



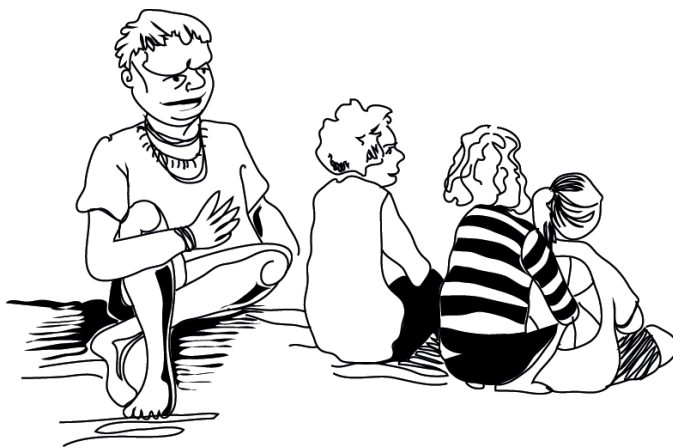
CHANGING MINDS, SAVING LIVES – PSYCHOANALYTIC INSIGHTS

Welcome to Pamela Nathan's psychoanalytic series, taking simple gems from the psychoanalytic dreamtime that may become tools for living...

THE ABSENT FATHER

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About Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a psychological therapeutic modality predicated on the notion that there is a part of the mind that remains hidden and repressed from awareness, knowing and consciousness. Hence, we can be a Jekyll and Hyde to ourselves. There is another whole world of experiences, processes and fantasies that can become known through dreams and

associations in a therapeutic relationship. Freud said that the unconscious proper of repression resembles a maximum-security prison that holds antisocial inmates—languishing for years or recently arrived. Though harshly treated and heavily guarded, the inmates are barely kept under control and forever attempt to escape (quoted in Gay, 1998, 128). Their breakouts succeed only intermittently and at great cost to themselves and to others. There can be an explosive power to the unconscious, which can break out in the form of delayed time bombs of trauma, lost memories and offence re-enactments. There is an external world and there is an internal world. Psychoanalysis privileges the unconscious world - the inner world. The unconscious world can impact on the way we think and feel and behave; therefore the more we know about what is hidden the more we can change distressing or destructive patterns of behaviour, create future

rich possibilities and become more HUMAN. We are no longer imprisoned and no longer need to fear the feral.

Psychoanalysis is about listening, talking about and understanding the present, which has a living past, in order to work towards knowing and healing. In turn, a new and more truthful past can be created giving new meanings to past experiences and to life in the present.

The Absent Father - role in crime and in mental illness

Many males do not grow up with a father who is actively present in family life. Fathers can be absent due to separation and divorce, death, long work hours, alcoholism, cultural wounds, a life of crime and/or mental illness. We are beginning to understand the need for fathers (or their surrogates) to serve as containers, protectors, facilitators, models, challengers, initiators, sanctioners, and mentors throughout the life cycle, and there is considerable cross-cultural evidence that negligence, absence, or the lack of active, involved fathering is related to many individual, social, and familial troubles. Many male criminals have experienced an absent father.

A father is always present in the mind however but the absent father can give rise to idealised or demonised father figures in the mind. The present and real good-enough father or surrogate is what is most helpful for healthy psychic growth and development for sons and future relationships and healthy futures. Fathers are important!

The role of father can be to provide:

- A support for the mother and baby
- A male model (toilet training) for the male toddler
- A male (rough and tumble) playmate
- An alternate attachment figure to the mother
- A triangular space where the infant/child can be both observer and participant in relationship to two people
- Boundaries, limits and discipline
- A limit to an over-involved mother
- A barrier to incestuous feelings for the mother
- A sense of external reality
- A male role model of masculinity and sexual development
- Separation and individuation
- Guidance in cultural and work roles in the external environment
- Love to mitigate the two way rivalry between father and son

How does an absent father impact on growth and development?

For children, the absent father can represent significant LOSS and profound MISSING of a GOOD father.

