



The International Journal of
INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Volume 4

Issue 3, No. 107

April – June 2017

**Examining Freud's Oedipal Complex in the Indian Scenario through
the Film, Gandhi, My Father**

By

Mrnalini Rao

*School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi, Kashmere Gate, New Delhi, India
Research Project by Ambedkar University*

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Prof. Suresh M. Makvana, PhD

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Ankit P. Patel

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

This Issue (Volume 4, Issue 3, No. 107) Published, June, 2017

Headquarters;

REDSHINE Publication, 88, Patel Street, Navamuvada, Lunawada, Gujarat, India, 389230

Author Helpline: +91 76988 26988

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ISSN (Online) 2348-5396

ISSN (Print) 2349-3429

ZDB: 2775190-9

IDN: 1052425984

CODEN: IJIPD3

OCLC: 882110133

WorldCat Accession: (DE-600) ZDB2775190-9

ROAR ID: 9235

Impact Factor: 3.3 (2015) from the InfoBaseIndex, Mysore, India

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Price: 500 INR/- | \$ 8.00 USD

2017 Edition

Website: www.ijip.in

Email: info.ijip@gmail.com

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IJIP's all content automatic indexed to Google Scholar, Google Book Programs.

Note: A dissertation submitted to the Justice Basheer Ahamed Sayeed College for Women, Chennai, Tamil Nadu in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science.

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Director & Co-Founder, Ad Executive Training &
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INDIA

Message from the Desk of Editor

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome all to explore/publish/ comment in/on our journal, The International Journal of Indian Psychology (IJIP). There are a lot of challenges which the growing psychological face in the realms of basic necessities in life. Psychological thoughts can play a very distinct role in bringing about this change. One of the key objectives of research should be its usability and application. This journal attempts to document and spark a debate on the research focused on psychological research and ideas in context of emerging geographies. The sectors could range from psychological education and improvement, mental health, environmental issues and solution, health care and medicine and psychological related areas. The key focus would however be the emerging sectors and research which discusses application and usability in social or health context.

We intended to publish case reports, review articles, with main focus on original research articles. Over objective is to reach all the psychological practitioners, who have knowledge and interest but have no time to record the interesting cases, research activities and new innovative procedures which helps us in updating our knowledge and improving our treatment.

Finally, I would like to thank RED'SHINE International Publications, for this keepsake, and my editorial team, technical team, designing team, promoting team, indexing team, authors and well wishers, who are promoting this journal. With these words, I conclude and promise that the standards policies will be maintained. We hope that the research featured here sets up many new milestones. I look forward to make this endeavour very meaningful.

Prof. Suresh Makvana, PhD¹

Editor in Chief,
HOD & Professor, Dept. of Psychology,
Sardar Patel University,
Vallabh Vidyanagar,
Gujarat, India

¹ ksmnortol@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is a theoretical one which uses the qualitative method of hermeneutics to interpret a text and analyze a film to investigate and interpret overlapping patterns between the text and the film. This paper therefore draws on several concepts and techniques to bring together rich analyses. The aim of a study is to achieve a deeper understanding of a person's subjective perception, for example, quality of life, a person's individual perceptions, experiences, impressions and actions, then qualitative research methods may be more relevant. In this research a qualitative approach suits best as it is aimed at bringing upon the researcher's perspectives and highlighting what the Indian Oedipal means to the researcher after analyzing the theories and interpreting the film. The analyses and interpretation are based on the subjective understanding of the researcher. This research is open ended, aim is to request all Young Indian Psychologists to think and contemplate on the complexity of this relationship, with the opposing currents. And what are the possibilities of other outcomes from these patterns. What is required to help the sons and the fathers? This requires further analysis, and these dissertation just attempts to evoke discussions around possibilities of emancipation from restraining shackles of dominant conventional models.

Keywords: *Freud's Oedipal Complex, Indian Scenario, Film, Gandhi-My Father*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My undergraduate study of psychology has enabled me to draw upon and begin to understand various Western philosophers and theorists. Yet out of all these I was always drawn to Sigmund Freud's theories. His theories were not simple, not based on overt behaviors. Instead they were far more complex, intricate and gave a deep and richer understanding of the person. He taught me that it is important to go beyond the observable, and I was absolutely intrigued by his concept of the unconscious. Till date, for me, the most nuanced and rich concept is that of the Oedipal Complex. Within the concept of Oedipal Complex, he discusses the sexual development of the child and how he or she comes to acquire gender roles through the parents. He emphasizes the significance of the role of parents in the child's life. The child formed his or her identity based on interaction with the parents.

Although I could understand Freud's theories and relished reading his works, I could not relate it to the Indian context. As I came into the last phase of my course, we began to question the lack of focus on Indian theories. We started to reflect on how culture plays a role in one's psyche. This motivated my choice of topic for this research. I decided to take up Freud's Oedipal conflict and understand and analyze how it plays out in the Indian scenario.

It is important for us to question and reflect on Cultural psychology. Studying patterns of reasoning across cultures is useful, because it brings to light both commonalities in thinking across individuals with vastly different experiences as well as extreme differences in thinking processes and styles as a result of these differences in enculturation. The study of cultural differences also has an unintended benefit. It illuminates variation between people across cultures, these observations also make it easier to recognize variability in thinking within a culture. The problem is that mostly Psychology focuses on typical behaviour. It is not always beneficial to generalize. It is important for psychologists to move beyond this, because psychology is essentially about focusing on individual differences and understanding human beings based on their situatedness.

Hence, what emerges is a rich possibility of analysis that Indian psychologists can explore and examine, given the cultural heterogeneities inherent in the Indian psyche. A passive acceptance of these dominant Western models is just not enough and active questioning and engaging is required to bring about theories that address specifically the Indian context.

Freud's Oedipus complex has its roots in the myth of Oedipus Rex. The play 'Oedipus Rex' by Sophocles greatly influenced Freud's theory. In the play, King Laius of Thebes was told a prophecy that his son would kill him and marry his wife. When the King has a child he sends it away with a Shepherd. However, the son lands up in the care of the King of Corinth and his wife. When the son himself gets to know about the prophecy he flees from Corinth in order to save his family from the curse. As he is travelling he kills a man on the way. When he gets to Thebes he solves the Sphinx's riddle and is welcomed into the city. He becomes the king and then proceeds to marry the widow Jocasta. Oedipus eventually finds out that he

killed Laius, his father, and married his mother, at which he is horrified and blinds himself to death.

Freud saw the play's incredible success in Germany and France in the 1880's and he realized that it supported his belief. He used the myth as a way to support his view of The Oedipal complex being universal phenomena. Freud's Oedipus complex is a childhood phenomenon, which occurs in the phallic phase (from three years of age) and is usually resolved in early childhood (at around the age of five). He characterized it as loving and hostile wishes that children experienced toward their parents. The child at this stage is coming to understand his genitals. During this phase, the boy and girl are developing their distinct sexual identities and begin to recognize the physical and social differences between the two sexes. This source of identification changes the dynamics with their parents. The boy views the father as a rival for the mother's love. The boy develops sexual feelings for the mother accompanied by jealous and aggressive feelings towards the father. The boy realizes that the father is stronger than him and he cannot eliminate the father. This causes unconscious anxiety which develops into a castration complex, a deep rooted, unconscious fear that their stronger fathers will emasculate them in order to eliminate the threat they pose to the attention of their mothers. To get rid of this castration anxiety the boy represses his feelings for his mother and identifies with the father, taking on the male gender role.

For girls, it is manifested differently. The Oedipal conflict for girls was later termed as Elektra Complex by Carl Jung. According to Freud, the girl sexually desires the father and is jealous of and angry towards the mother, since she realizes that she doesn't have a penis. The girl wishes to have a penis. This has been named penis envy and she resents her mother as a perceived source of her castration. The child wishes to have a baby with the father. To resolve the conflict the girl represses these desires towards father and resentment towards mother and identifies with the mother.

My interest in studying the Indian Oedipal arose from a desire to connect the learning's of Freud, who I am deeply fascinated by, to the intricacies of the Indian everyday life. When I came across the Girindrasekhar Bose and Freud letter exchanges, Bose seemed to highlight significant differences that I was further keen to explore. Freud derived his insights primarily from his therapies with highly educated upper middle-class Viennese women patients who lived in patriarchally structured nuclear families. These women often envied their brothers and other men for being able to make use of their education and for enjoying social freedoms. Also from his analysis of little Hans he emerged with the Oedipal conflict. The boy considers his father as a rival for his mother's love.

Bose, on the other hand, treated mostly upper-caste westernized Bengali Hindu men. Among them he had discovered 'a wish to be female'. He wrote to Freud in 1929: 'The desire to be a female is more easily unearthed in Indian male patients than in European.' In an analogy to Freud's women patients in Vienna, these Bengali men were also hindered in their development in their case by the realities of colonialism. Bose found while studying his European and Indian patients, that there was something different happening.

