

The external conflict of the story „my oedipus complex“ by frank o'conner

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The story „ My Oedipus Complex „ written by the well-known Irish author Frank O’Connor is a sacred narration of the youth and growing-up problem. There are three characters in the story: Larry - protagonist, his mother and father. The story is told by a little child Larry, who is 5 years old and who grows up in his nonhazardous world with just himself and his “ beloved” mother. He is not ready to share his mother’s attention with the father, who is returned from the war (WWI) and with new-born brother.

Larry is strongly connected with his mother and wants her to belong only to him. The author depicts in the story with galore humour the boy’s “ Oedipus Complex” referring to Freudian psychoanalysis. First of all, to understand the external conflict of the story we need to know who the main character is and what his view on life is. The protagonist, Larry, is an inventive, happy, imaginative and kind young boy, who thinks and cares a lot about her mother. The spectacular experience of Larry seems to be the representation of our childhood stories.

Larry is only 5 years old, but sometimes he behaves like an adult person. “... Having settled my plans for the day, I got up, put a chair under the attic window... “- he is planning the day, the things he wants to do. While I was reading the story I realized that he enjoys every morning, he thanks God who gave him another splendid day. He was a lively boy, who wanted to brighten his home. Nevertheless, he was just a child, whose thoughts were too strict and sometimes too mirthful.

It was difficult for him to understand why his father returned from war and why his mother now spends too much time with her husband and not with Larry. While Larry's father was fighting in the World War and rarely visited home, boy was enjoying himself and all his mother attention was turned to him. At the beginning of the story he said —“... the war was the most peaceful period of my life... ” Lately, the main point of the sentence was explained as: after his father came back at home his mother's love was shared by Larry and a “... stranger... ”.

The main focus is the relationship between protagonist and his father. It is humorous and adroit how author depicts the oedipal phase. So, as I already mentioned, the main conflict between parent and the child arises when father comes back from the war. Larry is jealous of dividing mother's attention on two people and is ready to fight for getting back her affections. In the story the relationship is viewed in terms of essential change in influence over normal male development from that of the mother in childhood to that of the father in adolescence.

Another thing that struck me was the author's view of God. Larry narrates when he and his mother prayed for his father, that he comes back home. But when their “ prayers were heard” the child wants his father to go back to the war, because their life changed dramatically. Larry asks his mother: "... Do you think if I prayed hard God would send daddy back to war? ... But, Mummy, couldn't God make another war, if he liked?... " Somehow the protagonist was disappointed about he was prayed for.

But why he didn't thank God for bringing him closer to his father? The answer is very simple he didn't know what he can do with him, how father can participate in his life. At the end of the story, Larry gets closer to his father when a new baby arrives and pushes both father and son out of the mother priorities. Such outcome create a kind of ironic situation (the thing what brought people closer). In Greek mythology, Oedipus was a prince who killed his father and wanted to marry his mother.

In psychoanalytic theory, the term Oedipus complex denotes the emotions and ideas that the mind keeps in the unconscious, that concentrate upon a boy's desire to sexually possess his mother, and kill his father. (wikipedia, oedipus complex). In the story Larry wanted to get rid from his father and become more closer with his mother. And the reason why he wanted that concluded in not being nearest to his father, he called him as a „ stranger“. Nevertheless some circumstances brought them closer. So I think the title of the Frank O'Connor story is somehow ironical and humorous.