the immune response produced by them occurred in a heterologous tissue, leads to the possibilities that toxemic changes are indeed immunologic and that antigenicity of the placenta may be an important factor in the pathogenesis of toxemia of pregnancy.

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"The Phaedra Complex"

We are indebted to the ancient Greek playwrights for beautifully precise descriptions of many of life's basic conflicts. Thus Sigmund Freud went to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* as a source for underscoring his observations about the son's attraction to the mother and subsequent rivalry with the father. The counterpart, a daughter's attraction to her father and rivalry with the mother, is the Electra complex.

In contemporary times, it seems we must give attention to the "Phaedra complex" as well, described by Messer[1] in a recent issue of the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Phaedra was a young Cretan woman who married King Theseus of Athens, a much older man. Theseus had a son, Hippolytus, by a previous marrage. The lad had grown into a stalwart athlete and hunter by the time Theseus brought his new bride home. Phaedra was immediately attracted to Hippolytus, but her love was spurned. Eventually, she committed suicide. Prior to her death she left a note for Theseus falsely accusing Hippolytus of having violated her. The king thereupon cursed his son and banished him. Hippolytus met a violent death when his horses were frightened by a sea monster. Theseus learned the truth too late to abrogate the punishment. Theseus himself died a violent death, and the tragedy was complete.

Thus, the Phaedra complex refers to the attraction between stepparent and stepchild, and is to that relationship what the Oedipus and Electra complexes are to the natural child-parent relationships. The major difference is that, with genetic offspring, the incest taboo is usually more stringent because of the blood relationship; with stepparent and stepchild, this taboo may be diluted.

That the Phaedra complex should interest us today is not surprising, in view of the number of families broken by divorce, desertion, and death. One result is the corresponding increase in the number of remarriages, and in the majority of these reconstituted families, children are involved. In 1966, there were an estimated 494,000 divorces or annulments granted in the United States alone. By 1967, this had increased to 534,000. Also, the number of children involved in each divorce decree is increasing.

For example, a man and woman obtain a divorce after several years of marriage. Usually, the mother gets custody of the children, with the father allowed visitation rights. The woman eventually remarries. Half-a-dozen years later, the daughter of the first marriage is now approaching adolescence and, not infrequently, the stepfather is the focus of her romantic interest. To the usual "family romance" between parent and child, one other dimension is added: they are stepparent and stepchild, and the incest taboo is not as viable.

It is worth stressing that all of these complexes can be seen as part of the "family romance" and need not be pathological. The attraction between child and parent of the opposite sex is a vital part of the child's social development. Where else but in the safety and security of his home can the child comfortably begin to experience sexual feelings toward members of the opposite sex? Eventually, these feelings culminate in the growing child's interest in heterosexual relationships outside the family.

The degree of intimacy or family romance varies from family to family. In some groups there is much warmth and physical affection; in others, austere formality. But let there be no doubt that, as part of the dependency situation and intimacy that exist between parent and child, there would be a natural tendency toward some expression of physical intimacy. In other words, any parent can see a child in a potential sexual role, and, conversely, the growing child can envision the parent as a source of sexual gratification. Observation of family interaction shows that there is often direct recognition of this fact by smiles, caresses, or pats; or, via the psychological mechanism of reaction formation, parent and children of opposite sex may go to great lengths to avoid touching each other. We see this very commonly during adolescence.

The key is to be aware that "family romance" exists; this awareness diminishes secrecy, furtiveness, and guilt. The experience of parents and children living together over many years brings other mutual interests to the fore and allows incestuous preoccupation to be consciously bypassed as well as repressed.

Although the incest taboo is universal, the origin is unclear. Of course, in the days when the life span was somewhere in the 30's or 40's, there was less concern about incest. As life expectancy climbs higher, there is greater contact between children and parents, and even grandparents. In Freud's view, the incest taboo probably arose because more cohesive and stronger family units arose when children were forced to establish sexual relationships outside the family; this eliminated disruptive and competitive forces within the family. (Freud was much influenced by anthropology and by animal studies which described the young buck challenging the older sire and the two of them engaging in a battle unto death.)

Perhaps it is possible to "institutionalize" family romance in order to reduce possible furtiveness,

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