal core of the ego-complex is dominated by archetypal images of heroes such as Superman, Hercules, or, in Arturo's case, King Arthur. The ego-self relationship is rigid, and splitting predominates as a defense against the "monsters" surfacing from the unconscious.

Up until the time his father remarries—his new wife is a young woman only a little older than Arturo—Arturo lives in a world circumscribed by his deep relationship to nature and to his bitch, Immacolatella. These symbolize his relationship to the "good" pre-Oedipal maternal and female on an archetypal level; having never had any experience of a personal mother, he unconsciously lives inside the Great Mother. His father, too, exists only as the fantasy of an archetypal hero, as a good, but absent, paternal object, which, by its absence and by its unpredictable appearances and disappearances, only stimulates Arturo's fantasies and yearning for a personal father even more. On those occasions where his father does turn up, Arturo refuses to leave his side and makes desperate attempts to get to know him, to reach, hold, and appropriate him, or at least parts of him, as in the case of his father's mysterious "Algerian dagger." Arturo's behavior in his father's presence is obtrusive; he tries to grab his father's dagger. Here, the dagger repre-

sents the Great Father's penis and mind. Whereas Arturo's identification with the Great Mother is introjective and *intrusive* (as evidenced by his living *inside* the Mother), his identification with the Great Father has an *obtrusive* quality. To be forearmed against the separation from the archetypal mother and to fight against the regressive-incestuous tendency, the boy needs to "possess" the father's "penis" by obtrusive identification. It is a kind of a primitive protoform of the mature identification that will later be established in postadolescence.

In his life, Arturo has had even less experience of a human parental couple, of a father and a mother, or a man and a woman. He lives in the world of the prepubescent, male latency child, in which male and female are kept strictly separate from each other by rigid splitting. In the novel, at the very time Arturo enters puberty, his father marries a girl who is only a few years older than Arturo himself. This situation plunges Arturo into painful conflict. On the one hand, he becomes aware of his own sexuality and, after violent internal struggle, is forced to acknowledge that he loves his stepmother. On the other, he suffers the loss of his idealized father image. As a result of these catastrophic changes in his inner and outer world, he endures—and survives—a deep depression. Internally, he relives, almost fatally, the trauma he suffered when his mother died in childbirth. Because of her death, he had to experience separation prematurely, an experience which he later relives regressively in puberty. After a great deal of struggle and turmoil, however, the hero's individuation takes a more conciliatory course. Morante's novel casts light on some important aspects of psychosexual

dynamics and thereby helps us to better understand both normal and pathological development in adolescents. The steps involved here include 1) the regression to a primitive (pre-Oedipal) level of mind functioning triggered by incipient sexuality, which Jung described in *Symbols of Transformation* with the incest metaphor;<sup>3</sup> 2) the various modes of identification with his parents that the male adolescent passes through on his way to creating an independent identity; and 3) the significance that the adolescent's experience of his parents as a male and female couple acquires for the organizational structure of his inner objects.

In the present paper, in both the theoretical remarks and the clinical case study of a male adolescent, I shall concentrate on the function of the inner parents as a male and female couple and on one particular mode of identification of the male adolescent with his father, namely that which Meltzer has classified as "obtrusive identification."<sup>4</sup>

### **The Function of the Body for the Inner World of the Adolescent and the Defensive Regression to the Negative Mother (Great Mother/Clastrum)**

My basic premise is that, through regression, adolescents in puberty project the newly revived unconscious fantasies of their relationship to their early inner parents back onto their own bodies.<sup>5</sup> The maturational changes brought about by puberty trigger what Fordham has called a deintegration of the child's self.<sup>6</sup> The enormous psychophysiological upheaval that goes along with this and its effect on the child's inner world have been compared by Jung to a catastrophe. As he writes: "At the outset of

puberty there is...already a certain personality present, which is then suddenly subjected to the shock of sexuality. As a result, the previously won conscious position is shaken, at times to a catastrophic degree....Something totally new erupts and confronts the Ego, which had not even suspected its existence." The danger facing the ego-complex, which, despite its relative stability at the latency age is nonetheless very rigid in its defensive attitude, is that of fragmentation. Says Jung: "There is always the danger of an individual being overwhelmed by an emerging drive and that he consequently disintegrates into multiplicity. The unity of the personality is lost. If one is unified, one confronts the other."<sup>7</sup>