Bose's theory diverged from Freud's theory in two ways. He firstly, spoke about the "the opposite wish" whereby whatever is consciously wished is harnessed to a wish for its opposite. He emphasized that there are three sources of the opposite wish; bisexuality (male and female), ambivalence (love-hate) and active-passive. He also says that the resolution of these attitudes is in the fulfillment of any one wish, if one attitude is satisfied the satisfaction of the opposite unconsciously occurs. Vaidyanathan quotes Girindrasekhar Bose "Under normal circumstances, the satisfaction of one attitude leads to the satisfaction of its opposite by the mechanisms of unconscious identity." (Vaidyanathan, 1999) Secondly, deriving from this opposite wish was his theory of Indian Oedipal. That is in men, there is a desire to be a man, which is accompanied by the unconscious desire to be a woman.

A.K Ramanujan proposed the theory of reversed Oedipal Complex in India which contends, instead of the son's being jealous and fearing the father's, the father's seemed to be jealous and afraid of the son and his relationship with the mother. Sudhir Kakar, another Indian psychologist also emphasizes that there is difference in the way the Oedipal plays out in India. Ramanujan described that there is a sort of inverted Oedipus, that is, in India, the mother's desires the son and is jealous of the daughter-in-law and the father desire's the daughter and is jealous of the son-in-law. There is an agreement among the Indian psychologists that in the Indian Oedipal the father is jealous of the relationship between mother and son. He is unconsciously angered by this and wants to castrate the son, in order to gain back the attention of his wife.

According to Bose, "the desire to be female is to be more easily unearthed in Indian male patients than in European..The Oedipus mother is very often a combined parental image and this is a fact of great importance. I have reasons to believe that much of the motivation of the 'maternal deity' is traceable to this source." (Bose, 1929)He describes that the wish to be a woman is less repressed in Indian males, because they have a sensuous tie with their mother's. The son, from the beginning is attached to the mother and he views his father through the vision of the mother. This makes him less afraid of being castrated by his father as he desires to be one with the mother. For the son, being like mother means not having a penis and therefore, fear is diminished by an opposing desire to be female which implicitly accepts castration. Bose at the same time directs us to the Indian Goddesses which is further elaborated by Kakar. According to Kakar, the maternal deity would have to be understood within Hindu culture as a possible reference to Parvati or Devi, the great goddess. In one explication of this myth, Kakar elaborates what for him is the Indian variant of Oedipus, called the Ganesha complex.

Ganesha was one of the two sons of the goddess Parvati. She has created her son with her essence, this being symbolic of the sexual and intimate connect between the two. She has requested Ganesha to guard her chamber while she is bathing. Her husband Shiva becomes a rival for his wife's affection and becomes envious of the son. In the mythical narrative Shiva kills his son who stands guard at her bedroom while she bathes. Ganesha represents that half of the boy who refuses individuation and liberation through maternal separation. He submits to his father in order to safeguard his relationship with his mother.

This paper focuses primarily on the Indian male development and his Oedipal relations with the father and mother, especially focusing on the father-son relationship. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the following questions related to the Indian Oedipal. Firstly, it attempts to look into the different manifestation of the Oedipal Complex in India, through a single narrative. Secondly, it seeks to analyze the parent's participation in the Indian Oedipal conflict, that is, how the Oedipal triangle plays out. Thirdly, it looks to understand how father is contributing to the identity of the male and how does it impact the son. Fourthly, understanding the complexity in father-son relationship. Lastly, is there an Indian Oedipal myth for India and how does it influence the Indian psyche? This dissertation aims to critically analyze the theory. The evaluation and analyses is conducted to understand the reversed Oedipal in the Indian context. This is also an attempt to judge the universality of Freud's claim with the help of Indian theories by eminent psychologists.

This research is aimed at exploring this thought process further and understanding this concept of reversed Oedipal through the film, 'Gandhi, my father'. It is a rich and evocative film that highlights significant aspects of the Indian Oedipal. It focuses on the father-son relationship and the burden undergone by the mother in this Oedipal triangle. The end is tragic as it is shown that Harilal's Oedipal remains unresolved.

The following research draws the reader's attention to all these questions. However it is not trying to impose any views on anybody, and is just an attempt to understand and learn. I would like to leave the research open ended and would encourage everybody to think, actively question in an attempt to uncover these facets further and reach a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the same.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The paper that follows solely focuses on the father-son relationship for the purposes of narrowing down the research topic and understanding a particular theme in detail.

This dissertation applies some theories which help to analyze Harilal's character and his struggle to form an individual identity, as portrayed in the film, Gandhi My Father. While my study retains its focus on Indian Oedipal, the writings of Sigmund Freud are useful in assessing the way the maternal role, paternal role and child's role has been constructed. Sigmund Freud and his Oedipus complex are among the most often discussed critical and contentious issues of modern psychology and literature. His concept of Oedipus complex deserves a great deal of appreciation. His theory has been used as a supporting theory in this research. Apart from this, Girindrasekhar Bose, Sudhir Kakar and A.K Ramanujan's theories of Indian Oedipus have been referred to majorly as their thoughts have helped to analyze and interpret conflicts and complexes between Harilal and Gandhi. To explore and answer the questions in detail, parts of books and a film have been considered and the related literature has been reviewed here.

Understanding Freud's Oedipal Complex

Sigmund Freud described that in the early years of the child's life the relationship with the mother is close, but during the Oedipal conflict, the boy represses the love of his mother in fear of his more powerful father. His Oedipal theory was greatly influenced by and derived from the 'Oedipal Rex' play by Sophocles (429 BC). In the play, an Oracle informs King Laius that his son would be the reason for his death. So, as soon as, his son was born, he was given away to a shepherd to be killed. However the shepherd felt sorry for the infant and left it along the mountainside. Oedipus was brought to the childless King of Corinth, Polybus and his wife, who raised him as their own son. Oedipus did not know that he was adopted. When Oedipus heard from the Oracle that he was fated to kill his father and marry his mother, he fled from Corinth. After he leaves, on his way he kills this person that cuts him off at a crossroads. He later marries the single queen when he becomes king of Thebes after solving the riddle of the Sphinx. Him finding out that the man he killed was his father and that the queen he married was his mother causes him to blind himself and his wife/mother to commit suicide

The myth "directs our first sexual impulses toward the mother and our first hatred and murderous impulses against our father." (Freud, 1965) According to Freud, the play is an illustration of the supposedly universal Oedipus complex a son's wish to possess his mother and eliminate his father, the foundation of human development and the psychoanalytic edifice.

Freud's (1909) publication, 'Analysis of a phobia in a five year old boy', was the first case study in which clinical material, derived directly from the treatment of a child, was presented as evidence in support of Freud's theories of infantile sexuality. The procedure was very

different to usual studies. Freud conducted a case study on this little boy but never actually met him more than once during the study. It was Hans' father who talked to the little boy and noted down his attitude, fantasies, dreams and conversations, which were then sent to Freud for analysis. Freud would give his interpretations and directed the father through a series of letters. This case study played a significant role for Freud in establishing his new theories concerning infantile sexuality. Little Hans, whose father had been sending Freud reports about his son's interest in sexual matters and his curiosity about his body and the bodies of others, an interest centered especially around the genital differences between the sexes. Suddenly these interests developed into a phobia. He refused to leave the house and go into the street for fear of being bitten by a horse.

The case of Little Hans documented the now well-known elements of the phallic-Oedipal phase of sexual development. Through his case it became evident that the child considers the penis as a source of pleasure, the love of the parent of the opposite sex (the mother) and the rivalry with the (otherwise loved) same sex parent (the father). It also disclosed the child's pleasures of looking and being looked at, persistent thoughts about the parents' sexual activities, about pregnancy and birth, and jealousy, death wishes, and castration anxiety.

Freud's explanation of the outbreak of Little Hans's phobia is as follows: the phobic symptom, that a horse might bite him or fall down, was a significant symbolization which was developed in an attempt to solve the oedipal conflict, with which he was struggling. Hans seemed to be afraid of his penis being castrated by the father.

Hans's sexually excited attachment to his mother and his ambivalent feelings towards his father, whom he loved deeply, but who stood in his way as a rival for the reciprocation of love from his mother. This gave rise to castration anxiety and the fear of being punished, as well as to guilt feelings which led to repression.

The birth of his sister heightened the conflict as she too was seen by Hans to be a rival for his mother's attention and affection. Also he realizes that she doesn't have a penis and believed that she had been castrated. Hans was able to quite openly express his death wishes towards his sister but the repression of his aggressive impulses towards his father strengthened his castration anxiety and forced him through the mechanisms of displacement and externalization to create a phobic object, which could be avoided. In this way Hans's inner conflict was converted into an external danger, which he could escape through flight. He was thus able to ward off an even greater anxiety, that of castration. The development of the phobic symptom fulfilled the function of helping to maintain Little Hans's psychic balance.

Freud's theory is one of the major theories that has marked a change in the developmental theories. Instead of focusing on the physical and mental growth of the child he directed us to the psychical and sexual development of him and urged us to understand the unconscious desires, to look at the individual as a whole rather than just physical and cognitive growth and development. His theory has guided this research, but where this paper splits from his theory is based on his idea of the Oedipal complex being a universal phenomena. This paper

is going beyond the universal to focus on the cultural variation of the Oedipus conflict in the Indian context.

