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Acerca de la mentira en su función protectora del psiquismo. Dominique, el incesto en los pliegues del nombre o la ig-nominia

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Llamado telefónico a mi consultorio en la época de mi vida que residía en París. Escucho una voz de mujer cuya distancia entre la facilidad para expresarse y el tono de niña pequeña me sorprende. Durante la entrevista que sigue a su pedido de turno, recibo a una mujer (que llamaré Dominique), de unos cuarenta años. Se presenta muy elegantemente vestida con ropa que la envuelve totalmente. Brillante abogada, su vida profesional está coronada de éxitos. Su vida afectiva no deja de ser intensa, aunque Dominique nunca compartió la vida cotidiana con una pareja, prefiriendo crear relaciones en las cuales conserva un dominio de las distancias. Luchando contra una depresión que podía comprometer su actividad profesional, elige venir a verme sabiendo que, en aquel momento, era responsable de un Centro de psicoterapias² especializado en problemáticas de violencia física y sexual. Comprendí más tarde que orientaba su consulta la idea que mi función institucional me permitiría estar más cerca de un relato hasta ese momento indecible. Habiendo escuchado en dicho marco innumerables relatos de incesto, su propio relato “no la dejaría fuera de la condición humana”.

Cuando tenía doce años, Dominique había sido desflorada por su padre. Argumentando su condición de médico clínico, el acto incestuoso fue perpetrado en la camilla de su consultorio, la penetración fue realizada digitalmente, en nombre de la medicina y del conocimiento necesario que debe tener un médico sobre el cuerpo de su paciente, incluso de su hija. Dicha escena se repitió durante años, hasta que Dominique se vio compelida a dejar el domicilio familiar a los dieciocho años, única forma de sobrevida psíquica.

Su padre, muy respetado en su entorno profesional, ocupaba un lugar de poder incuestionable entre sus colegas y en su familia. Cada vez que este médico de vocación se acercaba al cuerpo de su hija, Dominique sentía, mientras su padre recorría con las manos su cuerpo, que pretendía apropiarse de él, vaciarlo de su contenido, hacerlo suyo, vampirizar su feminidad naciente. Como si exigiera de ella que le haga

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una ofrenda inmóvil, en nombre de un pretendido amor filial e
cenario mortífero.

El genitor de Dominique podía tener violentas crisis de rabia por el ejercicio de su autonomía por parte de ella, de modo que no había podido crear amistades con chicas o chicos de su edad. Las raras veces que confiaba en su madre para advertirle lo que acontecía, sólo encontraba en su madre una reacción acorde a la gravedad del relato, abandonando sin encontrar una reacción acorde a la gravedad del relato, abandonando. En el desarrollo de la cura, comprendí que mi trabajo en el área y el tante de relatos de incesto que había podido escuchar me hacía, en el interlocutor capaz de entenderla. Su expectativa era que mi escucha del encierro quístico traumático, cuyo envoltorio infranqueable era una soledad desesperante. Al mismo tiempo, tamizada por mi experiencia en mi condición de psicoanalista, necesaria para su escucha, no me en cuenta lo fáctico de su percepción en el encadenamiento de su historia. Es frecuente que en ese tipo de daño psíquico padecido de manera traumática del incesto en sí mismo, se agregue el de la descalificación. El padre abusador comete el acto incestuoso y al mismo tiempo lo niega. No se trata de un incesto, como si fuera un acto de amor y no de descalificación. La percepción oscila entre la negación y la desmentida. Dicha descalificación es doblemente enloquecedora, dado que ataca la percepción de la propia identidad y estado de desmoronamiento psíquico por no poder confiar en sus padres y en un estado de orfandad por la pérdida del padre, dado que en realidad hay asesinato de la función paterna. "Muerte del alma" diría Schreber. El genitor desdibujado.

La feminidad naciente vampirizada, sus percepciones descalificadas y atacado, Dominique permaneció enmudecida veintidós años antes de hablar a alguien fuera de su entorno familiar. Eligió hacerlo en un marco de confianza. Perteneciendo ella misma a una familia médica endogámica, mi escucha médica la angustiaba, pero mi condición de extranjero en Francia le ayudó a la aliviaba. Le ofrecía una vivencia exogámica posible.

Habiendo transcurrido aproximadamente seis meses de análisis, en sesión los hijos que su padre había tenido de un segundo matrimonio me habla del asco que sentía cada vez que su padre, cometiendo un lapsus, se dirigía a su media hermana con su propio nombre, llamándola como si la confundiera con ella. Le digo que probablemente lo que su padre, al pronunciar su nombre, se apoderara del cuerpo de su media hermana como si la poseyera, como si se apropiara de su cuerpo, como lo había hecho con su padre. Entonces, Dominique me cuenta que el nombre de su media hermana con los que se presentó a la consulta no eran verdaderos. Que se trataba de nombres de fantasía. Tan sólo luego de mi intervención comprendí

cual había tenido esa necesidad de enmascaramiento. Es decir que durante meses presentó a mí con una “falsa” identidad. Dado que ser psicoanalista no se equipara en la profesión de notario y aún menos de policía, con ningún paciente se nos ocurría exigir un documento de identidad. Después de todo, se trata durante una cura de acceder a la subjetividad del paciente que no confundimos con la identidad social que elija.

En un trabajo anterior (Tesone, 2009) tuve la ocasión de describir de qué manera el nombre de pila viene a sellar de manera indeleble el cuerpo del niño, dándole el derecho de ser reconocido en su identidad singular. El nombre, como la piel, contiene al niño, marca el límite entre su cuerpo y el cuerpo del otro. Esconder su nombre, travestirlo, vestirse con ropa envolvente, era el modo en que Dominique protegía su cuerpo del dominio del otro, como una última barrera alrededor de su Yo-piel, como una muralla detrás de la cual su feminidad habría quedado protegida de toda vampirización incestuosa. Sus angustias paranoides transferenciales prevalentes al inicio de la cura, se fueron transformando, gracias a la confianza adquirida en una transferencia progresivamente positiva. Dominique me dio finalmente a conocer su verdadero nombre de pila. Detalle que tiene su importancia, su verdadero nombre era bisexuado (en efecto, al igual que Dominique, el nombre de fantasía elegido para presentar a esta paciente, en francés algunos nombres se escriben o se pronuncian de la misma manera, ya sea para mujeres o para varones, sin marcar diferencia de género). Curiosamente...o no, el nombre de Dominique era el mismo que el de su padre, fantasma de hermafroditismo tan común en padres incestuosos, y sellado en el caso de Dominique y su padre por la consubstanciación de sus dos nombres idénticos. El apellido, que nunca llegué a preguntarle, me lo dirá espontáneamente recién al cabo de un año de tratamiento.

El campo de lo traumático interroga de manera paradigmática lo no representable, poniendo en tensión el clásico dispositivo analítico de hacer consciente lo inconsciente, dejando al descubierto que en esta clínica no es suficiente el levantamiento de la represión para que la traza algo anémica se haga mnémica.

Es bien sabido, traumáticas son las experiencias disruptivas, como lo sugiere Moty Benyakar (2006), que habiendo hecho fracasar los procesos de ligadura no pudieron ser representadas. Fuera de lo figurable, de lo representable, la experiencia traumática escapa al dominio de lo simbólico y por lo tanto permanece suspendida en un tiempo fijado, detenido, inelaborable.

Benyakar (2006) afirma que la esencia de lo traumático es la irrupción en el psiquismo de lo heterogéneo, lo no propio, sin la posibilidad de metabolizarlo transformándolo en propio.

¿Cuál es el estatuto de aquello que ha sido vivido sin ser vivenciado, que forma parte del psiquismo sin ser representado, que no habiendo sido simbolizado no ha podido ser subjetivado?

Los sujetos que han padecido una experiencia disruptiva devenida traumática inquietan pues permanecen en el “no man’s land” de la frontera, a-estructurados más

que estructurados, pero no desestructurados, no se deciden a pertenecer a la nosografía clásica, no tienen esas letras de nobleza. O mejor dicho, la inscribed letra no se escribe con una pluma certera.

En el decir de varias niñas que habían padecido un incesto, seguidas por su familia en un Centro especializado en dicha problemática del cual tuve la responsabilidad durante varios años, aparece lo disruptivo (Tesone, 2005), en filigrana del relato de la excitación que había sido generada en el cuerpo de la niña por la efracción de una estimulación física venida del exterior, sin acuerdo ni de su cuerpo, que responde de manera incontrolada a la excitación externa, sino que él mismo en cuerpo externo, en un desdoblamiento del yo. Ese cuerpo que no siente cosas es y no es su cuerpo. Es un cuerpo que no reconoce como propia la excitación producida no la hace sin embargo deseante, dado que es una excitación subjetivante. Es una violencia agregada a la violencia de la penetración. No es el deseo, es una excitación robada, es una estafa dado que dispara la excitación sin el consentimiento del sujeto. El colmo del trauma es ese encuentro y brutal con un acontecimiento des-simbolizante que no permite que el sujeto asegure su continuidad vital (Assoun, 1999). El cuerpo adquiere así una extraterritorialidad, con un fuero propio, que requiere ser castigado. Es un cuerpo disruptivo: por la efracción y sobrecarga del hecho en sí mismo, por la alienante producida sin acuerdo ni deseo y por la experiencia de desubjetivación la misma implica. Es un goce asociado a la pulsión de muerte, desligazón de las relaciones que desestructura y aniquila la capacidad deseante. El enemigo no es sólo el abusador, sino también el propio cuerpo vivido con vergüenza y desprecio. Es el cuerpo abusado que "merece" castigo por haber hecho un cuerpo a pesar de sí mismo, en un siniestro desdoblamiento del Yo. Como si dijera: "No me ocurrió a mí, le pasó a mi cuerpo... no fui yo". Una excitación taforizada, pura carga, mezclada de angustia, pero excitación al fin. El cuerpo hace cuerpo... en el cuerpo. La niña se siente así descalificada como sujeto a la experiencia no vivenciada como propia.

A mi entender, en esta clínica, el trabajo del analista no consiste sólo en la represión para favorecer el recuerdo y la rememoración. Como sugiere Green (1970), en este caso, el trabajo del analista no consiste en develar un sentido de la experiencia sino en construir un sentido que no había nunca sido formado antes de la experiencia analítica. Al decir de Green (1990), el analista forma un sentido ausente. Condiciones necesarias para que la experiencia disruptiva potencialmente descalificada pueda ser calificada, pensada, vivida, dicha, más acá de la verdad histórica y más allá de la verdad vivencial en su calificación perceptiva.

El discurso del trauma, afirma Françoise Davoine, (1998), está siempre suspendido por alguien desubjetivado a partir del saber inscripto en el cuerpo, a tal punto que deja en suspenso tanto el juicio de atribución como el juicio de existencia. El cuerpo queda detenido es porque para que haya tiempo es necesario que haya sujeto que haya sujeto y por ende represión es necesaria una sucesión de significaciones.

el caso del trauma, se interrumpe la cadena de significantes, y precisamente ahí es donde se detiene el tiempo, en espera de un significante nuevo.

La regresión habitual en la cura nos llevaría no tanto a una rememoración, como es habitual en el análisis de neuróticos, sino a una zona de ambigüedad representativa en la cual la representación se hace difusa, se pierde en un cono de sombra. Reencontrarla, o incluso producirla sería la encrucijada. Pero esta construcción requiere un paso previo, que es la deconstrucción de aquello que ofició como defensa, es decir el quiste de no-representación que permaneció clivado como pura marca en espera de sentido. La construcción logra, en el mejor de los casos, que la membrana del quiste se vuelva porosa y el representante-afecto de la pulsión atraviese la barrera entrando a circular fluidamente y sin reticencias por la cadena de significantes inconscientes. El agujero de la cadena de significantes ya no será un vacío que aspira hacia la nada todo sentido, sino que desde el nuevo sentido actúa como motor de construcción de sentido.

En pacientes sometidos a vivencias disruptivas devenidas traumáticas, el Yo narrativo está vaciado de substancia, voz impersonal venida de lejos, no sé sabe de qué memoria o de qué olvido. Ignoramos quién habla y a quién habla. ¿Habla el otro en mí? ¿Habla la voz del quiste que lo reemplazó? La persona realiza una búsqueda sin fin de un Yo, que si bien es siempre en su esencia dehiscente e inacabado, puede sin embargo lograr una armonía con el sujeto. Para lograr acceder a su propio Yo, conectado de sus afectos conscientes e inconscientes, la narrativa deberá ser decantada de un flujo de palabras perdidas en la bruma de la ambigüedad emocional-perceptiva, que más allá de su valor asociativo no logran vehicular las emociones replegadas en el quiste defensivo.

Más que torre monolítica e inamovible la instancia del Yo es como una figura de geometría variable en continua transformación, que a pesar de su carácter poliédrico con múltiples facetas que refractan su carácter fragmentario, no define al sujeto pero lo sitúa en el eje de su responsabilidad emocional.

Si bien el analista no es un historiador que busca restablecer la verdad histórica de los hechos, sino la verdad vivencial del sujeto, tampoco puede abandonar completamente dicha búsqueda. Aunque es sabido que la búsqueda de la verdad histórica está destinada a fracasar, tampoco la intervención del analista se puede basar en una construcción que se independice totalmente de lo perceptivo de la verdad de los hechos. Es quizá necesario que se mantenga una tensión permanente entre la búsqueda de la verdad histórica y la construcción mítica, para que la misma no corra el riesgo de convertirse en un delirio minuciosamente construido pero tambaleante, a tal punto que el sujeto no haga pie. De lo contrario se corre el riesgo que el proceso analítico adquiera una fuerte carga de sugestión proyectiva por parte del analista.

Contrariamente al discurso social, lo dicho en una cura no se opone a lo no-dicho. Conviene sin embargo diferenciar entre lo enigmático, dominio del inconsciente, de la mentira (asociada al secreto), dominio, en parte, de la consciencia.

En el "*dígame todo lo que se le pasa por la cabeza sin reticencias ni juicio de valor*" en la clásica consigna de una cura con la cual atormentamos al paciente, se desliza

una paradojalidad persecutoria. Dado que lo no-dicho o incluso la mentira p tener, al menos provisoriamente, una cualidad benéfica para la puesta en disci la sesión analítica. Recurso de independencia respecto a las resistencias y a l canismos de defensa. Permite la aceptación del peso del significante y del tiem meditación y de comprensión necesario a la perlaboración. La mentira sup se sabe lo que se miente. Sin embargo, la mentira recubre un campo semántic vasto que incluye la ignorancia de todo lo que se miente o de la función que la cumple. En la evolución del psiquismo del niño, la mentira le brinda la oportu de escapar a la omnipotencia parental, asegurándole la posibilidad de constr propio espacio interior independiente. Piera Aulagnier (1976) sostiene que el brimiento que el discurso puede decir la verdad o la mentira es para el niño tan es como el descubrimiento de la diferencia de sexos, de la mortalidad o de los l del poder del deseo.

En el caso de Dominique, dar a conocer su verdadero nombre la ponían en transferencial de incesto, exponer su cuerpo al dominio del otro como lo habi decidido en su infancia. La mentira cumplía una función de protección de su arm narcisista. En ese sentido podríamos decir que la mentira operó como la pue reserva de un significante reticente, dado que nunca es el producto bruto de un alidad, por más traumática que sea, y que requiere tiempo de elaboración para c su velo. Pretender arrancar el secreto del otro, denunciar su mentira es un pr inquisitorio lejano al método psicoanalítico. Sería dejarlo vacío, demoler su resist aniquilarlo. De nada hubiera servido precipitarse a conocer la identidad soci Dominique a través de un apellido largamente silenciado luego que me confie nombre de pila. Se puede evocar la falencia del Nombre del padre, operación simb desfalciente en el caso del incesto, pero que no confundo con el apellido. Cons que la mentira de Dominique en cuanto a sus nombres, tenía por función invoc nombre que aunque ficcional, fuera portador de la castración simbólica y la acepta de la falta, apuntalando su frágil andamiaje narcisista. En el cambio de sus nom se alejaba de la dominación paterna, pudiendo ser paradójicamente ella en el e su subjetividad no manchada. Si la mentira era sostenida con tal firmeza, es po constituía la llave que abría a la cadena de significantes y le permitía al mismo tie permanecer protegida de un desencadenamiento prematuro. Fue a través del in que se hizo efracción en su subjetividad, pero paradójicamente, fue a través de la tira que pudo preservar su identidad del temor de efracción, evitando el riesg perjuicio repetitivo. Mantuvo la mentira hasta que el momento transferencial le propicio para salir de la caverna incestuosa y abrirse a una luz que no la encegued La salida a la luz desde las sombras de la caverna de la alegoría platónica no es sir y por otro lado no trae buena suerte identificarse masivamente con el destino Edipo en la tragedia, ese famoso enceguedo. El incesto conduce a la tragedia complejo de Edipo, en cambio, entendido simbólicamente, permite la asunción c falta y de la castración simbólica; es ordenador de la subjetividad, es un Edipo sin gedia, estructurante. En el marco de una cura el sujeto tiene la libertad de decir la

dad o de mentir, lo importante no es dilucidarla apresuradamente sino llevarlo a pensar lo prohibido de pensar devenido impensable y perlaborar su verdad inconsciente. La mentira provisoria puede tener una función quizá necesaria para afrontar de a pequeños pasos una subjetividad dañada por el traumatismo acumulativo que le impide desear y pensar en nombre propio. ■

Resumen

La mentira recubre un campo semántico vasto que incluye la ignorancia de todo lo que se miente o de la función que la misma cumple. En la evolución del psiquismo del niño, la mentira le brinda la oportunidad de escapar a la omnipotencia parental, asegurándole la posibilidad de construir su propio espacio interior independiente. Piera Aulagnier (1976) sostiene que el descubrimiento que el discurso puede decir la verdad o la mentira es para el niño tan esencial como el descubrimiento de la diferencia de sexos, de la mortalidad o de los límites del poder del deseo. En el caso del ejemplo clínico, para Dominique, dar a conocer su verdadero nombre la ponía en riesgo transferencial de incesto, exponiendo su cuerpo al dominio del otro como lo había padecido en su infancia. La mentira cumplía una función de protección de su armadura narcisista. En ese sentido podríamos decir que la mentira operó como la puesta en reserva de un significante reticente, dado que nunca es el producto bruto de una realidad, por más traumática que sea, y que requiere tiempo de elaboración para correr su velo. Pretender arrancar el secreto del otro, denunciar su mentira es un proceso inquisitorio lejano al método psicoanalítico. Sería dejarlo vacío, demoler su resistencia, aniquilarlo. De nada hubiera servido precipitarse a conocer la identidad social de Dominique a través de un apellido largamente silenciado luego que me confiara el nombre de pila. Se puede evocar la falencia del Nombre del padre, operación simbólica desfalleciente en el caso del incesto, pero que no confundo con el apellido. Considero que la mentira de Dominique en cuanto a sus nombres, tenía por función invocar un nombre que aunque ficcional, fuera portador de la castración simbólica y la aceptación de la falta, apuntalando su frágil andamiaje narcisista. En el cambio de sus nombres, se alejaba de la dominación paterna, pudiendo ser paradójicamente ella en el eje de su subjetividad no manchada. Si la mentira era sostenida con tal firmeza, es porque constituía la llave que abría a la cadena de significantes y le permitía al mismo tiempo permanecer protegida de un desencadenamiento prematuro en lo que hacía al incesto padecido. Fue a través del incesto que se hizo efracción en su subjetividad, pero paradójicamente, fue a través de la mentira que pudo preservar su identidad del temor de efracción, evitando el riesgo de perjuicio repetitivo. Mantuvo la mentira hasta que el momento transferencial le fue propicio para salir de la caverna incestuosa y abrirse a una luz que no la encegueciera.