In the relatively well-integrated ego-self axis of the latency child, the drive processes trigger deintegration processes through splitting, thereby confronting the adolescent at the onset of puberty with archetypal fantasies about his early parent objects. Adolescents experience this as an often precarious relationship to their own bodies and to the conscious and unconscious fantasies relating to them. These relationship fantasies represent the connection to parts of the parent's body. Psychoanalysts call them "part-object relations"; as a Jungian, I understand them as representations of the instinctive, somatic pole of the parental archetype. Part-object relations refer to the emotional relationship patterns whose symbolism can be disclosed not so much through their content or images as through the emotional experience of transference/countertransference. For the adolescent to successfully separate from the inner parents of his childhood as well as from his outer parents, a revival and spontaneous "work-

ing through” of these early part-object relations must first take place. Adolescents tend to project these back onto their own bodies, which can lead not only to the characteristic body experience of adolescence but also to the disorders typical of it. The analysis of a bulimic girl who was deeply identified with the phallic aspect of her father, for example, revealed that she had the fantasy of being made pregnant orally by her father. To “abort” the “child” of incest she acted out this fantasy through the reckless abuse of laxatives. This attack on her body/father relationship was different from that of many bulimic girls, who act out their attack on the negative oral relationship to the early mother through vomiting.<sup>8</sup>

In less severe cases, one can observe adolescents’ projections of their early relationship to the parents onto their own bodies, as when they develop typical dysmorphophobic anxieties and consequently believe that parts of their bodies (e.g., nose, ears, legs, skin, breasts, penis and so on) are misshapen. The feelings that accompany this are shame and/or deep self-doubt. Because the body plays such a central role in establishing a stable ego-self relationship, numerous manipulations or even attacks on the body are typical of an adolescent’s struggle to separate from the infantile part of his bond to his parents. The more an adolescent attacks his own body the more I assume he has identified with a negative archetypal aspect of his parents of infancy, because the earliest relationship is primarily a psychosomatic relationship.

As in infancy and early childhood, these part-object relations once again assume a special role during puberty in the individual’s experience of stability or instability and identity, this time on

account of his increasingly urgent sexuality. The role is different, however, in that adolescents normally split very flexibly in comparison to latency children. If the splitting is not flexible enough, this in itself can be a sign of a defensive personality structure, which can inhibit development. According to the Laufers, it is around the “central masturbation fantasy” in particular that the defense is organized.<sup>9</sup> Meltzer has used his concept of the *claustrum* to describe a pathological form of this defense with reference to certain profound disturbances of personality structure in general; he interprets the intrusive mode of projective identification with inner objects as an expression of mainly anal masturbation fantasies.<sup>10</sup> As the concept of the *claustrum* is essential for understanding pathological forms of personality structure as well as the notion of “obtrusive identification” to be analyzed below, I shall describe it here in some detail.

The notion of the *claustrum* is an attempt to reflect on the inner spaces of the inner mother (the archetypal background of the actual mother complex), that is to say, on those parts of the personality which “live” - in a regressive bond - in unconscious identity with the mother inside the maternal object, or which have penetrated inside. These parts of the personality are locked up in specific compartments of the archetypal mother. The fundamental idea here is that, in the unconscious infantile fantasy, the inner world of the inner mother consists of various compartments, which are penetrated by splitting and projection via the corresponding orifices (vagina, anus, ear, mouth, eyes). This thought is based on Klein’s concept of projective identification,<sup>11</sup> which has been expanded by Bion<sup>12</sup>

into a complex dynamic, encompassing primitive forms of communication and defense and the unconscious fantasies appertaining to them, either on the part of the child or of the primitively functioning mind (regressive states). Bion and other post-Kleinians have distinguished a spectrum of normal and pathological forms of projective identification. For Bion, the mother-infant relationship serves as a model of the container/contained relationship, which is also a model of the analytical process. The normally functioning container/contained relationship and the concepts of the "container" and of "containment" are seen as positive maternal space and capability, where the child's unbearable psychosomatic states, emotions, and fantasies are held, modified, and/or transformed by normal splitting and projective identification. In Neumann's terms, this is the positive elementary character of the Great Mother.<sup>13</sup> The claustrum, on the other hand, is conceptualized as a dead, dangerous, life-threatening, often machine-like inner space within the inner mother, which has anal characteristics.<sup>14</sup> This idea is associated with those pathological forms of projective identification in analytical therapy in which the transference/countertransference is determined by unconscious, intrusive fantasies.<sup>15</sup>

In these conceptions of the various aspects of the relationship to the inner mother, I discern a parallel to Jung's various facets of the mother archetype. Meltzer's concept of the claustrum corresponds to what Neumann refers to as the "negative elementary character" of the Great Mother.<sup>16</sup> Because of Jung's formulation of the archetypes, I believe we have a much broader approach to a greater variety of psychic reality (in the

form of images) and unconscious fantasies than psychoanalysis does; but we lack differentiated concepts for the *dynamic forces* within the inner world and between the inner and the outer world. Thus, for analytic work, I find it helpful to combine concepts like projection, projective identification, splitting, intrusion, introjection, etc., with Jung's archetypes as well as with his complex theory.

