

EMILE DURKHEIM AND THE OEDIPAL VICTOR

Qualifications

The first question that must be raised before getting into the meat of this article is my qualifications. Relative to other psychoanalytic writers, my requirements fall quite short. I'm not a psychoanalyst. I don't provide therapy of any kind other than occasional paid Freudian style dream interpretation. Though I do have a Master's of Science in non-clinical theoretical psychoanalysis from the University College London in conjunction with the British Psychoanalytic Society.

Secondly, I have to make the following demarcation. As noted, I'm not a psychoanalyst. The only patient I have is myself. Fifty minutes every day I practice self-analysis, a self-examination which is not easy. It is, in truth, quite arduous. And from this, me being a man, I only limit myself to findings demarcated by the male disposition. I do this also with the understanding that all humans are physically and mentally bi-sexual.

My Lessons from Emile Durkheim

So where does Durkheim fit into all this. It all started with my junior year abroad in college. There I attended the London School of Economics. While there I took a class in Sociology taught by the now ascribed Lord Anthony Giddens. It was a course which focused upon the fundamental tenets of this exciting subject matter highlighted by Giddens' new original work about risky behavior and how it compared to Durkheim's classic sociological work "On Suicide." In his book, Durkheim, being the founder of Modern Sociology, had compared suicide rates among various sociological variables such as religions, countries and wartime and peacetime. He found that systematic differences existed among such groups keeping all else equal. As for Giddens' new book, he found that risky behavior too fell upon systematic differences that existed among societal groups. Immediately upon hearing Giddens' findings, my academic critical antennae perked up. Wasn't risky behavior just a pure relational supplement to suicidal behavior? Was Giddens' findings just an off-shoot of Durkheim's findings? I, for sure, thought it was. Even more so, I was confident of this correlation well before I was even aware of Freud's concept of the death instinct. In fact, it is this novel finding by Freud which soon later fell in my lap that I knew I was absolutely correct in terms of finding this particular work by Giddens absolute of no value.

Now, let's examine why Giddens' work is an intellectual abyss. Simply, it is because levels of risky behavior directly correlates with suicide rates. One can argue that risky behavior contains a relatively large amount of Freud's death instinct, with suicide being the ultimate activity of the death instinct being acted out. For example, one of the most dangerous and risky activities

that men partake in is microcycle riding. People frequently joke and/or expound that the biker has a "death wish." This type of thinking travels well with other risky and dangerous behaviors. Volunteer joining the armed forces, deep sea exploration, rock-climbing, etc. Of course adrenaline is involved. It is sought. Yet, such individuals need risky death-defying behavior to get this high.

So we have clearly shown that there is a strong correlate between risky behavior and suicide. Both of these concepts fall largely on the death instinct scale.

Method of Investigation: The Power of Correlation

The reason I bring these academic wonderings up is because it is this powerful scientific tool, this being correlation, that I applied above in my criticism of Giddens' work which is what I will utilize in terms of transmitting the fact that divorce rates lead to more Oedipal victors, which psychoanalysts know the latter makes future neurosis much more likely.

Our beginning point will be the well-documented scientific notion and (yes) correlation that divorced parents are more likely to produce neurotic children. From this starting point, I will utilize further correlations to prove that the dangerous position of a child becoming an Oedipal victor is more likely to occur from divorced parents. No matter whether the parents get divorced during a child's Oedipal years or before or thereafter.

Before moving on, let us investigate the scientific power of correlation. Correlational analysis, definitely in the social sciences, has the strongest predictable powers of all measurement tools. It is a lead into cause and effect analysis. (Though there is of course inherent murkiness when using correlational analysis to determine in absolute terms what is the actual cause and what is the actual corresponding effect. However, no science, no hard it is, can truly determine cause and effect. All scientists truly can do is see that data points either move in the same direction or not in the same direction.) It is the easiest tool to measure and the most accurate in this manner. Though admittedly broad in its findings, but when enough data points are available, it can perhaps hypothetically illustrate a cause and effect relationship.