An absent father can make a son feel “BAD” and “guilty” and “responsible” and a bad father becomes present in the absence.

Consequences of the absent father for sons maybe:

- Weak identity
- Low self-esteem and confidence in their capacity
- Sense of entitlement because they believe they are owed a proper parent
- Guilt for replacing the absent father – unconsciously they killed him
- They fear (unconsciously) the absent father will retaliate
- The absent father has a lethal and revengeful presence
- Sons can worry about an incestuous attachment to the mother
- Oedipal guilt can lead to delinquency, crime or be projected onto rival gangs
- A debt culture can replace dependency needs and attachment relations
- A Mafia Godfather mentality can prevail
- Weapons can supplant fear and eliminate threat
- Substitution: Holding a knife or gun can make a boy feel like a man
- Revenge and retribution can replace forgiveness and understanding

To restore a link to an absent father male adolescents may:

- Follow in their father's footsteps
- Try to maintain links with their dead fathers
- Find elder siblings, police and gangs, to replace absent fathers

Links can be established in different pathological ways:

1. Summary of Bullet Boy Film: DEBT CULTURE and GUNS

In one of East London's most volatile neighbourhoods, pride, rivalry and revenge are the only codes on the street. Fresh out of jail, 18-year-old Ricky (Ashley Walters, Get Rich or Die Tryin') and his 12-year-old brother, Curtis, struggle to walk the straight and narrow when a minor street clash escalates into an all-out neighbourhood war.

Ricky (Ashley Walters) has just been released from a youth offender's institute. Although Ricky has every intention to put his life of crime behind him he soon falls back into the same violent cycle, mainly due to his hot-headed friend Wisdom (Leon Black).

The setting moves from the calm and idyllic countryside to the claustrophobic council estates of south London. As Ricky moves back into his council flat with his mum and younger brother, it seems slightly strange that this twenty year-old ex-criminal is going to be sleeping in a child's bunk bed. But then the heart of this film explores the idea of masculinity and whether this is sometimes overcompensated through possessing a gun.

For Ricky and Curtis, friendships, family and loyalty will be tested to the extreme in a world where guns are a fact of everyday life and boys try to be men before they're even teenagers. But it is his twelve year old brother Curtis, torn between the allure of his dangerous brother and his mum's more wholesome aspirations for him, who is really in the firing line. A minor street clash escalates into an all-out neighbourhood war. Curtis shoots Rio and then Curtis at the end of the film throws Ricky's handgun into the canal. He goes to visit Rio in hospital. Rio says he cannot wait to show his scar to the mates at school and then says to Curtis "You owe me big time".

Curtis identified with his elder brother in crime using his gun and the debt culture reigned supreme

2. Case study one: SUICIDE

A father commits suicide. A son, Tim, aged eight, was very close to him before he died. The father died on father's day. Tim unconsciously felt rejected by his father killing himself and could not believe he did not stay alive for him or that he wanted to stay alive for him. Consciously he idealised his father and said he understood why his father did what he did. His father had depression in the few years before his death. Tim in late adolescence developed depression. He talked to his father. He wanted to die so he could be reunited with his father. He had suicidal longings and fantasies. He had para-suicide attempts. He could not accept that he felt rejected by his father or that he experienced feelings of grief that he did not have a father who lived and was "good enough". He killed himself in the belief he would join his father and be linked with him forever leaving a note to this effect.

Tim identified with his suicidal dad. He found his Dad in the fantasy of unity and death.

Case Study two: MURDER

Jo's father was in gaol for murder serving a life sentence. Jo recalls domestic violence. His father left home when he was two. He heard a lot about his Dad from his uncles. He was considered an underworld hero. He was a bikie and a member of Hell's Angels. He had killed a cop. Jo from early adolescence was always in trouble with the police. He hated them. He lived a wild life high on drugs and boozed with drink. He got busted often and spent many nights in the cells. He used to visit his dad in a maximum security gaol. He used to boast to his mates that his Dad was in gaol. His father had a sword tattoo on his arm. Jo got the same tattoo. He got himself a motorbike. He womanised. He got himself a girlfriend Daisy and she got pregnant. They split soon after she gave birth to Daniel. One day he tried to hold up a bank manager for some fast cash. He had a pistol. Someone called the cops just in time. The cop advanced on Joe telling him to de-arm. Joe took out a cop. The cop died. Jo joined his Dad in the maximum security gaol.