To conclude this section I would like to give an illustration of a typical problem pubescent boys have when trying to overcome their anxieties about their incestuous-regressive tendencies (towards their mothers). They mix sexual and anal impulses and externalize them by telling dirty jokes of an anal-sexual character that are often aggressive and humiliating to women and girls. In analysis one can observe how confused they are about their fantasies about the inside of the female body; in these, they eagerly try to enter or invade the mother's body, but they often mix up the vagina with the rectum (although they are well informed about female anatomy), and this leads to their confusion. With Jung, I consider the impulse (in the unconscious fantasy) to invade the female/mother's body (the hero's manic fight with the dragon) to be a necessary component of a boy's normal development. But in order to "survive" and later to separate from this incestuous regression (see the whale/Jonah-complex and Jung's *Symbols of Transformation*), he has to form a basic male identification. In other words, he has "to possess" the father's penis to a "good enough" extent. In my view, the oscillation between the intrusive identification with the mother and the obtrusive identification with the father is

part of the normal developmental process in early puberty. The concept of “obtrusive identification” still needs to be elaborated, however, and it is to this that we now turn.

### **Obtrusive Identification with the Paternal Object**

In the instance of the adolescent who experiences a revival of pre-Oedipal fantasies and anxieties primarily deriving from part-object relations to the maternal body, it becomes clear that masturbation is not only accompanied by genital fantasies but also by pregenital fantasies. These are predominantly unconscious; the manner in which they are warded off determines to a large extent how adolescents cope with this stage in their development, or whether more or less severe disturbances ensue. As I mentioned earlier, the bodily orifices of the mother/woman occupy the center of the pubescent youth’s attention and fears, and are not infrequently a source of mental bewilderment, since a temporary confusion of the psychosexual zones can occur in the boy’s mind. On the (pregenital) level of the part-objects, there is a recurrence of an intrusive, that is to say, incestuous identification with the inner mother. This results in considerable anxiety, which boys frequently deflect by anal attitudes and behavior, such as obsessive-compulsive symptoms and the endless and addictive playing of aggressive video games. In adults, Chasseguet-Smirgel has pointed out that men try “to ward off their incestuous wishes by mobilizing their anality, which safeguards them from fusing with their mother and anchors them in a kind of pseudo-masculinity.”<sup>17</sup>

Meltzer, in turn, has made an important comment about the various

forms of identification: “But the intrusive identification with internal objects seems always to show both aspects, the identificatory and the projective (claustrophobic). The internal object of these processes is par excellence the internal maternal object and its special compartmentalization. Where the projection into the internal paternal object is obtrusive, it seems to be as a means of entry to the mother’s body. It has important identificatory consequences but little of the claustrophobic in its own right.”<sup>18</sup>

As I tried to show in the introduction, Arturo’s identification with his father had an obtrusive quality. He wanted to be as close to him as possible (physically), and he wanted to possess important, “mysterious” parts of him, one of which was the Algerian dagger. When his father was on the island, Arturo never left his side, and when they went walking, he was so proud of his father that everyone was supposed to see: “Procidans, my father is passing by!” His state of mind was replete with the phallic triumph that comes from trying to possess something very important; this is different from the state of mind that results when an identification occurs because of an invasion of the mother’s body (as a manic state of defense).

In the psychoanalytic theory of object relations and in analytical psychology, the relationship to the inner father receives less attention than that to the inner mother. Samuels is right in criticizing both practices for placing too much emphasis on the negative (Oedipal) father, or on the father as “father-in-relationship-to-mother.”<sup>19</sup> In my opinion, these offer too restrictive a perspective. The question is how the child succeeds in “using” the father as an

inner object as well, a process which Winnicott has described with respect to the mother.<sup>20</sup> For this to be possible, the father must first be “found” as an inner object, which, regardless of the presence of an outer father, can present difficulties.

### **The Inner Parental Couple**

As we have seen, Arturo had never experienced a human parental couple. Unconsciously, he identified with an archetypal aspect of the “Nature-Mother” (the island) and his father had a herolike archetypal quality, as well. Arturo developed a severe crisis when he realized that his father had fallen in love with an extremely young woman. He denied that his father and his stepmother also existed as a sexual couple of man and woman. Adolescents tend to deny this, although the regressive revival of the part-object relation in puberty also means that their perceptions, senses, and unconscious fantasies are deeply preoccupied with the couple of the primal scene, that is, with the mother and father as vagina/penis combination. But part-object combinations are also at work on the pregenital level of functioning as unconscious pair fantasies: the combination of rectum and penis, of mouth and breast, of mouth and penis, and later of breast and penis as a uniting symbol. What is expressed here in anatomical (part-object) terms signifies psychic relationships of function, which combine the inner parent as a couple in the child’s unconscious fantasy. This is an archetypal fantasy in so far as the bipolarity of the parental couple (father/mother, good/bad, corpus/spiritus) induces the fundamental process of identification. From my clinical experience, I have learned that those adolescents who suf-

fer from the most severe disturbances, such as borderline personalities or psychoses, do not have any fantasies about their parents as a couple or their fantasies are extremely destructive or perverse. Thus the process of symbolizing a pattern of relationships between different unconscious factors cannot develop and the adolescent individuation process fails.