Theories and Myths regarding Indian Oedipal

As this research focuses on the Indian Oedipal, it is essential to consider various viewpoints and relevant literature by Indian psychologists who have written about the Indian Oedipal. It is also important to gain understanding about the Indian myths that diverge from the Greek myth.

The book, 'Vishnu on Freud's desk' (1999), is a compilation of several important papers by renowned psychoanalysts who have deliberated on the cultural import of psychoanalysis to Indian soil. Girendrasekhar Bose and A.K Ramanujan discuss the possible Indian versions of the Oedipal complex based on their personal clinical cases.

Bose in the year 1921 exchanged a series of letters with Freud discussing the difference of the Oedipal complex in Indians. Bose writes about this in the chapter 'Psychoanalysis in Colonial India'.

He proposed that the castration threat appears convincingly frightening to the oedipal boy not only because of father's aggression or its narcissistic dimension but also because the wish to be a female already exists in the boy's unconscious. The push factor of castration gets combined with a pull factor of a deep, early maternal identification from which the boy had only reluctantly emerged and that continued to exert its pressure from within.

The tone of the correspondence between the two men was polite, with an occasional but clear disagreement around theoretical matters, especially Bose's theory of opposite wishes and his conception of the castration threat. Freud's response to Bose's ideas was mixed, in that while he commended Bose for his insights, he was not convinced of their validity. Along with a letter dated January 31, 1929, Bose sent Freud a series of his papers on various topics, and requested that Freud draw his attention to his paper entitled "The Genesis and Adjustment of the Oedipus Wish." Freud conveyed his thoughts about Bose's ideas in the following statement in a letter dated March 9, 1929: "Your theory of the opposite wish appears to me to stress rather a formal element than a dynamic factor. I still think you underrate the efficiency of the castration fear" (Bose-Freud correspondence, 1964, p. 125). Bose responded by stating, "I do not deny the importance of the castration threat in European cases; my argument is that the threat owes its efficiency to its connection with the wish to be a female.... The desire to be a female is more easily unearthed in Indian male patients than in European ones" (pp. 125-126). Bose further described the relevance of his theory of opposite wishes in explaining various psychic phenomena.

In Bose's (1929) paper 'Genesis and Adjustment of the Oedipus Wish', his theory departed from Freud's work. The theory of "the opposite wish" proposes that whatever is consciously wished is harnessed to a wish for its opposite. This bipolarity comprises an active and a passive element, one of which is conscious, the other unconscious. As Bose put it, "the wish

to strike somebody is accompanied by the unconscious wish to be struck." During the course of free association to presenting symptoms, Bose claimed to observe a 'see-saw' mechanism at work in his patients whereby instead of disappearing completely even after wishes had been made conscious, symptoms persisted and further associations revealed an unconscious element of the opposite type. As analysis proceeded, conscious tendencies slipped back into the unconscious and the opposite repressed tendency was made conscious. These alterations continued in a see saw fashion but over time the force of the opposite wishes weakened. Bose theorized the see sawing as proceeding at its own pace but was time consuming, so he also induced it by asking his patients to put themselves in the place of the object and thus force a new set of associations.

It was partly on the basis of this theory that Bose also re-conceptualized the Oedipus complex. Arising out of his theory of the opposite tendency, the desire to be male is accompanied by a desire to be female. According to Bose, the child first identifies with the mother as she takes care of him, feeds him, the child desires the mother. They share a close bond. The child starts to develop his identity through the mother, he first identifies as the mother and if the father equally loves, he tends to identify with the father through the mother's vision. As the child views the father from the mother's point of view, he desires to make a baby with the father and views himself as the wife of the father, as Bose says "a true female sexual attitude develops towards the father." He further argues that in India the children are exposed to their genitalia from a young age and that's why castration wish rather than anxiety is developed. The child desires the father as he is trying to be one with the mother.

He further describes that this wish to be female is in both males and females as both of them identify with the mother first. He argues that this castration wish becomes a castration threat if there is a fixation towards the libido. That is, maladjustment occurs in the female child if she cannot go beyond her father and seeks the father as a love object in all her later sexual relationships. For the son, if he cannot get over the fixation towards feminine attitude he may develop passive homosexuality. He develops castration anxiety if the father figure is aggressive, this may lead the child to repress this and look at the father as a woman, while he plays the role of the aggressor. The father is treated like a female and made to give birth to a child, the child believes he has castrated the father. The desire to be male is accompanied by a desire to be female, according to Bose, "to be more easily unearthed in Indian male patients than in European". Ramanujan also argues about this he says there is "less repression of the wish to be female than in Western literature and religion: Indian poetry and Indian saints lives are full of female identifications." (Ramanujan, 1976)

A.K. Ramanujan in his paper 'The Indian Oedipus', Sudhir Kakar in his chapter 'Maternal-Feminine' and Paul B Courtright in his paper 'Father and Sons', argue that the Indian Oedipal is different from the West, they insist that even Indian myths are different from the Greek myth. They direct attention to the fact that the mother son sensuous tie does not just exist in childhood but continues through adulthood. The father is mostly excluded from this relationship. Kakar emphasizes that this difference is due to Culture. For him, culture and

psyche have a bidirectional flow, culture influences psyche and in turn psyche also plays an active role in culture. He believes that there is a need to reevaluate the unconscious in cultural terms.

Ramanujan, Kakar and Courtright emphasize that in India the fathers are aggressive towards the son and are envious of the son rather than the son being jealous of the father. They believe that father is envious of the attraction and sensuous bond between mother and son, the father witnesses the mother as focusing too much on the role of being the mother rather than being his wife. They believe that the resolution of the Oedipal complex for the son lies in the submission to the father.

The three psychoanalysts, through the myth of Ganesha, further elaborate this. Ganesha is believed to be created from Parvati's (his mother's) bodily substances, she is the sole creator of her son. The relationship between Ganesha and his mother Parvati is similar to the one described earlier where a boy is in love with his mother, except that in this myth we encounter some evidence that suggests incestuous desires even from the mother. It is necessary to establish the connection between Ganesha and his mother's sexuality. Ganesha is set outside the door of his mother's bathroom her private chamber, where he guards the entrance and does not let anybody inside. The chamber is a place where his mother cleans, enjoys and relaxes herself, and often those actions involves nudity. The nudity itself implies sexuality and by Ganesha guarding her bathroom, he guards her sexuality and the access to it. The bath is symbolic for Parvati's sexuality. There is some evidence of mother's incestuous desires even from the fact that she sets him to guard her bathroom, as well as, gives him the role to guard her sexuality and the access to it. When Shiva (the father) returns, he wants to enter his wife's chamber which is symbolic of her sexuality, but he is stopped by Ganesha (his son), who claims to solely have access to his wife's chamber (sexuality). This leads to a fight between father and son. Eventually the son gives in to the father's powers and the father beheads the son. The head is symbolic of sexual potency and cutting it off would represent an actual castration. The new head that Shiva supplies for Parvati's beheaded son could be understood as Ganesha's second birth. He is brought to life again, this time under the father's conditions, with a clear hierarchical structure that places Shiva above his son and prohibits him to desire his mother. Shiva providing Ganesha with a new head is symbolic of the father's ego boost and feeling of achievement that the son is not as powerful as him, he is happy with his son, because Ganesha submits to him and his power.

This, Kakar and Ramanujan believe to be the Indian version of the myth of Oedipal and how it takes place in the Indian Patriarchal society. Kakar argues in India "the affective ties binding the individual to the family through the nurturant and erotic dependency of the son on the mother continuing into adulthood; and the patripotestal authority of the father, the repository of the religiously based values of the Hindu family and larger society." (Kakar, 1981) The son cannot separate and move toward individuation, he is emotionally tied to both the parents, and the larger society helps to reinforce this tie.

Ramanujan discusses other myths as well. He says “these myths are not just Indian Oedipal myths but also edifying tales that are related in a variety of contexts and act as myth models for both emulation and warning.” (Ramanujan, 1972) He further emphasizes that in these myths it is not that the son is always easily giving up, the son does try to assert himself but is invariably dethroned and in turn suffers aggression of the father. For instance the myth of Yayati. King Yayati has been cursed to suffer with old age and impotence. He requests his five sons to exchange the curse in return for their youth. The eldest son refuses and doesn't sacrifice for the pleasure of the father. The father punishes him. Whereas, the youngest son agrees and submits to the father, he takes on his father's curse. This over joys the father and he gifts the son his kingdom.

Taking the epic myth Ramayana, where the son submits to the father without any protests. Ram obeys his father and endures an exile for fourteen years. He is asked to suffer the exile so that the father can keep his word and to uphold the integrity of the royal family. After suffering the exile, his return, is celebrated and he is made the king. Basically, the son who is obedient is the one who receives the love of the father.

Similar is the story of Devvrata, son of king Shantanu (descendant of Puru itself). His father wanted to marry Satyawati a fisherman girl but Satyawati wanted his son and descendants to be the heir of throne for which Shantanu was not ready. Learning this Devvrata renounced the throne and vows of celibacy so that his father can marry her. This vow earned him the admiration of the gods, who renamed him Bhishma.

