

THE VOICE OF THE SYMOBLIC FATHER

Who is beyond the Subject as the one speaking in the place of the Other?
What is there in this beyond whose voice the Subject assumes each time he speaks?
J. Lacan. The Names of the Father. Unpublished Seminar, 10/11/1963

In this text I shall attempt to elucidate the function of the Symbolic Father, in the sense that it enables us to *evaluate* what is called the “immersion in language” considered crucial to both the humanization of the infant, and to symbolization in the analytic cure.

My argument is based on the enigma that arises out of an archaic encounter¹ between *language as universal* (*universel du langage*), which the pillar of the paternal represents, and the *universe* of a *private*, maternal tongue (*langue privée*). The significance of the encounter² between the two is immense, because it yields the child’s unconscious as its ultimate creation.

Typically this encounter, which is of course only observed indirectly through its effects in analysis, is discussed primarily from the perspective of the mother. I shall therefore examine it from the paternal dimension, with reference to several clinical experiences and some texts by Freud and Lacan, while at the same time delineating several ways in which it enables us to more precisely define the meaning of the unconscious according to Freud.

I shall conclude by providing my own interpretation of the way in which the Judeo-Christian tradition has grappled with and responded to this key enigma.

The Symptom as Means of Refusing Symbolic Debt

Julien, a 10-year-old boy, confided to his analyst that he was often jarred from his sleep at night by the unexpected apparition of ghosts. As soon as he turned on the light they would disappear, but when he turned it off again they would come back. As long as he was able to take his bearings using things he already knew, things that were visible, he felt confident these ghosts did not exist. But in the dark this knowledge quickly eroded, as if the distinctness made possible by the sight of familiar things had disappeared, leaving him exposed to the free reign of the monsters who ruled over the shadowy universe that would then engulf him.

Julien also confided that he was sometimes terrified by another kind of transformation. If he stared long enough at picture of someone he knew, its distinct shape would abruptly disappear and something deformed would take its place. Even though he otherwise knew the photo itself was not really changed by the deformity he saw coursing through it, in the moment this knowledge would abandon him, subjecting him to an overpowering feeling of anxiety which he likened to the way he felt when the specter of the ghosts would appear.

Julien’s symptoms bear witness to the fact that human beings are the unwitting locus of a binary conflict between what they know themselves to be as Subjects in the

¹ This text was written in the aftermath of a presentation entitled “In the Name of the Father,” delivered at the S.P.F. conference on “The Archaic,” in Besançon, October 8-10, 1999. It is an attempt to respond to some of the questions raised over the course of the entire conference.

² An encounter that continually raised questions for Lacan, a form of “insistence” which akin to what he dubbed the symbolic father and the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father.

Symbolic order, their individual truth, and what Lacan called, in his unique tongue, the silent Real. Normally this conflict is managed sight unseen by the pleasure principle and its champion, the ego. However Julien's case shows how it is possible for the ego to suddenly lose mastery over its own house when a certain unpleasure is felt, caused by the specter of the appearance of a new kind of knowledge guided by the Real which has assumed ascendancy³ over the Symbolic, provoking the human being's downfall from it, and reducing it to being the Real of the object (a), a piece of refuse (*dechet*). In terms of the transference what are the most crucial aspects of this?

For me, Julien was unwittingly *demanding*, beyond what he was actually saying, that the two fields elicited in the binary conflict be actualized in the transference. Indeed his symptoms conveyed an appeal, otherwise unheard, for this to occur, insofar as they were both the effects of a refusal and at the same time easily interpreted in light of this appeal as such. The analyst, I would then imagine, is the person who would not in principle be against this new direction (in the cure). But where does this appeal come from? What eventually enables it to be heard, and who answers it?