DESCRITORES: INCESTO / MENTIRA / NOMBRE / DEFENSA / PERCEPCIÓN / DESMENTIDA / CUERPO
TRANSFERENCIA

CANDIDATO DESCRIPTOR: DISRRUPCIÓN

Summary

Regarding the lie in its protective function of psychism. Dominique, incest in the pleats of the name or the ignom

The lie covers a vast semantic field which includes the ignorance of all the function it fulfils. In the psychic evolution of the child, the lie gives him of escaping parental omnipotence, assuring him the possibility of an independent interior space. Piera Aulagnier (1976) holds that the discovery can say what is true or what is false is as essential for a child like the discovery of the sexes, of mortality or the limits of the power of wish.

In the case of the clinical example, for Dominique, letting know her transference risk of incest, exposing her body to the others domination lie in infancy. The lie had a protective function of her narcissistic armour. In say that the lie worked as stand by of a reticent signifier, since it never is of a reality, how traumatic it were, and requires time of elaboration to untearing out the secret of the other, denouncing his lies is an inquisitorial psychoanalytic method. It would mean leaving him empty, demolish his resistance him. It would not have helped rushing to find out the social identity of Dominique's surname kept silent for a long time after he confided his first name. One mistake of the Name of the father, weakend symbolic operation in the case of I do not confuse with the surname. I consider that Dominique's lie regarded served to invoke a name though being fictional, it would carry the symbolic the acceptance of the fault, supporting her fragile narcissistic scaffolding. In names, she withdrew from the paternal domination, allowing to be paradig the axis of her unstained subjectivity. If the lie was kept with such firmness constituted the key that opened to the chain of signifiers and allowed her to remain protected of a premature unchaining in what had been the suffering through the incest that rupture occurred in her subjectivity, but paradoxically the lie that she could preserve her identity of the dread of rupture, avoiding the damage. She kept the lie until the transference moment was propitious to leave cavern and open up to a light that would not blind her.

KEYWORDS: INCEST/ LIE/ NAME/ DEFENCE/ PERCEPTION/ DISAVOWAL BODY/ TRANSFERENCE
DESCRIPTOR CANDIDATE: DISRUPTION

Resumo

Sobre a mentira na sua função protetora do psiquismo. Dominique, o incesto nas dobras do nome ou da ignomínia.

A mentira abrange um campo semântico vasto que inclui a ignorância de tudo o que ou da função que ela cumpre. Na evolução do psiquismo da criança a mentira

a oportunidade de escapar da onipotência parental, garantindo-lhe a possibilidade de construir o seu próprio espaço interior independente. Piera Aulagnier (1976) afirma que o descobrimento de que o discurso pode dizer a verdade ou a mentira é para a criança tão essencial como o descobrimento da diferença dos sexos, da mortalidade ou dos limites do poder do desejo. No caso do exemplo clínico, para Dominique, revelar o seu verdadeiro nome a colocava em risco transferencial de incesto, expondo o seu corpo ao domínio do outro como tinha padecido na sua infância. A mentira cumpria uma função de proteção da sua armadura narcisista. Neste sentido, poderíamos dizer que a mentira agiu como a posta em reserva de um significante reticencioso, pois nunca é o produto bruto de uma realidade, por mais traumática que seja, e que exige tempo de elaboração para retirar o seu véu. Pretender arrancar o segredo do outro, denunciar a sua mentira é um processo inquisitório distante do método psicanalítico. Seria deixá-lo vazio, demolir a sua resistência, aniquilá-lo. De nada serviria precipitar-se para conhecer a identidade social de Dominique através de um sobrenome amplamente silenciado depois que me revelou o seu nome verdadeiro. Pode-se evocar a falência do nome do pai, operação simbólica desfalecente no caso do incesto, mas que não confundo com o sobrenome. Considero que a mentira de Dominique sobre os seus nomes tinha como função invocar um nome que, embora fosse fictício, era portador da castração simbólica e da aceitação da falta, escorando a sua frágil estrutura narcisista. Ao mudar os seus nomes, se afastava da dominação paterna, podendo ser ela, paradoxalmente, no eixo da sua subjetividade não manchada. Se a mentira era sustentada com tal firmeza é porque constituía a chave que abria a cadeia de significados e, ao mesmo tempo, lhe permitia permanecer protegida de um desencadeamento prematuro a respeito do incesto sofrido. Foi através do incesto que se fez efração na sua subjetividade, porém, paradoxalmente, foi através da mentira que pôde preservar a sua identidade do temor de efração, evitando o risco do preconceito repetitivo. Manteve a mentira até que o momento transferencial fosse favorável para sair da caverna incestuosa e se abrir para uma luz que não a cegasse

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: INCESTO / MENTIRA / NOME / DEFESA / PERCEPÇÃO / DESMENTIDO / CORPO TRANSFERÊNCIA

CANDIDATO A DESCRITOR: DISRUPÇÃO

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El robo de la identidad de los niños: restitución de su identidad y el valor que adquiere la recuperación de sus nombres.ⁱ

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El golpe de Estado del 24 de Marzo de 1976 realizado con la anuencia de ciertos sectores de la sociedad civil y política y el establishment financiero tomó el poder, abriendo como se sabe el capítulo más dramático de la Argentina contemporánea. El poder represivo de las fuerzas llamadas “de seguridad”, precedido por organismos parapoliciales que comenzaron a actuar antes del golpe de estadoⁱⁱ, persiguió a todo oponente, ya sea por su militancia, por sus ideas o por su desacuerdo con el régimen despótico instalado. Se estima –como es de público conocimiento– que el saldo de esta acción represiva fue la desaparición forzada de 30000 personas (9500 enumeradas por la CONADEP), de las cuales 80% tenía entre 18 y 35 años, el 30% eran mujeres de cuales 10% estaban embarazadasⁱⁱⁱ. Las Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo calculan entre 400 y 500 los niños secuestrados por las fuerzas de seguridad.

La desaparición forzada de las personas es una figura muy compleja desde el punto de vista jurídico, dado que los responsables pretenden no dejar rastros del secuestro del “desaparecido”; cuya consecuencia más frecuente ha sido el asesinato de las víctimas. Debidamente comprobada, fue una acción concertada con las fuerzas de seguridad de otros países latino-americanos, el denominado plan Cóndor, con el acuerdo evidente de la política exterior de los Estados Unidos, en la época en la que reinaba la paranoia del “enemigo interno”. El poder militar llevó adelante una acción represiva organizada y sistemática, que incluyó también a los hijos de los “desaparecidos”. Ya no se puede pretextar ignorar que en aquellos años, hubo una cantidad incalculable de muertos enterrados bajo la denominación de N.N, incluso de muchos niños.

La acción mesiánica que el poder militar se atribuyó implicaba una metodología que se extendía sobre varias generaciones. En nombre de la “defensa de la familia cristiana” y de “los valores occidentales”, el poder se apropiaba de los niños de las personas “desaparecidas” para evitar, según su curiosa concepción de una “buena educación”, que fuesen criados por las mismas familias que habían precisamente educado personas consideradas como “subversivas”, de acuerdo a la jerga de la época. Todo esto en nombre de la “moral cristiana”

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y de los “valores occidentales”. Valores que, evidentemente, el poder definía de manera siniestra, iluminada y unívoca. Muchos niños nacidos en cautiverio, fueron posteriormente secuestrados y confiados en “adopción”. Esos robos de niños eran también orquestados para no dejar rastros de los delitos de secuestro y asesinato cometidos en toda impunidad. El poder se sirvió de la complicidad de muchas instituciones ligadas a la infancia, e incluso de los Tribunales, que validaban sus acciones dando niños en adopción y negándose simultáneamente a dar información a las verdaderas familias. La metodología implicaba ocultar el cambio de identidad o aceptar que los niños fuesen admitidos en instituciones para menores como N.N., haciendo de hecho imposible que pudiesen reintegrarse a sus familias legítimas.

El poder pretendió modelar así el psiquismo de varias generaciones. El robo sistemático de los niños, abyecto botín de guerra, tenía por objetivo darlos a las familias ligadas al poder, presuponiendo que estarían en condiciones de educarlos según su ideología. La mayoría de dichas familias eran cómplices del acto delictivo. Tan sólo algunas, inscriptas en listas de adopción en los Tribunales, ignoraban el origen de los niños.

Una docena de mujeres se reúnen, crean una Asociación y denuncian el secuestro de los niños a partir de 1977; lo hacen con inmenso coraje y arriesgando sus vidas, en pleno período represivo. El primer nombre que tuvo esa organización fue: “Abuelas argentinas con nietos desaparecidos”, después tomaron el nombre de las “Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo” con el que se las conoce actualmente.

El poder militar contó con el silencio cómplice de algunos medios de comunicación y ciertos sectores de las instituciones civiles, políticas y religiosas, lo que no desalentó a las abuelas, quienes, además de su laberíntica acción en los tribunales argentinos, recurrieron a denuncias ante organismos internacionales de los derechos humanos.

En Abril de 1978, las Abuelas (todavía eran doce) lograron que la Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación recibiera un escrito que reclamaba por sus nietos desaparecidos. En el mes de Julio de dicho año la Corte se declara incompetente en nombre del “principio de separación de poderes del Estado sobre el cual se asienta nuestro régimen republicano de gobierno”, como si la república no hubiese sido vejada. En el pedido de las doce abuelas se reclamaba “que los niños señalados como N.N. no se den en guarda con fines de adopción desde marzo de 1976 en todo el país, mientras se sustancia el pedido de Habeas Corpus y se proceda a determinar el origen de los casos de criaturas menores de tres años dadas en adopción desde marzo de 1976 en todo el país, para determinar si se trata del nieto o nieta de alguna de las peticionantes”^{iv}. Desde el año 1978 las Abuelas prevenían los horrores que se generarían a partir de adopciones ilegales, otorgadas con la complicidad de los jueces y funcionarios administrativos.

Frente a las negativas del poder y de las instituciones oficiales, las Abuelas dan prueba de una gran tenacidad e inventiva, y valerosamente, aun a riesgo de sus vidas, cambian de metodología. Así, para localizar a los niños secuestrados investigan por su cuenta, distribuyen folletos, pegan carteles, publican fotos en aquellos diarios que aceptaban hacerlo. Evidentemente dichas búsquedas se hicieron mucho más factibles con el retorno de la democracia a partir de 1983.

En enero de 1984 se realizan las primeras exhumaciones de cadáveres enterrados como N.N durante la dictadura militar. El horror de lo siniestro fue doble cuando se constató que entre los cuerpos asesinados por el impacto de balas tiradas por la espalda, se encontraban los cuerpos de dos niños de 5 y 6 años. Roberto y Bárbara Lanouscou eran miembros de

una familia con 3 chicos. En un tercer ataúd, pequeño, donde se podía pensar que se encontraba la hermanita, Matilde Lanouscou, de 6 meses, se encontró, como si fuese un cuerpo de bebé, un oso pequeño envuelto y un chupetón. No quedaban vestigios humanos. Todo era un horrible escenario para ocultar el secuestro de la niña, que todavía no fue encontrada. En la puesta en marcha de la máquina de matar, no bastaba con la muerte física, había que eliminar toda traza de nominación. Diría que el crimen había sido doble, el del cuerpo y el del nombre, más “peligroso” aún, representativo de un espesor identitario propio.

Los cuerpos enterrados como N.N fueron numerosos, como si bastara con borrar el nombre para anular la existencia pasada de la persona asesinada. Pretender no dejar traza de la ignominia, es pretender no dejar traza de nominación. No es suficiente para el régimen despótico apoderarse de los cuerpos, hacerlos desaparecer, asesinarlos. Requiere atacarse simultáneamente a la esencia del sujeto reflejada en su nombre. Hacer desaparecer un cuerpo y su nombre, dos caras del mismo crimen.

Respecto de los niños que seguían con vida, no era evidente demostrar incuestionablemente el lazo de parentesco, en la medida en que los padres habían sido también asesinados. Esto hacía aleatoria la declaración legítima por parte de los abuelos. No bastaba con localizar al niño desaparecido-secuestrado, algo en sí-mismo alentador, había que obtener la prueba del lazo de parentesco. Esto se volvió posible únicamente gracias al aporte científico de las pruebas de histocompatibilidad inmunológicas desarrolladas en los USA por la Dra. Mary Claire King en 1984 y realizados en Argentina a partir de ese mismo año, a pedido de las Abuelas. Estas pruebas tienen una fiabilidad del 99,95 con respecto al lazo entre los nietos y sus abuelos y/o sus tíos y tías.

Luego del advenimiento de la democracia en 1983, el juicio de las juntas militares que tuvo lugar en Buenos Aires en 1985, demostró sobre la escena judicial la existencia de un plan formal de secuestro, tortura en centros clandestinos y posterior asesinato de oponentes al régimen, así como de sus familias. Sus hijos habían sido asesinados o robados y dados a familias, en su mayoría, en connivencia con el régimen.

Proceso de restitución

Las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo luchan de manera denodada para poder encontrar a los niños, hoy en día jóvenes adultos, con el fin de devolverles su identidad y restituirlos a sus familias legítimas. Este combate que hoy ya no encuentra oposición, no fue inicialmente aceptado por el conjunto de la población ni por la totalidad de los medios. Demostrando los mecanismos denegadores de la condición de verdugos de la mayoría de los raptos, algunos pretendían que se habían vuelto padres adoptivos para los niños, de modo que era un trauma innecesario hacerles conocer la verdad sobre sus orígenes para devolverlos a sus abuelos biológicos.

Un equipo de pediatras, psiquiatras y psicólogos trabaja desde el inicio con las abuelas, aportando su contención y su saber profesional para poder garantizar que la restitución de los niños a su verdadera familia suceda en las mejores condiciones posibles para el niño.

Luego de diversos procedimientos, el proceso elegido es el siguiente:

— El juez, garante de la recuperación de la identidad del niño y la restitución de éste a la familia legítima, explica al niño en qué consisten la ley y la importancia de conocer la verdad.

— Es fundamental que esta separación tenga lugar de inmediato, incluso si inicialmente puede ser traumática para el niño. Se trata de un traumatismo movilizador, en el sentido de desalienar al niño restituyéndole el derecho de conocer sus orígenes, retomar su nombre y su apellido, de los cuales los raptos habían querido borrar todo rastro. El juez asume formular la prohibición que tiene que operar en contra de los raptos, beneficiando el interés superior del niño. Es el juez quien pone al tanto al niño sobre la verdad histórica en cuanto a su origen, las circunstancias de su secuestro y el terrible fin que sufrieron sus verdaderos padres.

— El niño es contenido por los familiares legítimos secundados por un equipo de psicólogos y psiquiatras que facilitan el encuadre del reencuentro.

— Es también el Juez quien debe explicitar a los abuelos el lazo legitimado por la decisión de la justicia.

— Los raptos quedan a disposición de la Justicia para rendir cuenta del delito cometido.

— Es de extrema importancia que ninguna persona en uniforme esté presente durante este acto de Justicia.

Podemos imaginar la intensidad del contenido emocional de este acto de restitución. Citaré *in extenso* el relato^v que hace una abuela, sumamente conmovedor. En dicho relato realizado en primera persona, se pone de relieve de manera ejemplar, la importancia que puede tener un nombre en la recuperación de una identidad, aparentemente perdida para siempre, pero que estaba presente, en espera de poder resurgir con fuerza e intensidad.

Paula Eva Logares fue “desaparecida” cuando tenía 23 meses, con sus padres Mónica Gripson y Claudio Logares. De nacionalidad argentina, fueron secuestrados en Montevideo. Elsa, la abuela, que vivía en Buenos Aires, se quedó todo el mes de junio esperando. Como buena ciudadana, pensaba aún que se puede ubicar a alguien que está arrestado, sólo había que indagar en una Comisaría. Todavía no sospechaba la siniestra condición de “desaparecido”. Su búsqueda empezó en Uruguay y después en Argentina. Elsa pensaba que Paula estaba con Mónica, su madre. Escribe cartas al presidente del Uruguay e inocentemente, le pide que le devuelva a su pequeña Paula cuando tuviese 4 años, una vez transcurrido el tiempo necesario para que la pequeña permaneciera con su madre. Tiempo –pensaba ella– que los servicios de seguridad le acordarían. Elsa todavía no podía imaginar todo el horror en ciernes: “*para mí fue catastrófico entender que estaban separadas. Ahora entiendo que era de una inocencia o de una estupidez absoluta*”. Esta imposibilidad de concebir lo siniestro no es, evidentemente, signo de estupidez, como parece reprocharse Elsa, sino de humanidad. Alguien que es respetuoso de la humanidad del otro no puede admitir la ignominia de los seres que funcionan como una máquina nefasta de destrucción y muerte.