The parts of the couple not only stand in a relationship of polarity to one another, but also in one of complementarity. The unconscious couple fantasy possesses a strong, positive archetypal attraction; at the same time it is rife with anxiety. This probably stems from the fact that, in puberty, these pre-Oedipal fantasies are highly sexualized. Klein has used the term “combined parent figure” to describe these infantile unconscious fantasies.<sup>21</sup> She noticed that during therapy even very young children behaved as though they unconsciously imagined that their parents were engaged in constant and exclusive intercourse. This fantasy did not, of course, manifest itself as a genital image, but encompassed the entire pregenital spectrum.

Man and woman as a pair is the symbol par excellence of a basic model of relatedness. This relatedness is also always projected onto the analytical couple in the therapeutic situation. For Jung, the idea of the “coniunctio” (the primal scene in psychoanalysis) was the most apt expression of the emotional intensity and the archetypal quality of relatedness in transference/countertransference as well as the expression of the intrapsychic process of transformation.<sup>22</sup> At this point, in my opinion, concepts of the unconscious fantasy, such as those described by Klein with reference to the “combined parent fig-

ure,” coincide with the concept of the archetypal fantasy in Jung’s work.<sup>23</sup> The mutuality of these two concepts (archetypal fantasy/unconscious fantasy) lies in the significance of the related affects and emotions.

Adolescents whose infantile unconscious fantasies have been revived as a result of incestuous regression are not only faced with the problem of shaking off the primary objects but also with classifying them by sex as male or female, if this process was not adequately discharged in childhood. For the child to be able to form a relationship to his inner mother and his inner father as subjective objects in the course of his development, he must first develop a conception of the complementarity of mother/vagina and father/penis with respect to the pair of the primal scene.<sup>24</sup>

If this process has not been adequately discharged, and if, simultaneously, a strong fixation on the pair of the primal scene still persists, this can cause a confusion of the psychosexual zones and general mental confusion in the pubescent adolescent, since a clear identification with the paternal or maternal object, or with the male and female parts of the inner object, fails to take place.

### **Case Study: David**

This example is meant to illustrate just how painful the search for the inner father can be when the discrimination between the mother- and father-object in the adolescent’s inner world is inadequate. With my patient David (a pseudonym), something within him refused to recognize this distinction and he remained in incestuous dependency.

It seemed that he could only maintain a distinction and separation of father and mother within the inner par-

ent couple at the cost of developing pathologically rigid splitting processes and a massive compulsion syndrome. Before he could discover his love for his father as an inner object, he had to abandon his identification with the combined parent figure as a defensive pre-Oedipal fantasy of omnipotence, and allow his inner father to be liberated from its intimate attachment to the inner mother and take on contours of its own.

David was fifteen when I met him. He was a tall, strong boy, who greeted me with a limp handshake and watched me sullenly and distrustfully. Although he usually stared at the floor during our sessions, he would occasionally give me a keen and penetrating look, apparently taking very careful stock of what I said and did. It was obvious that he felt extremely uneasy. On the one hand, he had the air of a sulky, deeply offended little boy who withdrew into a corner; on the other, he was capable of radiating an ironic and arrogant self-importance, which gave me the feeling of having been admitted by some singular honor into the presence of a king. However, after he began, hesitantly and ashamedly, to tell me about his problems, it soon became clear that this was his way of combating his desperate depression and his painful sense of being excluded.

His day was entirely taken up by compulsive thoughts and with control and order rituals, which served to banish his fears that his parents’ house would catch on fire and that he would suffocate. Before he went to bed, he checked all of the electrical appliances in the house, pulling out the plugs and compulsively touching certain objects in his room in compliance with long-set rituals. When he finally went to bed,

his mother had to be in the room in order to answer his repeated questions about the precautions he had made. This process frequently took up to an hour. He also arranged and collected videos and various magazines, and had assembled a large collection of toy cows. Although he was obviously accepted in his class, as evidenced in his position as class spokesman, he had no contacts or friends outside of school. The inner world or inner family in which David lived must have been extraordinarily threatening as a result. I interpreted his central fear, that the house would burn down, as a symbolization of the sexual excitation, anxiety, but above all the fascination that accompanied masturbation and that derived from the primal scene. There were indications in his symptomatic behavior that this, for him, was a highly active, unconscious fantasy, which, like any archetypal fantasy, draws all the fire, all the libido to itself and, at the same time, must be combated, since it arouses overwhelming feelings of anxiety and envy. I saw David's compulsive disconnecting of all the plugs—some of which his father plugged back in later in the evening—as an attack on the inner parent couple, which in his unconscious fantasy was apparently locked in permanent sexual union. He could only sleep if the window were closed and if he pulled the covers over his head and lay motionless. He didn't want to hear anything, although at the same time he was highly alert. He complained about the noises in the house at night and worried that someone would suddenly attack him, both of which were indications that he was afraid of being punished for his incestuous fantasies and for masturbating. Thus, internally, he lived in a system of com-