Joe identified with his lost criminal and murderous Dad. Joe found a Dad in the cops.

Case Study three: Madness and Murder

Gerard's father left the family home when he was six. He never saw his Dad again. He was sexually abused by his father's mate Sam down the road for years. He led a wayward life, numbing his memories with dope and went from one town to the next and one casual job to another. He had a breakdown. His Dad became part of his delusional system but was called Jesus. Jesus wanted him to become a disciple and he lived in a religious world a web of delusions. He got treated for schizophrenia. His delusions settled. One day he saw his abuser. He went to the police but they dismissed him as a madman. Gerard got an axe one day and killed his abuser in the way he had been abused.

Gerard felt wanted by his father in his delusional psychosis and abandoned by him to abuse in real life and he went on to murder.

Absence – where the good father is absent-can however foster growth in father-son relationships:

I turn now to the Greek epic poems “**The Iliad**” and “**The Odyssey**”: which are stories about father-son relationships in a patriarchal society where masculine men, indeed warriors, were the heroes of the day. Interestingly distance features in these father-son relationships and distance is considered to provide a fundamental cornerstone of noble achievement, admiration and affection. The fathers are proud of their sons and the sons are proud of their fathers.

In the “**The Iliad**”, the father Priam is a worthy warrior who has earned his retirement from battle after fathering fifty sons and fighting intrepidly in the Trojan War. One of those sons is Hector, a warrior in his own right who is earning a reputation as a man equal to his father in both his strength and his commitment to family. When he dies Priam is inconsolable and he begs Achilles for the return of his son’s body and he wishes to raise Hector from the dead. Hector fought his own battles and in doing so, won the love and respect of his father Priam. Distance, then, became one of the most important mediating factors that allowed the quality of the father-son relationship to be defined and established.

In “**The Odyssey**”, the physical distance between father and son is equally important. In “The Odyssey” it is the father Odysseus who has created distance by being far from home; the father’s absence is the impetus for the son’s journey, and it is in his own odyssey that Telemachus begins to prove his own worth. The two “desired to connect all along” yet the distance that was between them served to reinforce their bond because they could prove themselves to one another through the successful resolution of their respective trials. Telemachus sets out on a long journey to find his father. The reunion heralded intense weeping emotion between them.

In the **Aboriginal world** men provide holding men who hold cultural law, and country and young men in ceremony business. Young men learn the tools for living in ceremony business and learn to live in the bush independently by the law handed down by the generations of *Tjukurrpa* and senior business men.

Jack and the Beanstalk

Jack and the Beanstalk is a great story which tells of how the conflicts the growing boy endures in order to separate from the mother, individuate and grow into a resourceful boy/man. It tells of how a good loving father can offer the seeds for his son's development and to know and be aware of the risks involved in the child's development so he maybe alert and protect them in order to avert a catastrophe. Liz Kerr writes about the story from a psychoanalytic perspective:

You will remember that,

There was once upon a time a poor widow who had an only son named Jack, and a cow named Milky-White. And all they had to live on was the milk the cow gave every morning, which they carried to the market and sold. But one morning Milky-White gave no milk, and they didn't know what to do.

"What shall we do, what shall we do?" said the widow, wringing her hands.

"Cheer up, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere," said Jack.

"We've tried that before, and nobody would take you," said his mother. "We must sell Milky-White and with the money start a shop, or something."

"All right, mother", says Jack. "It's market day today, and I'll soon sell Milky-White, and then we'll see what we can do."