This line of questioning presents a unique set of difficulties because it cannot be followed through by the activity of thought, insofar as it is, formally speaking, unthinkable, and thus it only emerges where thought has failed. With this we have entered the realm of *language as universal*, which transmits a law known to us as symbolic insofar as it *transcends* human being itself, by placing it in relation to a primordially separate (because non-immanent) place that it is unable to know through its own imagination, but instead may only recognize symbolically by agreeing to pay the price of Symbolic debt. Therefore, it is only insofar as the psychoanalyst is able to agree to being indebted with respect to that which surpasses him individually, the transcendence of the Symbolic which *language as universal* transmits, that he is then able to not refuse the appeal when it appears begging his recognition. But this in itself does not explain how the analyst is able to *hear* the call, especially since it does not arise out of this or that signification or meaning, but instead elicits something that it at the same time muffles – signifyingness itself, which transmutes what is heard into something *unheard* (of).

Lacan's work points in this direction, in particular his seminar meeting of January 15th, 1958 and its attendant written text entitled "On the Possible Treatment of Psychosis," (composed during the same period from December 1957 to January 1958). It was at that time in his teachings that he made known the extent to which his reflections on Freud had "led me to see a connection between the appearance of the signifier of the father, as author of the law, and death, meaning the murder of the father, thus proving that the Symbolic Father, to the extent he signifies this law, is dead."⁴ Bearing in mind the experiences of Julien, what message is this reading of Freud and its audacious connection between paternity and death seeking to transmit?

The Call of the Primary Universe of Language

Freud first touched upon this issue in *Totem and Taboo* (1913), where he envisioned the origins of the Subject as an incorporation of the dead father leading to an enigmatic identification only known as a result of the traces it leaves in the clinical setting. By relating these ideas to the ones he then raised in his 1925 paper on

³ Lacan, *R.S.I.*, January 14, 1975.

⁴ Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 556.

“Negation,” it becomes possible to depict the construction of the Subject to come through the following dual movement:

On the one hand, by incorporating him the pre-Subject assumes the father’s strength, and thereby constitutes himself as a self-enclosed entity with a “good” Symbolic inside that remains willfully unaware of what occurs outside itself, because its hallucinatory representations, guided by the rules of the economy laid down by the pleasure principle, guarantee its belief in the existence of what they depict. And yet on the other hand, some part of the father eluded this process because it was judged “unfit” for incorporation and was ejected into the “outside.” This part of the father subsists and at times, given the right conditions, effects its return, producing what Julien referred to as “ghosts” (*revenants*), the part of the father left to wander in the Real because it never received the assent it needed to finally lay itself down to rest in the Symbolic – a *Father in the Real*. But why is Julien unable to “forget” this father when he appears, itself another way of interpreting the vengeance to which he believes he has fallen prey?

Clearly, the *Father in the Real* assumes these hostile and persecutory aspects because he is not recognized as “father” as such, but is instead perceived to be something that corrupts the previously incorporated paternal Symbolic. Furthermore the reason why he is always coming back, also an element of persecution, must be related to the fact that he seeks the symbolization he has been deprived of, and which he knows to be indispensable for him to achieve his Symbolic rest.

This accounts for Julien’s troubles: The corrupting influence of this “stranger” is held at bay when the binary conflict is in place, because it is held back by the barriers that guarantee the coherence of the good symbolic inside. However when the Imaginary, the visible world that regulates these barriers, is no longer there because the darkness prevents him from distinguishing between what is visible and what is not, the ramparts buckle under the weight of the Real of the Stranger pressing against them. Indeed what Julien was clearly talking about was a *Real* contamination of the Symbolic Father resulting from the disappearance of the borders that protected him from the toxicity of the *Father in the Real*. As he himself put it, he wanted above all to be rid of these ghosts who “came in through his eyes and took over his head.” But is this the true horizon of *his* own demand, a direction to guide the transference?

What he already knows but doesn’t know it yet is that there is an Other way of looking at things that does not involve the rejection of this persecutor, because in truth the Father in the Real is only returning in this way because he is seeking to *pass through* into the Symbolic. In truth Julien’s symptoms were not the result of the return of the Father in the Real as such, but occurred because he *could have* greeted this father and transmuted him into a Symbolic one. This is the true meaning of accepting being indebted with respect to the Symbolic. What are the implications of this in terms of the analyst in the transference.