pulsion and projected his sense of confinement outwards, as when he spoke of his claustrophobic anxieties and when he refused to get on a subway, train, or airplane. Presumably David was still living in introjective and projective identification with his overwhelming archetypal-parent figures. He continued to derive his sense of identity from a fixation on those infantile parts of his personality that still lived in a part of his inner mother, whose archetypal background represented the negative elementary character: a cooped-up anal space, controlling and restrictive, where one is closer to (mental) death than to life. In Meltzer's terms, David lived in a claustrum (pathological projective identification) and not in a container (normal projective identification).

Although, during our first meetings, I had gotten the impression that David mainly identified with his mother, he offered a father figure as a potential transference figure when he decided to come to me for therapy. He said that his grandfather had smoked a pipe, too, "but then he died of a heart attack"! As a child, David had had a close playmate in this maternal grandfather, and it was only after his death that the compulsive symptoms developed.

In our third assessment session, David told me about a dream in which he was supposed to take a cruise with his family to Asia. In the dream he had to decide whether he would prefer to stay at home on his own for two years or to spend the two years traveling with his family. He could not decide, and could not remember how the dream ended. He found both options unpleasant: having to stay at home alone as well as having to "live cooped up on a ship with the family," as he put it. I

suggested that, through this dream, he had told me that he had separation difficulties and that he hoped that therapy would help him reach a decision, an interpretation which he accepted. Neither of us could know that the two years that he had foreseen the therapy would last in his “therapy as journey” dream would indeed turn out to be its actual length (since I eventually moved to another city).

### ***Selected Details of the Therapy***

David was always very reliable and punctual about coming to his sessions, and he always followed the same procedure. He greeted me sullenly, immediately drew the chair opposite mine back against the wall in order to gain as much distance from me as my room afforded, and then fell into a silence that I felt to be both demanding and penetrating. His outward display of hostility and aloofness told me how great his unconscious desire must be to really get close to me, a desire which had to be squelched immediately. There was, at the same time, something importunate and restrictive about this “Don’t come too close” attitude, which I interpreted as an unconscious attack on my function as an analyst to understand and empathize, a function which he had to hold in check in order to cut off any contact that might develop between us. I could understand his efforts to keep me at arm’s length when I considered that, until he was twelve years old, he and his three younger sisters had slept together with their parents in a single large room. His parents had told me that they had not decided on this arrangement consciously, but because they themselves needed harmony and set no store by privacy. They justified this ideologi-

cally by claiming to be “somewhat superannuated sixty-eighters.”

A ritual developed during our sessions that might be called “Who is the analyst anyway, you or me?” David tried to involve me in endless discussions about whether and how I knew which were the “right questions” to ask so that he could give the “right answers”: “You’re the shrink, you’ve studied it, haven’t you?” At first I was at a loss to know what he was trying to tell me through this ritual, which soon developed into a harrowing game. I thought I could see in it a form of mother transference, where he was trying to test me in the same way as he tested his mother with his compulsive nightly interrogations. I also viewed it as his way of fending off his unhappiness and fears of failure by means of arrogant omnipotence. He often felt that I was using my interpretations to resist his becoming inappropriately attached to me. He would consequently become furious and cut off my contributions with curt two- or three-word statements. These altercations would flare up briefly and vehemently, and were then followed by long, sometimes strained silences, during which I was unable to stay in verbal contact with him. After ten minutes, he could not bear it any longer and would resume his diatribe: “It’s high time you asked a real question,” “I don’t know what I’m supposed to say,” or “I don’t think anything. I don’t know what’s important and what’s not, anyway!”

I could sense how much he was suffering, that he was desperate and ashamed, and that he did in fact withdraw into a state of not thinking and not feeling since he could neither deny his incestuous fantasies nor endure his feelings of despair. One day he came to

the session with a long scratch on his face. Hesitantly, he told me that he had done it himself in order to punish himself for what had been, in reality, only a petty quarrel with his father. He, David, was to blame for everything; he felt that his father despised him, constantly humiliated him, and gave his sisters preferential treatment. Only his mother understood him, whereas his father refused to see that he “had to do his things,” by which he meant his compulsive rituals. But worst of all, after conflicts with David or his mother, his father would often withdraw for weeks into a petulant, reproachful silence. After this incident, David often opened subsequent sessions with the remark: “Now he’s not speaking again.”