The emotional scene is set when the child is confronted by the fact that Milky-White's supply is exhausted. That ideal state that nurtured mother and child is over (even if only for the moment) and Jack must now turn to his own resources and to the outside world in order to develop. It is not hard for the child to grasp the unconscious meaning of the tragedy when the milk stops flowing and it is not surprising that this may evoke unconscious memories of the ending of that idealised pure, Milky-White, totally gratifying and seemingly unending, blissful relationship with mother.

Jack, faced with the realities of the situation, and confronted by his own needs and those of his mother, determines to "get work somewhere". However, as his mother says "nobody would take you". Jack is a little boy, he is not a big grown up man yet, able to provide for a wife and family. He has to allow time to "get ahead up the White Road" to proceed along the path of development.

"So he took the cow's halter in his hand, and off he started. He hadn't gone far when he met a funny-looking old man, who said to him, "good morning, Jack".

"Good morning to you," said Jack, and wondered how he knew his name.

"Well, Jack, and where are you off to?" said the man.

"I am going to market to sell our cow there."

"Oh you look the proper sort of chap to sell cows," said the man. "I wonder if you know how many beans make five."

"Two in each hand and one in your mouth," says Jack as sharp as a needle.

"Right you are," says the man, "and here they are, the very beans themselves," he went on, pulling out of his pocket a number of strange-looking beans. "As you are so sharp," say he, "I don't mind doing a swap with you – your cow for these beans.

"Go along," say Jack. "wouldn't you like it?"

"Ah! You don't know what these beans are," said the man. "If you plant them overnight, by morning they grow right up to the sky."

"Really?" said Jack. "You don't say so."

"Yes, that is so. And if it doesn't turn out to be true you can have your cow back."

"Right," says Jack, and hands him over Milky-White's halter and pockets the beans."

We can imagine Jack, disappointed that mother no longer magically supplies all his needs, turning to the idea of good father to provide a different sort of magic. This is the father, just happens to know his name who tells him what a good chap he is, how bright and clever he is and who offers the hope and promise that very soon he would grow into a great big man, as high as the sky.

Back goes Jack home, and as he hadn't gone very far it wasn't dusk by the time he got to his door.

"Back already, Jack?" said his mother. "I see you haven't got Milky-White, so you've sold her. How much did you get for her?"

"You'll never guess, mother," says Jack.

"No, you don't say so, Good boy! Five pounds? Ten? Fifteen? No, it can't be twenty."

"I told you, you couldn't guess. What do you say to these beans? They're magical. Plant them overnight and –"

"What! says Jack's mother. "Have you been such a fool, such a dolt, such an idiot, as to give away Milky-White, the best milker in the parish, and prime beef to boot, for a set of paltry beans? Take that! Take that! Take that! And as for your precious beans here they go out the window. And now off with you to bed. Not a sup shall you drink, and nor a bit shall you swallow this very night."

So Jack went upstairs to his little room in the attic, and sad and sorry he was, to be sure, as much for his mother's sake as for the loss of his supper.

In Jack's fantasy, perhaps his anger and disappointment in the Milky-White mother, has turned her into this cow of a woman who attacks, starves him and leaves him abandoned to his bedroom.

At last he dropped off to sleep.

When he woke up, the room looked so funny. The sun was shining into part of it, and yet all the rest was quite dark and shady. So Jack jumped up and dressed himself and went to the window. And what do you think he saw? Why, the beans his mother had thrown out of the window into the garden had sprung up into a big beanstalk which went up and up and up till it reached the sky. So the man spoke the truth after all.

At last Jack was able to drop off to sleep – to escape from this disappointing reality and in his dreams recreate the hope provided for him by the idea of a good father who allows his son to shine. However, although the sun was shining into part of the room, all the rest was still quite dark and shady.

The beanstalk grew up quite close past Jack's window, so all he had to do was to open it and give a jump onto the beanstalk which ran up just like a big ladder. So Jack climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed till at last he reached the sky. And when he got there he found a long broad road going as straight as a dart. So he walked along, and he walked along, and he walked along till he came to a great big tall house, and on the doorstep there was a great big tall woman.