Gananath Obeyesekere examines Ramanujan's paper on Indian Oedipus and argues that the resolution lies in the submission of the son to the father. Obeyesekere says “The son must submit to the father, by submission the son has the father's love and forgiveness. Identification through submission might even capitalize on a homosexual and a phylogenetic propensity, this is the dominant Hindu form of Oedipal resolution.”

In Hindu narratives, the ideal son is one who submits to the will of the father, society, and tradition. Obedience is considered to be the highest virtue. He is the good son, he who obeys, surrenders and submits. The father is believed to be the head of the family and is supposed to know best. Father must win in the Indian tradition. Father is the great keeper of cultural values. His indiscretions must be forgiven. This theme is further explored through the film, ‘Gandhi, my father’.

Father-Son Relationship through the Film

The film ‘Gandhi, my father’(2007) is directed by Feroz Abbas Khan. It explores the vicissitudes in the father-son relationship. Mahatma Gandhi is played by the actor Darshan Jariwala, his eldest son, Harilal played by Akshaye Khanna, Gandhi's wife Kasturba, played by Shefali Shetty and Harilal's wife, Gulab by Bhumika Chawla. The film is based on the biography of Harilal Gandhi, “Harilal Gandhi: A Life” by Chandulal Bhagubhai Dala (2007).

The book examines the intricacies of Harilal's life, he has lived his entire life in the shadow of his father's life. It provides a detailed description of the father and son relationship. It also provides evidence in the form of letters that have been exchanged between Hari and Gandhi. Hari begins as a young adult as one who hopes to emulate his father, study in England and become a barrister just like Gandhi. The film and the book portray how Gandhi has thwarted Hari's dream in the background of his political success. The father is seen as a man of strong ideals who neither provided his son with love, education or guidance. His son keeps looking up to him as a role model in the search for guidance but in the bargain Hari loses his own individuation and identity. Hari's confidence and self-respect are permanently undermined, despite the attention and intervention of his devoted mother. The film and the book both trace the journey of the lost relationship between father and son, and the affects of this on both.

The theories presented above exhaustively uncover both Western and Indian psychoanalytical theories and myths in the context of my thesis. These offer valuable insights into the father-son relationship and the representation of the same in the film, Gandhi, my father. The theories have been reviewed to help the reader understand different aspects posed by the different psychoanalysts, regarding the Oedipal Complex. This is significant because the purpose of this dissertation is to further analyze Freud's claims that the Oedipus complex is a universal process, and argue using the relevant literature from the domain soil to support the cultural variation of the Complex in India. The film 'Gandhi, my father' is analyzed and interpreted to bring out the Oedipus themes, to understand in depth the father-son relationship, the role of patriarchy in the process of identification and homoerotic ties between father and son.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the work that follows the film "Gandhi, my father" has been used to investigate the research question *Examining Freud's Oedipal Complex in the Indian scenario*. The film has been interpreted and understood using hermeneutics. The book "Vishnu on Freud's Desk" by Dr. T.G. Vaidyanathan with its theoretical deliberations and Girindrasekhar Bose and Freud's letter provided the lens to view the film.

This research paper is a theoretical one which uses the qualitative method of hermeneutics to interpret a text and analyze a film to investigate and interpret overlapping patterns between the text and the film. This paper therefore draws on several concepts and techniques to bring together a rich analyses.

When the aim of a study is to achieve a deeper understanding of a person's subjective perception, for example, quality of life, a person's individual perceptions, experiences, impressions and actions, then qualitative research methods may be more relevant. In this research a qualitative approach suits best as it is aimed at bringing upon the researcher's perspectives and highlighting what the Indian Oedipal means to the researcher after analyzing the theories and interpreting the film. The analyses and interpretation are based on the subjective understanding of the researcher.

In qualitative research, the results are not products of statistical processes or other Quantitative methods. Qualitative research offers insights into social, emotional and Experimental phenomena. For instance for this study the aim is to gain an impression, to achieve an understanding, to explore characteristics of particular environments and Indian culture and to understand the relationship between various processes. Another feature of qualitative research methods is that the researcher also functions as an instrument for data collection. Most qualitative studies focus on a single characteristic or a small number of characteristics. The studies yield very detailed, in-depth knowledge which can give increased understanding of phenomena from a perspective that is not amenable to quantitative method.

Qualitative research is also of value for exploring theories and understanding what needs to be changed as this study too is involved in figuring out the alternative version of Oedipal complex for India and if it is actually functional. The common denominator in qualitative research is that the researcher tries to reach an understanding and wants to create a general picture of the phenomenon under investigation and sometimes to generate a theory.

To generate the qualitative approach this paper uses the theoretical framework. The research question here is a theoretical framework narrows the research question and helps researchers create hypotheses. With the initial research question in mind, social scientists read all of the existing literature on the topic. The framework also repudates theories that oppose assumptions within the study. Critical analyses of the methodologies within the existing literature develop the methodology for a new study. These separate elements create one theoretical framework. The theoretical framework in a study works as a map for the research. After an initial reading

of the literature, researchers often rewrite the original research question based upon the theoretical framework. It is during this stage that researchers develop hypotheses. The theoretical framework must demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of the research paper and that relate to the broader areas of knowledge being considered.

The qualitative approach used in this research is Hermeneutics, interpreting and coming to an understanding of what actions and expressions “mean” is at the core of hermeneutics. The origin of hermeneutics can be traced back to the interpretation of religious texts. The origin of the term hermeneutics (from the Greek *hermēneutikós*) bears an obvious reference to Hermes, the messenger god of the ancient Greeks. In order to deliver the messages of the god. While Hermes had to 'explain' what the Gods' intentions were to mortals, his explanations were clarifications aimed at rendering what was unclear clear in order to allow mortals to make sense of and understand what was being conveyed. Hermeneutic philosophy attempts to foster understanding in this way, as opposed to describing cause and effect when attempting to make sense of and comprehend worldly phenomena.

Hermeneutics has long been recognized as an important element of Martin Heidegger's thought. His remarkable achievement was to initiate hermeneutics ontological turn. Instead of regarding understanding as a subjective event, he presented it as an event, an expression of actuality (Being). Heidegger transformed phenomenology in an ontological way, which is very much the case with what he did with regard to hermeneutics itself. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger points out that phenomenology is the science of the 'Being of entities' and it is as such that their meaning, modifications, and derivatives are arrived at. However, Heidegger argues that phenomenology does not have as its object that which is visible and clearly defined; rather, it is those phenomena that remain hidden, 'covered over', or somehow disguised, which are of interest. Rather he views man in all the modes of his everyday activities as an interpreting animal. This holds also with regard to the kind of activity we call philosophical research, that is, questioning. Insofar as the human being is an interpreting animal it interprets being as well, and Heidegger formulates his being question specifically in terms of a question concerning the meaning of being.

For Heidegger the essential task of hermeneutics is to draw out what our being-in-the-world entails. The invaluable heritage of Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics is its stresses upon the always and already situated and relational nature of understanding.

This paper has tried to uncover the meaning so everyday life, the meaning that Freud's theory holds here in India, it goes into understanding the cultural modalities and meanings. It questions the text and theories and understands the meaning of the discourse. The aim is to bring out the cultural nuances that play out in the film and that help connect the theory to the film as well as how it is reflected in the real world.

To be human, to be a researcher who lives life as articulated by the writings of Heidegger is to always already be in-the-midst of a specific situating that is constantly in flux. As researchers of this methodology we are never outside our research, never planning ahead with full confidence that we know precisely how it will be; rather we are always already in the midst of the research, confronting the possibilities, making choices, wrestling with the restlessness of possibilities. Such a way of 'being' cannot be learnt from mere instructions.

The hermeneutical circle is one of the most fundamental doctrines of hermeneutical theory. In its most basic form in contemporary hermeneutics, it is the idea that we always understand or interpret out of some presuppositions. With the hermeneutic circle what we are trying to establish is a certain reading of text or expressions, and what we appeal to as our grounds for this reading can only be other readings. The circle can also be put in terms of part-whole relations: we are trying to establish a reading for the whole text, and for this we appeal to readings of its partial expressions; and yet because we are dealing with meaning, with making sense, where expressions only make sense or not in relation to others, the readings of partial expressions depend on those of others, and ultimately of the whole.

Hermeneutics is concerned with the process of the creation of interpretive understanding. Understanding of a paper is never isolated. Here it is the understanding of the text which is interpreted in the context of the film. Understanding of the relevant literature of the text and film in turn is influenced by each other. This process in a more generic form is examined by hermeneutics: how the understanding of parts relates to the understanding of a larger whole and vice versa. The hermeneutic circle describes this movement back and forth between the parts and the whole in the process of understanding.

This paper is an attempt to understand how Freud's theory of Oedipal complex takes a different turn in the Indian culture, especially the father-son oedipal relation, to interpret this understanding of the Indian male's Oedipal development the film Gandhi, my father is used. There is a back and forth connection between the theory and the film, which gives a larger and richer interpretation of the researcher's subjective meaning. This is double hermeneutics, the film maker has tried to make sense of Harilal's journey and the researcher in turn attempts to make sense of the film maker's sense making. This research is also the beginning of a journey to gain experience and enter the world of research.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

Disclaimer: The film is not exactly the real life relationship between father and son (Gandhi and Harilal), all views and thoughts are solely of the director and creator. This research analyses the father-son relationship based on the researcher's reading of the director's perspective.