Elsa recurrió a las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo quienes la ayudaron en su búsqueda. Una foto de su nieta, tomada en 1980, teniendo al centro de Buenos Aires de fondo, fue dirigida de forma anónima a una ONG de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos con la denuncia de que la criatura figuraba como hija de nacimiento de un Comisario de Policía. Según la denuncia la niña se llamaba Paula Lavallen o Luivallén. Mirando la foto, Elsa la reconoció sin dudas como su nieta y prosiguió con el mismo ahínco, pero con mayor estímulo, la búsqueda emprendida. Paula, en ese momento, tenía 4 años. Elsa logra encontrar la dirección y pasa y vuelve a pasar a lo largo de la calle para observarla. Intenta sin resultado el contacto con ella, hasta el día en que se encuentra finalmente frente a su nieta y a una persona que la toma en sus brazos a la salida de la escuela. Obviamente, en esa época las abuelas no podían contar

con las instituciones judiciales de la dictadura para identificar y devolver los niños a sus familias legítimas. Un día, descubre que la familia de los raptos se había mudado. Está desesperada. No logra encontrar la nueva dirección pero la búsqueda continúa y la democracia adviene. A partir de ese momento, la Asociación de Abuelas puede pegar afiches con las fotos de los niños secuestrados y ciertos diarios y revistas las publican también. Una pareja vecina le hace llegar espontáneamente la nueva dirección donde vive Paula con sus raptos.

“Un día –cuenta Elsa- la volví a ver descendiendo del micro escolar con una muñequita en brazos y un guardapolvo rosa. Tuve un shock. La nena es muy parecida a su mamá y era como ver de nuevo a Mónica chiquita, parada ahí en la vereda. Al mismo tiempo quedé desorientada. Paula ya tenía 7 años. ¿Qué hacía todavía en el jardín de infantes? Tenía que estar en segundo grado, yo no entendía nada. Más tarde supe que los Lavallén la habían anotado como recién nacida en el momento de su secuestro. Paula vivía como si tuviera dos años menos”.

A partir de ese momento, Elsa frecuenta el barrio todos los días y para que los vecinos se familiaricen con su presencia sin levantar sospechas, lleva un canasto y hace sus compras. Mientras tanto, los abogados de la Asociación preparan la presentación en justicia. Había que encontrar el acta de nacimiento falsa, pero carecían del nombre exacto. Los abogados habían ubicado en una lista de torturadores el nombre Lavallén, pero no sabían si se trataba del apellido del apropiador. Entonces, una de las hijas de Elsa se acercó un día a Paula y le preguntó: *¿cómo te llamas?* Y Paula contestó: *“Paula Luisa Lavallén”*. Así lograron confirmar el apellido correcto, sólo les faltaba el nombre. Un día, una señora vecina de los Lavallén, se acercó a la Asociación y pidió hablar con la abuela de Paula. La mujer tenía miedo pero al mismo tiempo no carecía de convicción: *“Pienso que si la criatura tiene una familia que la está buscando, el mejor lugar donde va a estar es con esa familia porque esa casa no es para una chiquita y menos para una adolescente cuando tenga diez o doce años”*. Y le habla de sus temores de cómo Lavallén tocaba y trataba a la niña. Cómo esa gente educaba a la niña “para” los designios de Lavallén. Tenía la impresión que éste no tenía una relación sana con la niña. Paula contará más adelante que Lavallén le decía que las chicas no hablan con los chicos porque son malos y sucios y que un día se casaría con él. El 13 de diciembre de 1983, al día siguiente de la asunción del Presidente elegido después del advenimiento de la democracia, los abogados hacen una presentación frente a la justicia. Cuando por orden judicial se dispone que la niña sea retirada de la familia de Lavallén, éste se presenta a la justicia con una “verdadera” acta de nacimiento según la cual Paula era supuestamente su hija. El documento era auténtico, había que demostrar que los datos eran falsos. Los exámenes de histocompatibilidad sanguíneos no existían todavía como elemento de prueba y hubo que esperar el 3 de agosto de 1984 para que estos tipos de pruebas puedan realizarse en Argentina. Cuando por fin tuvo lugar y se confirmó fehacientemente que se trataba de Paula Eva Logares, no por eso la niña fue devuelta a sus abuelos, quienes serán convocados por la justicia el 13 de diciembre de 1984. Por la Asociación de las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo estaban presentes dos psicólogos, un pediatra y los abogados. Recién entonces el Juez dispuso devolver la niña a su familia legítima.

Es conmovedor citar el relato de la abuela Elsa integralmente:^{vi}

“La nena lloraba mucho, pateó mucho, no necesitó sedante, no quiso comer, dormitó un rato. Hasta que me dijeron que podía pasar. Entramos con mi marido a hablar con ella y ella llorando con mucha bronca, muy enojada, me dijo que quién era yo. Le conté que era la mamá de su mamá. “ Mentira –me gritó –mi mamá es Raquel y mi papá es Rubén” Eso es lo que

*dicen ellos— le dije—, yo digo otra cosa. Si yo soy la mamá de tus papás y no soy la mamá de ellos, de ninguna manera estos señores son tus padres. Se puso a gritar y a decirme que yo no era nadie, que lo único que quería era destruir a su familia” Más adelante le dije que había traído una foto para que vea y diga lo que le parecía, para ver si se acuerda de sus padres y agrega “yo había hecho ampliar fotos de sus padres con ella en brazos. Las miró y me las tiró arriba del escritorio. “Esto no es verdad —dijo Paula— porque son demasiado nuevas para que sean de la época que vos decís”. Le pedí disculpas y le expliqué que había hecho ampliar la foto para que se viese mejor la cara de sus padres, las fotos viejas estaban en casa para que ella las examinara. Miró una de las últimas que teníamos de cuando ella estaba con nosotros y dijo: “Sí, esta es bastante parecida a una que hay en casa”. Calculé que sería una fotografía que le tomaron al poco tiempo de secuestrarla. Se quedó mirando la foto de su madre y no decía nada. Miraba la foto del padre y lloraba, lloraba, no paraba de llorar. Entonces le dije: ¿Sabés cómo le decías a tu papá? “No”, me contestó. Le decías **Calio**. Cuando se lo dije me miró, y repitió muy bajito con el mismo tono que de chiquita le había dicho a Claudio, su papá: “ **Calio, Calio**”. Ahí se largó a llorar a los gritos” Fue como un nuevo nacimiento. Como dice el pediatra que asistió de un modo muy pertinente tanto a Paula como a su abuela, ese momento equivale a la ruptura de un absceso. Es un momento muy doloroso.*

Esa tarde Paula fue a lo de su familia legítima, quiso ir al baño, no preguntó dónde estaba. Parecía reconocer el lugar. Se dirigió a la pieza del fondo, su pieza de otro tiempo, donde se había dormido tantas veces. Paula preguntó cómo eran sus padres, pidió ver fotos. En 1988, finalmente Paula recupera su nombre y su apellido de nacimiento. Cuenta la abuela que cuando el secretario del Juez le entrega su documento de identidad: *“Paulita sonríe y se abraza a mí. Sabía que la identidad de Paula era importante para mí, pero no tenía la exacta dimensión de lo que significaba realmente: era que la tenía a mi lado. La justicia reconocía en los papeles su presencia y más allá de Paula, la existencia de Mónica y Claudio. Ellos habían existido, estaban vivos y presentes en su hija”.*

Últimamente (6 de Febrero 2014) la Asociación de las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo anunció que de los chicos que nacieron en centros de detención ilegales, hasta ese momento habían podido recuperar 110 nietos que habían sido secuestrados durante la dictadura militar.

Uno de ellos es Sebastián nacido el 27 de marzo de 1978 cuando su madre Adriana estaba detenida en un centro ilegal en la ciudad de La Plata.

Había sido secuestrada cuando estaba embarazada de 5 meses, al mismo tiempo que el padre de Sebastián, Gaspar, quien pasó a integrar el número de víctimas de la tristemente célebre ESMA (Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada).

Sebastián era ya un joven adulto cuando su medio-hermana le cuenta que había sido “adoptado” al igual que ella. Pensando en las fechas, tuvo la curiosidad de saber si no era uno de los niños secuestrados durante la dictadura. Visita el sitio Web de la Asociación de las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo y le parece reconocer a sus abuelos por el parecido físico. Se pone en contacto con la Asociación y hace un estudio de ADN que confirma su intuición. A partir del momento en que conoce su verdadero origen, su verdadero apellido, elige y añade como segundo nombre José, el mismo por el que habían optado sus padres para el caso en que el recién nacido fuese un varón; Josefina si fuese una nena. A partir de entonces, Sebastián es Sebastián José, inscripto en el deseo de sus padres, en su verdadera filiación.

Consideraciones acerca de la filiación y la nominación en referencia al robo de niños

La acción represiva que incluía el robo de niños no fue desorganizada ni azarosa. Fue la consecuencia de un plan orquestado, basado en la “Doctrina de la seguridad nacional” y “del enemigo interno” que tenía por objetivo no sólo hacer desaparecer a quienes se opusieran al régimen, sino también castigar a sus familias, buscando una verdadera desintegración de varias generaciones. El robo de niños y su “adopción” por las familias en connivencia ideológica con el régimen, a menudo ligadas con las fuerzas de seguridad, formaba parte de un plan de depuración ideológica con fuertes características mesiánicas. Queriendo interrumpir la cadena de generaciones, el poder pretendía inculcar a los niños los “verdaderos valores”, en una violenta negación de la ignominia y de lo siniestro de tales actos, incompatibles con todo valor ético.

Es paradójico que, después de la restauración de la democracia en 1983 y los juicios de restitución de los niños a sus familias legítimas, algunos hayan podido sostener que la restitución no era conveniente. Aducían que las familias que habían educado a esos niños se habían convertido en sus padres adoptivos, que los habían educado con “amor” y por consecuencia restituirlos a su familia biológica, desconocida hasta entonces, era agregar un trauma suplementario.

No es redundante subrayar que además del delito de secuestro de niños y falsificación de los documentos públicos, el poder cometió otros delitos no menos graves, como el no-respeto de los derechos, debidamente contemplado por la Convención de los Derechos de los Niños, a tener un nombre, a conocer su identidad, a situarse en su filiación. Fue violada la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos de 1948, el Pacto Internacional de Derechos Políticos y Civiles aprobado por las Naciones Unidas, y la Convención Americana sobre los Derechos Humanos de San José de Costa Rica, aprobado en 1969. Todas esas convenciones y tratados insisten en el derecho del niño a tener su identidad, ser inscripto bajo el nombre de los padres o de uno de ellos, como así también a tener un nombre en acuerdo con la elección de los padres en la descendencia de su filiación.

Los ministros de la Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni y Ricardo Lorenzetti en autos “Gualtieri, Rugnone de Prieto, Emma Elidia y otros, s/sustracción de menores de diez años”, causa G 291, XLIII, afirman:

“el crimen en autos no configura un hecho aislado, sino que respondió a una decisión general en el marco de una empresa criminal llevada a cabo por un aparato de poder del estado violador de elementales derechos humanos”.... “La creatividad tan perversa de esta decisión hace difícil la comprensión misma de su motivación y, por ende, de la propia dinámica criminal de los hechos”, pues tanto “puede pensarse en una tentativa de eliminar la memoria de esas víctimas, sumiéndolas en la ignorancia no sólo de su origen sino también hasta de su propia orfandad”, como en un delito que “se erige en una nueva cosificación humana que guarda cierto parentesco con la esclavitud, por considerar a los infantes como parte de botines de correrías criminales”.

En el fallo del Tribunal Oral Federal N° 1 de La Plata, se afirma que: “este acto criminal, aberrante, de colocar al niño al margen de toda protección legal, arrancado del vientre materno, alterando su estado civil, llevándolo a la ignorancia sobre tal estado, colocándolo en situación de desaparecido, eleva la sustracción, retención y ocultamiento de un menor de diez años, a la categoría de crimen de Lesa Humanidad, ya que la unicidad de la víctima puede referirse a la humanidad toda en su conjunto^{vii}”.

Evidentemente, desde el punto de vista jurídico la problemática es vasta y merecería ser tratado *in extenso*. Debiendo acotar, elegiremos la perspectiva que concierne a los traumas causados a los niños y sus consecuencias psíquicas, en particular subrayando el eje de la filiación y la nominación, y el valor que toma la verdadera nominación cuando el niño recupera su identidad, en el momento de la restitución por parte de la justicia a su familia legítima.

Las familias impuestas al niño por los organismos de seguridad a menudo formaban parte de la máquina infernal que había secuestrado y matado a sus propios padres. Como subrayan las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo^{viii}, no podemos hablar en esos casos de adopción, como algunos pretendieron más adelante, sino de apropiación violenta. Estos niños no fueron abandonados por sus padres, sino arrancados por la fuerza a sus familias legítimas.

Se trata de niños separados de sus padres, quienes en la mayoría de los casos fueron torturados, muchas veces en presencia de sus hijos –utilizados en esas circunstancias como factor de presión suplementaria– y después asesinados. El poder se negó a reintegrar a los niños a su verdadera familia, desmintiendo el secuestro del que habían sido víctimas.

Luego de semejante acto delictivo, la situación en la que se encuentra el niño origina graves daños psíquicos, particularmente a nivel de su identidad, la confusión acerca de su origen, la negación del horror sobre el cual las familias apropiadoras pretendían crear relaciones de afecto y paternidad. Como un infiltrado maligno, los efectos traumáticos se extienden sobre toda su salud psico-somática ejerciendo una influencia deletérea sobre la vida del niño, con tiempos de latencia imprevisibles y capaces de hacer sentir su nefasta incidencia de modo perdurable.

La restitución al niño de su identidad y de su historia, así como la restitución del niño a su familia legítima, es el paso previo y necesario para intentar una reparación del daño sufrido. Es evidente que el momento de la restitución es traumático para el niño, pero se trata de un trauma estructurante, a diferencia del trauma disolvente que había sufrido en el secuestro. La restitución *“Es un acto fundante que se basa sobre la articulación de la verdad y de la justicia”*. Las situaciones en las que se encontraban los niños son *“fraudes y falsificaciones sin ley y sin verdad”*. A partir de la restitución *“no solamente las huellas mnésicas psíquicas se actualizan, sino también las corporales, porque el cuerpo recuerda. El cuerpo “escucha”, el cuerpo “ve”, el cuerpo “dice”, en el reencuentro con el universo familiar de origen el cuerpo “sabe”. Este cuerpo interviene como organizador que permite acceder a los fundamentos constitutivos”^{ix}*.

Se trata del cuerpo donde queda inscripto lo traumático no simbolizado de los niños que no tenían aún la posibilidad de lenguaje verbal. La experiencia de los niños nacidos cuando sus madres estaban detenidas ilegalmente, habiendo sido secuestrados inmediatamente o a veces algunas horas después de su nacimiento, llevó a pensar que puede existir en el niño una huella psíquica previa al nacimiento, denominada *“identificación pre-primaria”^x*. En las situaciones traumáticas del tipo de las que venimos hablando, esta quedaría *“clivada, encerrada o enclaustrada al interior de una caparazón sin destruirse ni ahogarse”*. La restitución opera como *“permeabilizadora de esta capa protectora del quiste, liberando la potencialidad de identificación que vehicula su núcleo”*.

Para estos autores, la restitución genera un cambio de los juicios de existencia y de atribución que habían sido subvertidos en el momento del secuestro: *¿Quién soy? ¿De dónde vengo? ¿Quién desea mi bienestar?* El niño debe pasar por una *“desidentificación”* de las falsas imágenes parentales, como paso previo a la asunción de su verdadera identidad. Esto

no podrá hacerse sin una resemantización de las experiencias vividas. El relato auténtico de lo que realmente sucedió aporta un esclarecimiento a los significantes enmudecidos que habían quedado suspendidos, en espera de representaciones simbolizantes.

Como escribe A. Lo Giudice,^{xi} no se pueden borrar por arte de magia la usurpación y las huellas que el secuestro produjo en los niños; se puede, sin embargo, abrir un espacio para construir una verdad histórica que impida el asesinato de la memoria. A menudo los niños se debaten entre una “*memoria obligada que prohíbe el olvido*” y una “*memoria prohibida que obliga al olvido*”.

Según lo señala Pierre Legendre,^{xii} el lazo institucional que supone la vida familiar: “*es obra de la genealogía, que sostiene el hilo de la vida, recuerda al sujeto su asignación*” a un lugar dado. Este lugar, el niño no podrá crearlo por sí solo, necesita ser construido por los que lo anteceden. Como un vacío en espera de ser llenado, este lugar le es dado en primera instancia por sus padres en el imaginario que precede su nacimiento. En ese sentido, y como subraya Legendre, un álbum de familia es otra cosa que un libro de fotos. Instituye un orden a lo largo de las generaciones. Esta sucesión de lugares tiene por objetivo la creación de la alteridad, meta principal de la familia, evitando el magma indiscriminado que vendría a producirse en caso contrario. La institución familiar debe convalidar una genealogía ordenadora de los lugares, es decir de los sexos y de las generaciones.

El sujeto, como remarca Legendre, es transindividual en la medida en que es definido por categorías jurídicas y psicológicas de la genealogía. Su identidad está pre-figurada por quienes lo preceden. A través de ellos el niño encuentra un punto de anclaje para ocupar su lugar en la genealogía y construir su futuro. La función de los padres sirve por cierto de eje conductor en el dispositivo genealógico, y esta es la carencia cruelmente inscrita en los niños secuestrados. No es en nada comparable con la verdadera adopción. En esta última, la función parental está plenamente asumida en una genealogía adoptiva que no pierde significancia, dado que se construye sobre el respeto de la identidad y la verdad acerca del origen. La función paterna, ya sea biológica o adoptiva, debe ser ejercida como portadora de una Ley simbólica que trasciende al portador y según la cual la función paterna se somete a la misma Ley simbólica de la que es portadora. Esto es lo que transmite a sus hijos: la aceptación de la castración simbólica y la falta a la cual todo ser debe confrontarse. Es por eso que la genealogía excede el trío padre-madre-hijo para incluir toda la sociedad.