"Good morning, mum," says Jack, quite polite-like. "Could you be so kind as to give me some breakfast?" For he hadn't had anything to eat, you know, the night before, and was as hungry as a hunter.

Jack climbing up the beanstalk is a vivid and compelling image. What might the child make of it? It has obvious genital and phallic connotations and perhaps the hope of one day being a great big father hunter fed by his equally great big tall woman wife. Perhaps it also relates to more primitive fantasies as well. Is it the wish or dream of regressing to that fantasised ideal state inside mother, to climb back up the cord and into that heavenly womb. Is it the wish of the starving infant, hungry as a hunter to recreate this ideal maternal object who he can dwell inside or have inside himself forever?

"It's breakfast you want, is it?" says the great big tall woman. "It's breakfast you'll be if you don't move off from here. My man is an ogre and there's nothing he likes better than boys broiled on toast. You'd better be moving on or he'll be coming".

"Oh! please, mum, do give me something to eat, mum. I've had nothing to eat since yesterday morning, really and truly, mum," says Jack. "I may as well be broiled as die of hunger."

Well, the ogre's wife was not half so bad after all. So she took Jack into the kitchen, and gave him a hunk of bread and cheese and a jug of milk. But Jack hadn't half finished these when thump! thump! thump! the whole house began to tremble with the noise of someone coming.

"Goodness gracious me! It's my old man," said the ogre's wife. "What on earth shall I do? Come along quick and jump in here". And she bundled Jack into the oven just as the ogre came in.

He was a big one, to be sure. At his belt he had three calves strung up by the heels, and he unhooked them and threw them down on the table and

said, "Here, wife, broil me a couple of these for breakfast. Ah! what's this I smell?

Fee-fi-fo-fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman,
Be he alive or be he dead
I'll have his bones to grind my bread."

"Nonsense, dear," said his wife. "You're dreaming. Or perhaps you smell the scraps of that little boy you liked so much for yesterday's dinner. Here, you go and have a wash and tidy up, and by the time you come back your breakfast'll be ready for you."

So off the ogre went, and Jack was just going to jump out of the oven and run away when the woman told him not. "Wait till he's asleep," says she; "he always has a doze after breakfast".

The Oedipal plot thickens. The infant's wish to get back inside the mother is barred by the presence of the Oedipal father, just as Laius barred his son at the crossroads. This larger than life figure is imbued with monstrous feelings. Perhaps imbued with the little boy's feelings, that he fears could eat him alive: his fears that he could be eaten up by his demanding all consuming greed. Is it the demanding, jealous infant who smells a rat, the blood of the English man, the presence of the father who he wishes he could get his teeth into and grind to pieces? It is reminiscent of Klein's patient Little Erna, whose oral aggression and destructiveness projected into the man, killed, roasted and ate up the parental couple.

However, it seems to be the link with the good maternal object that saves the day and reassures the little boy with the monstrous feelings that he is only dreaming, nothing in reality is as terrifying as it seems, and that when he has tidied himself up and got himself together, he will find a good breakfast; a good mother waiting for him.

"Well, the ogre had his breakfast, and after that he goes to a big chest and takes out a couple of bags of gold, and down he sits and counts till at last his head began to nod and he began to snore till the whole house shook again."

Again reality is put to sleep and Jack re-enters his fantasy world.

"Then Jack crept out on tiptoe from his oven, and as he was passing the ogre, he took one of the bags of gold under his arm, and off he pelters till he came to the beanstalk, and then he threw down the bag of gold, which, of course, fell into his mother's garden, and then he climbed down and climbed down till at last he got home and told his mother and showed her the gold and said, "Well, mother, wasn't I right about the beans? They are really magical, you see."

So they lived on the bag of gold for some time, but at last they came to the end of it, and Jack made up his mind to try his luck once more at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning he rose up early, and got onto the beanstalk,

and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed till at last he came out onto the road again and up to the great tall house he had been to before. There, sure enough, was the great tall woman a-standing on the doorstep.

