

## **"More than friends, they were brothers" – Friendship in the context of phratry or the reverse of fraternal rivalry.**

### **Abstract:**

Fraternal relationship plays an extremely important role in the personality formation, which recognition only recently has been valued in the psychoanalytical literature.

Above all centred in its conflict dimension, fraternal relationship is being object of other approaches, more focused in feelings associated to friendship.

So, it is through the approach of the friendship link, the author proposes to analyse and to question the subject of fraternal relationship, by using his clinical experience/practice as group-analyst.

**Key-words:** friendship, fraternal relationship, Group-Analysis.

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## **I - Introductory Note**

Heads of the same coin, friendship and rivalry, such as love and hatred are affective tones that can be found, complementarily among a set of feelings that comprise the complex relational fraternal.

Fraternal rivalry was already approached by us, in cooperation with Teresa Silva Pinto, during the period of 2000 and 2004.

It was then sought to demonstrate, among other aspects, the need to understand this relational framework, beyond the boundaries Oedipal, as well as its important for the formation of personality and the consistency of the socialization of individual

As it is known, recognition of fraternal relationship importance, only recently come to be valued in the psychoanalytic literature.

Focusing initially on the conflict dimension, fraternal relationship has been subject to other approaches, more focused around feelings associated with friendship.

It is therefore through the bond of friendship that we propose to analyze the theme of fraternal relationship

We will start by addressing the friendship after the fraternal relationship, for then we focus on the fraternal relations of friendship and its context in the groups of group analysis, we finished formulating a set of questions driving the debate with the audience

## **II –Friendship**

In ancient Greece Aristotle said that man had as ambition, two great things: knowledge and happiness. From Epicurus to Plato happiness was believed to be linked to the cult of friendship (Lima, 2004).

Aristotle's conception considered a friend as a "second self" or an "other self" (Ortega 2002, cit in: Oliveira 2005) and as Plato, supports the idea that a man is not self-sufficient, needing friends for both the development and cultivation of "virtues" like to get away from ignorance and to achieve happiness.

In Socrates, the pursuit of truth and knowledge of self, must be accepted and recognized by his own ignorance. For this, the individuals must adhere to what is different from themselves, freeing themselves to some extent, from dogmas and principles of authority. In this sense he does not admit the distinction between master and disciple, considering them as friends, able to establish exchanges at full parity (Oliveira 2005).

Currently, Coimbra de Matos, in his article entitled "The game of love in psychoanalysis and in life" (2008) recently published in the magazine "If ..., No!" states: "The cooperation and trust, promote development and innovation more than competition and mistrust." In this sense, it presents and describes various types of natural (not pathological) love, which we would highlight: the parent-child love, brotherly love and conjugal love. Thus:

"1) Parent-child love, parent-filial, protector-protected and caregiver-care, security relationship and help. It's an asymmetrical relationship of the vertical axis (...). It is also a dependency relationship (...) and univocal.

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2) Brotherly love or friendship. It is a symmetric horizontal and two-way interdependent and bi-univocal (...). Predominates communion identity and identification by similarity. It is an affiliated relationship, not eroticism.

3) Love marriage or conjugality. Value for symmetric and asymmetric (symmetric powers, asymmetric roles), horizontal, interdependent and uni-bi-univocal (...); characterized by complementarity of identity (different but complementary)...”

As opposed to natural love, pathological love is presented in forms of fusional, delusional and narcissistic love.

With regard to the relationship amongst/among brothers, easily found descriptions both real and in the literature that illustrates love or intense hatred. In the intense love the idea of soul mates, leads to a community body, incurred in incest, the hatred amongst/among brothers, the same confusion between you and the other (in this case the mother) generates deadly rivalry (Fernandes, 2002).

Friendship and respect in Fernandes (2002) are disregarded in this narcissistic fusion, but in the proximity of individuals who recognize the desire and the difference between the two. Friendship is built on the recognition of the identity of two beings, love, ambition of being deliriously one (soul and body). In this sense, would venture to say, as Gikovate (cit in: Lima, 2004) that friendship can be understood as a process of becoming an adult love.

### **III – The Fraternal Relationship**

The progressive reduction of phratry increases the intensity of the relations between brothers, and their interdependence, this interdependency is accentuated in situations of crisis (divorce of parents), or when there is input from a group of brothers to a new family (where we need to share a new space and the attention of the new couple). In these situations, so frequent nowadays, the brotherly relations can be characterized as an "island of stability" or even "family permanence" (Almodovar, 1986 cit in: Fernandes, 2002).

By focusing on the Oedipus complex, as the central structure in shaping the character, the classical psychoanalysis underplays the specific value of the fraternal complex. This is considered a displacement of the Oedipus complex.

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In opposition to classical psychoanalysis, and Benghozi Féres-Carneiro (2001, cit in: Goldsmid; Féres-Carneiro, 2007) consider the phratry a synchronic entity, with a specific psychic apparatus, different from the sum of the individual psyches of the brothers, who constitutes a continent group.

