

The psychology of the female body in the incestuous father-daughter relationship: clinical study realized in Algeria

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Introduction

Research in human and social sciences, especially those which belong to the fields of psychology or psychoanalysis, don't stop focusing on the question of the body in all its States. If Freud opted for a psychophysiological dimension of the 'body', psychoanalysts, such as Groddeck, Reich, Schilder, Dolto, Anzieu and Pankow advocate essentially psychoanalytic visions. Indeed, the psychoanalysis remains the way privileged to think the question of the child's body in the "unequal" situations (Laplanche, 2007)¹, such as incest, topic of which the article is focused, which attempts to analyze, from a psychopathological perspective, the nature of the incestuous relationship father-daughter in the Algerian context. However, a reading of the nature of the father-daughter relationship is needed, in order to avoid the unreasonable conclusions. It appears, from our first reading, that this relationship is defined by a set of contradictions: confidence and insecurity, love and hatred, desire and fear. Fear would be shared on both sides: a father who is threatened by a possible scandal, once her daughter is sexually mature, and a girl who is threatened in her body freedom, being forced to hide when she reached the age of puberty.

The puberty phase that knows the girl seems to be a "problematic" passage in the Algerian family. The fact that daughter acquires sexual function would be one of the factors that disrupt the family operation. This body empowerment is often not accepted by the whole family, but especially by the men of this family. Why does it bother? How does the Algerian father perceive the emancipation of his daughter's body? It would be at the origin of the passage of father to incest?

Through this article, we will try to analyze the nature of the father-daughter relationship in the Algerian context. We think that there is a psychological distance between the girl and her father, in

¹ - ملخص: تندرج هذه الدراسة في إطار علم النفس العيادي. لقد استخدمنا المنهج العيادي (دراسة حالة فتاتين ضحيتا زنا المحارم)، وهذا بالعودة للمقابلات النصف موجهة. إن هدف البحث ليس علاجيا في حد ذاته، بل وصفيًا. إنه يدرس طبيعة العلاقة أب-بنت في الإطار الثقافي الجزائري. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن هذه العلاقة (أب-بنت) تتميز بالتناقض الوجداني. يظهر أيضا أن الموانع التربوية تساهم في تكون خيال (عقلية) عائلي متموقع بين الحفاظ على شرف الفتاة والرغبة في الاحتفاظ بها للذات.

الكلمات الأساسية: زنا المحارم أب-بنت، تناقض وجداني، دراسة عيادية

¹ - Laplanche. J. (2007). *Sexual: la sexualité élargie au sens freudien 2000-2006*. Paris : PUF, 302 pages. « Inceste et sexualité infantile », conférence de Vienne 2006). in Dejours Christophe, « Corps et psychanalyse. », *L'information psychiatrique* 3/2009 (Volume 85) , p. 227-234. URL : www.cairn.info/revue-l-information-psychiatrique-2009-3-page-227.htm. DOI [10.3917/inpsy.8503.0227](https://doi.org/10.3917/inpsy.8503.0227).

the Algerian society. This distance, which is rooted in the educational system, could be the cause of the incestuous father's attitude.

Indeed, in Algerian society, Arab-Muslim culture, the separation between man and woman begins in the family unit. Children of both sexes separated very early, well before puberty. Anyway, Islam orders to separate brother and sister at the age of ten years. Concerning fathers, there is no trace in Islam, which encourages the distance between the father and his daughter at a given age.

It is true that the father/daughter relationship knows, nowadays, an open-mindedness in the urban areas of Algeria, where we are witnessing a form of liberation in the education of the girl, as that of the boy. This is not the case in traditional families (who are in the majority) because they are conformist and shall teach their daughters the values and mores of the past, so in this context the separation between men and women is therefore crucial that the father belongs, he is 'man' and the girl must keep distance and respect. Respect means distance.

In the relationship of father and daughter in Algeria, Frantz Fanon had written in 1959: "The in-depth analysis shows that the father sees the woman in her daughter. Conversely, the girl sees the man at her father. The ban here is such, the prohibitions are registered at the centre of the personality that the co-presence itself becomes unbearable" [*Translate*]² (Fanon, 1959, p. 92 In Toualbi, 1984, p. 58).

Fanon goes further in his analysis to qualify this father-daughter of "incestuous relationship". He speaks also of the existence of a "lock by multiple sexual meanings" (In Toualbi, *op.cit.*). After the independence of Algeria, Fanon considers that this distance has disappeared. Is it really the case?