That it is crucial he not in turn refuse, as Julien has, *his own* debt with respect to the Symbolic, (by over-relying on Oedipal interpretations for example), because the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father conveys an appeal that is able to put the Oedipal father, the rival, back in his place in the Imaginary. Clearly, as the case of Freud himself demonstrates, the Imaginary father and his Oedipal rivalry are able to *explain* certain symptoms. But they do not seem to do so in a way that leads to the kind of symbolization needed to create the Subject of the Unconscious. What then is the act that in fact enables it to enter into existence?

When *language as universal*, the paternal face of the “immersion in language” as such, encounters the “private tongue” of the maternal, it transmits to the child, in

the form of an enigma, an *alien* function that only appears in those moments when the speaking subject undergoes the experience of being at a loss for words. What Freud labeled the experience of “stunning,” the moment that precedes that of “enlightenment” in the structure of *der Witz*, is an indispensable moment in order for this “Stranger” to appear in the place of the Other. The same is true of what he referred to as the inhibition that led to repression, and of course the symptom. Similarly, Lacan argued the question “*Che vuoi?*” was necessary in order for this Stranger to address the Subject of the Unconscious in a way that would make it hear the following invocation: “You who are at a loss for words, are you authorized to enter into existence again as a Speaking Being?” When this moment arrives, the place of the Other loses its consistency. The demand for the Other is no longer a demand for its being, (one way of describing the mourning the subject undergoes for the loss of words). Instead, something *unheard* of abruptly appears that may only be heard by the Subject of the Unconscious to come, as if the voice that conveyed it were beyond the reach of any and all signification or meaning. At stake is a voice that does not arise from what is *heard*, that is to say from signification or meaning, because what it transmits instead is an *unheard* of aspect of *signifyingness* as such.

On the horizon of every language as universal, therefore, resides this *Stranger*.⁵ A primordial Signifier devoid of all meaning or signification, the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father (Lacan). For the Subject it is a Stranger, but not so strange as *all that*, considering, (as Freud pointed out in his 1925 paper on “Negation”), the Subject did accord it a primordial *Bejahung*, did say “yes” to its ordinary existence. In short, this signifier promises all the richness of a certain pooling together to come, (this is the meaning of the “to come into-existence” [*ad-venir*] as such), of an interweaving between the stranger’s strangest strangeness and the most radical innerness, culminating in an act that may rightly be called *analytic* insofar as it creates a genuine articulation between the Other and the Subject of the Unconscious, something previously unheard of that defies the dualism between ego and other.

The trouble is, since this moment does indeed involve the abolition of dualist thinking, it also entails a certain *anxiety* whose refusal, as the case of Julien demonstrates, occasions the transformation of the Symbolic father, signifier of the Symbolic order as such, into the *ghost*, a signifier in the Real that has not received the Symbolic recognition it is due. Thus returns the binary conflict that holds every “thinker” in its grip, unless he is able to place his trust in his unconscious thinking activity governed by the *beyond of the pleasure principle*.

The essential point to keep in mind is that this (not too) strange Stranger paves the way to Alterity as such, because the note of strangeness it harbors opens onto the strangeness that results from the appearance of the Other itself. Who would have ever thought there was a connection between the wealth of language as universal, and the phenomenon of *strangeness*? Who would ever have been able to make us see and hear the enigma of this Stranger in the form of the Symbolic Father,⁶ this Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father who induces, if he is not recognized upon his arrival, a *disturbing*

⁵ Indeed the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father is the only signifier the Subject is entirely unable to produce himself, a fact which escaped Freud.

⁶ Though Freud did not name it as such, and thus failed to correctly interpret the meaning of psychosis. The proof of this was his need to make recourse to the idea of a projective homosexuality in order to explain it. By doing so however, he did not take into account the impact of *language as universal*, which is in fact what is lacking in these cases due to a foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father, as Lacan, nonetheless still reading Freud, so aptly saw and made heard.

strangeness, or even *memory disturbances atop the Acropolis*? Who if not Freud, the man who was forever on the trail of the effects of his encounter with the Real, from the moment he first realized he was shot through by the presence of something that gave him no peace? Who if not Lacan and every analyst in their wake who accepts the “gain” of being indebted to the Symbolic?