The fraternal bond is considered a psychic construction common to members of a phratry, enabling them to distinguish themselves as a subgroup within the family group. With the arrival of his brother, the child is forced to stop being the object of exclusive privilege of the maternal figure, which facilitates the differentiation of the real and imaginary, and assures the mediation and exchange between reality and psychic reality group.

From this perspective, Jaitin (2001, cit in: Goldsmid; Féres-Carneiro, 2007, 2007) raises the hypothesis that, in the same way that the mother is the first object intermediary between the child and the world (between self and not me), also brothers, while real people (actual figures); represent the first instruments of ownership or use of reality.

To Goldsmid and Féres-Carneiro (2007), that fact that brothers form a subgroup within the family, also called fraternal subsystem, they are increasing the Oedipus complex, turning it into family complex. The fraternal relationship will then contribute significantly, both for harmony and for the family disharmony, assuming as a laboratory for social relationships experienced outside the family.

Continuing with these authors, we find that there are a number of factors such as gender, age differences, parental intervention and "temperament" that interfere with the relational characteristics of the child.

For example, if your brother comes early, during the stage of weaning, it may create destructive impulses or oral regressive character. The birth of a brother in the pre-Oedipal period raises a number of questions about sexuality that will precipitate their entry into the Oedipus complex: the discovery of childhood sexual difference, the origin of babies, the primal scene and the anguish castration.

Being born at this late stage the baby may be "adopted" by mobilizing in his older brother, parental identifications, with consequent feelings of tenderness and protection.

When the phratry is composed of adolescent brothers the main reason of quarrel is the demarcation of the territory and the use of personal belongings. However, it is also known solidarity among brothers, which often leads parents to feel towards a "true

union of the children”, into which they protect one another, an attitude clearly of corporate union (Goldsmid; Féres-Carneiro , 2007

Regarding the phratry position, said Freud (1917), "the position in which the child stands in the sequence of the family is an extremely important factor in determining his later life, and deserves consideration in all anamnesis ".

Adler (1957, cit in: Goldsmid; Féres-Carneiro, (2007) advocates the idea that to judge a human being it is necessary to know the situation in which he grew up and in particular his position as a child within the family.

The eldest son, according to Britto (2002, cit in: Goldsmid; Féres-Carneiro, 2007) is generally closer to the parents; has the feeling that he is and plays the most important role among his brothers, and thinks he has a hierarchically superior position with more responsibilities. He is the model for the brothers and an heir to the leadership of the family.

For Adler (1957, cit in: Goldsmid; Féres-Carneiro, 2007), the second son lives in a state of nervous tension, fighting the superiority of the eldest. But the youngest, considers him a special one and also privileged.

Despite the strengthening of the latest research, such as the ones of Toman (1961) and Sulloway (1996) It is known that, apart from the order of birth, other factors such as his own sex as well as the sex of his brothers, age differences and size of the phratry, all this is also important data in order to determine the similarities in personality among individuals who have the same fraternal configuration (Fernandes, 2002).

#### **IV - Friendship in Fraternal Relationship. Complicity, Companionship and Solidarity.**

In "Totem and Taboo" Freud (1913, cit in Goldsmid, Féres-Carneiro, 2007) creates a myth about the origin of civilization. The formation of the fraternity would be a consequence of collective resignation to the post of full power, previously occupied by his father. The mark of the fraternal group will be an agreement, a memorandum on the need to control and fraternal rivalry and with it, feelings associated with envy and jealousy.

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According to Losso (2001, cit in: Goldsmid; Féres-Carneiro, 2007) the fraternal function can then be defined as the reciprocal help, collaboration, advocacy and provision of identification models between brothers, because they belong to the same generation, act as models of identification other than their parents.

The relationship between brothers will then produce horizontal IDs, vertical secondary to the vertical IDs, represented by parental figures.

The fraternal bond of belonging to the same generation is next, equal and symmetrical. This symmetry, as previously reported by Coimbra de Matos, allows greater freedom for its members, thereby facilitating their relationship. The domain of one brother against another, if any, is negotiable and can be reversed. It is not assumed, does not set the bond, contrary to what happens in parent-child relationship (Goldsmid; Féres-Carneiro, 2007).

According to Goldsmid Féres-Carneiro (2007) brothers in their dealings with each other, learn things in life and the world, acquire new linguistic references, listen to family stories, they develop anxieties, develop their creativity through games and activities, explore unknown domains, including sexuality.

In accordance with these authors, the Phratry establishes ties of complicity in some cases create situations to "deceive the father." United in a legitimate freedom of initiative by the group, the brothers challenge the authority and power of absolute truth, attributed to the father figure.