In the past, the traditional Algerian girl lacked the right to lie to her father, or to look it in the eyes, and even to speak in his presence. However, the objective is not only to keep the respect between father and daughter, especially to prevent any attempt of seduction on the part of the latter toward her father. Paradoxically, this distance anchored in the Algerian educational system would itself be source of provocation of the acts of incest.

Both cases which we present in this article have been selected among others rape victims with whom we have worked during the realization of our thesis. These two victims of rape are also victims of incest. During our analysis of the cases of our thesis work, we were able to record clinical

¹ - French psychiatrist and essayist deeply involved in the struggle for the independence of Algeria and the international struggle taking a solidarity between the 'brothers oppressed'. It is one of the founders of the school of thought third world. Biography of Frantz Fanon available on the wikipedia.org website, accessed 2015-11-03 01:00. Frantz Fanon is considered to be the father of Psychiatry in Algeria.

² -« L'analyse en profondeur montre que le père voit la femme dans sa fille. Inversement, la fille voit l'homme chez son père. L'interdiction est ici telle, les prohibitions sont à ce point inscrites au centre même de la personnalité que la coprésence elle-même devient insupportable ».

features linked to the experience of incest, it is from there that we decided to attempt an analysis of the father-daughter relationship in the Algerian context. It is important to say that, despite the ambition to describe the relationship father-daughter, the sample of two cases remains limited. Studies with a larger sample or even a limited sample but in a therapeutic context it would be able to better define the nature of the father-daughter relationship. We have therefore not met them in a therapeutic context, but rather in research work. The objective of the research is therefore descriptive. However, it is also important to point out that we have more than a dozen interviews with each of them, which has made the possible therapeutic effect and promoted freedom of speech in both cases of adolescent victims of incest.

Remember therefore that the objective of this study is to describe the nature of the father-daughter relationship in the Algerian society, exceptionally in the context of the incest. This work fits into a theoretical study of cultural psychology. The work method is the clinical method with the use of the clinical analysis of semi-structured interviews.

The presentation of the cases

The first case: Aisha

At the time of our survey, Aisha was 17 years of age. She lived with her family, her parents and her brothers and sisters until the age of 9, when her mother died of cancer. The father, imam of mosque remarried with a woman who according to Aisha has updated the mistreating of overreacting, leading her to leave the House several times, since the age of 10 years. According to Aisha, her repeated runaways provoked the wrath of her father and becomes more and more aggressive with her. Indeed, after each return to the House, she is beaten and abused by the latter. At the age of 15, she fugues and is raped by her brother's friend. After the police investigation and her return to the House, her father asked her to sleep with him, since according to him, his daughter is eligible: "*Oh! So you do it with a stranger and not with me?*" he told to his little Aisha. This application emerges following the revelation by Aisha from her loss of virginity. When she refuses to give in to the will of her father, he drops the pants with violence and penetrates her by finger.

Clinical analysis

The gesture of aggression of the father took place just after the stranger rape to Aisha. It seems to us that the desire to preserve the anatomical virginity of his daughter, as a symbol of purity and family honor, explains why this father has not attempted to rape her before she was still Virgin. Furthermore, the method by which this incestuous rape has been committed (digital) shows willingness to torture. Indeed, the violence in which this Act of aggression has been committed provides information on the desire to torture. Indeed, the father was trying to punish his daughter. Bessole (2008,) rightly wrote that "rape is a terribly efficient way of torture" [*Translate*]¹.

Furthermore, the torture of the father is accompanied by a desire for "possession of the body of his daughter" [*Translate*]² (Villerbu, 1995 In Viaux et al., 1995, p. 88). "*You did with a stranger, and*

¹- « Le viol est un moyen terriblement efficace de la torture »

²- La possession du corps de sa fille.

with me not? We can talk here of "possession of her body" [*Translate*]¹, says Susan Brownmiller (1975): "It is the negation of the basic form of private property. "It's the natural and inalienable right of all the people on their own body." [*Translate*]².

It can also be explained by what Loïc. Mr. Villerbu (*Ibid.*) calls "ritual of domination" [*Translate*]³.

Pubescent daughter maturity exposes the father not so much to his sexual desires, a loss of authority⁴, even if are expressed in their sexual component. Villerbu (*Ibid.*) insists on the need to "untie sexual scene and abuse of authority" [*Translate*]⁵.

The appearance of the breasts, as well as first menstruation provides information on the sexual maturity of the girl, which would be the emergence among the Algerian family of anxieties around the loss of virginity or falling pregnant. In the family imagination, this pubescent body can now attract the attention of foreign men. This perception of the daughter 'woman' in the family can itself lead these same men to the incestuous act.