Film Summary

“To people he was a father, to his son he was a father he never had”. This is a perplexing statement, isn't it? Gandhi is known as the father of the nation, we endearingly call him “Bapu”. The entire world is aware of how he tirelessly fought for India's independence. But do we know about the troubled relationship he shared with his son? The struggles that his own son faced in trying to identify with his father, trying to follow him and still exist as an individual. ‘Gandhi, My father’ directed by Feroz Abbas Khan tells the story of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Kasturba Gandhi's relationship with their eldest son Harilal Karamchand Gandhi. In the shadows of the Father of the nation, lived his own son Harilal Gandhi, who was lurking in the street, having to live the life of a beggar. He is caught between trying to live up to his father's name and achieve his independent aims. In the end, his struggles fail in a tragic manner. Mahatma Gandhi succeeded in saving the nation from the British, but failed miserably in saving his son.

The film guides us through Harilal's story which is being told in flashback, starting in 1906. Harilal was left in India when his father went away to establish a law practice in South Africa and become a political leader and advocate of passive resistance and civil disobedience. Hari marries Gulab, but is separated from her, when summoned to join his family in Durban. He hopes to emulate his father but the Mahatma, who sees family ties as inimical to his mission, denies him both his love and the formal education that would set him free. Sacrificing the boy to his principles, Gandhi sends him to protest against the oppressive South African authorities. Hari's confidence and self-respect are permanently undermined, despite the attention and intervention of his devoted mother. While Gandhi's reputation and influence steadily grow, Hari's morale sinks as he vacillates between trying to impress his father and defy him. His business schemes fail, he takes to drinking, is convicted of fraud and his wife leaves him with their children. Forever stumbling, trying to pick himself up and seeking forgiveness, Hari is lured into becoming a Muslim, reverts to Hinduism and is finally disowned by his parents.

The film's aim is not to diminish the Mahatma's reputation. Rather it is to make him appear more human and vulnerable and to explain the high price paid by him and his family, when he decided to sacrifice himself to the political, social and spiritual liberation of his people.

This research aims to explore the manifestation of the Oedipal complex in India, the way it has moulded the identity of the Indian son. Is there an Indian Oedipus? Is there a parallel Indian myth like the Greek myth? How does this myth play out? The focus here is on one of the Oedipal relations, the struggles and conflicts between the father and son. What is the

meaning of the relationship? Can Girindrasekhar Bose's concept of homosexuality be accentuated in the father son relationship? What are the conflicts faced by the son and the father? All of these questions are explored and further investigated through the film 'Gandhi, My father'. I have selected this film, as it exhibits the Oedipal struggle in the father-son and mother-son dyads and highlights several facets of the Indian Oedipal triangle. It showcases the tragic tale of the son who is pathologically stuck in the triangle without any possibility of resolution. The film is like an biographical story of Harilal but it can be juxtaposed on the story of every Indian man.

An Insight into Sigmund Freud's Oedipal Complex

Freud spoke of an Oedipus complex, which is based on the Greek myth of Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles. In the Greek play, Laius, king of Thebes, is told by an oracle that he would be killed by his son and so leaves Oedipus out on the mountainside to die. Oedipus is rescued by a shepherd and taken to the king of Corinth who raises him as a son. Oedipus, in turn, is told by the oracle that he will kill his father and marry his mother. Horrified by this, he flees Corinth. At a crossroads he meets Laius, quarrels and kills him. At Thebes, he correctly answers the sphinx's question and hence wins the hand of Jocasta, his real mother, with whom he had children. When, at last, the truth comes out, Oedipus blinds himself because of the shame. Based on this Freud elaborated the unconscious desire towards the mother and the hostility against the father.

Oedipus Complex, for Freud, is a conflict that each boy undergoes at the age of three to five, it is a part of his Psychosexual development theory. He argues that the boy is forming his gender identity at this stage. The boy comes to realize that there are differences between his mother and father, his father has a penis and his mother doesn't. A critical aspect of the Oedipal stage is loosening ties with the mother. This arouses in the child vulnerability, need for dependence and intimacy. The boy wishes to possess his mother and replace his father, who he considers a rival for mother's love. He experiences Castration anxiety, a fear of both literal and figurative emasculation by father. In order to resolve the Oedipal conflict, the boy represses his feelings towards the mother and identifies with the father, taking on the male gender role. The super-ego is formed, it becomes a sort of inner moral authority, an internalization of the father figure that strives to suppress the urges of the id and make the ego act upon these idealistic standards.

The Indian Psychoanalyst's take on Oedipal

A.K. Ramanujan(1999), in his paper 'The Indian Oedipal', discusses the reversal of Oedipal Complex in India. In his view, contrary to the son being jealous of the father, the father is jealous of his son and the close bond shared between the son and the mother. It means, the father needs to castrate his son rather than son's need to avenge the father. Sudhir Kakar (1999), found the same difference in his patients and went on to argue that, present in India, are maternal sexual desires towards sons and fathers suppressing their sons, supporting the reverse Oedipus.

Girindrasekhar Bose through a series of letters attempted to convey to Freud the existence of a different Oedipal wish in India. He found that his European patients did face castration anxiety, but he argues that among his Indian patients there was no fear of castration. Instead he discusses there is a common wish to be female among his Indian male patient. A homosexual inclination of son towards father. He calls this the opposite wish, a desire to be male and simultaneously an unconscious desire to be female.

The importance of a myth to portray this kind of dyad is because it provides a sort of universal characteristic of the father-son relationships. Kakar and Bose emphasize that there is no earlier or deeper self apart from culture. A myth is essential to highlight the aspects of the universal Indian psyche. Freud just discusses one Oedipus myth, but in India there seem to be several. All the myths seem to direct us to the difference in Indian Oedipal, they differ in the direction of aggression and desire. Taking the myth of Shiva and Ganesha, Ganesha is asked by his mother Parvati, to guard her door while she's bathing, a while later Shiva enters but Ganesha does not grant him permission to enter her chamber. This is metaphorical of the sensual tie between mother, father and son, the chamber being symbolic of Parvati's womb and point of sexual entry. Ganesha is guarding, coming out of the womb and at the same time father is trying to make his entry. This is the conflict, the father is angered by this child who is challenging his sexual relation with his wife. In this hostility, the father beheads the child which is symbolic of castration. The conflict is resolved since the son, Ganesha submits to the wrath of the father, the father, thus realizing that the son is not an actual threat, embraces the son and provides him with a new head. The son in turn identifies with the father in his complete submission to father's authority and represses his desire for the mother.

Let us further analyze how this father-son rivalry and conflict plays out in the film. The film gives a rich insight into the Indian Oedipal through the story of Harilal and his father, Gandhi. The story of Gandhi and Harilal will blend in and out of the myth, to reflect the working of an individual psyche as well as discussing every Indian male psyche.

Father-Son Relationship (Gandhi and Harilal)

Through the course of the film the relationship between Gandhi and Harilal has been one of clashes, conflicts, diverse expectations, disappointment in both directions, and the inevitable frustration. The film revolves around Mahatma Gandhi's relationships with his eldest son Harilal Gandhi, how Harilal first idolizes his father and wants to be a barrister like him and eventually all he has is resentment over the 'father he couldn't have'. The director has placed Mahatma's political accomplishments in the backdrop and his un-accomplishments as a father in the foreground.

Gandhi is characterized, by the director of the film, as a man who is self made. He is a strong man of independent ideologies and values. He believes in standing up for what is right and he devoted his entire life to fighting for the nation to achieve freedom from the British. He didn't take anyone's support, single handedly he brought masses together and encouraged the nation to fight. As a father he had the same expectations from his son. He encouraged his son

Harilal to be like him and fight for freedom. He didn't believe in formal education, though himself he was well educated and was a Barrister. He enforced his ideas of education and literacy on his son. He didn't want him to study in school since he felt knowledge is achieved from being active in the environment rather than sitting in classes. Gandhi was the head of the family and he used his power to control the son and direct Hari to do what he wanted.

Harilal was equally stubborn and wished to be independent as Gandhi, he wanted to make something out of himself. He initially considered his father as a role model, he wanted to accomplish higher studies and hoped to become a barrister as his father had once been. He was a devoted son, ready to follow the path led by the father. But son had certain expectations from the father and the father seemed to have different expectations from the son.

The father had abandoned his son in Rajkot and moved with his wife to Phoenix for his work. He received a letter from Hari stating that he would be marrying Gulab. Gandhi was the one who had got them engaged in the first place, but he didn't want them to get married at such a young age. So he refused to go for the wedding and sent his blessings. This reflects the authority of the father figure, he is the one who decides who his son has to marry and when. Also this shows that he is selfish and stubborn about his beliefs, he is not flexible and doesn't take into account son's desires. He wants things only to be his way. The father has an ambivalent attachment towards the son, he desires his son to listen to him, but still when his son listens to him he isn't able to digest it. There is a conflict in Gandhi's mind, he wants to be supportive of his son but his own ideals seem to overpower his love for the son. This is partly symbolic of his strong superego that he wants Hari to inculcate. Hari discusses with Gulab that he doesn't understand why his father is upset and he reveals that sometimes he is afraid of his father but he doesn't know the reason.