Now that Julien may be left to quench the Father in the Real’s thirst for vengeance by according him his Symbolic recognition, I shall now turn to working out a more precise definition of this call of the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father already referred to in schematic form.

The Hole in Thought

Sometimes, despite the fact that I am apparently speaking to someone whom I know quite well and our intercourse is flowing smoothly, thoughts suddenly begin to grow in the back of my mind that make it hard for me to hear what he is saying.

If I pay close enough attention it becomes clear to me that these thoughts stem from what he is saying to me, and that their purpose is to form arguments that confirm or contradict it. If the Real I come into contact with at that moment is not too strong I may be able to approach the bar and deliver arguments that permit me to shine through the power of my words, as God’s or the Devil’s advocate, (in the end it makes little difference). If however the Real I encounter when I start having these thoughts is a bit more forceful, my words may falter, and when it reaches a certain point my capacity to think may be shut down altogether.

What is suddenly going on inside me? I don’t precisely know, but what I do know is I would be right to imagine I have stumbled upon *something*, the Real, that stopped me in my tracks before I even knew it. Can I then rest easy where I am? No, because this *something* keeps on pushing me forward as if I were unforgettable to it. What is it seeking to convey?

If I take Freud and the Real he encountered in the signifier *Herr* as my example, it becomes clear what has happened is that I have unwittingly refused an encounter with something, but precisely what this encounter is eludes the grasp of the thinker I believe myself to be. Could it be a meeting with some thought that has undergone secondary repression? Perhaps, but what made me invoke this defense in the first place?

In fact, if I give it its proper due this *hole* in thought, which leaves me at a loss for words, is able to lead me to a secret place within me I did not even know I harbored, an Elsewhere besides the narrow confines my conscious thought seeks to box me into before and after its appearance. Before its arrival I thought I knew what I was saying. Afterwards, I find myself intrigued by the fact that my thought continues to perpetuate itself. This element of *insistence* would seem to be suggesting I return and examine more closely the moment of the missed encounter in question, so that I might learn to recognize this *something* that is otherwise so unthinkable, incomprehensible and enigmatic, the thing before which I faltered.

But what stopped me in the first place was the fact that I didn’t have a clue as to what was going on – as “speaker” I am unable to locate a knowledge that might guide me...All the better, since I would never have *heard* anything in the first place without this *hole* in thought...Heard what though?

The Unheard (of) Call of the Father

It is only once my “already-made” knowledge has disappeared that I may then locate the presence of a presence that had been non-present until that moment, the presence of an “I who...*does not know* what it is hearing, (the condition necessary in

order for it to) *believe* in what it is hearing.”⁷ This moment is similar to the fall of the Subject Supposed to Know which occurs in the wake of the arrival of the *object cause of desire* (Lacan),⁸ only revealed to those who may in some way be on the verge of entering into existence as the unheard (of) receivers of a voice which abruptly resounds in a way that transmits something that is, as mentioned earlier, itself unheard (of).

Strange resonance of a voice which eludes recording, reproduction and conscious control, because it seeks a presence, unconscious of itself, a Subject of the unconscious who immediately, before it has a chance to think, says “yes” to this stranger, a subject who elicits and opens itself up to it, despite having previously done everything it could to raise protective barriers against anything strange or unknown. The thinker in me has no choice but to believe this call relates to ethics. Why? Because when this invocation first appears I may if I so choose refuse it – one of the basic conditions of all ethics as such. However without the help of knowledge (*savoir*), which in this moment has faltered, the best I can do is have *faith* in this unheard (of) thing I am hearing – such is the call of the voice of the father that, in a flash, knots together the pure sound of symbolic signifyingness and the thunderbolt of the Real, waking me from the slumber my ego had allowed me to contentedly sink into, leaving it content as well. How does all this unfold over the course of an analytic cure?

The Subject of the Unconscious in the Transference

There are moments when an analyzand suddenly realizes all the titles, diplomas and others goods he thought he possessed do not in fact belong to him, as if the very idea of property itself, made possible for him by the Symbolic law of the legal code, were no longer his. This particular experience of the transference may not be limited to this however, insofar as in the same moment he may also hear the presence of another law which causes him to feel anxiety because it was previously unknown to him. What precisely has he stumbled upon once more in the form of this law he re-cognizes as coming from some “Elsewhere,” despite the fact he does not feel he knows it as such?