In the case of Aisha, the envy of the father to keep the body of his daughter for him appears, at first, in body abuse and, in a second time, in the digital rape. The common principle between these two behaviors is to humiliate this body and punish it so that he may not grow. This incestuous father doesn't seem to accept puberty or even the passage of his daughter at the age of puberty. This incestuous father does not seem to accept puberty or even the passage of his daughter at the age of puberty, and he is afraid that his fantasy comes true as the body of his daughter becomes sexually mature which would be at the origin of his violent attitude. Indeed, the Aisha's father lived puberty of his daughter as an imaginary loss of father/daughter in the psychoanalytic sense love or still lived, the fear of "losing his authority" [*Translate*]⁶, according to Villerbu (*op. cit.*).

This observation could be confirmed by the violent father's attitude, when he knew that his daughter has lost her virginity. His daughter's body, becoming "woman's body" would be bare all his incestuous fantasies. Indeed, following her rape by a stranger, Aisha wouldn't be more perceived as a child by her father. In her father's mind, Aisha's body has acquired a characteristic of adults, since it has been sexually consumed in the rape. It is apparently a body capable of giving pleasure and since it is damaged, it doesn't deserve to be protected. Are we therefore faced a psychopathology of torture?

¹ - La possession de son Corps.

²- « C'est la négation de la forme élémentaire de la propriété privée. C'est-à-dire le droit naturel et inaliénable de tous les gens sur leur propre corps. »

³ - Rituel de domination »

⁴ -On the ritual of domination, and the ambivalence that characterizes the father-daughter relationship, we have lit by the guidance of Madam Françoise Sironi, Lecturer at the University of Paris 8, clinical psychologist, psychotherapist, author of several books, including the most famous 'Bourreaux et Victimes, psychologie de la torture', 1999, Odile Jacob.

⁵ -« Délivrer scène sexuelle et abus d'autorité ».

⁶ -Perdre son autorité.

Sexual arousal that the father wanted to induce by the penetration of her daughter by the finger would be, in this case, a component of a "rite of domination", according to Villerbu: mark his daughter of his imprint, or even mark her, to come back to him. This would explain why the father raped his daughter after she was raped by a stranger.

For Aisha, the loss of the hymen during her rape would have created a permanent sensation of loss: 'I'm broken'¹; which generates the feeling of no longer being as before and above all be marked permanently by her father. A marking, which provokes strong feelings of shame and guilt. The shame of Aisha would also be the result of a long apprenticeship. Making beautiful would cause her shame: " I am ashamed when I dress like all these girls at the centre, with jeans and everything ", she tells us. This would be in relation to the generational transmission of shame. Indeed, for Aisha's father, any form of development of femininity and of the female body is prohibited by generating shame. Moreover, he always forbade her daughter to dress like all girls of her age. For this purpose, all that is desired is forbidden. More importantly, all that is desired would be shameful. Tisseron (1992) explains how shame operates in the family's system: "the child resumes shameful attitudes from his parent in his regard. All behaviors of a child can become for him shame from the time when they are facing a parent who made them ashamed." [*Translate*]² (Tisseron, 1992, p. 36)

According to Ferenczi, "the child is identified with the aggressor by becoming the parent of his parent mothering him to repair what pushed him to make him a victim [...] This behavior is found among teenage victims of incest". [*Translate*]³ (Ferenczi, 1982)

We deduce that Aisha was raised in a house where the forbidding was on all the objects of pleasure. This is why she also feels guilty whenever she wants something. However, this desire does not always seem to be recognized by herself, it would often take the costume of shame or disgust by reaction formation.

The second case: Sarah

The presentation of the case

Sarah is 17 years old. She was adopted by a host family, while she was five months old. Sarah reports that at the age of 6 years her parents divorced. Sarah's custody was awarded to her father and paternal grandmother. Sarah tells us that she has been, for several years, from her father sexual touching, without that person knowing. Sarah also says that she learns, while she was that 14 years, her status as an adopted child, a new what she can't digest, this is why she runs away from home. A

¹ - "I'm broken", (*m'kessra*) in Arabic dialect, an expression that means in some "non-Virgin" Algerian dialects And who wants to also say "damaged" as well as "ruined".