"Good morning, mum," says Jack, as bold as brass, "could you be so good as to give me something to eat?"

"Go away, my boy", said the big tall woman, "or else my man will eat you up for breakfast. But aren't you the youngster who came here once before? Do you know, that very day my man missed one of his bags of gold."

"That's strange, mum," said Jack, "I dare say I could tell you something about that, but I'm so hungry I can't speak till I've had something to eat."

Well, the big tall woman was so curious that she took him in and gave him something to eat. But he had scarcely begun munching it as slowly as he could when thump! thump! they heard the giant's footstep, and his wife hid Jack away in the oven.

In Kleinian terms, Jack not only projects his jealousy, greed and devouring destructiveness into his father making him monstrous, but he also by means of incorporation, robs him of his golden assets. He appropriates father's power and potency and in fantasy supplies and provides all this for mother himself. There is intense competition with and jealousy of this Oedipal father. After all, it is father who he imagines has robbed him of his rightful position, by taking his place in the heavenly bed with mother. However, when Jack projects his monstrous rage into father and at the same time robs him of all his goodness, he is then faced if caught, with the terror of violent punishment and retribution.

"Go away my boy – or else my man will eat you up for breakfast".

"Every day my man missed one of his bags of gold".

The other complicating factor for Jack is that when he robs his father of his assets in this magical delusional way, the fantasy doesn't last for long, and he is once again faced with his own inability to supply himself and mother in reality. So once again, at great risk Jack sets out on his mission to plunder the father. The fairytale continues.

"All happened as it did before. In came the ogre as he did before, said, "Fee-fi-fo-fum," and had his breakfast of three broiled oxen.

Then he said, "Wife, bring me the hen that lays the golden eggs. "So she brought it, and the ogre said, "Lay,"and it laid an egg all of gold. And then the ogre began to nod his head, and to snore till the house shook.

Then Jack crept out of the oven on tiptoe and caught hold of the golden hen, and was off before you could say "Jack Robinson".

But this time the hen gave a cackle which woke the ogre, and just as Jack got out of the house he heard him calling, "Wife, wife, what have you done with my golden hen?"

An the wife said, "Why , my dear?"

But that was all Jack heard, for he rushed off to the beanstalk and climbed down like a house on fire. And when he got home he showed his mother the wonderful hen, and said "Lay" to it; and it laid a golden egg every time he said "Lay."

Well, Jack was not content, and it wasn't long before he determined to have another try at his luck up there at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning he rose up early and got to the beanstalk, and he climbed and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed till he got to the top.

But this time he knew better than to go straight to the ogre's house. And when he got near it, he waited behind a bush till he saw ogre's wife come out with a pail to get some water, and then he crept into the house and got into the copper. He hadn't been there long when he heard thump! thump! thump! as before, and in came the ogre and his wife.

In stealing the hen, Jack now has the fantasy of an endless supply of gold, not bags that run out. He, like the ogre (or demanding and omnipotent little baby) just has to say the word and "mother hen" will produce all he wants. There seems to be movement from the oral stage to a more anal position. Even more than the bag of gold, the hen that lays golden eggs may represent anal desires of possession. At the phallic level, he also believes he like father, has the capacity to make mother hen reproduce.

The unfolding of the fairytale gradually brings more into view the idea of a parental couple. "Mother hen cackles" at the prospect of being stolen from father, mother now refers to "the ogre" as "my dear" and when Jack returns to the house in come the parents together as a couple, "in come the ogre and his wife".

"Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman," cried out the ogre. "I smell him, wife, I smell him."

"Do you, my dearie?" says the ogre's wife. "Then, if it's that little rogue that stole your gold and the hen that laid the golden eggs he's sure to have got into the oven." And they both rushed to the oven.

But Jack wasn't there, luckily, and the ogre's wife said, "There you are again with your fee-fi-fo-fum. Why, of course, it's the boy you caught last night that I've just broiled for your breakfast. How forgetful I am, and how careless you are not to know the difference between live and dead after all these years."