In the conversations with David’s parents that accompanied the early stages of the therapy, his father told me about his bouts of silence and was very unhappy about them. David’s father actually felt a very much closer attachment to his son than seemed evident from David’s external point of view, which may have been due in part to the fact that he had been able to look after David during his first year of life more than his mother had. She had had to go back to work only eight weeks after his birth, which was not the case with either of his sisters. David had cried a lot as an infant, and, according to his parents, it was his father who had been patient enough to calm him down. His mother told me distressfully that she had only been able to breast-feed David for eight weeks, whereas she had breast-fed his sisters for two to three years. The youngest, who was almost five years old at the time, was still being breast-fed in the morning and evening. David was extremely self-reproachful about his fury at his father,

probably since he was unconsciously afraid of destroying him and losing him completely. I now succeeded quite frequently in relating the bouts of strained silence during our sessions to David’s feelings when his father stopped speaking to him, and to his desire to have his father all to himself. As a result of this, David began to tell me more about himself and his situation at home, since he clearly felt that I understood him better. He said, “I don’t want to fight with Mister M.; I only want to be accepted.” (For several years, he had only called his father by a fictitious surname and used the formal, polite pronoun “Sie” to address him). He found it particularly infuriating that his sisters were able to sit on their father’s lap and to get him to do what they wanted without him getting angry or becoming unaffectionate. The atmosphere in the sessions was charged with envy and jealousy as well as with latent violence. Additionally, the sessions were typified by self-opinionated intransigence and power struggle: everything seemed to revolve around humiliation or triumph, defeat or victory, and nothing else. But behind all of this, I increasingly began to detect David’s yearning to discover how he could have his father to himself, a father he felt to be entirely in the possession of the women in the house, and whose silence left him with an ominous feeling of uncertainty that expressed itself in paranoid states during the session. David constantly asked how he could really be sure that what was spoken inside the room wouldn’t get out. He seemed to be projecting his inner reality onto the analytical situation. This inner reality had typical features of what Meltzer, in his account of the claustrum, describes as “life in the maternal rectum”:

*The prisoners of this system, where the term claustrophobia takes on its most poignant significance, have only two choices: outward conformity or joining as lieutenants of the great leader, the fecal penis. One way or another, the outcome is degradation, not only of course, in behavior, but more essentially - being less equivocal - in concepts and the ability to think as a basis for action. Truth is transformed into anything that cannot be disproved; justice becomes talion plus an increment; all the acts of intimacy change their meaning into techniques of manipulation or dissimulation; loyalty replaces devotion; obedience substitutes for trust; emotion is simulated by excitement; guilt and the yearning for punishment takes the place of regret.<sup>25</sup>*

From what has been so far said about our interaction and about the emotional atmosphere during the sessions, it is apparent that David and I had very much become an analytical couple, simultaneously bound together by maximum distance and rigid contact. I experienced his maternal transference in his fearfully inspectorial, *intrusive*, and demanding attitude. In the father transference, I was transformed into an analyst who, while professing omniscience, shirked the answers by claiming that the “wrong questions” had been asked; who was elusive and not subject to the *obtrusive* grasp. Facets of the maternal and paternal transference oscillated with bewildering rapidity within each session, after which I frequently felt exhausted and perplexed. This was probably a state that David experienced inwardly, and I suppose it had to do with his vehement and often desperate attacks on his inner parent couple, by means of which he hoped to separate them without losing either father or mother. Within the analytical situation, he pro-

jected this onto our analytical couple relationship. I interpreted David’s use of the formal pronoun “Sie” with his father as his wish to see him within his relationship to his mother as separate from the latter. I saw the question-answer ritual as an enactment of the inner parent couple, which David unconsciously seemed to imagine as a penis/rectum intercourse. By this metaphor I mean the atmosphere of violent manipulation and the lack of a creative exchange of emotions and ideas; the latter would suggest that an unconscious fantasy of a penis/vagina couple was at work. But this “good” and pleasurable incest fantasy caused David to have deep regression anxieties. By sticking to the anal mode of interaction with me, he kept his incest anxieties at bay, but at the cost of rendering the analytical experience we shared rigid and barren.

During the further course of the therapy, David continued his question ritual. But gradually, in addition to the merely intrusive, inspectorial, disparaging character it had hitherto had, a new, wooing, libidinous, homoerotic curiosity entered our relationship. My interpretation was that, although he was still searching for a projective identificatory relationship with me in the mother transference, he was doing so with the added intention of getting to know me in the transference as an inner paternal object, one that offered not only the possibility of identification via the anal mode but also of self-knowledge, rather than omnipotence and phallic potency. He consequently tried to find out about my style of living, my interests, and my political views, adroitly disguising his curiosity as conjectures: “Well, I guess you probably read such and such a newspaper....I bet you drive such and

such a car.... You probably think....” and so forth. In his own way, he made more interpretations about me than I could ever have made about him. I regarded this as a form of obtrusive as opposed to intrusive identification, an importunate but necessary appropriation of the paternal phallic object. This was undoubtedly a decisive step in his inner development, as epitomized by the fact that his search for a male/paternal object had taken a libidinous turn and that its realization no longer relied exclusively on sadistic attacks on the penis in the mother transference.