Por el contrario, los raptos de niños no pueden asumir la función parental dado que la misma queda sepultada junto a los cadáveres de los padres asesinados. La función parental no puede basarse en un crimen de lesa humanidad, hecho de mentiras y de travestismos de la verdad. Como lo subraya F. Ulloa^{xiii}, en esas condiciones, el niño es rebajado a la condición de un “objeto-fetiché” del que se apropian como botín de guerra, en un simulacro de parentalidad.

Nos confrontamos al campo de lo abyecto, que, como lo remarca Julia Kristeva^{xiv}, se relaciona con la perversión. Lo abyecto es perverso dado que no abandona ni asume una prohibición, una regla o una ley; la esquivo, la corrompe; usa la prohibición para negarla. Mata en nombre de la vida. Y la autora concluye: es el traficante genético; se apropia del sufrimiento del otro para su propio bien: es el cínico por excelencia

Por su parte, Legendre nos recuerda que “*la familia no es una yuxtaposición de individuos; es una entidad, que consecuentemente tiene lugares con valor estructural, nombrados y jurídicamente organizados. La entidad familiar es una puesta en escena*”

instituyendo la representación del Edipo". Para ello es necesario que lo institucional de la familia imponga límites a la descarga pulsional. Pero, poner límites –afirma Legendre^{xv}– “*es poner en escena jurídica el sistema de las prohibiciones*”.

Cuando se los apropian, los raptos de niños, apropiándose los, no realizan un acto simbólico de adopción, sino que los hacen objeto de sus pulsiones de dominación, desplegadas en esa escena. Se sitúan en el registro de lo pulsional sin límites. En la apropiación del niño en tanto que objeto parcial al servicio de la omnipotencia mortífera, hay crimen del alma. En lugar de ser portador de la Ley simbólica, el raptor la desafía, y pretende ser el hacedor de la ley. El efecto siniestro es provocar una subversión de la Ley, dado que secreta pus en forma de ley putrefacta. Como subraya Legendre, no podemos enunciar *yo quiero* sin referencia a la Ley. La Ley quiere antes que nosotros. Por el contrario, el raptor dice: la Ley existe para mí *si yo quiero*... Se impone así como el referente absoluto. No es sin duda una mera coincidencia si la vecina del Comisario Lavallén teme, teniendo en cuenta el modo relacional que observa, un pasaje al acto incestuoso del raptor, en el momento de la pubertad de Paula.

En el fondo, dice Legendre, la institución de la genealogía consiste en articular los deseos incestuosos y la Ley, es decir, poniendo un límite al incesto. Los sistemas institucionales están contruidos sobre esta base, que articula lo prohibido a la Ley simbólica. Se trata de la Ley escrita con mayúsculas: “*a fines de estipular que se trata del límite al Deseo absoluto, al deseo de la identidad imposible*”.

A la manera de un hueco, el lugar que vendrá a ocupar el niño, es un lugar creado por el discurso de los padres que prefiguran su llegada. La elección del nombre, como venimos diciendo a lo largo de este libro, es un momento crucial de la inclusión simbólica del niño en el deseo parental y en la descendencia familiar. Como una estampilla de origen, el nombre lleva la huella que lo reenvía permanentemente al discurso deseante de sus padres, que le da existencia aún antes del nacimiento.

La herramienta de la metamorfosis que asegura la entrada del sujeto en las categorías de la genealogía, es la nominación, afirma Legendre. Y precisa al respecto: “*la nominación, esta técnica de civilización del sujeto*” que sirve para construir la alteridad.

En el proceso de devolver la identidad a los niños “desaparecidos-apropiados”, pudimos ver hasta qué punto la recuperación de sus nombres era esencial. Esta recuperación de los nombres y de sus apellidos parece evidente para los primeros niños recuperados, que eran muy pequeños. Pero también lo es por ejemplo, en el caso de Sebastián, que a pesar de sus 29 años al momento de la revelación de su verdadera identidad, sintió la necesidad y eligió él mismo agregar al nombre con el cual había vivido hasta ese entonces, el de José, que había sido elegido por sus padres. No solamente recupera su apellido, gracias al cual se inscribe en una verdadera descendencia, sino también el nombre, José, que le permite el reencuentro con el deseo de vida de sus padres.

Es particularmente conmovedor y elocuente de la importancia del nombre de pila el relato de Paula, la nieta de Elsa, cuando en el momento de la restitución, se muestra, en un primer momento, furiosa frente al anuncio de un cambio tan radical en su vida, negándose en un principio a creer quiénes eran sus verdaderos padres. Contra toda espera, bastó con que su abuela le murmurase al oído el nombre de su padre, Claudio, de la manera en que lo pronunciaba siendo niña “*Calio*...” para que Paula estalle desconsoladamente en llanto. El poder de la reminiscencia fónica del nombre de su padre operó como certeza sobre su verdadero origen, a pesar de que tenía en la época del secuestro menos de dos años.

Los traumatismos “primarios” recuerda René Roussillon^{xvi}, conciernen “conyunturas históricas o prehistóricas en las cuales el sujeto, demasiado inmaduro o desbordado por la intensidad de lo que debe vivir, o privado de un contexto relacional adecuado, no ha podido simbolizar, ni siquiera de manera imperfecta o parcial, frente a lo que tuvo que confrontarse”.

Desde el inicio de la vida psíquica, las capacidades mentales se ejercen, primero, sobre el material acústico. El espacio sonoro –afirma D. Anzieu^{xvii}– es el primer espacio psíquico, un espacio protegido pero no herméticamente cerrado. El espejo sonoro es previo al visual. El Self se forma como un envoltorio sonoro en la experiencia del baño de sonidos, concomitante a la experiencia de la lactancia. Este baño de sonido prefigura el Yo-piel, con una cara a doble faz orientada hacia el adentro y el afuera, ya que la envoltura sonora está compuesta de sonidos emitidos alternativamente por el entorno y por el bebé.

Como lo subraya Laurent Danon-Boileau^{xviii}, existe en el psicoanálisis contemporáneo la intuición de un nivel más profundo del inconsciente que corresponde a lo que ha sido designado como “memoria sin recuerdos” (André Green y Sara y César Botella), inconsciente originario (Piera Aulagnier) o lugar des trazas mnésicas perceptivas (René Roussillon).

Percibimos así la pregnancia que la sonoridad del nombre de su padre adquirió para Paula, el valor de condensación que adquirió de toda una historia simbólica familiar. La sola enunciación del nombre del padre, su materialidad sonora, fue suficiente para que florezcan nuevas fragancias. Como acordes de un instrumento primitivo, como una música encantada, Paula es repentinamente puesta en contacto con su originario enquistado en forma sonora. El sonido del nombre presentifica el cuerpo de su padre. Es en el instante en que Paula escucha el nombre de su padre, de la misma manera en que lo pronunciaba siendo pequeña, que algo bascula de la incertidumbre y de la confusión traumática disolvente, hacia el posible inicio de un duelo a partir de la verdad de su filiación legítima. Dicho nombre, reminiscencia sonora, fuente de emoción constituyente, la confirma en la certeza de su filiación. De Paula Luisa Lavallén, niña secuestrada por el Comisario Lavallén, volverá a ser Paula Eva Logares, la hija deseada, inserta en una genealogía, la hija de sus padres Mónica y Claudio Logares, nieta de Elsa.

Del 1976 al 2008, han transcurrido 32 años del golpe de estado y los niños apropiados de la época ya son jóvenes adultos. Las formas de la búsqueda de la verdad toman otros carriles ante la justicia. En Febrero de 2008^{xix}, se ha iniciado el primer juicio en el que una joven apropiada durante la dictadura se presenta como querellante contra el matrimonio que la crió como si fuera propia. María Eugenia Sampallo Barragán vivió hasta el 2001 sin conocer su verdadera identidad. Al momento del juicio tiene 30 años, aunque desconoce la fecha exacta y el lugar donde nació en cautiverio. Sus apropiadores le habían dado diferentes versiones de su “adopción”, sin escatimar agresiones. Por ejemplo, en una oportunidad su apropiadora le vociferó: “sos una desagradecida, si no fuera por mí, hubieras terminado en un zanjón”, frase cuya sordidez sería cabalmente comprendida por ella sólo con el correr de los años. María Eugenia sabe ahora que es la hija de dos desaparecidos, Mirta Mabel Barragán y Leonardo Sampallo. Mirta estaba embarazada de seis meses cuando la secuestraron junto a su hijo Gustavo, de tres años, y a su pareja Leonardo. El niño fue a parar a una comisaría de donde lo rescató su papá, y durante mucho tiempo, ya con sus familiares, habló del “hermanito” que su mamá estaba esperando. Eso resultó clave para que la familia supiera que tal vez había un niño o una niña nacido en cautiverio. De Mirta y Leonardo hoy se sabe que estuvieron en el

centro clandestino de detención El Atlético y luego en El Banco. Mirta fue sacada de allí en febrero del 78 para dar a luz; es posible que María Eugenia haya nacido en el Hospital Militar. A partir de ese momento, no se supo nada más de sus padres. El matrimonio Gómez-Rivas recibió a la niña tres meses después, por una gestión del militar Berthier, amigo de la apropiadora.

María Eugenia se decidió a realizar el juicio contra sus apropiadores después que los mismos, tras ser procesados, abrieran una contracausa donde la acusaron a ella y a todos los testigos de mentir. Cabal ejemplo del grado de negación y desmentida perversa que imperó durante la dictadura y cuyas ramificaciones aún persisten contra toda evidencia. Al momento de escribir estas líneas el juicio oral continúa, pero es interesante destacar la importancia que puede tener para la joven apropiada que los culpables sean sancionados, ya no como modo de restablecer la verdad de su filiación, confirmada por las pruebas de ADN, sino para liberarla del traumatismo desestructurante de sus propias percepciones, por haber crecido en la confusión enloquecedora de la mentira alienante, cuyos efectos deletéreos aún pueden manifestarse a pesar del tiempo transcurrido. En ese sentido, más allá de la condena de un delito, importa subrayar que la escena judicial puede adquirir un valor simbólico apaciguante para el psiquismo desgarrado de la joven apropiada poco después de nacer.

Resumen:

El proceso de apropiación de niños durante la última dictadura militar argentina, y las restituciones logradas gracias a Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo y la intervención de la Justicia, nos permiten pensar cuestiones claves en relación a la genealogía, la transmisión del nombre propio, y la filiación. El abordaje de algunos casos de niños nacidos cuando sus madres estaban detenidas ilegalmente, habiendo sido secuestrados inmediatamente o a veces algunas horas después de su nacimiento, nos lleva a pensar que puede existir en el niño una huella psíquica previa al nacimiento, denominada “identificación pre-primaria”. A través de tres casos de nietos restituidos gracias al trabajo y al esfuerzo incansable de las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, se introduce la importancia del nombre de pila en el relato, la vinculación con la familia de origen, y el proceso de restitución.

Palabras clave: Apropiación, Restitución, Genealogía, Transmisión del nombre propio

The identity theft of children: restitution of their identities and the importance of recovering their names

The appropriation of children during the military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1982), and the restitutions made possible thanks to the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo and the Law, have made it possible to think about essential matters concerning genealogy, recovery of names and filiations. On studying some of these cases where children born during their mothers' illegal detention, were abducted immediately after birth, have lead us to think that psychical footprints, known as pre-primary identification may exist in children prior to their birth. Three cases of grandchildren, recovered due to the tireless work of the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, are used to introduce the importance of a child's first name, the ties with their original families and the process of restitution.

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- ⁱ Texto modificado del capítulo X del libro “En las huellas del nombre propio”, del mismo autor, Letra Viva, Buenos Aires 2009 (segunda edición 2011). Dicho libro obtuvo en el año 2011 el segundo premio en la categoría “Ensayo Psicológico”, de la Secretaría de Cultura (hoy Ministerio) de la Nación.
- ⁱⁱ Entre los cuales la tristemente célebre Triple A
- ⁱⁱⁱ Informe de la CONADEP (Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Persona, «Nunca Más», EUDEBA, Buenos Aires, 1984.
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- ^{xix} Página 12, 22-02-2008

IN THE TRACES OF OUR NAME

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Juan Eduardo Tesone was born in Argentina, received his degree as a physician with an Honours Degree from the University of Buenos Aires, and was a medical resident in psychiatry in the Buenos Aires Children's Hospital (1974–1976). In 1977, he was awarded a scholarship by the French Foreign Affairs Ministry and travelled to France, where he finished his studies in psychiatry at the University of Paris XII. He trained at, and is now a Full Member of, the Paris Psychoanalytical Society. He was a resident physician at the La Salpêtrière Hospital (1977–1998), and has been an adviser to the Social Welfare Ministry of France. He was Adjunct Physician of the Hospitals of Public Assistance of Paris (1978–1988), and Medical Director of the E. Pichon Rivière Medical-Psycho-Pedagogical Centre of Paris (1987–1998). In 1998, he returned to Argentina. He also became a Full Member and Training Analyst of the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association and Full Member of the IPA. At present, he is a Professor of the DUEFO of the La Pitié-Salpêtrière Medical School, University of Paris VI Pierre et Marie Curie, Professor of the Masters Programme in Interdisciplinary Studies on Subjectivity, School of Philosophy, University of Buenos Aires, Professor of the Masters Programme in Psychoanalysis of the School of Psychology of the University Del

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PSYCHOANALYTIC IDEAS AND APPLICATIONS SERIES

IPA Publications Committee

The Publications Committee of the International Psychoanalytical Association continues, with this volume, the series: "Psychoanalytic Ideas and Applications".

The aim is to focus on the scientific production of significant authors whose works are outstanding contributions to the development of the psychoanalytic field and to set out relevant ideas and themes, generated during the history of psychoanalysis, that deserve to be discussed by present psychoanalysts.

The relationship between psychoanalytic ideas and their applications has to be put forward from the perspective of theory, clinical practice, technique, and research so as to maintain their validity for contemporary psychoanalysis.

The Publication Committee's objective is to share these ideas with the psychoanalytic community and with professionals in other related disciplines, in order to expand their knowledge and generate a productive interchange between the text and the reader.

In *In the Traces of Our Name*, Juan Tesone emphasizes the influence of the name given at birth in terms of the construction of subjectivity. Parents' wishes, linked with those of former generations, are included in a genealogy that must be reworked as a task which never ends in

order to appropriate one's own name. In his book, Tesone presents an interdisciplinary viewpoint which connects his psychoanalytic approach with a historical and cultural background.

Special thanks are due to Juan Tesone for his contribution to the "Psychoanalytic Ideas and Applications" series, as well as to Charles Hanly, President of the International Psychoanalytical Association, for his support.

Leticia Glocer Fiorini
Chair, IPA Publications Committee
Series Editor

FOREWORD

The theme of this book—the proper name—has for a long time been the object of attention, study, and discussion on the part of various disciplines from linguistics to logic, history, and anthropology. As far as I know, this is the first book written on the subject of the proper name from the point of view of psychoanalysis. This is certainly curious, since one would spontaneously presume that psychoanalysis would have something to say about it, as, in fact, is demonstrated by the author of this book.

The title describes the project well: *In the Traces of Our Name* consists of ten chapters, ranging from “Why do we name?” to clinical psychoanalysis, and it includes a fascinating examination of the proper name in culture and literature. What do we talk about, in logic, in a dissertation on the proper name? I shall try to summarize the argument because it is essential in order to understand this book and its originality.

I shall refer to a fundamental text on the subject, that is, the three lectures given by the logician and philosopher Saul Kripke at the University of Princeton in 1970, published for the first time in 1972 together with other essays on linguistics and philosophy, and subsequently in a separate form in 1980 under the title of *Naming and Necessity* (Kripke, 1980).

In these lectures, Kripke discusses the theory of the reference of proper names, of the necessity, and of the relationship between body and mind (thesis of identity). Although the three themes are linked to each other, as Kripke shows in his handling of them, we are specifically interested in the theory of the reference of proper names.

In order to analyse them, the author repropose the thesis on proper names by John Stuart Mill in his well-known "A system of logic (1843), stating that names have denotation but not connotation. Kripke uses Mill's example relative to the small English town of Dartmouth. This town is at the mouth of the River Dart. If the river were to be diverted, would it be incorrect to continue giving the name of Dartmouth to this town? Mill says that it would not be incorrect, and Kripke agrees with him emphasizing that some people might certainly assign a connotation to the name, for example, the town that is at the mouth of the River Dart, but this does not mean that the name has a meaning. The fact that the town of Dartmouth is at the mouth of the River Dart is not part of the signification of the name.

Mill's theory, shared at least in part by Kripke, is not approved by contemporary logic. Frege, Russell, Hintikka, and Searle—to mention a few of the relevant names—are opposed to it and argue that a proper name is no more than a defined synthetic or masked description. In a very well-known article (1958), Searle says that the referent of a name is not determined by one description only but by a bundle or family of descriptions. Also, the meaning of a proper name would be revealed by the bundle of descriptions.

At this point, Kripke continues with a long discussion on these theories of contemporary logic that naturally I will not repeat here. He concludes by introducing the notion of "identity through possible worlds". A "possible world", he stipulates, is the result of the descriptive conditions that we associate with it. It is necessary, he says, to find something that in all the possible worlds will serve to designate the same object; to this something, Kripke gives the name of "rigid designators". The final theory is that proper names are "rigid designators"; in other words, they do not connote, or—and this is the same thing—they do not have a meaning and cannot be reduced to just any group whatsoever of defined descriptions.

In order to understand the originality of a psychoanalytic interpretation of the problem, we must ask ourselves where the author of

this book stands in relation to the previous debate, apart from justifying the brief description of Kripke's ideas

Tesone holds the same position as Jean Molino, editor of a monographic edition of *Langages* and author of one of the essays that appears in it. In a paragraph entitled "Etiquette vide ou trop-plein de signification" (blank label or too full of meaning) he describes briefly (as I have tried to do above) the alternative theories regarding the meaning of the proper name. He concludes with two statements: "proper names can in some cases have a meaning identical to a defined description or to a disjunction of defined descriptions", and "however, the proper name functions as a 'rigid designator', independently of any modification that the individual who it designates may undergo" (p. 15). This would, therefore, be a compromise between the two main currents described previously and to which the title of the paragraph refers. This is not the right place to make a judgement on the logical-philosophical viability of Molino's theoretical compromise, but it is understandable that it can be of interest to a psychoanalyst.