So the ogre sat down to the breakfast and ate it, but every now and then he would mutter, "Well I could have sworn –" and he'd get up and search the larder and the cupboards and everything, only luckily, he didn't think of the copper.

After breakfast was over, the ogre called out, "Wife, wife, bring me my golden harp."

So she brought it and put it on the table before him. Then he said, "Sing!" and the golden harp sang most beautifully. And it went on singing till the ogre fell asleep, and commenced to snore like thunder.

Then Jack lifted up the copper lid very quietly and got down like a mouse and crept on hands and knees till he came to the table, when up he crawled, caught hold of the golden harp and dashed with it towards the door.

But the harp called out quite loud, "Master! Master! and the ogre woke up just in time to see Jack running off with his harp.

Jack makes one last desperate and terrifying attempt to steal father's most precious and beautiful possession. However, there is an even greater sense of the link that connects the parents. The harp that plays for father, that belongs to him, protests more vehemently than ever, crying out "Master! Master!", alerting father to the presence of the "the little rogue". The golden harp does not belong to Jack, he is not master of it, it belongs to father.

"Jack ran as fast as he could, and the ogre came rushing after, and would soon have caught him, only Jack had a start and dodged him a bit and knew where he was going. When he got to the beanstalk the ogre was not more than twenty yards away when suddenly he saw Jack disappear like, and when he came to the end of the road he saw Jack underneath climbing down for dear life. Well, the ogre didn't like trusting himself to such a ladder, and he stood and waited, so Jack got another start.

But just then the harp cried out, "Master! Master! and the ogre swung himself down onto the beanstalk, which shook with his weight. Down climbs Jack, and after him climbed the ogre.

By this time Jack had climbed down and climbed down and climbed down till he was very nearly home. So he called out, "Mother! Mother! bring me an axe, bring me an axe." And his mother came rushing out with the axe in her hand, but when she came to the beanstalk she stood stock still with fright, for there she saw the ogre with his legs just through the clouds.

But Jack jumped down and got hold of the axe and gave a chop at the beanstalk which cut it half in two. The ogre felt the beanstalk shake and quiver, so he stopped to see what was the matter. Then Jack gave another chop with the axe, and the beanstalk was cut in two and began to topple over. Then the ogre fell down and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came toppling after.

Jack grabs the axe and in cutting down the beanstalk rids himself just in time of this monstrously rivalrous and competitive relationship with his father. This puts a stop to the Oedipal illusion that he can steal and possess all of father's powers, but also frees him from the fear of revenge and retaliation and the need to constantly rely on mother providing him with a safe retreat. He gives up Oedipal illusions, and instead decides to live in the real world.

It is significant that mother does not chop down the beanstalk. She is not able to put a stop to Jack's rivalrous relationship and hatred of the parental couple, only Jack can do this. Only Jack can in time come to the realisation that he must give up these fantasies in order to get on with life in the real world.

Running all the way through the story is the sense of the good maternal object who provides a safe regressive haven to which Jack can retreat when fears of destructiveness become overwhelming. It is a mother who protects the child,

while at the same time remaining loyal to the father. It is love that gets Jack through. It is the love experienced with mother, *but also the good loving father who offers Jack the seeds to sow for his own development. He provides for his son the opportunity to internalise a loving paternal relationship, a relationship with the father who wants to give to him not rob him.* Together mother and father can provide for his needs. As Jack matures and internalises the experience of a good parental couple, he can have his own golden harp, and in identification with father can marry his own great princess.

"Then Jack showed his mother his golden harp, and what with showing that and selling the golden eggs, Jack and his mother became very rich, and he married a great princess, and they lived happy ever after."

Present Fathers are important for sons and absent fathers too, if a good absent presence.

