

# Paternity

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no one there. Then a voice from the shadow of the lilac hedge came to him, sweet with hesitation.

«I walked up the alley. I thought perhaps . . . you could give me a cup of tea . . . or something.» Joyce refused to believe what he heard until Hans continued, «I had to explain about this afternoon. The boy is Laurie's steady since last Saturday night.»

«I know, I know,» Joyce said quickly, wanting to stop the pain of apology in the voice. He went swiftly to the dark hedge, stumbled and was recovered by hands that were still as smooth and firm as stone . . . a cheek that, now without accident, was still like cold sandpaper. And for no apparent reason the night of the mulled rum leaped again into his mind. The dancer was no longer on stage alone. A partner had entered from the wings. The music from the house was swelling. Their *pas de deux* had begun.

## PATERNITY

E. M. Forster once remarked: «If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I'd have the guts to betray my country.» Too much emphasis (he believed) could not be placed on *personal relationships* because they were the stones with which to build the larger structures of society. To establish a good personal relationship is very important but no relationship, no matter how precious, exists in and of itself. Since we live in mortal bodies, all relationships remain threatened and contingent, a fact true of those deeply rooted in sex as well as where the sexual element plays a minor role.

Therefore, in order to validate itself, the relationship must avoid exclusiveness. When two human beings are together, they should constantly look to something else, as if from the top of a light-house; the married couple looks to the child; the homosexual to art or to a common interest of some sort.

Without minimum affinity, homosexual relations cannot survive, which is why every attempt of an intellectual to live with «trade» breaks down.

In order to justify itself, the relationship must look to something beyond itself. When children come into the world, they break the tight nature of the marriage and this problem may be solved. Kierkegaard once wrote: «If a married man were to say that the perfect marriage is one where there are no children, he would be guilty of a misunderstanding. He makes himself the absolute . . . every married man by means of the child becomes a relativity.»

What, then, is the role of the child? A child is a mysterious gift of life that cannot be had by wanting (although the sincerity of the wish may help.) To really bear a child, one must bear with the child. That is, to have a child, in the fullest sense of the word, a man and

woman must possess a respect for the future. In many ways the child tends to form the parents; he shows them the meaning of possibility, for instance. How often the old fairy tales begin with such phrases as «Long ago there were a King and Queen who said every day, «Ah, if only we had a child!» or «There was once upon a time a rich King who had three daughters» . . . or «In those days there lived a wealthy merchant who had six children, three boys and three girls.» What's mentioned first, as of prime importance, is this matter of relationship. What was significant to the basic human audience of the fairy tales was the establishment of relationship. Once this was clear, the story teller could go on to other things, or an elaboration of that one thing.

When a child enters a marriage, it tends to humble both the mother (because her wishes now serve the new arrival) and the man (because he has encountered a competitor.) This reduction of status, which involves suffering, tests and usually strengthens the whole situation. Under good conditions the early part of a marriage can be a dialog, (it can, that is, represent a true communication.) But after the child comes, he begins to ask all the questions. In most marriages, husbands should ask more questions of their wives, rather than leave the curiosity to the child. Because of this suffering, because of this reduction, the child changes its parents into contingent objects.

It is the child in «The Juniper Tree» (and many other stories) who plays the largest role, who entrances the shoemaker and goldsmith, who in a sense creates his father's joy and his sister's unhappiness, who causes the other people to be more like what they are, more good or bad.

When two homosexuals come together, they can do one of a number of things. First, they can remain absolute to each other, as a childless married couple is absolute to each other. Since they associate in this unqualified way, they tend to shut out the non-homosexual world. Symptoms of what we have called this «absoluteness» are compulsiveness, self-absorption, and various forms of sexual violence together with jealousy and unfulfillment.

But in a different type of homosexual relation, a kind of impersonation may be practised. One partner, not always the elder, may regard the other as a child, or if not a child, a homunculus, in part a projection of himself. How does this differ from the case of Narcissus? It differs because these two persons exist as separate entities. The other person must exist, must be surrounded by a novel reality, the separateness being as strongly attractive as the similarity. Let us try to find out why this type of association often results in disaster. Shakespeare in «The Sonnets» sketched out an outline of some such relationship. What the poet in «The Sonnets» is attempting is the dangerous, forbidden act of creating a human being. He is trying to create a person whose free will is but a phase of his own. Both surrogate-father and lover, the poet introduces the young man to the girl. This is in the nature of a test for the creator wants to see if he has succeeded; he discovers that his magic has failed.

What lies at the bottom of this failure? — pride and omnipotent feelings. Because he leads an erratic inner life, (not strictly checked

with reality), a certain type of homosexual soon develops and nurtures this desire for power, these feelings of invulnerability. The case of the poet in «The Sonnets» forms a very mild illustration of this. We can see more clearly in the lives of Frederick the Great and Nathan Leopold how this thirst for power, these oceanic feelings managed to destroy the balance of the personality. Willa Cather wrote a story, «Paul's Case», where she showed the irrational acts of a young homosexual, touched with this grandioseness. Paul, in this story, desires the power to claim the passing moment and to make it his. Music calls up these cosmic emotions in him. He has a longing for what Miss Cather calls «the world-shine». At the end he comes to ruin, he cannot see himself as an unfinished person, he is unable to visualize himself within the concrete situation. However the illusion of omnipotence need not result in disaster as in this case or the case of Alcibiades. No, if the feelings of omnipotence can somehow (and a dark world lies within that word «somehow») be channelled, they may bring about fine poetry, (e. g., Crane, Whitman, Marlowe.)

For the most part human beings, whatever the object of their love, achieve good relationships to the degree that they destroy pride and absoluteness. A partial solution for homosexuals is the creation of an interdependence where now one is the child, now the other. That does represent a step forward. A more difficult life-solution is where the poetic creativity becomes, as it were, the child and no single partner is needed, but many.

In any event, if two people are serious (whether homosexual or heterosexual), they will learn to understand the true nature of their limitations and that in itself may strongly unite them.

H. G.

## S O N N E T

*Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage  
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit;  
To thee I send this written ambassage  
To witness duty, not to show my wit.  
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine  
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it;  
But that I hope some good conceit of thine  
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it:  
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,  
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,  
And puts apparel on my tottered loving,  
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:  
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee,  
Till then, not show my head where thou mayst prove me.*

*William Shakespeare*