Before entering into the psychoanalytic hypotheses elaborated by the author of this book, let us take one last look at the thinking of Molino. I quote:

Finally, the proper name has a meaning. But we must be careful about the ambiguity of the word: the proper name has a meaning, but for whom: for the ethnologist, for the person who gives the name, for the person who bears it? It is important to distinguish the rules of reception and of comprehension of the proper name, and the rules of its production: the name can mean for me something different from what my godfather wanted it to mean. This substantiates the need to separate the three fundamental dimensions of the symbolic: production strategy, reception strategy, and neutral level of existence. [pp. 18–19, my translation]

This way of organizing the dimensions of the symbolic enables us to put together the function of identification and classification of the proper name with the function of signification—functions that were described by Lévi-Strauss in *La Pensée sauvage* (1962). For the latter, Molino suggests that the proper name produces an indefinite series of interpretants that are richer and more charged with affects than the interpretants of common names.

It is exactly in relation to this series of interpretants that Tesone introduces his main theory: in the series of interpretants there exists a *privileged interpretant*, the parental wish that presides over the choice of the name and that contributes to determining the subject. This is the real psychoanalytic theory of this book; as I think will be clear from what I have said above, it must include a dimension of signification, without this meaning that the classificatory function of the proper name is denied, or that anything definite is said about the validity of the different logical theories. As in Molino's proposition on the symbolic dimensions, it is a question of distinguishing the levels. Regarding the classificatory level, Tesone states that naming, giving a proper name to a child, means collocating him in a relational system, inserting him into the order of human relations, as Lèvi-Strauss postulates. The difference lies in the fact that our author, in accordance with psychoanalytic theory, believes that two laws exist: the classificatory law and the law of unconscious wish.

I shall not comment on the chapters (Two, Three, and Four) containing very interesting considerations and historical and cultural information about the significance of the name in different cultures, and about the importance given to naming, divine gift, in the Old Testament. In Chapter Five ("Giving a name"), he speaks of the imperative need to give a name to the newborn child, but also of the functions of the proper name. Of particular interest is the sub-section about the secret name in different cultures, especially the reference to Bettina Bäumer's work on the secret name in Hinduism. The author makes an inspired linguistic passage from "secret name" to "secret of the name". It is in the choice of a name that the wishes of the parents become manifest; the true intersection where the prevalently implicit histories of both the families throughout the generations reside. The aspect of the transgenerational value of the name must not be forgotten when making a psychoanalytic study of the proper name. The consequences that these implicit as well as explicit histories can have on the identity of the newborn child are considerable and, very frequently, pathological.

Although it is possible to give a name to oneself (the book gives a few examples, beginning with the heteronyms of Pessoa), human beings receive a name, a name given to us by others, usually our parents. The name conveys to, and installs within, the primordial self the presence of the other, a fundamental argument that here we can

only mention. This forms the main theme of Chapter Six, dealing with “the signifying force of the name”. The proper name is conceived as the hinge that links the family myth, the real ante-text that precedes the birth of the subject, to the text that the subject himself will be able to write. The received identity must become experienced identity; the subject must take possession of his name, he must ideally come to assume for himself Montaigne’s aphorism quoted by the author: “This is me” and not “I am this”.

Chapters Seven and Eight provide a good analysis of examples offered by Freudian texts as well as various fascinating literary examples.

The reader is thus prepared to confront the following chapter, which is dense with meaning but at the same time with pain. It is entitled: “State terrorism in Argentina and children seized by military power (1976–1983)”. The facts are well known. The forces of evil were not satisfied with torturing and murdering thousands of people; they forced pregnant women to give birth in concentration camps, afterwards killing them and adopting their babies. Tesone writes a terse and terrible sentence: “The machine of death, not satisfied with causing physical death, sought to eliminate every trace of nomination”. A few incredibly courageous women—the mothers and grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo—at considerable risk to their own lives, began to try to identify the children who had disappeared. There began a long “process of restitution” of which the author speaks, giving examples showing that certain realities are more surreal than invented stories, and that many of these stories, as well as filling us with rebellion and indignation, can also reduce us to endless tears and sorrow.

Various interdisciplinary work groups joined in the efforts of the mothers in the process of restitution. Some of our analyst colleagues (I wish to mention Elizabeth Tabak di Bianchedi, Marcello Bianchedi, Julia Braun, Marilù Pelento, Janine Puget, and the paper they presented at the 1989 IPA Congress in Rome, quoted by Tesone), as well as giving their practical contribution, have reflected on the type of trauma that remained impressed in these children, on the type of trace that could be “enacted” in the case of those infants who had been separated from their mothers, sometimes immediately after their birth, and who had had a life of lies and falsehoods imposed upon them. The authors of the paper say that “the body sees, the body listens, the body knows”, that as well as the psychic traces it is

possible to make the body speak, that one could think of a psychic trace preceding birth, a trace that they called “pre-primary identification”. Some of these ideas appear in the works of other colleagues who have worked with survivors of the Shoah, as demonstration of the fact that horror knows no boundaries or ending; also that certain human beings are prepared to dedicate themselves to repairing and healing the wounds of others.

It is hard to diminish the significance of this chapter that also illustrates the valuable contribution of those people who fought so that not all was lost, including names.

Five clinical cases conclude the book; five cases that focus on the importance of the name and of naming in the psychic and real life of subjects, and that provide clinical consistency to the author’s theories.

Tesone says that the parents “announce” the child before his conception, and that the discourse “on” the child thus gradually creates a place that his existence (at first imaginary) will occupy. The child will become a named place, probably at first with many names, each one the representative of a wish, part of a history, contributions of wishes or of histories of someone else who will inhabit, or not, the final name assigned to the real child. After his birth he will become an interlocutor, in an interlocution where his own name will have value as recognition, identity, existence in the world.

This book offers to the reader not only a fascinating journey through the meanders of culture, literary quotations, stories heard and experienced in everyday clinical work, but also a difficult journey through the pain and horror of certain realities. The pages deal with an issue largely ignored by psychoanalysis; they do so with passion and authority, and they provide a reading that is not only interesting but also essential.

Jorge Canestri

INTRODUCTION

The proper name, infinite rewriting

Santiago Kovadloff

I met Juan Tesone at a friend's house. Although our first meeting took place in Buenos Aires, he was living at that time in Paris, where he worked as a psychoanalyst and a teacher.

In a social milieu in which interest in talking about oneself largely surpasses willingness to listen to others, Juan Tesone's attitude, which contrasted with this tendency, was as unusual as it was a pleasure. When he spoke, he did it to counter, with humour and intelligence, the assumption that residing in Paris is, for a psychoanalyst in particular and in general for any foreign intellectual, an indisputable and constant advantage in comparison to possibilities offered by his own country or any other in the Latin American region. Juan Tesone prioritized, in his view of the matter, the idea that a good place to work, learn, and live is one where we can come to not know ourselves the best, that is to say, where we may confound the mirage of monolithic identity that locks us into prejudice and presumptuous generalizations about what it is that we characterize as reality. For me, his criteria, simultaneously cautious, ironic, and passionate, were stimulating and fertile and led to growing contact between us that, as it deepened, became a real friendship. This friendship enabled me, first through correspondence and then thanks to the proximity encouraged by his

return to Argentina, to access his dominant intellectual interests. The theme that, over the years, was to form the subject matter of this book soon appeared.

A man of two worlds, America and Europe, and two languages, Spanish and French, Juan Tesone cultivated, with perseverance and from early youth, the stimuli proposed by this double pertinence. Out of the incessant interaction in his mind between these two social and cultural universes, he drew captivating conclusions.

Inscribing his reflective effort in the furrow opened two thousand years ago by Plato and the sophists, strengthening his intuitions with the study of theoretical proposals of his teacher, Sigmund Freud, and by his intense clinical practice, Juan Tesone advanced in the systematization of his ideas concerning proper names. In them he identified, as the tip of an iceberg, the suggestion of fundamental conflicts that may influence the process of formation of subjectivity. This book, however, would take a long time to take shape. The need to write it, articulate its parts, and give it all the narrative flow its author wanted for it came after a previous step: Juan Tesone's gradual re-encounter with his everyday life in Argentina. Thus, *En las huellas del nombre propio* crowned, as a task and its fruit, an act of existential inscription in a recovered biographical context.

In his book, Juan Tesone proceeds with the expertise of a tracker in an open field. A reader of traces, sensitive to signs, he dedicates his effort to discover and interpret the role that, in the identity of each of us, the proper name plays as the crystallization of familial hopes and mandates that influence its choice and imposition. He also emphasizes the decisive task each of us needs to perform in order to make this imposed name express a whole personality.

In other terms, Juan Tesone explores the palpitation of other presences in ours, of ours in that of others. He investigates names conceived as signs that ask to be deciphered and enable us to discern unconscious and historical motivations. He considers that this enquiry and clarification may help to identify and overcome conflicts that may affect the psychic development of a child or to turn around the course of an adult life. His investigation enquires into the conjectural line of motivations that may have explicitly or implicitly inspired our names in those who chose them.

In the course of these ten chapters, the reader will notice how their author goes about opening the way to the formulation of his most

challenging proposal: how are we to recognize ourselves authentically in these names that others have given us, how to fill them with a reasonably innovative meaning born of the realization, always perfectible of course, of our expectations of life? His work, as the reader will learn, explores the roots of the act of baptism; in the person who carries the name he interrogates the intention of those who gave it; he interpellates the past in the present, the tacit in the explicit, the influence of the aims that inspired beings of yesteryear on the dilemmas incarnated by beings of today. In other words: the confluence, in the proper name, of intergenerational tensions that Juan Tesone approaches, as evidenced in the different moments of this work, from historical, religious, literary, and psychopathological perspectives.

Juan Tesone understands that "The writing of the name remains as the familial symbolic trace, the group palimpsest to which several generations often add their contributions. We would do well to go through this family book, follow its movements, reveal its characters and recognize this manuscript in cursive writing connected by bonds that run through several generations, in order to enable the child to appropriate his proper name". However, this act of appropriation is always and forever "an unfinished task". It is unfinished to the extent that it is possible.

The broad scope of information in these pages is, therefore, far from any intention of saturating with immutable conclusions the riddle into which it delves. The proposal is instead to open and display a wide range of complementary reading and multi-faceted approaches that multiply the evidence of the unfathomable wealth of the subject it explores, as well as the versatility of complementary interests that find support in the author's mind. Juan Tesone has also been able to enrich these pages with the constant clinical experience to which he is undoubtedly indebted for many of his most inspired reflections, even where he seems to be operating the least as a psychoanalyst.

"A name is attributed to a child but sometimes a child is attributed to a name." In this sentence by Juan Tesone, we hear, quite clearly, oracular resonances. A truth several times millenary, predominantly Hellenic, is outlined in his formulation. The proper name, the author stresses, is not a fate, and yet it palpitates with silenced aims, expectations, and mandates with intense historical roots whose articulation is crucial when subjective self-determination is involved. As long as

this does not occur, we repeat, this name reveals only the predominance of the intention of those who gave it. Consequently, the appropriation of the proper name is a primordial task for each of us that cannot be delegated. However, this appropriation has no end. Whoever takes it up never stops taking it up, over and again. It is, therefore, infinite rewriting. For this reason Juan Tesone insists, "Only in the course of this process does the name become one's own".

CHAPTER ONE

Why do we name?

“For in naming we speak, don’t we?”

(Plato, 1967)

“**W**hat’s in a name?” asks Shakespeare through Juliet in the tragedy whose title features the first names of Romeo and Juliet, thereby summing up an unknown that linguists, philosophers, ethnologists, and psychoanalysts have queried so frequently. She goes on with this sweet argument: “. . . that which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet”. And Romeo would like to be called Montague no longer, but instead incarnate the sweet flower of his first name without the family name that conflicts so deeply with Juliet’s desire. However, as we follow the action, we see that Romeo is then unable to say who he is: “I know not how to tell thee who I am . . .” And Juliet, who begs him to forget the family name, but not the first name, answers with resignation, “Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?”

Our first name is inseparable from ourselves, the essence of the person. It suffices to pronounce a few phonemes or to articulate some apparently insignificant syllables; the mere evocation of a name may

provoke love or hate, sad or happy memories, clear and distinct or chaotic, confused sentiments in relation to the possessor of that name. The softest whisper of a name may make an adolescent blush, brighten a child's face, move a mother or father to tears or joy, provoke a lover's palpitations, an enemy's fury and animosity, a student's recognition and gratitude for his teacher, or a child's for his parents. The name is inseparable from the person, and it functions to individualize that person.

As Molino (1982) stresses, on the one hand, in some theories the first name has no connotation, as if it were a label whose entire meaning were no more than its phonic reality. On the other hand, we find theories that consider proper names the most meaningful of all, since they are the most individual. Molino concludes, in the terminology of Peirce, that the proper name seems to function as an empty distinguishing feature but, at the same time, refers to a number of interpretants evoked by common names (i.e., those that are not proper names). This is the literary and poetic function of proper names, which are hyper-semanticized in the interpretation of Barthes. Molino suggests that in this case, the proper name seems to refer to an indefinite number of interpretants. We agree with Molino's thesis and adopt it, but further postulate the existence of a privileged interpretant that we identify in the parental desire that presides over the choice of that name and determines the subject.

The *Grammaire Générale et Raisonnée de Port-Royal* (Arnauld & Lancelot, 1969) describes two types of ideas: some represent a particular thing, such as each person's idea of his father, mother, friend, himself, etc., whereas others represent things that are similar to each other, for example, the idea of people in general.

It is accepted that we use proper nouns for those that represent singular ideas, as in the name Socrates, which represents only one particular philosopher named Socrates, or the name Paris, which corresponds to the city of the same name. For this reason, "proper nouns have no plural, since by nature they fit only one", explains this Grammar.

We would in vain attempt to establish the origin of proper nouns. Just as we would in vain open a debate concerning the creation of language. I do, however, think that naming and words are indissolubly connected. This union can be seen more explicitly in societies with oral transmission, as in those of tribal Africa, as we shall see below.

“In this world and in all the possible worlds anyone could imagine, nobody can avoid having a proper name. Even if Abelard had not been Heloise’s lover, he would still have been Abelard . . . and more intact as well” (Slatka, 1994).

Proper names are expressions that function only as referents, that is to say, they refer to a particular entity considered to be a singular “individual”: Peter is the particular man I know. However, we need to differentiate the proper name from other expressions that serve only as references: deictics or demonstrative pronouns and personal pronouns.

It is by virtue of the paradigmatic role of proper names in the sign system outside the speech system that their insertion in the syntagmatic chain perceptibly breaks that chain’s continuity. For example, in French this paradigmatic value is indicated by the absence of the preceding article and the use of an upper case letter to transcribe it (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 359).

A name is also a right of children and an institution that, unlike others, does not represent an anonymous social reality. It is the only institution that individualizes a person through an act of recognition indissolubly connected to the symbolic functions of maternity and paternity.

According to the logician John Stuart Mill, a name denotes a unique individual—Victor Hugo for example—without *a priori* recognition of any particular property. From this perspective, it may be inferred that a name is a signifier devoid of meaning or value. In other words, in Saussurian terms, a name would not be a linguistic sign. But if it had no meaning, how could a name acquire metaphoric meaning?

What the linguist Benveniste demonstrates is that a name belongs to a certain semiological system. He situates it in terms of “a conventional mark of social identification that may constantly designate a unique individual in a unique way” (quoted in Slatka, 1994).

This convention is specific to each society, each of which imposes its ways of naming individuals.

To name means to bring the child into the order of human relations; thus, the importance acquired by the name given to a child and received by that child. To have no name is a disaster, absolute disorder. To have a name means having a place in a relational system. In order to really exist, it is necessary to have first been named; names carry meaning and reveal vocation (Goldstain, 1982).

To choose and give a name to a child gives him imaginary history and family symbolism. This donation inserts the child into filial continuity and registers him in the maternal and paternal lineages, a trans-generational Ariadne's thread that shows him a road but does not prescribe it: the name converts this subject into an irreplaceable being that cannot be confused with any other member of his lineages.

This donation includes something sacred, since it is not goods given or sold but something given to be kept. It would be inconceivable to imagine a contract between the unborn child and its parents, as stressed by Godelier (1998).

In this sense, life is instituted in every society as a unilateral gift and a debt. However, this symbolic debt is not necessarily paid in direct reciprocity to the elders, but through the next generation when that person in turn has descendants.

In the choice of the child's name—the first symbolic inscription of a human being—the parents' desire appears in the manner of a filigree. When the child is born it is not a *tabula rasa*, virgin of any inscription. A fore-text precedes it, which is also a parental intertext. The name becomes the written trace of the crossroads of parental desire. The child will inscribe his own text onto this pre-text, and will possess his own name by means of the singularity of its traces (Tesone, 1988).

The writing of the name remains as an indelible trace of a symbolic family history, a group palimpsest to which several generations often make their contribution. Therefore, we do well to go through this family book, follow its movements, reveal its characteristics, and identify this manuscript in cursive letters connected by links that run through various generations, in order to enable the child to make his name his own. Giving new life to one's name is always an unfinished task.

The choice of the name indicates the distance we may measure between biological procreation and filiation. The assignment of a name to the child sanctions the fact that filiation is not a biological, but a symbolic, fact. This choice situates it within an institutional device where each individual has a place in the family structure.

The family in which the child is inscribed has a past, an interrelational reticular weave, a transgenerational network that lodges the child who comes into the world in its midst. The family offers the child a space: a signifying structure that operates as a mould. Thus, even before birth, the child receives a message emitted by parental

signifiers. A name is attributed to a child, although sometimes a child is attributed to a name.

Does the name therefore prefigure an inexorable fate? Is it true, as Diderot said with the voice of Jacques the Fatalist, that “everything good or bad that happens to us down here was written up there”? And he adds, “Oh, Sir, here you see how we are so little the masters of our fate and how many things are written on the great parchment!” (Diderot, 1796, cited by J. Starobinsky, 1984). We shall see below which routes enable us to diverge from this deterministic perspective.