Oedipal Victors

Now what do I mean by Oedipal victors. Oedipal victors, from the male's side, are little boys and later as men, if not psychologically corrected, who succeed in being their mother's lovers and whose (romantic) love instincts aim towards the mother ad infinitum. But this Oedipus victory, this victory in terms of not having to succumb to the father's might, have huge negative consequences. Successful mother acquisition determines that the normal Oedipus proceedings do not come to its successful healthy end whereby the young boy must acquiesce to the mighty father's strength and thus are normally set upon the path to find their own unique female counterpart. But a male Oedipal victor does not do this because he has already won the prize: the Mother. But what a costly prize this is. A future neurotic plight most likely stands firm.

Analysis

1st Step of Analysis

We start with the following highly positively measurable and proven observable fact:

Divorced parents are more likely to have neurotic children. This “really” is a correlation between divorced parents and their ensued neurotic children.

From the Internet :

A.

rotor.org (Gateway to Mental Health Services)
“How Parents’ Divorce Impacts Children’s Mental Health”

“... studies also find that anxiety and depression rates are higher in kids with divorced parents.”

B.

pubmed.gov
Abstract of “The Effects of Parental Divorce on Children”
Huseyin Caksen, Psychiatriki 2022.

“Individuals affected by parental divorce have a higher risk of developing a variety of mental health conditions including emotional and behavioral disorders, poor school performance, depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, suicide attempt, distress, smoking and substance abuse.”

C.

verywellfamily.com
“The Psychological Effects of Divorce on Kids”

“Divorce may increase the risk for [mental health problems](#) in children and adolescents. Regardless of age, gender, and culture, children of divorced parents experience increased psychological problems.”

“Divorce may trigger an adjustment disorder in children that resolves within a few months. But, studies have also found depression and anxiety rates are higher in children from divorced parents.”

The correlation between divorced parents and the relatively worse mental health of their children is in truth such an obvious fact which most everyone would hypothesize that the quotes above aren't really necessary. I just added the above factual statements to make sure I fully clarify where the analysis is starting from.

2nd Step of Analysis

Here we move onto another obvious point stemming from the given that divorce leads to more-likely troubled and mentally ill offspring.

Are parents who eventually get divorced more likely than parents who stay together to produce a more conflictual environment in their homes? Now, I'm not just regarding this at the time of divorce. But I am also including the full length of the marriage.

How can I make such a claim? Really, just an extension of common sense. This is a straight generalization; however, a straight generalization that stands on strong legs. It has to be that eventual divorce no matter how long before the divorce takes place, more likely manufactures a more conflictual home-life than parents who stay together “till death do they part.” There is just no argument here. This matter has to be correlated. There is no choice otherwise.

3rd Step of Analysis

Because there is no question of what holds true in the 2nd Step of Analysis, I now take it one step further. Parents who eventually get divorced versus those that stay together for life are more likely to have a less stable and more contentious environment when the children are young, most particularly as pointed out to reach a psychoanalytic audience, during the all important Oedipal phase of childhood. Again, another simple corollary similar in the type of argument as in the 2nd stage of analysis above.

4th Step of Analysis

So if there is more conflict between husband and wife at the time when a child is young and going through his formative Oedipal years, there are more outstanding needs that both parents have to get either in or out of the nuclear family.

*Please remember, as stated above, I am not a practicing psychoanalyst and I am a male and thus I can only remark and theorize from the standpoint of a little boy and his further developmental and psychological needs.

5th Step of Analysis

So if a child's formative years is encased by his parents' unstable relationship, more likely than those found in healthy parental stable relationships, the mother is looking more outwards other than towards her husband to meet her psychological needs. So in these disruptive relationships, the mother more likely could take her child as her surrogate husband—that is, more likely than in healthy parental relationships.

And if all this true, we have arrived at the point where we can pronounce that Oedipal victors are “manufactured” more likely in unhealthy relationships than in healthy stable ones.

