

## Allegory

Most couples are kept together by mutual sympathy. This applies even if the sympathy is not mutual or the object of sympathy is not a person but wealth, in a marriage of convenience, for example. Discussing sympathy is more difficult for same-sex couples, in which partners would not ask each other when their sympathy started—although this is a common question in heterosexual relationships. (Unspoken) interest in same-sex sympathy actually aims *at the reason of the sympathy, the “why?” (motive) of the reason*. The inquisitive person seems indiscrete (perhaps even to himself/herself), although the potential answer might be as banal as in case of a heterosexual relationship. To illustrate it metaphorically, let us look at the example we have had before, vegetarianism.

Laying the table, the host feels uncomfortable when a guest tactfully tells her that he is vegetarian and does not eat meat. The host does not understand. What is lunch without meat? How can somebody be vegetarian when nothing is better than meat? Out of embarrassment, the guest starts explaining and tells that he used to like meat, but he once was at a traditional pig slaughter, and what he saw there frightened him as well as spoiled his digestion. He has been displeased by everything related to meat ever since. He was not born vegetarian. His dislike of meat comes from a past bad experience. Another guest joins the conversation and tells that he wanted to eat meat as a child, but they had it only rarely. Even if he had asked for it, he still had to eat what he was given. What he wanted to eat did not matter at home.

If we interpret this example, we can see that eating meat is such a natural and pleasing activity to the host that she awaits her guest with meat. At same time, however, one of the guest’s dislikes eating meat because of a bad memory. The other guest—although he likes to eat meat—does not find pleasure in eating meat. When he was a child, his parents did not say that eating was more than mere nourishment, a source of pleasure. So was his childhood. Let us return to the previous example. The motive for rejecting the preference for meat was not the *attraction* to vegetarianism but a memory inducing *aversion* (towards meat) or the childhood environment where eating meant nourishment and “not a topic”.

I leave it to the reader to figure out what “meat” symbolizes and whom the host and her vegetarian guest symbolize, and what the difference between nourishment and food is.

## Trauma

Trauma means a sudden injury and/or distress that causes (physical and) psychical damage. Psychoanalysis interprets trauma based on its objective effects (i.e. those of the outside world on a person) and subjective effects (i.e. those induced in a person). Accordingly, a trauma is a high-intensity experience that exceeds the information-processing ability of the person involved. A trauma causes anxiety, terror and powerlessness and, in an analytical sense, a collapse of ego functions. This effect can be a lasting one, make processing difficult and develop the post-traumatic symptom causing a compulsive repetition of the traumatic event and displaying it in phantasies and dreams. The consequence of the trauma depends, therefore, on two factors: trauma intensity and the information-processing ability of the traumatized person.

Time, i.e. in which development stage (childhood, adolescence, adulthood) a person suffers the distress, is an important impact factor. A trauma is not always a shock. It can be a minor one around the stimulus threshold while being lasting, permanent. If such a trauma happens in early development, then the impact will accumulate and prevent consistent personality development. Selye’s stress theory emphasizes the time factor, and Khan’s study on the deficiency of maternal functions discusses “cumulative trauma” which can accumulate in the child and become a traumatic effect. Ferenczi’s study “Language disparity between adults and children” relates to this, as it analyses the intense anxiety of children who suffer sexual traumas, subject themselves to the expectations of adults and identify themselves with the attacker, destructing their future object relations.

A traumatized person tries to suppress his or her memories of the trauma, avoids situations remembering him or her of the trauma and becomes quick-tempered or ignorant—the unprocessed trauma produces psychosomatic symptoms, and the posttraumatic stress syndrome develops.

Translated by Adam Katona