Hari goes to Phoenix to help his father in his protests against the British. Hari shares with his father his interest of reading love stories, but his father sharply dismisses this and insists that Hari read some sensible books about intellectual Indian role models. Hari is extremely motivated to study and become a barrister. Gandhi discourages Hari from getting formal education, since he feels it is worthless. He is advised by his co-worker many times to focus on his relationship with his son, and understand what his son wants, rather than enforcing his ideologies on his son. Harilal at many instances needs his father's attention but never receives any acknowledgement. Every time Hari tries to pursue something in order to make his father proud, Gandhi criticizes him and brings him down. This is symbolic of the father's envious nature towards the son, unconsciously the father is afraid that Hari will subjugate him and in an attempt to control this Gandhi criticizes Hari.

For instance, Hari dreams of having a law attorney which will be named after his father and him. Hari wants to be with his family and enjoy his life. But Gandhi insists that Hari not dream of all this, instead focus on fighting for the country and invest all his energies in planning strategies for the same. Hari tries hard to identify with his father, to be like him but whenever he goes in that direction, his father seems to curb him down. When Hari hears

about the scholarship that one of Gandhi's friend is giving only for Gandhi's children, he feels excited that his father will select him. Instead Gandhi selects some other candidate and gives an explanation stating that all the citizens of India are his children and all of them deserve it, as well. At this moment, Harilal feels betrayed by his father and decides to take on a different path and go back to India to his wife and children.

Gandhi finally tries to talk to his son and understand him, but Hari is completely broken and dismisses him saying it is too late for him to mend ways. He expresses his feelings of being hurt, unloved and rejected by his father. Till then, Hari was trying to give up his needs and co-operate with his father, trying to be like him. People addressed him as "Chhotta Gandhi" and he took pride in it. At this juncture, he feels shattered and he is angry and doesn't want to be like father. Hari argues that what is this freedom that the father has bestowed on him, it is no freedom but just endless limits. He says he is free as long as he follows his father's dreams and his ideologies, and his own opinions are considered invalid and not permitted. He is not allowed to think or do as he wishes. He uses the metaphor "father cut my wings and now he wants me to fly", to explain how the father has destroyed the son's sense of self. Gandhi still insists that Hari shouldn't study further since he has failed so many times. Instead he should invest his time in the ashram.

Even in his dis-identification with his father, there is a sense of identification, as he is still recognizing himself in relational terms with him. Every time Hari fails he feels that his father has won. He gets so frustrated and overwhelmed that he identifies himself as the failed versions of Gandhi. By this time he has completely given up, he has somewhere let his father's thoughts get into his head. He believes himself to be the worthless son of Gandhi. He says he cannot any longer carry the burden of being Gandhi's son. He writes down an angry letter to the father expressing that his failure and break down is only because of him. His self-identity has vanished in trying to become like him. He wanted to be his ideal son, but Gandhi didn't allow that also. He blames Gandhi for his state, saying he was never like this before and his father is responsible for this version of Hari, who is lost and confused. Gandhi reads the letter and acknowledges it, but still feels that he is not at fault, his son's anger against him is not justified.

Hari, in this state of feeling worthless, takes to alcohol. In order to prove himself, he starts rebelling against his father. He gets into fraud schemes and takes loan from many people that later he can't afford to pay back. When people complain to Gandhi about his son's failure, instead of talking to his son, Gandhi encourages and supports people to fight against his son and put a case on him for taking their money. Gandhi believes this will help his son and motivate him to become a better person, not realizing that Hari himself is facing many problems. Hari is struggling and again heavily takes to drinking and eventually becomes an addict. His wife and son die due to plague.

Gandhi talks to Hari and tries to convince him to come back to the ashram. Hari refuses but he sends his children to stay with him. Hari starts working again and tries to get back to his feet. Gandhi comes to meet Hari and again urges to come work with him, this time Hari

agrees. He hasn't forgiven the father but still wants to stay close to him to avoid the pain he is feeling. He becomes an active member and organizes protests and gives speeches to encourage people to fight for India against the British.

Amidst all this, some men lure him by using his struggle with his father and use this as a weapon to destroy Gandhi's name. As Hari has lost his father figure, he is unconsciously trying to find that fatherly love. He feels that these men understand him unlike his father, so he joins their company. But again he feels betrayed and his company fails because it is based on fraud that Hari was unaware of. Instead of helping Hari and understanding that it isn't his fault, Gandhi urges people to send him to jail and not invest in his fraud company. He writes a newspaper article which conveys the message that he has disowned his son, and no longer should people invest in Hari's company thinking that Gandhi is a part of this.

Hari is still struggling and unconsciously needs his father's love. He becomes interested in Islam because of their concept of brotherhood, which he longs for and he converts in order to receive the love and respect that he didn't receive from his father. This works out for sometime, Hari is cared for by the Muslims, but in the end they also disregard him because of his bad habits. He converts back to Hinduism, he feels a connect with Dayanand Saraswati. These conversions reflect his unconscious desire to identify with a male role model, trying to fill the hole caused by the lack of a father, by searching for other males who are of his father's age. He tries to change his future but he states in despair that his past doesn't leave him. This is symbolic of his search to find and be one with the father.

Eventually he develops hatred towards the father and believes that it is only his mother who actually loves him, and his father is in such a high position because of the sacrifices made by his mother. Gandhi is involved in the last stages of getting freedom for the country and his son is not his concern. He is unaware about the whereabouts of his son.

Before Kasturba dies, she makes Gandhi promise to take care of Hari. Gandhi is involved with trying to stop the Hindu Muslim riots. He requests someone to find Hari since he misses him and wants him to help him in this troubled phase. His remorse are expressed in the following words, "The greatest regret of my life...Two people I could never convince, my Muslim friend Mohammed Ali Jinnah and my own son Harilal Gandhi." Even after Gandhi dies, Hari is not able to show his love or say a proper goodbye, since the crowd tramples him before he reaches his father's burning body.

Mahatma Gandhi lived setting high moral standards for the world to follow. Yet, these very standards overshadowed the aspirations of his eldest son, Harilal, to be a lawyer of repute like his father, to complete his education and to get a job in India and, eventually provide income for his nuclear family. While the father gradually becomes the father of a nation, the essentially good son stumbles in his valiant quest for identity and survival. His marriage breaks down and he seeks solace in religion, buffeting between Islam and Hinduism. In the end he is left without a father and his self-identity is shackled.

Mother-Son Relationship (Harilal and Kasturba)

The role of Kasturba is very important. Kasturba is the woman who often had to make peace between the Mahatma his son, Harilal. Kasturba had to dedicate herself to a man torn between the nation and the family. She was the person who was caught between her absolute devotion to Gandhi and her love for and attachment with Harilal. She was right there in the middle, caught in the angst and rivalry between her husband and son. She is simple and diligently takes the role of a responsible wife and a guilty mother.

Kasturba deeply adored her son, she wanted the best for him, and she even fought for him with Gandhi. When Gandhi refused to grant Hari the scholarship, she insisted that this was wrong. She argued that her husband had been selfish and ambitious, he wanted to go study in South Africa so Hari had to give up his schooling. Hari wasn't given a chance to grow, she pleads with her husband to help him out, to encourage his son's dreams. She urges Gandhi to not separate from his own children, to understand them.

Hari is very close to his mother. He knows that she is the one who understands him, he is aware that the father is the one who controls both her and himself. She was expected to get everything right, and be in control not only of external situations but of her emotions. She had the constantly pained look of somebody who had to hold back. She can feel that her son is not doing well but feels helpless because she cannot go against Gandhi. Whenever he feels distressed and upset, Hari comes back to his mother. She embraces him and helps him regain his self-confidence. When Hari gets a job after his wife passes away, he tells Gandhi that the first thing he wants to do is take his mother home.

Hari also feels that Gandhi is such a big man, only thanks to Kasturba. He loudly announces this to the world, saying Gandhi is nothing, it is actually Kasturba who has struggled and achieved, she has made the highest sacrifices and that's why she should be respected by the entire world. She was a freedom fighter too, something usually ignored in our hurry to cover Gandhi with a halo. Hari carries a shriveled orange, which he hands over to her, saying it is for her, not for him, pointing at the Mahatma. This is symbolic that all the credit for Hari's achievements and success goes to the mother, and all the failures and feeling of emptiness goes to the father.

When Hari gets lured into bad company, Kasturba goes to visit him and tries to show him the right direction. She tells him that he has changed a lot and that she cannot find her son in him anymore. He has become someone else, someone whom she can't recognize, this is not what she has taught him to be. She tells him Gandhi can still ignore all the rubbish written about him, but as a mother, she cannot forget about her son. She apologizes to him on both her and Gandhi's behalf, and tells him that she is old and tired, she can't see him like this and wants him to change.

Kasturba cannot even die in peace without knowing her son will be fine, she pleads with her husband to look after her son, understand his needs after she dies. She tells him that her son

isn't bad, he has been misunderstood by the world and as a father Gandhi should help him regain his identity.