6th Step of Analysis

Hence, it follows that divorce no matter when it occurs during a child's upbringing, is more likely to manufacture Oedipal victors. And as stated above, Oedipal victors have a high propensity for neurosis later in life.

And thus, this finding correlates well with the fact that divorce is more likely to procure more mentally ill children.

All Neurotics are Oedipal Victors

This is quite a statement and truthfully, I am not very sure in the veracity of this claim. But Freud did say that the Oedipal Complex is at the core of all neurosis. And I believe (as already stated)

unhealthy parental relationships more often than in the case of more stable ones make it so the Oedipal Complex has a much lower rate of resolution. And I believe most often of all the individuals a mother would take as a substitute for her husband and as the target from which she tries to manufacture her emotional needs would be her child. Taken to the maximum, I believe in some way Oedipal victors, might more than presently hypothesized or believed, make a large part of the percentage of neurotics. Furthermore, a substantial support of this argument is that the resolution of the Oedipal Complex is when the son acquiesces to the mighty father and must drop his desire to have his mother for himself. But this last step is impossible to even get to if the son never has to fight for the mother's love. He already has it. (Moreover, does the father fight as hard if he is no longer in love with his wife). So by theory, this final stage of the most important psychic development can never be reached if an Oedipal victor is in place. In essence, I believe in the varying degrees of an Oedipal victor being present (Nothing in this world is black and white. All are shades of gray. And such goes the varying degrees of an Oedipal victor) in relative terms causes the whole Oedipus chain to be broken. Moreover, as far as I see it, there is no theoretical argument that can crush the chains of proper Oedipal development so decisively.

Nature and Nurture

Before ending this article, I want to say something about Nature versus Nurture. Any common sense individual would agree with Freud that both of these factors, in some proportion, strongly dictate a person's mental life (Notwithstanding later intense and successful psychological work).

What we have solely dealt with so far in this paper is "Nurture" factors, i.e. the status of parental relationships. What about "Nature"? Where does this come into play? I believe this has already been dealt with—Let me explain:

As psychologists and common man know is that people usually match up with partners who are pretty much emotionally stable and healthy as they are. We can assume that more emotionally stable people have a less tendency for divorce than less stable individuals. Moreover, more emotionally stable people have better mental health than those who aren't as emotionally stable. So in general, people who get divorced have less overall mental health than individuals whose marriage lasts. So, children of divorced parents, inherit unhealthier and less stable mental instincts from their parents. And this is where the "Nature" argument comes into play.

Above we did a lot of analysis to show the "Nurture" component and how divorced parents leads to a more unhealthy upbringing and increased mental illness. Now we bring with that the "Nature" component. Overall, we can draw the conclusion that with regards to parents who stay married or get divorced, it is the latter (with all other things being equal) who pass on mental drives that are more conflictual.

So the argument presented here comes all together. Both "Nature" and "Nurture" work together and come into play in illustrating the truthful axiom that divorced parents produce more mentally