Source of material:

I have used four papers and fictionalised case studies from my forensic and clinical work:

David Mann (1993). The Absent Father in the *British Journal of Psychotherapy* vol.9 (3): 301-309

Donald Campbell (2014) Debt, shame and violence in adolescence: Reactions to the absent father in the film *Bullet Boy* in *IJP* 95: 1011-1020

Michael J. Diamond (1998). Fathers with Sons: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on "Good Enough" Fathering Throughout the Life Cycle in reprinted from *Gender and Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 3: 243-299.

Liz Kerr "The Third Position or the Oedipal Situation" in *Psychoanalysis Downunder*, issue 8

The external world can mirror or parallel the internal world. There can be an internal psychic gang which offers false security and a sense of power. The internal delinquent gang can rely on violent fantasies to defend against narcissistic wounding, loss and depression. Guilt can be alleviated by being bad, criminal and then punished. There is no forgiveness. No one forgets. It is payback. There is a debt culture-“You owe me and I owe you!”

There are certain obvious facts that are known about the nature of father-son relationships in Homer's most famous epic poems, "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey" before the reader even enters the texts. The reader knows, for instance, that the structure and organization of ancient Greek society was patriarchal (Caldwell 40). The position of men was vaunted, especially men who were strong and courageous. Sons were prized, particularly if they promised to imitate their father's noble achievements and exhibited the skills that would permit them to do so. In "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey", then, it is not surprising that the relationships of Priam and Hector and Odysseus and Telemachus, respectively, are as admiring as they are; these fathers are proud of their sons, who show such promise, and the sons are likewise proud of their fathers, who have earned enviable reputations as warriors who defended their territory bravely. What is surprising, however, is that the father-son affection in both epic poems is achieved only through distance. Both father-son pairs spend more time apart than they do together, and it is through distance that they develop admiration and love for one another.

In "The Iliad", the reader learns that Priam is a worthy warrior who has earned his retirement from battle after fathering fifty sons and fighting intrepidly in the Trojan War. One of those sons is Hector, a warrior in his own right who is earning a reputation as a man equal to his father in both his strength and his commitment to family. Yet, interestingly, as explained in one of the important quotes from *The Iliad* by Homer it is stated, "Priam scarcely has any interaction with his son" (Crotty 24). In fact, there is only one occasion when father and son share direct dialogue (Crotty 24). Perhaps it is surprising or incongruent, then, that Priam would make such a moving and passionate plea to Achilles for the return of Hector's body after Hector is killed by Achilles, as he does at the end of the epic. His pain is so acute that he wishes to "raise him [Priam] from the dead" (Homer 293). Such emotion might seem more authentic from a father who had a closer and more affectionate relationship with his son. Similarly, it might seem strange that "Priam... and Priam's sons... would be in jubilation" over the conflicts among other people when their own affective and physical ties seem so tenuous (Homer 26). Such seeming incongruence, makes sense, however, when one understands that larger cultural context and backdrop of the epic. As this thesis statement for *The Iliad* suggests, fatherly affection is not touchy-feely, nor is it necessarily given unconditionally or freely. Rather, a son must earn his father's respect and admiration, and it is by leaving home and fighting his own battles that the son is able to achieve this. Further, the shared beliefs and values of father and son are not necessarily established or inculcated by direct contact. Distance, then, becomes one of the most important mediating factors that allows the quality of the father-son relationship to be defined and established.

Priam does not, during the time of Hector's absence, serve as an inspiration for the son, at least not consciously. As Crotty notes, the sons in Homer's epics are notable for their "lonely test of arms" (26), and while the "father is an important conduit for transmitting heroic values across the generations" (Crotty 26), it is not necessarily the case that Priam is at the forefront of Hector's mind as he endures his heroic tests. **In fact, Crotty contends that the son's achievements are "based on [his] sense of the father's absence, that is, the lack of a beneficent power that reliably shields and supports him" (26).** From a psychoanalytic perspective, one might interpret this dynamic as the son's quest to know the father through the paradoxical act of moving away from him in a literal sense, yet patterning his life in an effort to imitate the father's actions and achievements, a common theme in mythological literature

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