

The development of psychoanalytic understandings of male homosexuality: Moving beyond pathology

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Abstract

This paper investigates the psychoanalytic theories of male homosexuality at our disposal, with particular focus on the oedipal stage of development. Responding to the question of whether one ought to retain the Oedipus complex as a central organising concept in the psychosexual development of the male homosexual, or whether to discard it and develop new theory, the paper argues that reconceptualisation of theory is necessary, while still retaining Oedipus as a central organising concept. Although contemporary psychoanalytic theorising has gone some way towards achieving this reconceptualisation, there has been no thorough research into the difficult terrain that the homosexual boy must traverse in order to successfully negotiate the oedipal stage of development. The paper uses clinical material to illustrate non-pathologising contemporary psychoanalytic theories of male homosexuality, while also highlighting relevant issues that require further investigation and conceptual elaboration.