The characters of Kasturba, Gandhi and Harilal and their relations are intertwined with every Indian son's life. In a patriarchal society like India, boys are supposed to leave their attachment for their mother and become separate individuals but not independent just separate individuals, just like their father. They have to obey the father's rules, follow the occupation their fathers want them to take on and completely submit to authority of the father. There are chilling similarities between Gandhi and every father, his treatment of his wife and children.

The Oedipal Conflict

The film portrays the jealous nature of the father towards the son. The film shows several conflicts between father and son which is symbolic of the Indian Oedipal conflict. The portrayal of Gandhi suggests that he unconsciously seemed to fear Harilal, his son. Gandhi was in competition with his son for the potential of him taking over as man of the house and his wife's attention. He was threatened by Harilal's desire and motivation to study and become a barrister and wanting to settle down. To handle the threat he denied him conventional education, he did not consider Harilal for the scholarship offered by his friend for his children. Instead he gave it to someone else who didn't deserve it. All these currents are unconscious, since consciously he is being guided by his high ideals. Gandhi feels jealous when Hari tells him that after he earns some money he will request the mother to come and stay with him. To this Gandhi responds saying that he would also love to come and stay, but Hari doesn't acknowledge this. This reflects Gandhi's insecurity with the mother and son relationship, as well as his need to be recognized by the son.

The second conflict is seen in Harilal's struggle to identify with the father, the son desires and longs to be like the father, he wishes to become the father. This is not taken well by the over ambitious father. The father is metaphorically like a cracked mirror, Hari wants to be his reflection. Just like any other son who would do something and look at the father to know if he's going right, Hari sought assurance from his father. If the father responds with love the mirror does a good job and the son feels re-assured. But, like in the case of Hari, if the father doesn't respond or criticizes the son, then the son feels lost and the mirror is cracked because he is confused about who to identify with. Gandhi doesn't want his son to over power him, he wants his son to be under him. Harilal has views that are opposite to those of Gandhi, and once Gandhi realizes this, he wants to control him. He can be seen as the phallic father who wants total authority over the son. He even controls his married life. He decided who Hari should get married to and was grossly disappointed when Hari marries without taking his consent. Gandhi is insecure of his position and doesn't want his son to overshadow him. The father keeps bringing him down and criticizing him. He doesn't allow him to think and work as he wishes, instead he degrades his ideas, Hari wanted to be educated, but father keeps reminding him of his failures which brings Hari's self esteem down and he doesn't form an independent identity. Hari projects his unfulfilled love, dreams and desires on his own sons

by saying he would keep lots of money aside for their education and that they would definitely go abroad and study.

Since Harilal doesn't receive the father's love, he tries to shift this love to other male role models of his father's age, like his father's colleagues, or when he converted into a Muslim because he admired their brotherhood, or when he was influenced by Dayanand Saraswati and converted back to Hinduism. Although in the end, he was shown to be rejected by all of them and he says that he finds history repeating itself in his story. This indicates that his unconscious desire to identify with his father remains unfulfilled.

Hari is unable to understand himself as an individual apart from his father. The frustration of being Gandhi's son envelopes his self-identity. He is guilty of failing in life, he expresses this when his wife triggers his frustration while she discusses with her friends that she has little money left since she is paying for her husband's education. At this moment he shouts and yells that he is the worthless son of his father. He is a failed version and he cannot keep up with the pressures of being Gandhi's son.

The relationship between Kasturba and Gandhi is similar to those in a patriarchal society. The father is the head of the family and makes decisions whereas the mothers have to follow. She was caught between her husband and son, and her heart poured out to her son, but she ended up sticking to the decisions made by her husband. The mother plays the role of the ego, she tries to mend ways between her husband who has a strong super ego and her son Hari who is engulfed by his id. The mother longs for her husband and son to come close. Harilal was deeply connected with his mother. He could identify with the mother so much that sometimes he would unconsciously feel like her, being oppressed by the father (I will elaborate on this later from another standpoint). As a mother she loved the son and wished best for him, she fought for her son against Gandhi when he denied him the scholarship, the son also equally loved the mother, the father was unconsciously jealous of this relationship. He didn't want Hari to take his place so he never let Hari's own dreams flourish.

The Oedipal triangle plays out as Kasturba (mother) is bound by the love for her son (Hari) and the son is attached to the mother, he is forced to separate from her because of the jealous father (Gandhi). The mother is the link that tries to bring together the son and the father. The father uses his authority and phallic power to separate the son from the mother, and forces the son to submit to him. The son does submit to his father at many phases of life, for instance, when he accepts his father's decision of coming to Phoenix and working with him, he accepts that he is a failure, his father had predicted and when he submits to working with the father in the ashram. But, he doesn't like this submission and stands up again to create an identify. Unfortunately, he fails and in the end he loses himself and the father. In this case the Oedipal remains unresolved.

Castration

Hari unconsciously feels castrated by the father many times, he also expresses this to him through letters and in person. The father feels guilty about this towards the end, but he is unable to bridge the gap between them because of the complex nature of the ambivalence from both ends.

One of the instances of symbolic castration is manifest when Gandhi refuses to give in to Hari's dream of going to England and studying. This is symbolic of castration since the father castrates Hari's dreams, he crushes Hari's dream by taking the scholarship away from him and giving it to some other man. The son feels betrayed, since he was only trying to submit to the father by becoming a barrister like him, but the father sees this as a challenge to him and he is afraid that his son will overpower him, though Gandhi consciously believes ideological reasons have informed his decision.

Another form of castration is reflected when Hari feels immense pressure from both outside and within. The outside being his wife, Gandhi and society, who identify him as "Chhotta Gandhi" (junior Gandhi), and don't allow him to fail as any normal son would do. They look at him at Gandhi's level and belittle him when he cannot stand up to Gandhi's ideals and follow his ways. The inside is Hari himself who desires to become like the father, wants to study and become a barrister like him. This pressure overpowers his own desires and identity and his sense of failing is symbolic of another sort of castration of Hari. As he starts to identify himself as a failure, he no longer can hold on to the frustration and is shown shouting in the streets. Expressing this castration of self, he says he can no longer handle this pressure of being Gandhi's son and doesn't want to be like him anymore; he feels that he has failed and he has lost.

One of the major portrayal of castration is when Hari poignantly expresses, using a metaphor, "father cut and destroyed my wings and now how can I fly". The wings are symbolic of Hari's penis and his desires and the flying is symbolic of his wish fulfillment of having a family and becoming a barrister. He expresses with utmost despair that his father has castrated him and now he is incapable of doing anything. Hari also vents out to his wife Gulab that he loves his father but at the same time he is afraid of him. This is symbolic of castration anxiety, as he loves his father but he is scared of his power of being able to subjugate him.

Hari expresses in a letter to his father how upset he is and that this state of being frustrated (castrated) is because of Gandhi. Hari describes that he was never like this before, this failed, worthless son of Gandhi had dreams, but Gandhi didn't allow them to flourish. He says he wanted to be an ideal version of Gandhi but the father took that away from him.

Gandhi writes an article in the newspaper again unconsciously castrating his son, but this time he disowns him in public. He writes in the article that sons do not always become like the father, so people should not believe in what Harilal says, that he has nothing to do with

Hari's company. Gandhi further writes that he has broken all ties with Hari and he doesn't consider him his son anymore.

Connecting it to the Indian myths

As shown in Ganesha's myth that the son is the one submitting to the father, as he allows Shiva to behead him. In the same way Harilal submits to Gandhi, but Gandhi cuts his wing symbolically castrating his desires to have a separate home and stay with the mother as a family.

Gandhi doesn't give Harilal the formal education he deserves and gives it to someone else who isn't as deserving as him, this blends with the Yayati myth. As Hari doesn't submit to father by joining him in his protests and following his ideologies, the father punishes him and gives the reward to someone else who has submitted to him and his authority. Just as in Yayati's case, when the father is cursed with senility, the elder son refuses to take on father's curse, whereas the other son submits and sacrifices for the father. This results in punishment for the elder son, whereas the other son receives rewards and love of the father.

The mother-son bond is also similar, Parvati adores Ganesh and he carries her essence. Similarly Kasturba loves her son and Hari is like her reflection, helpless against the father's authority. Parvati loves her son and tries to protect him from father's anger. When Ganesha is beheaded, Parvati is furious and she makes sure Father brings him back to life. Kasturba also fights for her son as she tries her best to bring him to the right path and keeps encouraging the father to understand his son and help him.

In the myth Parvati is helpless and does not stop this beheading since she is in her chamber unaware of this. Same way in Hari's case, the mother cannot do anything, she is helpless since she herself has to adhere to the father's authority.

The myth is a way of connecting Harilal's case to every Indian male psyche, as it is witnessed in every Hindu patriarchal family. A personal memory as well as an historical memory is intertwined in Hari's story. The father overshadows the mother, his decision is considered final, the son who obeys and respects the father's authority is allowed to shine, but not at the cost of the father.