He has hit upon the fact that the Symbolic Law he knows so well, the one that is clearly written in the legal code but which no longer furnishes him the constancy of its previous legitimacy, is forever haunted by the fact that *there is* also an other, unwritten law, a stranger to the first because it does not arise from signification and meaning, a law he recognizes nonetheless because it makes him aware of something intimate within himself. Why is he now able to hear and accept this *stranger* to his conscious activity of thinking despite the fact that it entails the undoing (*désêtre*) of the written law’s semblance of legitimacy, which at any rate he is not seeking to reject?

This moment has become significant for the course of his analysis because he now possesses, as has already been discussed, a smuggler (*passer*) transmitted to him by his forebears, a Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father that is on familiar terms with both of them and thus is able to bind them together because it transcends the binary conflict which had previously kept these two symbolic laws apart – the written law of the legal code which enabled him to follow the orderly path of the meanings laid down by his “already-made” knowledge, and the unwritten law that appears before him as originary and archaic, making him feel a certain form of surprise that affects him to the point that it robs him of his ability to think.

The former, transmitted by *language as universal*, serves primarily to confirm that the latter is the unconscious, and the way in which the written law “forgets” its primordial counterpart serves primarily to increase the significance of the unwritten

⁷ Alain Didier-Weill, *Invocations: Moïse, Saint-Paul et Freud*, Calman-Lévy, 1998, p. 17.

⁸ As for the object cause of desire of the Other,

law's sudden appearance, insofar as it is the wellspring of a moment to come when the Subject of the Unconscious, the subject that speaks, is able to resonate in us because a first logical moment in time has occurred when a receiver able to hear its call emerged. This is what Lacan laconically referred to as the moment when "the sender receives its own message in inverse form,"⁹ a highly significant passage insofar as it is through it that the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father assumes responsibility for enabling the invoker to become invoked, "when the sound of music is heard," as Alain Didier-Weill has pointed out.¹⁰

This moment changes me because it invokes me to return to this archaic "beginning" via a hidden interrogation from the Symbolic, a primordial Signifier that reveals itself purely as voice, a *remainder* of the object-voice as such.¹¹ One way to better understand the relationship between these aspects of analytic experience and the Judeo-Christian tradition would be to question how the latter has dealt with what has been presented here as a new position in the transference.

The Superegoic Voice of the Father and Christian Religion

Christianity is right to base itself on the idea that the father's strength must be frequently incorporated. The rites of communion serve to alleviate the contamination of the Symbolic Father by the Father in the Real.

In this light, sin arises out of the corruptive influence of what we call the Real, which religion interprets as the *flesh*. As Paul of Tarsus long ago noted, *evil* would thus be a result of the fact that this force is stronger than the Divine Law.¹² Indeed the fundamental weakness of the divide that governs the conflict between the two was apparent even in the first Man, Adam, in that the Symbolic space he shared with God was dissipated.

Saint Paul, saved by Christ's appearance on the road to Damascus, developed his theory of original sin on the basis of the universal applicability of this experience. Paul smuggled (*passed*) us *his* theory, the one dictated to him by *his* own thought, via the idea that all people are born *bad*, sullied by Adam's sins, but may then be transformed into something *good* by the grace of God: No human being is thus capable of becoming good through himself, of his own accord, because *only* God may, through *his* grace, grant us access to originary purity. All the major acts associated with Christianity – Baptism, Conversion and Penitence – are therefore related to the Greek word "*metanoia*" – change.

Paul does indeed "smuggle" (*passer*) us his theory, but at root what he smuggles is in the Imaginary register, because its main purpose is to reinforce the binary conflict by raising Imaginary ramparts between purity and impurity, which only the love and grace of God may lift, subject to highly specific conditions of course.