After about a year of therapy, I had to tell David that I would be moving to Cologne in a year. David replied rather sardonically to this announcement, saying “I hope you get a nice apartment there,” and a little later, “Cologne’s a bit too far for an hour,” both of which revealed his wish to come with me. In the sessions that followed there was initially very little change, but in the subsequent months there was a dramatic decrease in his symptoms outside the therapy sessions. To me, this was something of a boon, as it also reduced my feelings of guilt for violating the framework of the therapy: I was leaving him, thus depriving him of the opportunity to make up his own mind as to when he would stop coming. He realized my relief immediately, of course, exclaiming scornfully: “What good does it do me that you’re glad I’ve improved? I’m not your shrink!” There was an undertone of envy in this, envy of the analyst’s penis. Unconsciously he fantasized that I would claim his success in therapy and take it away to Cologne with me; this “phallic envy” seems to be a negative aspect of the male adolescent’s obtrusive identification with the father.

David could only keep his envy in check by means of disparagement; but it was coupled with a defiant, desperate sadness because he could not quite come to terms (obtrusively) with the fact that I was leaving him. It was presumably to prevent such feelings and the experience of independence from erupting that he insisted on his omnipotence, making sure that I understood that I was not allowed to take credit for the changes he was now effecting in his life. Interestingly enough, I only learned about these outward changes in bits and pieces. He had largely abandoned his control system in the afternoons and evenings as well as his compulsive rituals; he occasionally got together with other young people, ostensibly to learn Latin, but in reality to swap and watch videos and computer games. He had set up his father’s new PC for him and told me with undisguised pleasure whenever he went on long car journeys alone with his father during vacation.

His behavior during the sessions remained largely unchanged; that is to say, he still needed his question-and-answer game as an obtrusive ritual to maintain contact between his inner situation and the analytical situation. But he became more animated, and straightforwardly told me about the content of his fantasies, which mainly revolved around his self-image as a man and his physical appearance, with a view to assessing his chances of ever being successful with girls. At the same time he began to make critical remarks about his mother, sometimes openly and sometimes more guardedly, while his complaints about his father decreased. His question-and-answer ritual assumed a different emotional aspect in that it no longer had such a

desperate quality. It became more of a provocative game, designed to shatter my patience and participative neutrality. In this, he often succeeded and I frequently got very annoyed at him.

A process began in David whereby he started to discriminate between the inner father and the inner mother. He projected this onto his actual parents by focusing on such questions as what qualities his parents possessed, what merits and differences, as well as on what talents he himself had. The external event that initiated this was that he had to decide what subjects he wanted to major in school. He had originally expected me to "help him make up his mind" again, but he immediately backtracked from this, reacting to my reticence with a fitting interpretation: "You're right, a bit of separation might not be a bad thing, you psychologist you!"

The topic of separation led to an increased polarization of his parents in his inner reality and thus in his inner perception, thereby bringing their complementary character out more clearly. On coming into one session, he remarked that he had been thinking about why, especially in the sessions at the beginning of the therapy, he had often been unable to talk about the things that had been occupying his mind or had had happened to him. In the preceding session, I had been wondering aloud about why so little had changed in our relationship in comparison to his situation outside the therapeutic hour. (This was not quite the case, but it was how it appeared to me at the time.) David replied by appealing to me to appreciate the dilemma he always found himself in: for "reasons of loyalty" he couldn't say anything bad about his father, his mother, or any of his sisters. On the one hand, this was because

he wanted me to give him my full approval and take his side, and, on the other, because he was terrified that if he did he might disown them and lose them altogether. In this situation he simply had not been able to speak. This conflict situation is a very typical feature of the therapy of adolescents, and seems to me to be interesting not only as an illustration of adolescent separation problems but also of how the aggression needed to effect the separation turns primarily on the inner parental couple. If the pre-Oedipal differentiation of the inner parents of the primal scene is incomplete, a reenactment of this process becomes imperative in adolescence before the paternal object can be "found" again and "used." What David said shows that he had begun to make constructive use of his "analytical" thought potential, the analyst's penis. He was beginning to distinguish between inner and outer reality and, at the same time, painful as it was, he could now perceive the inner conflict and reflect on it. That means that something else had begun, too, a sort of coming-to-terms with loss in the transference, even if, unfortunately, this process had to be broken off prematurely. But there had obviously been time enough for him to apprehend me in the transference as an object that could endow meaning, and that, unlike his outer father, did not simply lapse into silence and withdraw when attacked.