² - « L'enfant reprend les attitudes honniseuses de son parent privilégié à son égard. Tous les comportements d'un enfant peuvent ainsi devenir pour lui source de honte à partir du moment où ils sont confrontés à un parent qui les a rendus honteux. »

³ - L'enfant s'identifie à l'agresseur en devenant le parent de son parent en le maternant pour réparer ce qui l'a poussé à en faire une victime. Ce comportement se trouve chez les adolescentes victimes d'inceste.

few days after, she is again placed in the foster home by the competent authorities, after the guard has been removed to adoptive parents. Just admitted to the home, she asked permission of output with the support of her mother for a weekend. Following a violent altercation between her and members of her family, once again she eventually runs away and ends up on the streets of Oran city. But, unfortunately for her, the fugue turns fatal, since she gets raped by a stranger who, says, was under the influence of alcohol.

Clinical analysis

Remember that we met Sarah in a study on rape, and not on incest. We have, in all, eleven interviews with her, for a period from one hour to one and a half for each interview, and this was for a period of almost one month. During our extended interviews, more precisely at her eighth meeting, she told us her experience of incest with her adoptive father. She had repressed these sexual touching. The therapeutic effect of the interviews would be then bound to the fact of bringing to consciousness-repressed memories. If Sarah had actually forgotten those touching, this could constitute "a form of denial, that characterizes the trauma as he had already advanced Freud (1939) or even back to consciousness" [*Translate*]¹. (In Darves-Bornoz, 1996).

The repetition of these touching makes the feeling of fear that had Sarah increased day by day. See that these acts were committed with any discretion and secrecy, Sarah might confuse intimate and secret. In addition, Sarah had known this secret relationship mode very early (aged 6), thereby predisposing personality to a pathological relational model. Summit (1983) speaks precisely "accommodation syndrome" [*Translate*]², Teitelbaum (1996) from 'adaptation syndrome': "the repetition of the abuse appears as inevitable. The child doesn't want to become the destroyer of the family, he continues to remain silent. Occasionally, the child accepts his fate, it goes up to idealize his image and that of the abuser and he gives him excuses. In case everything is unveiled, the rupture of the incestuous relationship may result a decompensation and a threat of loss of the identity, because the very young abused child knows only this kind of relationship" [*Translate*]³. (Teitelbaum, 1996, p. 107) Bessoles (2000) explains the passivity of the victim of incest face the

¹- Une forme de déni, qui caractérise les traumatismes comme l'avait déjà avancé Freud (1939) ou encore un refoulement survenu à la conscience

²-Syndrome d'accommodation

³- Syndrome d'adaptation : « La répétition de l'abus apparaît comme une fatalité. L'enfant ne veut, nullement, devenir le destructeur de la famille, il continue de se taire. Quelquefois, l'enfant finit par accepter son destin, il va jusqu'à idéaliser son image et celle de l'abuseur et lui trouve des excuses. En cas de dévoilement, la rupture de la relation incestueuse peut même provoquer une décompensation et une menace de perte de l'identité, car l'enfant abusé très jeune ne connaît que ce type de relation ».

repetition by the "impulse to hold", such a profanation of the sacred, the other (female) offers the most totalitarian experience to the impulses to hold. [*Translate*]¹ (Bessoles, 2000, p. 9)

The first time Sarah had not understood the touching of her father, but she knew, somehow, that this is not acceptable socially. During the second touching, the incommunicado work began and the victim includes once this Act is prohibited and it is a disgrace. Threats from the abuser confirm: " *he has always said me: "If you talk to someone, I will kill you, you and your mother."*" or: " *If you mention I'll kill your mother, it is she who will pay*". The victim was not only obliged to secrecy imposed by the adoptive father, but was forced to give pleasure by touching. All these events put Sarah in an adult role while she knew nothing on the pleasures of adults or their meanings. The incommunicado as well as put Sarah in an active sexual role where it would touch the sexual organ of her father whenever he claimed those touching had put her body under the hold of the domination of an ascendant. Ferenczi (1982) writes that: "the child is silent for fear of revealing the secret, but at the same time he is silent, because he can't learn anymore, lest they learn too. Based on misunderstanding of the situation and especially the reason, the child is unable of symbolization and fantasmatisation. Sexual acts in which he was brought to participate despite himself, he became also unable of mentalization" [*Translate*]² (Ferenczi, 1982, p. 132).

According to Bauchet, Dieu and Sorel (2012) : "the incestuous families use the child to set the goals and conflicts of adults". [*Translate*]³

Unlike Aisha, who throughout her childhood, suffered acts of violence, maltreatment and torture by her father, Sarah had only gifts and rewards of her adoptive father: " *before he was tender with me, he always brought me gifts, he bought me all the things that I wanted to have, but after, when he has started to drink alcohol, he changed, and became aggressive, he scared me*". For Loïk M. Villerbu (1995): "the aggressor is behaving in a rehearsal or a reiteration that assumes a set in condition and in this case instead of threats gifts are present" [*Translate*]⁴ (Villerbu, *op.cit.*, p. 90)

For Sarah, those touching would have led to the feeling of having a 'body-object' [*Translate*]⁵, in the words of Schweitzer (1990, p. 176), which can increase the anguish of the victim around a real

¹-« Pulsion d'emprise » : Telle une profanation du sacré, l'Autre (féminin) offre l'expérience la plus totalitaire aux pulsions d'emprise.