Overall, brothers have a conscious knowledge and unconscious, of psychic functioning of each other. Each brother keeps in his memory, a number of family events. Even if their lives go in different directions, the intimacy of this experience will leave a "mark" in the unconscious of each one. Knowledge of the intimacy of his brother will continue to be a heritage of reference for their identity.

But the fraternal function, it is not just a performance attributed to the brothers. The father can have with your child fraternal function, for example, in a game situation, where both are on parity

## **V – Group Analytic Context**

We can find more published material , both referring to the clinic or social life, or reports of use related to competition, rivalry and enmity among brothers, than reported examples of friendship, complicity, fellowship or solidarity.

The same happens in groups of group-analysis. It seems that Eros Tabata overlaps, giving rise to more destructive dimensions of our personality, than constructive ones.

In group-analysis, despite this recognition, we privilege both communication and the development of affections negative and positive, provided that they fit the real expression of the emotions of the individual and since that it is shown its authenticity, in an exercise of love for truth. We are not only "bad people" are also "good people", often with the difficulties of accepting and integrating into our personalities.

The binding models pertaining to fraternal relationship, such as ambivalence, rivalry, loving feelings, needs repair, impulses and domain bondage among brothers ... update on the group- analytic *setting* and therefore may be subject to therapeutic development.

In previous published work (Salgado, Silva Pinto, 2001), about the fraternal rivalry, some principles that we stand now with some "arrangements, are also applicable to the fraternal relations of friendship and brotherly context in which would resume as follows:

- 1 - The fraternal relationship is a process deeply rooted in the personality development of the individual;
- 2 - The conflict / warmth-affection due to the fraternal relationship bring out the problems linked to identity;
- 3 - The fraternal relationship is a process for easy visibility in group contexts of group analysis.
- 4 - Accordingly, the fraternal relationship in group analysis is an excellent mean of observation and therapeutic management of the identity of the different elements of the group.

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5 - The personality of the group-analyst extended the emergence of the fraternal relationship, lends it authenticity, thus contributing to the reconstruction and / or creation of true identity on his patients.

To these points we added today:

6 – Friendship experienced by the group-analyst, can be a mean of facilitating access to the truth and therefore an excellent mean for therapeutic work.

7 - Friendship promotes a positive culture of cooperation, tolerance, facilitator of new thoughts, new learning, which is opposed to a culture, still characterized by "trauma", "lack," so dominant in our therapeutic paradigms.

In synthesis, we would say that fraternal relationship is assumed as a relational paradigm that, as Coimbra de Matos, is symmetrical, horizontal, interdependent and bi-univocal, where it prevail community identity and identity by similarity, a ground where they develop feelings of belonging and membership, so badly needed in troubling times in which we live.

## VI – Discussion

Resulting from this work, some questions of conclusive character arise as follows:

Is friendship, before love, a more mature genetic-evolutionary sociological feeling?

In this sense, is it not friendship, as in ancient Greece, where the cultivation of friendship was closely associated with the polis, the community, the counterpoint to the “tyranny of intimacy” in relation “to the personal life imbalanced and a public sphere emptied?” "(Ortega, 2000, cit in: Oliveira, 2005).

Will it not be the group of group-analysis, a micro polis? In this sense, is it not the group of group- analysis, a privileged space for the introduction of a new relational culture in recognition of friendship a paradigm of reference?

And the group-analyst cannot be assumed as a person closer to that of a friend, supported by Ferenczi? The group analyst's authority, the perspective that is invested, the supposed knowledge, Lacan tells us that it does not result in a defence that somehow undermines the commitment of the love of truth, as supported by Freud and Bion?

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Like Socrates suggests, it is not the parity, a fundamental condition of the creative process and free expression of thought?

In this sense, the analytic hierarchical systems of societies, that the Portuguese Society of Group Analysis is an example, normative, based on principles of authority, are not presented as inhibiting the emergence of new ideas and new developments, contrary to the freedom of his own clinical praxis?

Will there not be cooperation and trust as opposed to competitive rivalry, facilitators and promoters innovation?

In clinical practice, experience of positive feelings of warmth, does not pose the same problems of proximity / distance, differentiating self / other, that the aggression?

Is it not the group of group-analysis a sum of "not selected friends" as it is the fraternal group?

The experience in group-analysis is unique and different from the reality experienced by each group member. There will be real-life possibilities of how one begins the younger brother and end up as the eldest, as can happen in a group of group-analysis?

And this new reality, which we call "fraternal universal experience," would facilitate understanding processes of change and more adaptive interpersonal relationships?

Returning to the title of this paper: "More than friends, they were brothers ..."is that the emotional bond among brothers is more powerful than the emotional bond among friends?

When we formulate questions, we always have in mind the title João dos Santos book: "If you do not know, why ask?" With the idea that perhaps only question, as the question itself contains a statement of knowledge.

In a context of friendship, the sharing of knowledge are questions of doubt in search of new questions, new knowledge, a movement of freedom, growth and expansion of mind, so the way of our function of analysts.

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