Explaining non-resolution of the Oedipal complex in Harilal's case through the Indian perspective

In Harilal's case, as portrayed by the director, there seems to be no resolution to the Oedipal Complex. He struggles and oscillates between submission and defiance, constantly shifting position in connection with his father. This is reflected constantly through his identification and dis-identification with the father. He portrays a classic example of ambivalence. His occasional submission to his father may be looked at as more complex than identification with his father, in an attempt to resolve the Oedipal complex. Here I would like to invoke Bose's theory of opposite wish to understand Harilal's inability to resolve the Oedipal conflict. According to Bose (1929), a conscious wish is always accompanied by an opposite

unconscious one. For example, a wish to be male is accompanied by a wish to be female. While talking about castration anxiety, Bose contends, "my argument is that the threat owes its efficiency to its connection with the wish to be a female. The real struggle lies between the desire to be a male and its opposite, the desire to be a female. I have already referred to the fact that castration threat is very common in Indian society but my Indian patients do not exhibit castration symptoms to such a marked degree as my European cases. The desire to be a female is more easily unearthed in Indian male patients than in European." (Bose-Freud Correspondence, 1964)

Freud contends that Oedipal Complex is resolved by the threat of castration and subsequent identification with the father and introjections of his authority into the child's ego to form the core of the superego. As Vaidyanathan quotes, Girindrasekhar Bose (1929), on the contrary proposes, "The superego must be conquered and the ability to castrate the father and make him into a woman is an essential requisite for the adjustment of the oedipal wish. The Oedipus is resolved not by the threat of castration but by the ability to castrate." (Vaidyanathan, 1999) If Freud's theory is to be accepted, it should have been easy for Harilal to resolve the Oedipal conflict by submitting to the father and smoothly taking on his ideology. His father repeatedly offered a potent threat of symbolic castration. On the contrary, my reading of the story of Harilal, as depicted in the film, takes me closer to Girindrasekhar Bose's understanding of what forecloses the possibility of adjustment of the Oedipal complex in him. Harilal unconsciously, repeatedly tries to castrate the father by denying his ideology, for example, when he buys and keeps all the British made cloth as a way of contesting against Gandhi, who is protesting against British made materials and promoting Indian hand-made cloth. Harilal unfortunately was the son of a man who had the potential to become the father of a nation and later led a national movement of a very high order. He was the ultimate phallic symbol! What is the possibility of castrating such a father? Moreover, his father kept repeatedly castrating him symbolically, by thwarting his dreams and missions, under the cover of his ideology. Thus, Harilal was stuck in this Oedipal complex, painfully oscillating between submission (involving identification as well as wish to be passive) and defiance, in relation to his father.

The homosexual currents between the father and the son are subtly portrayed in the film. The binary within Hari himself, in identification and dis-identification with the father, is symbolic of the opposite wish that Bose discusses. Hari is trying to possess father as there is a homosexual attraction and defy him as a consequence of the heterosexual rivalry. This is paralyzing for him. Even when he feels the father has failed him, he is trying to re-possess the father by viewing himself as the failed version of the father. The opposite wish here is identifying as the father; desire to be male and simultaneously the desire to dis-identify with the father, unconscious desire to be female and re-possess the father. Harilal's wife, may also be looked at as a symbolic version of the father. She is chosen as Hari's wife by the father, she follows his ideals, she encourages her husband to be like him and she believes that Gandhi is a perfect role model. For her, Gandhi can never be wrong. So this reflects that Harilal unconsciously has married his father. Another instance where he goes to a female prostitute which was an indirect way of compensating for the father's love. He desires to talk

to her and let his emotions out, just like he wants his father to listen to him. But just as his father doesn't give him the patient hearing, the prostitute also dismisses him.

Harilal's deep connection with his mother may also be looked at as his identification with her in desiring the father. Harilal writes to his father that "my mother is an oppressed woman, she has no voice. She cannot do what she wants to do because she is completely submerged by you." The son also registers the sacrifices made by the mother and he claimed that his mother is the greatest and should be celebrated rather than his father, who the entire nation looked up to and respected.

In the end, Gandhi expresses remorse, unconsciously, feeling guilty about castrating his son and he desires to lie on Hari's lap and die. Here, I propose Gandhi's homosexual desires for the son as complicating the dynamics between them. Unconsciously he too desires the love of his son, as portrayed in the film. In the script, these desires peep through certain moments of yearning that the father feels for the son. For instance, when he keeps encouraging Harilal to come and join him in his endeavor to fight against the British or come and stay with him in the ashram. Also when Harilal tells Gandhi that as soon as he earns money he will request his mother to stay with him, to this Gandhi responds that he too would love to come and stay with Hari. It may be interpreted that the threat of the repressed homosexual wishes of the father towards the son, added impetus to his need to castrate the son repeatedly by "cutting his wings". Gandhi is also stuck between opposite wishes, the repressed desire for the son and need to castrate the son due to the reversal of Oedipal complex.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

As depicted in the film, Harilal was seeking a role model and instead he had a father who was threatened and was buried in his desires to help the country. In the course, he forgot about his actual son. The mother tried her best to be available but patriarchy overruled her, as well. The mother had to support the father and follow him. In Harilal's case, there seems to be an absent father figure and therefore he roams around the streets trying to find other role models and develops a diffused identity, which is neither his father's nor his own.

Hari felt confused and misguided. As he did not fit into a mould, he went ahead to fashion himself the way he wished, but the father, unconsciously being jealous, did not let this happen. Gandhi planted the seed of failure in Hari's head and this is what stayed with Hari. His rebelliousness brought him a long way, but unconsciously he still wanted to be like his father. The fear of failing made him so anxious that he couldn't think about anything else. Because of this he failed and this he connected with his father's winning. This failing is symbolic of submission to the father. Harilal and Gandhi develop a mutual hostility towards each other, which is at the end a loss of father to son and a loss of son to the father. This loss is tragic. The rivalry between the father and son is linked to the larger script of patriarchy that pits the father and son against each other.

This is how the Indian Oedipal plays out. To my understanding, the film beautifully captures both the flavours which have been noted in the Indian Oedipal theme, the reversal of the Oedipus in the father's repeated attempt to symbolically castrate the son, as well as the son's being stuck in the oedipal theme through constant vacillations between the opposite wishes, resulting in homosexual currents and heterosexual rivalry towards the father. In the West the son's independence and separate identity is encouraged and motivated. Whereas in India the attachment and submission to father's identity is celebrated.

It is also important to look into the role of the supporting father. There are many theories regarding the significance of the supporting father. According to Winnicott (1960), the father's role with the newborn is protecting the mother and child relationship. This provides a secure environment for the mother, which in turn enables her to provide a nurturing environment for the baby. The father can offer both physical and emotional support. A strong relationship between the father and mother provides security and safety for the infant. This provides the infant a "rock to which he can cling and against which he can kick" (Winnicott, 1964). The fathers become an important figure that can assist the child in separating from the mother and provide a way into the world (Mahler & Gosliner, 1955). Indeed, an infant who lacks the assistance of a third may struggle to emerge from the maternal relationship (Greenspan, 1982). Thus the father plays a crucial role in the disentanglement from the mother (Abelin, 1975). One way the father can do this is by spending time with the infant away from the mother, knowing that the child can be returned to a secure base with the mother (Bowlby 1969; Trowell, 2002). The individual benefits when the father is available to both mother and child. As his or her relation with the father will be a base for future relations.

My research has aimed to study the Indian Oedipal through the lens of father and son. I have tried to bring out the male identity formation and its loopholes. This is just one of the Oedipal relationships, there are many more, father-daughter, mother-son, mother-daughter.

For me, this research is open ended, my aim is to request all Young Indian Psychologists to think and contemplate on the complexity of this relationship, with the opposing currents. And what are the possibilities of other outcomes from these patterns. What is required to help the sons and the fathers? This requires further analysis, and this dissertation just attempts to evoke discussions around possibilities of emancipation from restraining shackles of dominant conventional models.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my parents for always supporting, encouraging me and for believing in me.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my teacher Pallavi Banerjee for the continuous support of my dissertation, for her patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge. She has been incredibly supportive from the beginning. She has guided me through the initial stages where I was formulating my thesis and helped me brainstorm and carry the idea through. She has encouraged me to organically organize and coherently interpret the topic and its various facets while keeping an unbiased perspective. There have been times when the work overwhelmed me but her constant guidance pushed me forward and motivated me to give my best.

I would like to give my deepest appreciation for Drishti for always being there for me, from reading my work, helping me edit to constantly encouraging and for accepting nothing less than excellence from me. Time and again calming me down and being my strength. Your valuable insights have immensely helped me!

Nalini, I am forever thankful to you! For hearing me vent out. Reading my research time and again to reduce my anxiety. For doing the most drastic things to calm me down. Thank you for listening, offering me advice, and supporting me through this entire process. I am forever grateful for those endless phone conversations where I was cribbing and you listened and believed in me. I am grateful to have such a close friend like you!

Lehar, for understanding the pain and distress. For being my dissertation buddy and crying together about all the troubles and challenges, thank you!

Anshita and Niyamat, thank you for taking out time and reading my dissertation giving me constructive feedback and supporting me.

Prakriti for talking me into taking dissertation and discussing both the pain and the fun in working on a thesis, thank you!

A sincere thanks to Akanksha and Anshumita ma'am for helping me out with the readings. For modeling great teaching and for furthering my thinking about the Indian Context.