⁹ At various points during the Conference it was pointed out that Freud failed to recognize this first moment belonging to the receiver. He only transmitted to us the second moment, belonging to the Subject who creates unconscious desire. Lacan on the other hand did not forget this first moment, most likely because he accounted for the psychotic's relationship to speech, and the psychotic is first and foremost precisely this receiver in question. Lacan's work on the importance of the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father thus represents an important elaboration of a moment when Freud came up short, a Signifier that knots together, via an inversion, the receiver of the Other's speech and the emitter of its own.

¹⁰ Didier-Weill, *Invocations: Moïse, Saint-Paul et Freud*, Calmann-Lévy, 1998.

¹¹ This in my view is what Lacan referred to as desire (x), which is not bound to a specific object because it is caused by an object lack, as is unconscious desire itself.

¹² "The Law was powerless...in that it was Flesh..." Romans, VIII, 3.

Paul's version of his con-version recasts the experience in terms of the persecutor and the persecuted, because his thought always invokes *egoic and superegoic idols*.

It wasn't until the First Century that the Catholic Church managed to fully tighten these elements, held together loosely by the writers of the original Gospels, into the dogma of the Holy Trinity. In the prologue to the Gospel according to John for example, the Word clearly appears in the beginning as pertaining to God, and then is only later, secondarily, "made flesh" by the advent of the Son.¹³

Why was it possible for the Church to then affirm uncontested for the next eleven centuries that both partake of the same substance *from the beginning*? What mystery does the Trinity hold which enabled these sorts of heresies to multiply, culminating in its pronouncement as the "sole principle of the universe" by the Council of Latran in 1215? A few points may shed some light in this direction.

In the year 325 B.C., the Nicene Council affirmed the idea that Father and Son were consubstantial in *homoousius*, in opposition to Arius whom it rejected as heretical and schismatic.

In 381 B.C. the Council of Constantinople decreed that the Holy Spirit also partook of the same substance as the Father and Son, thus founding the Holy Trinity of three persons in One on the basis of their shared matter.

Saint Augustine, who converted in 386, reconfirmed this idea but further specified that the purpose of the Spirit was to ensure the Father's word made flesh (in the Son) would return to Him. After himself transitioning from an "intellectual" Christian to full-fledged bishop, Augustine's main contribution in this light was the idea that there occurred a "procession of the Spirit," cementing the con-fusion between the originary locus of speech and its later place of reception. What does this dogma mean? That originary speech is infallible because it is embodied in the *homoousius* between the Father and the Son and then returns to the Father via the procession of the Spirit. Interestingly, by the way, Augustine took his inspiration for this fundament of Christian theology, which would eventually strengthen beyond measure the force of the idea of the Holy Trinity itself, from the pagan philosophers Plotinus and Porphyry, who contended that the One must first be disseminated into its elements in order to then be reconstituted in a second moment and thereby revitalized.

In the summer of 1054 in Constantinople, after two centuries of dogmatic quarrels between it and Rome over the question of the Holy Spirit, the final schism between Eastern and Western Churches occurred. The anathemas of July 16, 1054, solemnly laid at the altar of Saint Sophia, would not be lifted until 1965, nine centuries later, by the meeting of Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch Athenagoras.

In the XIII Century Aquinas succeeded in incorporating the mystery of the Trinity, the essence of revealed knowledge, into his *Summa Theologica* in a way that made it *rational* to accept it while at the same time preserving its nature as mystery. This is why he is viewed even today as the one who dragged the West out of the Middle Ages, but at the price of a certain compromise (formation). What was the secret being harbored by this symptom, fiercely defended and even dogmatized by the Church, (at the Council of Trent in the XVI Century), in exactly the same form as it was originally articulated by Aquinas himself?

Christianity as a religion would have us think that when originary speech abruptly loses its invocatory tone it is transformed into the enduring, embodied and persistent voice of meaning.