In Greek thought, we find three aspects of the composite figure of fate:

- Moira, the inflexible predetermination of an existence, words spoken beforehand that all history must obey;
- Tyche, the (good or bad) encounter, chance;
- Daemon, the agency or internal character of each subject, unknown to himself, that guides his steps independently of his will.

The name joins the three aspects, condensing need and chance and leaving the subject the possibility of repossessing his proper name, which will always be his name, but enriched by the uncertainties of chance while it is constantly being rewritten. In certain cultures, as we shall see below, this possibility is punctuated by a change of proper name upon coming of age or in function of different life cycles.

In the choice of the proper name there is always “nomen-poiesis”, or an act of poetic creation that is constantly re-created when the child grows able to take possession of his name. Only in the course of this process does the name really become a proper noun.

In the choice of his name, the child is enunciated by his parents. In order to become the subject of this enunciation, he needs to make the name he was given (the “given name”) his own. This is what Françoise Zonabend (1977) calls “the constant dissociation between identity received and identity experienced”.

The reasons that motivate the choice of the proper name may be relatively clear at first glance. However, this does not prevent the true crossroads from being unconscious, since it is a condensation or signifying over-determination that fills it with meaning. Indelible trans-generational ink impregnates the name and delineates its contours.

If, at some time, the child produced a symptom, the proper name could be examined as a cryptogram whose deciphering may prove useful to liberate the child from an anchor point that is certainly necessary for filiation, but may sometimes bind him to pathology.

In this perspective, it is important that the first name does not remain sutured to the parents' desires, but opens on to other possible significations. The choice of the child's name may be the point where maternal and paternal lineages converge, with the condition that this point of intercrossing is decentred, both in relation to the guidelines of the parents' desires and of his own, and the acceptance of his own unconscious as an other.

CHAPTER TWO

Some historical and cultural considerations with regard to naming

“. . . Not thinking of names as an inaccessible ideal, but as a real atmosphere into which I would plunge”

(Proust, 1929, p. 390)

The two elements of the modern onomastic system common throughout Europe are the family name and the given name. Although the last name has acquired more importance in our current system, we must not forget that, in reality, it appeared relatively recently. The use of a name begins to appear around the year 1000 and its use only spreads through Europe during the Renaissance. Only then does the formula, given name plus family name, become prevalent. During the eleventh century the most decisive mutation occurs when the system of the double name replaces the system of single names.

The Council of Trent (1563) contributes to this evolution when it orders the registry of baptismal names, a use that had begun in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in order to avoid consanguine marriages.

At the Synod of 18th October, 1619, the Bishop of Limoges, Raymond de la Marthonie, publishes the *Statutes and Regulations* for his

diocese, which decree, in Chapter X, *On the sacrament of baptism*: “No names will be given that allude to paganism and are not used in the Catholic Church, but instead those baptised will be given names of saints”. This text may be analysed in two different ways, depending on whether we look ahead in time or back. Ahead, these statutes are one of the starting points of the Catholic reform that, as we know, required the whole of a long century to penetrate into the countryside in the region of Limousin in central France; this leads us at least into the mid-eighteenth century. If we go back, these statutes represent the influence on names both of the Renaissance, with its taste for antiquity, and that of the Reform, attracted by the Old Testament. But this episcopal decision does not seem to be aware of the profound evolution in Limousin that leads from a massively Germanic naming system up to the tenth century to nearly total Christianisation of baptismal names (cited in Perouas, Barrière, Boutier, Peyronnet, & Tricard, 1984).

Although we circumscribe our discussion to the appearance and evolution in modern anthroponomy of the use of the family name, it is worth pointing out that until that time (except in the Roman naming system) there had been only one name. This one name corresponded, in general, to our first name today and could not be passed on from one generation to another. Now, the family name belongs to the legitimate children. In modern societies it is a classifier of lineage.

From the legal perspective, Boucaud (1990) considers that a name is: (a) *immutable* (except by legal or administrative decision); (b) *imprescriptible*: its possession cannot be lost due to protracted disuse (for example, in the case of children “kidnapped-appropriated” in Argentina during the military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983 and subsequently recovered); (c) *non disposable*: only exceptionally may the holder of a name relinquish or bequeath it or authorize its use by any other person.

It is important to underscore the salient place of names in regard to human rights. The right to a name is not included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December, 1948, but does appear in the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights which gives the former Declaration compulsory legal force. Article 24–2 of this Pact provides: “every child must be registered immediately after birth and have a name”.

As Boucaud (1990) reminds us, the Declaration of the Rights of Children, signed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959,

also takes up the same principle, included in the Universal Convention on Children's Rights in 1989, signed by Argentina, and also in the Inter-American Convention on the Rights of Man.

The right to a name specifically concerns children, and this right must be situated particularly in Latin America, where we have, in the recent past, witnessed the forced disappearance of persons. The kidnapping and theft of children deprived of their filiation and identity by unconstitutional power is a separate chapter in this tragedy. We discuss in Chapter Nine the dramatic consequences in Argentina of this sinister and methodical procedure of exterminating part of the population.

In the French naming system as described by Chemin (2005), beginning on 1 January 2006, all parents may, for the first time in French history, pass the father's name on to their children, according to tradition, but also the mother's family name or even both family names separated by a hyphen. This liberty puts an end to various centuries of paternal predominance, which had been imposed in Europe since the Dark Ages.

Finally, terminating this custom, sanctioned by the French Revolution by the law of 6th Fructidor, year II, the members of Congress have delayed in responding to European demands, as underscored by Chemin in her article. Since 1978, a resolution of the Council of Europe requested that heads of state allow both spouses to enjoy equal rights in relation to the attribution of the family name to their children. A year later, the United Nations asked its members to "remove all sexist dispositions in the right to the family name". Most European countries had already ruled in favour: Germany modified its legislation in 1976, Sweden in 1982, Denmark in 1983, and Spain in 1999 (Fine & Ouellette, 2005, cited in Chemin, 2005).

A year after this small revolution that ended the last difference between the father and the mother in family law, the civil services of the Municipalities of France begin to inventory the changes registered. Although there is still no national report on the effects of this law, the French *Journal of Genealogy* has made an initial survey. It analyses six thousand registers of birth published during the months of February, March, and April 2006 in seven urban and rural municipalities throughout France: Paris, Rennes, Montpellier, Metz, Montluçon (Allier), Provins (Seine-et-Marne), and Le Creusot (Saône-et-Loire). The results show, according to Chemin, that in these municipalities,

approximately 14% of parents do not want their children to carry only the father's family name. This wish to drop the prominence of the father's family name is more notable in Paris than in the provinces (20% of couples in Paris, 4.7% in Metz, 6% in Montluçon, and none in the rural setting of Creusot). This wish that breaks with a custom born in the Dark Ages is more frequent in married couples than in common-law couples.

Most families that wish to modify the primacy of paternal filiation in France prefer to transmit a double family name that includes the maternal family name, but not only this one: 96% of couples choose to give their child a double family name. Currently (June, 2008), this possibility, legislated in Europe, remains a subject of debate in Argentina.

In spite of the importance the family name has acquired in the contemporary naming system, whether by only patrilineal or matrilineal or by double transmission when the two are associated, its use is automatic and marks the filiation registered on the birth certificate: the child is the son or daughter of . . .

However, the primitive name was originally singular. There was neither a given name nor a family name. The name was the equivalent of our first name today, since it was not passed on automatically: "the prefix pre- [in French the first name is translated literally as the "pre-name"] must not be understood as indicating any idea of grammatical position placed before the name" (Jarrasé, 1901), from which we deduce that it only involves the idea that the origin was previous; in effect, etymologically speaking, the given name ("prénom" or "pre-name") is the first of names.

Single name, given name, and family name

In the origins of humanity, each child was attributed a different name that was created freely by his genitors. The giver of a name was not constrained, as today, to select a name from a pre-established list: he participated in a real act of creation of a name that very frequently had never been used until then. Motivations could be influenced by a historical event in the community, characteristics of the delivery or the child's traits, relation to its ancestors or, prevalently, by the expression of wishes concerning the child. Quite often, the name was unheard of

(homonyms, in effect, were infrequent), so that the symbolic creation of this name gave the child an originality comparable to its genetic heritage.

The name indelibly seals the right of each person to recognition by others of his inalienable identity. When a name is the exclusive property of a certain subject, its meaning goes beyond this quality: it grants this subject a title that makes him someone irreplaceable.

Usually, within the possibilities offered by language, we have words that allow us to replace one term for another, providing an idea with greater precision or metaphoric scope. We cannot do the same with the names of persons. The very permanence that naming grants the subject is not inscribed in the register of being, which is always mutating, but in discourse: as long as his name has not been erased from the memory of humankind, we may speak of an individual (Pariente, 1982).

The continuity of the name as a referent of the person may in some cases not be interrupted by the person's death (for example, Borges, Cortazar, Cervantes, Proust, Shakespeare, etc.). Their name remains forever alive in the memory of humanity, and it is in allusive discourse that their immanent status persists beyond their real existence.

The meaning of names in different cultures

For ancient peoples, all proper nouns were originally meaningful. The name showed a road and could thus have a bearing on the child's fate. Hence, the care dedicated to its choice is understandable. There was nothing childish or absurd about this as long as the name held a meaning inherent to it, since each person's name was associated with his future and could influence his fate.

Salverte (1824) states that the North American original peoples give strangers who attract their attention a name chosen from their own tongue: that person's name in his original tongue does not designate enough for them, since it does not enable them to associate it with any idea evoked by that person.

The need to associate the name to a semantic meaning is revealed by an Arabian anecdote. The Sultan of Mascote needs to employ an Italian physician and asks him his name. "Vincenzo" [Vincent], answers the doctor. "I don't understand you," insists the Sultan, "tell me the meaning of this word in Arabic." The Italian translates it as "Mansur", victorious. From that moment on, the Sultan, delighted by the lucky prediction associated with this name, calls his physician Sheik Mansur (from *Nouvelles Annales de Voyages* [New Travel Annals], cited in Salverte, 1824).

The use of meaningful names is a constant in many cultures. It was not only the name as it was usually written that could have meaning; even its anagram could acquire signifying power. In effect, for the Hebrews, anagrams were part of cabalism, which provided a means to discover predictions included in the inspiration of proper nouns by the wisdom of the Almighty.

A young Persian with no other goods except an intense interest in studying was called Nauari (he who has nothing). His teacher, having detected his bud of talent, gives it a different connotation by changing the order of the letters: Anuari (brilliant, illustrious). The prediction generated by this semantic change was not fashioned in vain, since he, one of the greatest Persian poets, was immortalized with this name (from d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* [Oriental Library], cited in Salverte, 1824).

In many peoples we find stories inspired by historical or fabled events that correspond to the genre of the short story, based on the meaning of a person's name. Salverte offers a particularly clarifying example. In the Latinized name of the Jesuit, Garnet (*Pater Henricus Garnetius*), another Jesuit had deciphered *Pingere Cruentus Arista* (you will be painted in blood like a tassel of wheat). Subsequently, Garnet was involved in the gunpowder conspiracy and in London in 1605 suffered the ordeal of those condemned for high treason. Father Jouveny tells us that Garnet's face was found painted on a tassel of wheat . . . tinged with blood . . .

To underscore the weight of the meaning of names, beyond the fact that society as a whole was not indifferent to circulation throughout the community of their semantic aspect and their influence on the person's fate, I will offer a less erudite example than the use of a Latin anagram.

One story, almost comical and even bordering on the ridiculous in relation to the semantic use of names, took place in Venice. The *Da Ponte* (literally, "of the bridge") and the *Canali* (literally, "canals"), ancient Venetian families that vied with each other for nobility, fed their animosity by using this type of reasoning: "Bridges are above canals." To which the other side responded: "The canals are older than the bridges." The dispute grew to such proportions at the social level that the Senate thought it appropriate to impose silence on the rival patrician families. Applying the same semantic allusion, the Assembly reminded them that it had the power to destroy bridges and cover up

canals . . . which cut this silly quarrel down to its proper size (de la Houssaye, 1685, Volume 1, pp. 66–67, cited in Salverte, 1824).

Names in Tribal Africa

Knowledge and possession of the material sound of a name is the same, in the belief system of the Bantu and held in common with many other peoples, as domination of the person. This expresses the point to which the name equals the person: “the name is the person,” his very essence, a vital part of the individual (Segy, 1953).

Tempels (1945, pp. 66–74) describes three components in the Bantu naming system:

- the name received at birth and chosen by the parents. This name is immutable and is kept secret;
- the second name corresponds to the Nyama, or life force, and describes spiritual qualities and ways in which they may be increased or diminished, acquired or lost, by the subject. This name is acquired at puberty during the ceremony of initiation and passage into adulthood;
- the third component is the “relational name” by which the person is known socially in everyday life. Only this name may be spoken at liberty and is the only one used in life.

The first two names are carefully kept secret, since if an enemy came into possession of the true name, its very knowledge would give him immense power: “To touch a name is to touch the person himself”.

Keeping the name secret is, thus, a measure taken to protect inviolability, to avoid risking the possibly evil influences of whoever might remove the veil of protection.

The name is considered to exert immense psychic power over the fate of human beings. A name is never indifferent and involves a number of relations between the person that bears it and its source.

Segy (1953) postulates the hypothesis that in the totemic laws of the clan and of exogamy, the ties created by the name are more important than blood ties.

According to the laws of exogamy, every man must marry a woman belonging to a different clan. In matrilineal societies, Segy

explains, in which lineage is maternal, the daughter may marry her paternal first cousin, since he nominally belongs to a different clan. Persons of the same clan cannot marry, even if there is no blood kinship between them. Segy concludes that it is the name that has the power to regulate the laws of exogamy, but not consanguine relations. For the Ouehie (Tiérou, 1977), common in all of tribal Africa, the name functions as a message transmitted by the parents. This message is addressed in the first place to the child, but also to the wife and her family, the neighbours, and, in a broader sense, the community as a whole.

The attribution of names in the Ivory Coast (Tiérou, 1977)

According to Tiérou, the choice of the name in the Ivory Coast occurs in a ceremony called Poyouzon; it takes place three or four days after the child's birth and symbolizes the passage of the newborn's soul from darkness to life, the great light, which happens between the third and fourth day following the child's birth. The godmother intervenes actively, holding the baby in her arms; family members, friends, and guests go out to meet and escort them. The specific altar for the ceremony consists of a mortar, a container filled with water, a small glass, a bench, and white clothing. At the moment of culmination the priest falls silent and a wise man approaches the altar, takes the little glass, fills it with water and pours the contents on to the child's head several times; he then fixes his gaze on the sun and solemnly reveals the name that the father has told him. After a joyful show of offerings, the head of the family gives a speech about the child's name and reminds the assembly of the event that was the source of inspiration for its choice. Once these explanations have ended, different commentators may then take the floor if they wish to express their point of view.

Names, states Tiérou, have an important place in Ouehie society. They express the authenticity of this people and represent the meeting point of all their creative potentials. All together, Ouehie names reflect the collective memory of this people and are one of the great sources of their cultural and artistic heritage.

In Oubloa, it is most frequently the father who gives the child its name. In the case of an illegitimate child, the choice is incumbent on the parents of the single mother. Names are infinite and the

giver is not limited by rigid rules; the range of possible names is limitless.

Names are never chosen randomly: for each giver or author, the meaning of the name is related to a meaningful motivation. The author may take his inspiration from personal experiences, real facts, social situations, etc.

To give a name is the same as giving life; it means participation in the creation of a life. These names, infinitely varied, form a whole body of literature, as both a critical perspective of the society and praise of its virtues. The proliferation of Ouehie names, as Tiérou insists, can also be explained by the constant efforts of the Ouehon to improve the illustration of the spirit of each generation.

Tiérou emphasizes that the relation between African names and the event that inspired them is undeniable. This determines the great importance of oral transmission. Each name represents a useful point of reference in the reconstruction of historical facts.

In Ouebla, every author that proposes a birth name is required to explain in public the reasons for this choice before ceding the floor to the commentators; in effect, whereas the event is useful for the speaker, the audience is indispensable. Each of the spectators recognizes himself through the speaker's words and finds his own collaboration and transcendent contribution in the name and the event to which it refers. Commentary is registered in the frame of the people's elaboration of an opinion of the name. Tiérou emphasizes that participants are asked to think for themselves, so that their opinion will contribute to the effort of their personal imagination, to be added to collective reflection. Every person present at the baptism, whatever their social status, may participate freely in commentaries on the name if they wish. All the different strata of society may participate in the ceremony. The minimum age for the right to comment is fifteen.

To illustrate this ceremony, Tiérou takes the name "Bloa" as an example. It originates in the phrase: "Ouee Aha Bloa Ena". "Ouee" means: in order to, so that "Bloa" means, in the literal sense, earth. In the figurative sense, it means people, region, country, continent, world, humanity, universe; "Ena" means: to walk, to progress, to develop. Translating the phrase word by word, it would be the following: "In order for our earth to walk". By extension: "So that our region, our country, our continent and humanity may progress, develop and be enriched materially and spiritually".

Therefore, after this choice, all the members of society participate as commentators; they do this seriously, in silence and with discipline. We can appreciate the ritual and symbolic value of this ceremony.

The bearer of the name is the axis around which the whole learning system is structured, since he is above all the bearer of a message; however, he is not restricted to the literal or allegorical meaning of his name. He is considered an independent messenger in relation to the giver. Whether his name is flattering or not, he does not lose perspective concerning his role, which is to participate in the perpetuation of a collective work whose purpose is to make society progress both on the material and spiritual levels.

In all cultures, the birth of a child is generally a happy event. Festivities may be expressed in diverse ways, but they show the importance that, since its origins, humanity has given to its descendants.

I consider it relevant to stress that what is most meaningful in the Ouehie ceremony is organized around the act of naming: the naming and the reasons that motivated it are its nucleus.

The baby's delivery is not a sufficient condition to mark the arrival to life of a child. Giving him life is fundamentally to give him a name. And it is not chosen randomly. For the name giver, usually the father, the meaning of the name has a significant motivation. In general, those who choose it are inspired by historical events, facts that concern community life, which also reveal a facet of their own life.