² -« L'enfant se tait de peur de dévoiler le secret, mais en même temps, il se tait car il ne peut plus apprendre, de peur d'en apprendre trop. En fonction de l'incompréhension de la situation et surtout du pourquoi, l'enfant est incapable de symbolisation et de fantasmatisation. Les actes sexuels auxquels il a été amené à participer malgré lui, il devient aussi incapable de mentalisation ».

³ - Les familles « incestueuses » utilisent l'enfant pour régler les finalités et les conflits des adultes.

⁴ -« L'agresseur se conduit dans une répétition ou une réitération qui suppose une mise en condition et dans ce cas au lieu des menaces des cadeaux sont présents ».

⁵ -corps-objet

loss of her body. It means that she has the feeling of not being in control of her body and that it is not because of a confusion between the two registers real and imaginary. Because of her young age and the situation of abandonment (by mother) that she is a victim, Sarah had not other people who support. She was entrusted to her father to educate her, it means that anything that comes from him it would be normal and legitimate.

The Sarah's vulnerability, because of her very young age at the time of the touching and the situation imposed by the father that of introducing her into an adult role, led her to ask questions about her body. Is it her own body or does it belong to her father ?

Bauchet et al. (*op.cit.*), the importance of this vulnerability is more proportional to the degree of proximity between the aggressor and the victim: "defend becomes even more difficult when the child has faith in the adult, or when he needs him. We speak, therefore, about abuse of power, and by extension of sexual abuse" [*Translate*]¹

As long as the image of the body is cleaved, there is no differentiation between the inside and outside in the subject. The latter would be prisoner of another, unable to control her body.

Conclusion

The study of these two cases of teenage victims of incest in Algeria, it shows the ambiguity that surrounds the incest act in a general way. Through the case of Aisha, we found that the objective of the father was to mark her daughter by his imprint. Also, we have seen that this penetration came after the loss of virginity of Aisha and not before.

For the second case Sarah, the body is perceived as provocative by the other (father and aggressor then), carrier also their shame. Sarah felt under the influence of her adoptive father for years, which would have resulted in her the permanent feeling of belonging to the other "authoritarian." The rape came to realize another report can determine her sexual fate in passivity and total submission to the other.

Finally, it seems that, for the two fathers of these victims, it is to manipulate the body of their daughters and put them under their influence and dominance. We were not able to meet the fathers, but according to the victims, it appears that the behavior of their fathers is, in both cases, ambivalent. They are positioned between the obsession to save their daughters pure, intact body and between the transition to incest as a way to achieve a destructive fantasy. To do this, they use pathological mechanisms such as the incorporation of the body of their daughters and the displacement of the grip on the sexual urge. In the case of Aisha, the domination is done by force, unlike of the case of Sarah, where the dominance is done by the hold and accommodation. Finally, with the two fathers, the track of sexual frustration remains to explore.

¹- se défendre devient d'autant plus difficile quand l'enfant a pleinement confiance en l'adulte ou lorsqu'il en a besoin. On parle donc d'abus de pouvoir, et par extension d'abus sexuel.

The maternal figure must be present in the father/daughter relationship. The presence of the mother (real or symbolic presence) is essential to put an end to the incestuous fantasies that characterize especially the oedipal period.

Also, the involvement of the father in the education of his daughter since the first days of her life helps to build a healthiest link. Indeed, see his daughter grows up as a main actor in this education would allow the movement of a love says 'normal' between father and daughter. However, the separation imposed by the Algerian traditional culture would be responsible for this perception of daughter as 'woman'. By a reaction formation, this father can perceive his daughter as a stranger to him. The distance between the two is widening with age, which gives the appearance of incest. Bauchet et al. (*op. cit.*) indicate that in father-daughter incest: "it often comes to fathers who cared a little for their daughter during the first three years and were not involved in the physical care" [*Translate*]¹.

Therefore involve the father in the education of his daughter, would achieve body progressions of his daughter and accept them while remaining in the exercise of paternal authority legitimate and not excessive.

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¹« Il s'agit souvent de pères qui se sont peu occupés de leur fille lors des trois premières années et n'ont pas participé aux soins physiques ».

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