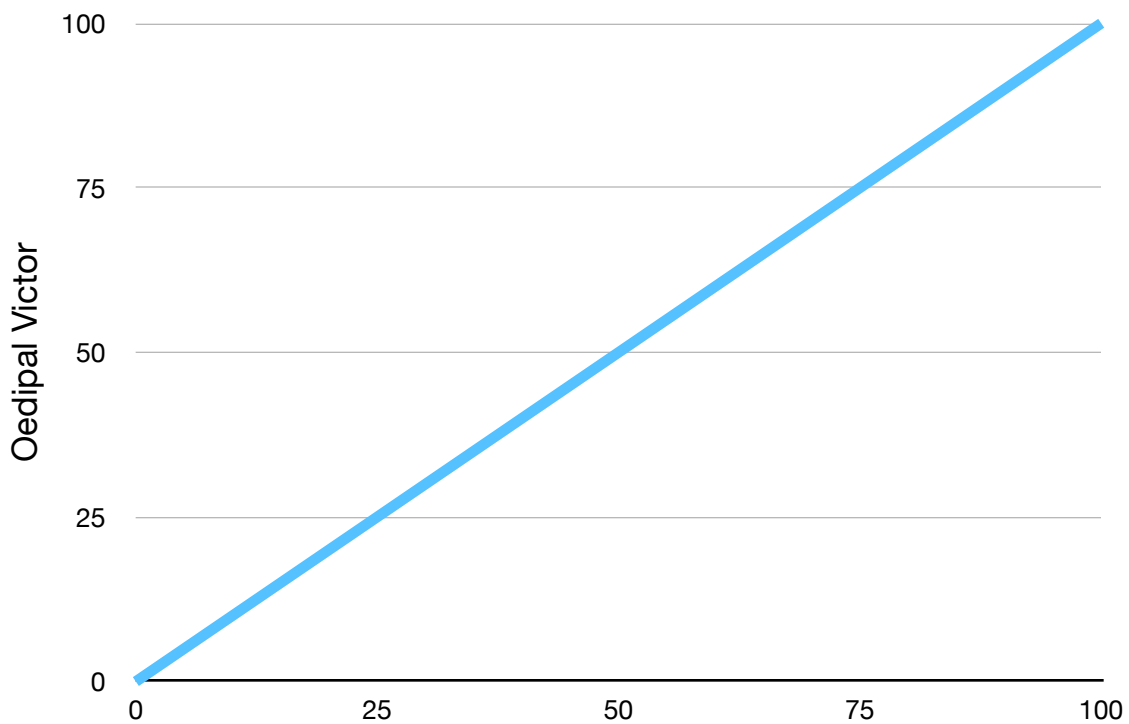
ill (among other things such as substance abuse, poor school performance, etc.) offspring. Everything lines up!

Conclusion

A lot was said in this article. Analysis was based on correlation, logic and common sense. But I stand by it all. And I know there will be dissidents. However as a trained social scientist, I know that correlation is the strongest and beefiest measurement device for analyzing individual and group behavior in all of the Humanities. In fact, though a possible off-shoot of correlation, being cause and effect analysis, it is truly "Fool's Gold." No more scientifically strong in the social sciences, which psychoanalysis is one, as the old dictum "Which came first: the Chicken or the Egg."

Moreover, logic and commonsense is man's mental pinnacle through eons of development.

Addendum



Addendum I

It came and stuck to me as days went by after I completed the 2nd draft of this paper that there is a definite and certain relationship between the degree that one is an Oedipal victor and how much one would have to deal with neurosis later in life. Now as I had previously spoken about degrees in that no one could be a pure Oedipal victor (100 on the graph above) or have no qualities of an Oedipal victor (0 on the graph above), the same goes true for one's degree of neurosis. It cannot be 0% or 100%. As I have previously stated, life is all about grays.

Unlike what I wrote before, now I have no doubt about this definite relationship. I stand concretely behind this statement. It makes pure theoretical sense. The concept of the Oedipal victor destroys the Oedipal Complex inside and out. It annihilates it. It makes the Oedipus Complex to be only capable of partial resolution for the reasons stated above in the section "All Neurotics are Oedipal Victors."

Addendum II

Once the love of the mother is achieved, does the killing of the father already occur or is it that there is a retaliation stage where the father then threatens the son because what the son has seemingly already achieved, that is the majority of the love from the mother and her attention. Is it this latter scenario whereby the normal Oedipus process gets to the natural conclusion? Is it here where the father threatens castration and so the son has to move on and find his suitable mate?

In Sophocles' original Oedipus myth, Oedipus first kills his father and then has sex with his mother. This sequence of events matches option one above which theoretically could produce an Oedipal victor. In option two, events occur in the exact opposite order and do not align with Sophocles' play. First mother's monopoly of love and then father's threats. This more so leads to a relatively healthy Oedipal resolution.

I only speak about all of this because of its theoretical importance and obtuseness.