Basing his work only on the study of the meaning of the names of a family in southern Dahomey, Saulnier (1974) produced a truly interesting work that enables us to underscore once again the importance of names in the entire African system. The study of the individual names in this family includes three generations and extends from 1870 to our time.

In this region, the question a person is asked regarding their name is "Na we a no nyi?" The term "nyi" means both "be" and "be named" and, therefore, there is no differentiation between being and being named, which are considered equivalent.

Consequently, the name reflects the individual's very being, situated in a complex network of familial, social, and religious relations interwoven in space and time.

Saulnier's mindful and precise analysis allows him to thread together, through the meaning of individual names, the family's beliefs, social situation, difficulties, deaths, economic situation and ancestors: "It is unnecessary to query the person in question in order to learn about his milieu and what he thinks or believes; it is enough to know the names of his children . . ."

In this way, Saulnier is also able to deduce even some events and certain births followed by death that the family had never spoken about until then and which, from my point of view, suffered apparent forgetting as an effect of the repression that encloistered them in the familial unconscious.

Customs in Gabon (Abbé Walker, 1954)

Protective names

Protective names, talismans, or lucky names are given to children from birth, in particular to those whose viability is in doubt. They are supposed to contribute to warding off evil spirits, banning curses into forgetfulness, or removing children from the influence of people with bad intentions.

Among the Nkomi and the Eshira, these names are spoken in the form of an anti-phrase to preserve children from death. The aim, when they are chosen, is to allow the children to live, sheltered from bad intentions. This practice of talisman names is found in all of Gabon, but also in the rest of Africa, Madagascar, and even in the Far East.

For example, if a child is born on an unfortunate day, his parents may prudently call him "Raferina" (manure) or "Ratisoa" (pig), since fate will not be interested in visiting its cruelty on anything as unattractive as manure or a pig.

Something similar occurs with the children of princes, whose disagreeable names are intended to distract the attention of evil genies. The parents later give them attractive names, but take care to keep them secret.

For many peoples, an attack on a name is an attack on the person himself. To avoid eventual evil use of this name, which would thereby inflict a wound on the subject, the real name is kept secret and a relational name, purposely degraded, is used socially to confound evil spirits.

Naming among the Burundi (Ntahombayé, 1983)

In his preface to this excellent book, Maurice Louis emphasizes the importance of studies of names of persons, or anthroponyms, since, beyond their aspect as verbal messages, they are also an ethnological reality as they are the *par excellence* site for cultural expression. They are also a psychosocial reality, since they affirm and reinforce the network of relations in which the individual is defined socially and where his personality develops. A name is always a message connected to the personal history of the giver. According to Louis, three main directions may be discerned in the messages inherent to individual names: some messages are orientated towards the "numen", their God, others translate a coincidence and still others are addressed to society.

In the nominal category, Louis includes names determined by an acting power. They may be ancestors, spirits, or genies. Humanity exists in the world of language as a receptor of signs, but is not fully aware of the identity of the emitters or necessarily aware of the message received; a propitious circumstance, Louis points out, for the operation of intermediaries such as fortune-tellers. Their main function is to decode the messages of the "numina". Some children are identified as the children of a numen power: for example, of the "water spirit".

Sometimes these names refer to a tutelary power, whereas others attempt to reverse the influence of a power that showed it was negative, particularly when the child to be named arrives after several dead children. At that time, through his name, he is associated with something of little value so that God will not want to take him away.

Some names show a coincidence in time, place, or situation. This coincidence may be with a salient element in the community or society. For example, "born in the absence of men", since all the men had gone out hunting.

Finally, there are particular characteristics of the newborn, such as physical or behavioural traits that influence the choice of a name.

Some names act as messages to society. The receptors are neighbours, relatives by marriage, or even one of the members of the couple.

Names sometimes reflect conjugal conflicts; they may thus evoke, in some cases, accusations against the wife and her lovers or the husband and his impotence. Anthroponymy is not interesting as an

inventory of names, but as a witness and reflection of a culture that commits the name givers.

Names, for Ntahombayé, help words to become fixed. They are the material support of a message transmitted by the parents to a third person; they reflect the individual's very being and situate the individual in a complex reticulum of family, social, religious, and temporal-spatial relations. In the study of proper names, it is more important to understand the attitudes behind the names than the names themselves.

The study of names by Ntahombayé discusses them as a linguistic reality situated on the level of the act of communication where they function and also as a psychological and socio-cultural reality. The importance of the individual name in Burundi, as the author explains, must be grasped in the frame of a civilization of oral tradition, in which words have almost sacred force.

In general, a name is the material support of a message passed from the parents or another giver to a third party: the child, a neighbour, the wife, the wife's family, etc.

There are: (1) function names, with which a person needs to invest himself in order to carry out this function; (2) descriptive names that exhibit the giver's spirit of observation of detail; they reveal a particular physical or moral trait of the receiver in comparison to his surroundings. This type of name may be given at any time in life. They are often known as childhood names, since they describe the child throughout development. Conditions that give birth to a name may have objective support, but they also have intentional support, since they project the child into its future in the form of wishes that aim to help the child develop his good qualities; (3) these qualities touch on both the giver and the bearer of the name. They are the centre from which the giver's deep concern regarding his own, the child's, and his family's future expands.

Aimed at social communication, the message-name calls another message-name, establishing a kind of dialogue that runs through them. They give birth to names of social relations, fed by sentiments of friendship or hostility. A name is conceived of as a tool for social struggle and a guarantor of order through which neighbours are warned to beware of their machinations and of the distrust and precautions they inspire, while at the same time veils of hypocrisy are lifted and jealousy and envy are questioned.

The purpose of the name given the child is to convert the person that receives it passively into an acting person. Even names with a negative connotation must be seen in their positive aspect, since they seek to cure an ill or to protect the child from malice. Names are intended to guarantee the subject balance and harmony in the midst of the group, and, therefore, aim at his social integration.

Ntahombayé considers

that beyond the appellative function, the name has a referential and connotative function. The name refers to a whole set of social, cultural, historical, political and economic elements that reverberate mutually as in harmonics. It is a reservoir of memories, a means of fixation of a fact or event that it commemorates. Its function is to preserve tradition. Connotation adds a personal stamp to this reference. [p. 262]

A name serves not only to identify an individual; it also confers existence. This is doubtless one of the most important functions of bearing a name: it opens up to life.

In Ntahombayé's book we find certain very clarifying examples: to greet a child, an adult says: (a) "*Gira izi*" (may you have a name). The child is wished a name, that is to say, an existence; (b) if he intends to attack him, the adult may say: "*Urakabura izina*" (may you have no name) as an extreme way of wishing his death; (c) to confirm that the individual materializes his name and that his behaviour responds to the content of his name: "*Izina ni ryo muntu*" (the name is the man).

Through these examples, we see that the name does not have a simple appellative function but is the same substance as the person: the essence of being and the name are the same thing.

In the Burundi naming system, names sometimes function to exorcise death. In these cases, the giver chooses a name that is often pejorative. The child is thus "made into a thing" and in general produces, allegorically, a foul odour. In this way, death is disgusted and stays away. For example: *Biyorero* (garbage dump) or *Henehene* (goat excrement). These names are messages sent to the numen powers for the purpose of staving off death, since it would not be interested in such unattractive "things".

Other examples: *Mashakarugo* (wish to be successful in consolidating the family); *Bakinanintama* (they play with the ewe). Since the sheep is the symbol of wisdom and innocence, with this name the

husband invites his wife to behave better; *Ntiruraguma* (the couple is still not solid); *Ntirwiyubaka* (the house is not built); *Gashirahamwe* (that which unites).

At other times, names in Burundi are a way to express relations, good or bad, between families. For example: *Mbanzurwanco* (they started the hate); *Bazombanza* (they started it), which means that it is not I but they who provoked us and began to harm us.

Banzubazé (check on it first).

Nzirumbaje (I am hostile towards the one who provokes me).

Ntahombayé laments that the system of individual names is progressively being altered by contact with the Western world, which tends to impose its own patronymic system on the inhabitants of Africa. Thus the name, traditionally replete with motivation, is slowly losing this function, to the detriment of local values and culture.

Names in ancient Egypt (according to Garnet, 1948)

The Egyptians, as confirmed by the Text of the Pyramids, assigned great importance to the attribution of proper names, also indissolubly connected to the person in this culture, even though names were themselves living, autonomous elements with an independent existence.

This coexistence of fusion and independent existence is evident in certain phrases spoken twice, first addressed to the person and then to the name. For example: "There is nothing bad about you, there is nothing bad about your name."

The name, like a person, lives and exists around men or God; it may be wished prosperity, long life, or exemption from the consequences of death.

The name must be "kept in good shape" and the best way to achieve this is to pronounce it frequently. As Garnet remarks, using the etymological meaning of "pronounce": to sharpen it like a knife.

Because of its receptivity, the name may both suffer influences and also actively exert them: only because names have a semantic aspect, "only to this extent are names active". The meaning, originally virtual, tends to be realized in acts that harmonize with this semantic register.

Knowledge of a person's name confers power over that person, as in many other cultures. Its mere pronunciation may be the prelude to

exercise of total domination over that person. From this derives the customary use of secret names, or, alternatively, deformations of them, so that their social use becomes harmless. The name is the person's essence and the person who dominates its material sound may, by extension, dominate the person, a characteristic shared with other cultures as we have seen.

The Arabs and names

Naming in Arabic distinguishes between the real proper name (ism) and other elements, such as the parental name (kunya), the relational name (misbah) and the nickname (laqab).

Proper names are all meaningful. For example: Kamil (perfect), Mansour (victorious), Asad (lion), etc. (according to d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*, cited in Salverte, 1824).

As Hattab tells us, it is a custom in Arab communities, shared with many other peoples, to give the first-born son the name of the paternal grandfather. However, there is one very interesting feature that makes them unique: when the first son is born, the father changes his own name and becomes "father of . . ." For example, if Mr Ahmed calls his first son Hussein, his name becomes Ahmed-Abou-Hussein. When the father's name changes, which occurs at the moment of his paternity, it leaves the groove of his change of function which shows particularly that the father comes into his paternal function through his son's birth. The son pre-forms the paternal function and his presence draws the father into his new function. This change, inherent to all paternity, is inscribed in Arab peoples through this change of name, perhaps as a way to indicate that this man, now a father, is no longer the same man, since with the birth of his son and to the extent that he assumes his function, a qualitative change was produced in his identity; a change meaningful enough to be marked by engraving it into his name.

Like so many peoples in antiquity, the Arabs attribute immense importance to the influence of the name's meaning on the individual's future.

The tenth Abassid Caliph, Motavakkel, took pleasure in corrupting the name of his eldest son Montasser (the victorious) by calling him Monttadher (he who waits). This Caliph attributed to him great impa-

tience to succeed him on the throne, a fear he probably wished to allay through this change of name. Motavakkel's cruelty and abuse of power in relation to his son provoked his assassination at his son's instigation. When he took power, Montasser justified the parricide he had committed by referring to the cruel insult to which his father had subjected him by changing his name. This dramatic example, beyond the subjacent Oedipal rivalry and family conflict, illustrates the importance peoples have assigned given names.

The Greeks

Greek names were all meaningful and in practice their number was unlimited, since there were few homonyms.

In public centres in Athens, the citizen wrote his name, to which he added the name of his father or an ancestor, although his true name was considered his given name.

We find names that express moral values, courage, or justice: "strong in battle", "just beauty", or even names that praise sports, war, and, especially, glory.

Family history could determine the creation of a name. After the Achaeans left Ftotide and established themselves in Argos, their chief, Arcandros, gave his son the name "Metanastos", which means "the émigré".

We find similar motivation in the name of a Dorian chief, Aleteas, "the wanderer", a name that recalls the long voyages of his father, who was forced to wander far from his native land (Pausanias, *Achoïc* [Achaia], cited in Salverte, 1824).

The signifying force of the name encouraged both personages in real life and imaginary characters in theatrical productions.

In one of the choruses in *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus dedicates twelve verses to a mournful allusion to the name of Helen, the presage of combat and destruction (vv. 690–671, cited in Salverte, 1824).

Orestes, in Euripides, comments on his name, a symbol of melancholy and misfortune.

A father, dramatized by Aristophanes, tells how he felt obliged to associate, in his son's name, the ideas of economy traditionally valued by his family, with the ideas of grandeur connected to the famous family of his wife (whom he had unwisely chosen . . .).

Whereas the first examples helped us to illustrate the influence of parental history and imaginary in the choice of names in Greece, the latter example is eloquent in regard to the choice of a name as a compromise between the maternal and paternal lineages. In this case, the name also responds to parental imaginary and is a vehicle of marital conflict.

The Roman naming system (Jarrasé, 1901)

The oldest Roman naming was summed up in a single name, as in the case of Romulus, Remus, and Faustus. However, during the republican period the naming system is multiple and includes fundamentally the "*tria nomina*", that is to say, the *praenomen* + *nomen* + *cognomen*.

The name in the Roman conception is not intended simply to individualize a person, but must also inform his condition in his family and in society. The name tends to designate not only the physical person, but also this social and political personality.

The *nomen* is the denomination common to all the members of the same "*gens*"; the *praenomen* individualizes the person more precisely and distinguishes the different members of the same family; the *cognomen* is an additional name inspired initially by a physical trait of the individual or, in some circumstances, connected to an event in his life. It is similar to today's nickname.

On inscriptions, the *praenomen* was always written in abbreviated forms, quite probably to conjure any evil influence. For example, *Caius Julius Caesar* was written *C Julius Caesar*. This custom suggests that the *praenomen* reflected the true essence of the person. The possibility of speaking it was consequently reserved for his closest entourage that supposedly would not use it wrongly.

All *praenomen* had a meaning and expressed the parents' ideas. Some examples cited by Jarrasé: *Servius*: child saved to the mother's detriment (she died during delivery); *Spurius*: bastard, born outside the family; *Titus*: beloved; *Herius*: from *Herus*, son of the teacher; *Agrippa*: girl born feet first; *Hostus*: from *hostis*, foreigner, born outside the country; *Proculus*: born far away; *Vibus*: from "to live", full of life; *Faustus*: from *favere*, happy;

The tomb inscription of a Roman, founder of the city of Lyon, formerly part of the Roman Empire, "L. Munatius Plancus", tells us

about his filiation. It is given not only by the inscription of his father's *praenomen*, but also his grandfather's and great-grandfather's: "L. Munatius, Lucii filius, Luci nepos, Lucii pronepos, Plancus".

In spite of the complexity of Roman nomination, the different terms that constituted it and its evolution in time, the *praenomen* never lost vigour; its semantics express both filiation and parental ideas about their child.

The Eskimos (Gessain, 1980)

Eskimo culture assigns privileged importance to names which is the master key to their entire belief system. In this culture, we appreciate particularly the central position of its naming system, indispensable if we intend to understand the formation of the identity of the subject and the whole people.

In the Eskimos' conception of persons, three elements converge: *Tina*, *Tarneq*, and *Adek*. *Tina* refers to the body and is animated by one of the principles of life. It is considered a place of passage, an ephemeral house, "the provisional container of an immortal reality" (Gessain). *Tarneq* is an impersonal life principle and is similar in all human beings. This element is what gives life and animation to the body; it exists already in the foetus, even before birth.

Finally, the component of the person that is most interesting to note is *Adek*, the name. It is considered the principle of personal life and is eternal. *Adek* possesses the attributes of a person and, therefore, has desire, initiative, possibility of choice, and memory. It wishes to inhabit a body and is able to reincarnate. It comes from the body of a deceased relative and waits for a new habitat in the body of a newborn. In this culture more than in any other, the name aspires to eternity, carries attributes of the dead relative, the previous carrier of the name, and has the responsibility to transmit them to the new carrier.

In addition to the major name, which Gessain calls the "reincarnation name", the Eskimos have other names in reserve, as many as seven or eight.

When a child is born, the mother whispers one or several names into its ear. Depending on the baby's reaction to the tones of this enunciation or to its material sound, the mother interprets what she must

call her baby. If he cries, screams, or becomes agitated, it means that he rejects the name. If he is calm and serene it means that he likes and accepts the name.

The choice of the name is, therefore, dialectic, the result of verbal, gestured, phonic, and imaginary interaction between the mother and the child, during a creative process that is intended to occur jointly.

This affinity and agreement, this harmony between the name and the body, is sometimes used to obtain power in midwifery: when a pregnant woman has difficulties in the delivery, the child's name is spoken into the mother's belly and the unborn child is told, "You who are anxious to receive a name, come out rapidly."

The main or reincarnation name is the one that confers "solidity and structure" on the person, the one that guarantees the pillars of his identity.

The name given by the parents and "accepted" by the child carries with it the traits of the deceased relative, certain particular characteristics of his fate, and the property of some chants.

An example offered by Gessain shows to what point the symbolism of reincarnation, in connection with the name, influences the daily life of the Eskimos. A family, consisting of a very old man, his son and his wife, lives in a house together. When the son brings in a seal he has hunted, the woman shares it with her father-in-law and says, "Your kind son has brought us a seal." One day, the old man dies. A short time afterwards, when the couple has a son they give him (and he accepts) his grandfather's name. When his father brings a seal he has hunted, his mother cuts the animal into pieces and distributes them about the house. She separates the piece that would have been for her father-in-law and tells her son, "Your kind son has brought us a seal." Then she shows the child the piece of meat that belongs to him as the hunter's "father" and cooks it separately. Finally, she breast-feeds the baby. In this way, the grandfather in some way lives on in the child's body and continues to receive his part of the food. This transgenerational telescoping would not have occurred in such a well-defined way if the child did not carry his grandfather's name.

Sometimes, a long time may pass before the *Adek* of a deceased person is reincarnated in another body. In this case, the name, which has not yet found a body, is spoken by the deceased's relatives, who wish to keep it alive. In this way, the emission of the sound of the

name, though imperceptible to others, keeps it in a latent state on the outskirts of life, while it awaits a body that will accept it.

If a child has not received a name, even if this act is voluntary, the child is not considered a human being. As long as this child is in this condition, it may be killed without this act being considered murder. Although it may mean infanticide to an external observer, for the Eskimos it is only the rejection of an impersonal element of life: the *tarnek*. One of the principles of life, the anonymous one, is eliminated, but no human being is killed since no living being acquires humanization until it has been named.