By the time the therapy had to finish, David had succeeded in developing a homoerotic transference with less anxiety, which enabled him to make constructive use of the father in his search for identity. This obtrusive, homoerotic identification was also in evidence in the last sessions we had. These revolved around his fantasy that,

as a parting gift, I should at least give him a car, preferably a Porsche, in other words that I should pay him for putting up with me for so long.

At this point, the analytical therapy would normally have begun to address his complicated and painful relationship to his mother. Unfortunately there was no time for this.

### Discussion

I believe that the announcement of my departure acted as a catalyst for—or perhaps even actively promoted—the process of internalizing the father, since anxiety about losing an object promotes its introjection. This is a link to Elsa Morante's Arturo. But in contrast to Arturo, David had had a "good enough" experience of an actual father, which helped him not to get stuck on an archetypal father image. One can assume that a boy's mature male identification has different sources, such as the archetypal father, the actual father, the father in relation to the mother (the parental couple), the animus of the mother, and the collective father image of the society in which the boy lives. Different modes of introjective and projective forms of identification, active at different times in the developmental process, correspond to these different sources. This differentiation is somewhat artificial, however, because in real life these different modes and forms do not develop separately.

In this paper, I have focused on the search for the inner father in relation to the inner mother. We need to recognize that the inner parental couple is not the same as the actual parental interaction. It is an infantile (regressive) fantasy and represents a merging of archetypal elements with elements of the actual

parental interaction. In David's case, for example, this became obvious when his parents told me about their pair conflicts. The father would often retreat for weeks into complete silence, leaving the mother feeling hurt and helpless. The couple seemed to be engaged in a desperate power struggle, with triumph and humiliation its dominant affects.

David experienced his parents as though they were involved in continuous penis/rectum intercourse, and he projected this unconscious fantasy onto our transference/countertransference relationship. This stemmed, I believe, from his incestuous regression to the mother (to the negative elementary character of the Great Mother), which he tried to thwart by mobilizing his anality (his compulsive-obsessive symptoms). In *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung has clearly stipulated the necessity of regressing to the pre-Oedipal parents in order to gain wholeness. (In terms of adolescent psychology, this means in order to gain identity.) In my opinion, during early adolescence or puberty, this regression is primarily experienced in terms of the adolescent's relationship to his body. Because David's pre-Oedipal differentiation of his inner parents of the primal scene was incomplete, he had great difficulty in "finding" his father "in" his mother. His search for a paternal object with his question-and-answer game shows that, unlike the maternal object, an inner paternal object tends to be established via an "obtrusive" or, as it were, "grasping" mode of projective identification (with the father's penis) rather than via an intrusive mode—by "seizing," "touching," and "holding" rather than by penetrating the inner mother. Like intrusive identification (with the negative inner mother), obtrusive identification seems to be a primi-

tive mode of male identification with the inner father. For his part, David was also partially identified with the paternal aspect of his mother's animus (e.g., the grandfather with the pipe). He could later integrate this relatively conflict-free link to his mother into his primitive obtrusive identification with the father/therapist. The question-and-answer game slowly changed from asking the "right" questions (where, obviously, all possible answers were "wrong") to asking questions like "what sense does that make?" This change also extended to his curiosity about my personal life and intellectual interests. As Jung says, the animus is "the archetype of the mind [spirit/meaning], just as the anima represents the archetype of life per se."<sup>26</sup>

In therapy, David began to approach the father via the animus of the mother, which he projected onto me. Through this rapprochement, he demonstrated that he was in the process of identifying with a father object that had more to do with significance and meaning than with the infantile satisfaction of his needs.

In this context, David's obsessive symptoms existed as a defensive, transitional ritual designed to overcome those anxieties that had been aroused by the revival of his incest fantasies in puberty. The question-and-answer game can also be understood as a transitional ritual designed to deal with the frightening confrontation between his inner state of mind and the analytical situation. For David, the ritual created a stable framework for our work. In my experience, analytical work with adolescents consists largely of establishing a stable framework, since adolescents project their relationship to their inner objects beyond the family onto the society surrounding it. If the inner

object world happens to be pathologically organized, this can have long-lasting, adverse effects on the adolescent's transition from life in the family to life in society.

## Notes

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3. C. G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, CW 5 (1911-12).
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12. W. R. Bion, "Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-psychotic Personalities," in *Second Thoughts* (London: Heinemann, 1967), pp. 43-64; and "Attacks on Linking," *ibid.*, pp. 93-109.
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18. Meltzer, *Claustrum*, pp. 58-59; emphasis mine.
19. A. Samuels, *The Plural Psyche: Personality, Morality and the Father* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 66ff.
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23. Compare H. Solomon, “Das gar nicht so schweigsame Paar im Individuum”, *Analytische Psychologie* 28 (1979), pp. 149-171. (“The Not So Silent Couple within the Individuum,” paper read at Tavistock Marital Studies Institute, 1993.)
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26. C. G. Jung, “Concerning the Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious,” *CW 9/I* (1934), p. 66.