Thus the secret of *homoousius*, the same substance for Father and Son, would involve hiding a *con-fusion* which prevents the entry into existence of a speaking being

¹³ "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [It] was with God in the beginning. Through [it] all things were made...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John I, 1 and 14).

as the “Son” of language itself. Indeed, as the experience of the transference clearly demonstrates, an emitter of speech may only enter into existence if he has first separated himself from the place where he originally received speech as such. This (originary) speech immediately recedes once it is heard. It is reduced to the mere *remainder* of a call eliciting a certain feeling of angst. It might be imagined therefore that the *procession of the Spirit* serves to ensure that this encounter with the Real of the place-of-origin is successfully ferreted away by the *homoousius* of Father and Son. Is this secreting away so important indeed that *ex-communication* is the only response the Church was able to develop to those who choose not to obey this knowledge, “already-made” under the most secret of conditions? Is *ex-communication in the Real* the only place fit for such heretics? Why does this secreting away concern the psychoanalyst?

Because it presupposes that what may effectively oppose the encounter with the Real is a trumped up psychical instance with the power to both levy judgments and submit evidence, (including as concerns love), and which the analyst calls, following Freud, the superego. Of course he stumbled upon it frequently over the course of his own analytic cure, and he also realizes institutions are susceptible to it whenever they begin to overemphasize consensus and the group. Above all he knows the Subject of the Unconscious is derived from an Other logic supported by the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father. The psychoanalyst may therefore *dare* envision that relations between desire and institutions will perhaps always end in conflict. Will what he uncovered in his own analysis enable him to free himself from the inevitable binary conflict between desire and the institution, and transmute it into a *dialectical* conflict instead? Such would seem to be the lesson of the institution of the Church, as well as that of any institution which fails to guarantee the institution of “already-made” knowledge. The significance of the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father in this respect becomes even more clear in light of Biblical thought.

The Voice of the Prophet

Interestingly, Biblical thought takes into account what the Church-Institution has secreted away. It bases itself on the call of God positioned as Father, but above all as absent in the moment when his call, reduced to pure voice, is directed to the future prophet, who is invoked but cannot really *know* God’s will because all he has to contend with is the spirit that arises in His absence.

It should not be too surprising to discover therefore that the spirit in question here is radically different from the one institutionalized by the Church, because the first moment of its dialectic works to *sustain* the Real in the Father’s voice such that it eventually finds, in its receiver, a Real it can relate to. A second moment in this process involves what Lacan taught us to refer to as “inversion.” The Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father is crucial here because it is only through this inversion that the Subject enters into existence as himself an *emitter* of speech. How does this process unfold?

In the first moment the prophet to come is stunned, lost, dumbstruck and unable to sleep. However all will not be lost in this moment when he “does not know,” if he is able to have faith in the Spirit which is seeking out in him the “good listener” to the Real of the invocation. He may indeed enter into existence as a speaking being in a second moment if an intermediary one, the moment of the inversion itself, *comes to pass* because the Signifier of the Name-of-the-Father smuggled (*passé*) it to him. A being speaking of what therefore? Precisely of this place from whence he came into existence, of the place where a voice unheard spoke to him and which he must, in a way, now take up in turn.

In Biblical thought therefore the positions are in the inverse vis-à-vis the Institution-Church – the Spirit intervenes in the second moment. Most importantly however, Biblical thought envisions the Symbolic Father as reduced to a voice, in

categorical opposition to Trinitarian dogma.

To Conclude

By returning to an archaic moment in the child's life, both beginning and commandment, when language as *universal* encounters the *universe* of a private maternal tongue, I have sought to transmit the meaning of an element in the former which returns in the transference.

The voice of the Symbolic Father as a *remainder*, as an object *cause* of desire, does not reveal a specific meaning because its role is merely to indicate that *there is* an Other direction to be taken, something which everyday signification works to muffle. According to my argument the Christian Church secreted away this invocation which the Biblical message instead seeks to convey.

I shall conclude therefore by pointing out that Freud, whom we are bound to admire for having invented Psychoanalysis itself upon the basis of his discovery of the unconscious, did not fail, in his unique way, to transmit, (particularly in those case studies in which he includes himself as part of the narrative), that analysts in his wake may also be led to brush aside this *primary universe of language*. However this ever-elusive place of signifyingness remains the source of a call which may, if it is not rejected, lead to symbolization – a call whose enigma is to invoke a previously absent presence, the Subject of the Unconscious.

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Jean Chamoille