The name, as Gessain explains, possesses certain capacities that are inherent to it and which act in the body it animates.

A person may be skilful or inept at a given activity, according to the skills or ineptitude related to their name. Gessain illustrates this with the case of a widow he meets again several years after her husband's death. She tells him that her husband had left in a kayak and never returned. "He was not skilful in kayak," she concluded. Five months after having been widowed, she has a child to whom she gives the dead father's name. The child grows, and when he comes into adolescence Gessain asks, "Does he hunt in kayak?" The mother answers, "Oh, no, isn't once enough?" Ineptitude for using a kayak and the implicit risk of meeting his death were indissolubly connected to the name.

Another mother, who wishes to reincarnate the name "inept in kayak", chooses to give it to her daughter, since her female status would keep her from harm.

However, this pre-form carried by the name does not exclude the possibility of acquiring other types of skills that will enrich the person and be transmitted to the next body that accepts it. Thus, *Adek* may assimilate previous experiences and use them again. A father, a hunter, dies in the trap of an evil spirit. His son, who carries the same name, suffers the same fate and also dies in the spirit's trap. The same name is reincarnated again in the latter's son, but this time, alerted by the previous experiences, he remembers the way the spirit attacks and is able to defeat it.

For the Eskimos, names in general, beyond their meaning, are axes of life forces that are communicated to the body. The names that accompany the major name also contribute to strengthen the person, and offer a guarantee against the uncertainties of life.

Proper names in Vietnam depending on age
(Luong Can Liêm & Nguyen Thanh Châu, 1982)

The naming system in Vietnam is relatively complex. It has the interesting and original peculiarity that one of the names is chosen by the subject for use upon coming of age. This choice reinforces the effect of the repossession of his name that every subject, regardless of his culture, needs to undertake in order to become himself.

The family name (*họ*) is placed first, followed by the name or names of the person (*tên*). There are two hundred family names in Vietnam, an average of about twenty per town, of which two or three belong to half of the population (the Nguyen, for example). The family name is transmitted by the paternal line. However, given the small number of family names, personal names are absolutely indispensable to identify individuals.

The *civil status name* (*tên bố*) is declared by the parents when the baby is born and is registered in public and family records. The choice of this name must not take any name that was already used by a reference considered superior: ancestors, kings, etc.

The *common name* (*tên tục*) is the name given the child and is the one he will keep until coming of age. This name is used essentially by the protective circle of the family, both nuclear family and in-laws.

The *emblematic name* (*tên hiệu*) is chosen by the subject for himself when he becomes a young adult. This name must express and show an idea or a quality. It may serve as a pen name.

The *key name* (*tên tu*) is a name derived from the principal name; it is assigned in relation to civil status in order to reinforce the meaning of this name. It is chosen by the individual and its meaning must be able to create a relation between the meaning of the civil status name and the emblematic name. In some way, it serves as a key to decipher meaning.

Finally, the *posthumous name* (*tên thụy*) is chosen by elderly people, to prepare for their death, or for use by the family after their death. It is with this posthumous name that the person will be honoured and called on the altar of the ancestors. The posthumous name allows others to find its carrier in the great beyond, considering that he is no longer called the same names as when he was alive.

The authors note that the name chosen by the person at the dawn of his adult life is written beside the original name on the civil records.

It is interesting to emphasize that the person must explain the reasons behind his choice to his family and must attempt to preserve some relation to the previous choices made by his parents. Without this precaution, the individual would later face the risk of not being recognized by prayers sent to him by his descendants after death.

Another noteworthy point is that the different names may also be a source of reference to the different moments in a subject's life.

The *tên bo* is the main name: this civil status name is the one that is written in the records and is used in school. In childhood and up to the end of puberty, the common name, *tên tuc*, is only used in the family circle and close social relationships. Abandonment of the *tên tuc* marks passage into adult life. The *tên bo* and the *tên tuc* both have a meaning. The *tên bo* must be beautiful, especially its musicality. The meaning of the *tên bo* usually crystallizes the group aspiration, expressed by the parents, concerning what life holds in store for their child. This name represents something like a collective wish and a guarantee for the future. The meaning of the name should be able to guide the meaning of the subject's existence. For these reasons, the name is sacred, since the subject's existence is also considered sacred (given that it is partly predetermined).

For the choice of the *tên bo*, certain rules must be followed, according to which the meaning must be harmonious and free of excess and inordinate ambition, since otherwise it could harm the individual instead of wishing him good luck.

In contrast, the common name (*tên tuc*) must not be beautiful, since it functions as protection against envy and evil actions that could be inspired by the beauty and refinement of the *tên bo*. Plain or unattractive names are supposed not to arouse interest or evil actions.

The choice of the *key name* indicates the highly symbolic moment that is passage into adult life. From this time on, the person's own desire and projects in life are taken up in the first person and the subject states the decision to take charge of the forces that influence his future with the choice of his new name. In this culture, the choice of the first name indicates, with its material sonority and the individual's active social participation, the new envelope that every subject, independently of his culture, must procure in order to become himself.

The naming system in China (Alleton, 1993)

Chinese discourse regarding names is as old as Chinese civilization. It has changed greatly throughout its millennial history and was never homogeneous in space or egalitarian in its structures. It would be rash, as Alleton warns us, to try to study Chinese names in general. Most of the examples that illustrate Alleton's book are a result of an individual survey made between 1980 and 1985 by the author, whose sample includes several hundred inhabitants of the People's Republic of China.

The given name (*ming*) is the name *par excellence* in China. Each has a meaning, but rather than the rigid etymology that we find in most Occidental names, in China given names have a dynamic meaning. The first name includes one or two syllables and is constructed when it is attributed. Any element (morpheme) of the language may be a proper name or at least part of one. Alleton offers the following examples, chosen randomly: Kewen (science); Xiaoming (dawn); Li (perseverance); Yunfu (yun "hidden" and fu "happiness"); Xueqiao (xue "snow" and qiao "heating wood gatherer").

A complete inventory of Chinese names would be impossible, since all the signifying elements in the language may be used. The author also states that Chinese writing contributes to crystallizing the signifying value of the name that is always transcribed by one or two characters that have a meaning.

In giving a name, the Chinese are very conscious of the harmony between the meaning, the sound, and the graphic forms, seeking to produce an obvious poetic effect.

In the traditional idea, the horoscope and the stars coexist as influences in the individual's fate; however, this fate is not considered unavoidable. Through the choice of the name and fundamentally through its meaning, fate may be averted and the child wished another, more favourable one.

As in many other societies, in China the name serves to classify the person who carries it, according to certain tensions between individual and culture. Sometimes, names may indicate the order of the generations and even of rank.

X Hua is a man born in 1953 in Shanxi, according to Alleton. Hua is the second character of Zhonghua, "China". It is a very frequent form—and at first sight banal—in contemporary given names. This

name takes on more meaning in relation to those of this person's brothers. The five boys in this family are named, respectively:

X Long "dragon"; X Hu "tiger"; X Hua "China"; X Wen "civil", and X Wu "military".

When they are read in order, one after the other, remarks Alleton, these names form a long sentence: *long hu hua wen wu*: "The dragon and the tiger are the symbols of the culture and strength of China".

This father needed to have five sons . . . to reveal the meaning of the message!

Names often reveal the cultural level of the parents, which is not surprising if we consider the social stratifications of this country throughout its history. Alleton states that the social interpretation of names is not always univocal. Thus, one character may be considered appreciative or depreciative, depending on the context. The author contributes the following example:

When *rong* (lust, honour, glory) is used alone, it has a heroic, revolutionary connotation (valued in certain periods and depreciated in others, depending on the circumstances and the milieu). However, if this morpheme is part of a bisyllabic name, it inevitably evokes signs on a storefront. [p. 68]

In Alleton's book, there is a lovely example of the influence that dreams may have when it is a question of choosing the person to be in charge of important functions in the administration of this country. An emperor of the Ming dynasty, having heard a clap of thunder during a dream a few days before presiding over the final session of the highest level of the mandarinates, chooses to put a man in first place on the list of postulants whose name is Qin Minglei, whose name means "thunder that makes itself heard". Although interpreting a dream as capable of predictive value is common in many peoples, this anecdote illustrates the importance assigned to names and their meaning, both of which are intimately interconnected in China.

Therefore, in their choice of the name's meaning, the Chinese take great pains to choose positive characteristics and harmonious and elegant sounds.

Unlike the choice of given names in the West today, generally selected from a previously established list, all the names in China are unused, created to measure, constructed and attributed in one single

movement. It is interesting to stress that in ancient times a Chinese person received a supplementary name every ten or twenty years. This proves that the name was not immutable and that the individual could often choose his adult name for himself and had the option to inscribe his own sign. However, we must add that there is only one official way to name on identity documents: the *xing* (family name) and the *ming* (given name).

Foreigners who are residents of China are required to adopt a Chinese name, which is most frequently a transcription into characters or syllables of their original names. For example, Alleton tells us that the name of the French poet Rimbaud is written in two characters that are pronounced "Lan-bo", and another poet, Verlaine, "Wei-lai-na" or "Wei-er-lun". Thus, what may seem an authoritarian practice could also be seen as a way to include foreigners in an understandable naming system.

Alleton finds that when she asks a Chinese person at what age he received his given name, his answer distinguishes three dominant periods: (1) at the moment of birth and during the first months of life; (2) between seven and nine years of age, when he enters school; (3) between sixteen and twenty-five years of age. These periods, states the author, correspond to moments when names were attributed in other historical times: (1) *ming*, the given name; (2) *xueming*, the school name; (3) *zi*, the social name.

The choice of the given name at the moment of birth is a creative act for which responsibility is taken by the parents, although the father's opinion in this regard may have a predominant character. The Chinese are very sensitive to interactions between the meaning of names and a person's fate. A person who has suffered a number of misfortunes in his life may try to modify his existence by changing his given name.

In China, the first name is written after the last name. An individual has only one first name, which was chosen by his parents. This name is used until he is twenty, the age at which he receives a social name, or *zi*. From this age on, he is no longer called his *ming* except when with his family.

As Alleton remarks, in Chinese, the first name is not a simple designation that serves only to identify: it has signifying value. However, it acquires important value as identification, since there is a very weak incidence of singular family names in China. For example,

in Alleton's book, we find that in a telephone directory published in 1984 by the Chinese Postal System, there were 5,730 family names: of these, approximately 2,000 are common and 3,500 rare. Five thousand family names—or more than a billion persons—represent an average of one family name per two hundred thousand persons. This gives us a numerical idea of the importance of individual naming in China, that is to say, it is based mainly on the *ming* or given name.

However, there is no specificity of proper names, which cannot be distinguished in any way from other words. The originality of China, stresses Alleton, is based on three characteristics: in the first place, each given name is created by the person who bestows it, which in some way puts the father in a situation analogous to that of a novelist who baptises his characters; in the second place, the words or morphemes used are those of everyday language; in the third place, the work of interpretation concerns not only some names which carry subtle allusions, but all of them, even the easiest to understand.

Given names always have a meaning, although it is not immediately available to revelation. Their meaning is not transparent; the opaqueness that they preserve in all circumstances cannot be understood independent of a context. The Chinese frequently discuss their names, leading to interchanges; thus, the meanings of their respective names may become a real subject of conversation. Even though certain meanings associated with the name are taken up, their polysemy is inexhaustible, since the person cannot know all his parents' motivations when they constructed his name. In the interstices between the meanings of the name, the subject may frequently slip in the meaning that he himself attributes to it, each name preserving all its mythopoeitic value. "The most appreciated given names are halfway between vain transparency and hopeless opaqueness: they suggest a reference or allusion that is less difficult to recover. They offer the aesthetic pleasure of the lifting of veils" (Alleton, p. 92). Each given name is like a prism that reflects an infinite number of meanings.

In this perspective, the idea of establishing an inventory of Chinese names is senseless, since all names are new. The transmission of the *xing* (given name) is patrilineal. However, unlike in the West, transmission of the *ming* (given name) is forbidden; a child may not be given the first name of any forebear. This is one of the original aspects of the Chinese system that differentiates it from other cultures. Each first name must be new and concern only this subject. We have seen to

what point in China there is a weak classificatory and identifying value of the person, a value deposited in the *ming* (family name). This is true to the extreme that newspapers often refer to public figures only by their first name. It is essentially in the written form that the singularity of first names acquires its full identifying dimension. In contemporary China, Alleton emphasizes, most first names have two syllables (written with two characters), although monosyllabic names are not rare.

Serge Bramly (2005) tells that in China, a person close to him refused to call him by his first name. Serge, pronounced in Chinese, *saa-djeu*, sounds too much like *shazi*, which means “dumb” or “stupid”. *Pang Li*, a homophone for “Bramly”, seemed more acceptable, since in Chinese it means “high mountain”, a name more appropriate for what produced the affective tie between them.

It is interesting to refer to an example *in extenso* in order to understand more thoroughly the development of production of meaning in connection with the choice of the given name.

X Jieming is the name of a woman born in 1933. The characters of her given name mean, respectively, *jie* “come between”, “be in an intermediate position” and *ming*, “brilliant, clear, explicit”. None of the interpretations that we can imagine in the function of this name corresponds to the one explained by this person. Her parents had had four children, the first two had died, the next was a boy, and she was the last. Her parents evoked this situation by using the graphic form of her name. The character *jie*, written with four strokes, may be separated into an upper part that is identical to the character for *ren*, “man” and a lower part, in two strokes, which, in its inverted form, corresponds to the character for *er*, “two”. Therefore, *jie* is able to function as a kind of hieroglyphic for two persons. The second character of the name is written with juxtaposed signs of the moon and the sun, which may evoke a girl and a boy. This is the woman’s comment to Alleton: “Four children were born; two are dead, two alive, one girl and one boy. This is why my name is Jieming.”

In this example, we see something as complex as the fact that beyond the meaning related to the graphic signs of the language or of the ideogram, the name’s polysemy is infinite, since the carrier of the name may then add all the meanings that her imaginary life gives her the opportunity to embroider on it. This does not prevent the original name from providing a basic meaning on to which the others will be strung.

Since the Chinese may receive several names, some of them when they are adults, we can stress that the given name does not tie the person down to a fixed fate; it is a porous fate, since each individual has an opportunity to inscribe a new wish to orientate his own future in an open way.

Naming in the Old Testament

In the Bible, the power of naming is conferred on men by God's decision. The Bible demonstrates that the importance assigned the choice of names is by no means absurd or childish. For the Hebrews, the name was not only a useful label to differentiate one person from another, but was the person himself, its mere pronunciation revealing one of his qualities. The name was motivated, had a meaning, its choice was not arbitrary; the name was unique and belonged to that person in every sense: it was new and belonged exclusively to the person thus named.

For example, in the Bible and for two thousand years, there is no repetition of names such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. None of the twenty-one Kings of Judah was named David following the first of the dynasty (Miller & Miller, 1978).

Abram was eighty-six when Hagar bore him Ishmael. When he was ninety-nine, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers . . . You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations" (*The Holy Bible*, 1984, Genesis 17: 1–5) because

etymologically, in Hebrew, there is a play on words between the name Abraham and its signifying expression: father of multitudes.

All the names chosen in the Old Testament had a meaning that carried a message. For example, the sons of Jacob, through plays of phonic similarity in cadence with the etymological meaning: Reuben, since the Lord saw him, Simeon because he heard, Levi because he attached, Judah because he praised, Dan because he vindicated, Naphtali because of Rachel's struggle, Gad was Leah's good fortune, Asher made Leah happy, Issachar was a reward, Zebulun would bring honour, Joseph because he adds (Genesis, 29, 30). When Sarah finally gives Abraham a son (Genesis, 21), her husband is 100. God had said; "You will call him Isaac." In Hebrew, there is a play on words between the name of Isaac and the verb "to laugh", in reference to the son of their respective old ages, since Sarah was ninety.

Genesis (35, 18) says that when Rachel had her son, childbirth was difficult and led to her death. "As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni", that is, "son of my trouble". But his father did not accept this name and called him Benjamin, that is, "son of my right hand". By changing his name, Jacob liberated his son from the weight of responsibility for his mother's death; through the substitute he assigns him, he wishes and predicts for him a good future (since the right hand was considered the favourable side).

We find another example of the semantic importance of the attribution of names in those Joseph chooses for his sons. Before the onset of the years of hunger, when he was Pharaoh's minister, Joseph had two sons. He named the first one Manasseh, because he said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household". (In Hebrew there is a play on words between the name Manasseh and the verb translated as "made me forget".) He named the second son Ephraim, saying, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering" (Genesis, 41: 51, 52). (Here, too, there is a play on words between the two terms.)

The ten names of Moses

The name Moses was chosen by the Pharaoh's daughter when she said: "I drew him out of the water" (Exodus, 2: 10). As Ouaknin and Rotnemer (1993) emphasize, the Talmud insists heavily on the poly-nomy of Moses. He had nine names: Moshé, Tov, Yered, Gedor,

H'evere, Sokho, Yekoutiel, and Zanoah. The Talmud, add the authors, comments on these names and analyses their etymology:

- Tov and Touvia mean "good" and "God's goodness";
- Yered from the verb "yarad", "to descend and to make descend", since Moses made the bread from the sky called manna fall down;
- Gedor from the verb "gadar", "to make a barrier, to put a limit", since Moses organized the people according to the Law, constituted essentially by a number of limitations: the limitation of jouissance and regulation of violence. Hence, the notion was born of sharing the goods of this world. In this way, he set "dams against the unlimited".
- H'evere, from the verb "Leh'aber", that is, "to form a bond". Literally, "he bound men to God". Etymologically, he constructed a religion, from the Latin "religio", meaning "to bind tightly".
- Sokho, from the verb "souka" or "protective tent". Moses protected the people of Israel like a souka and hence, Sokho, the protector.
- Yekutiel, root of the verb "qavay", "to hope", given that since those times, the sons of Israel began to hope in God.
- Zanoah, from the verb "zahiah", "to leave, to discard", since Moses left or discarded when he did not take into consideration Israel's failings. He prefers to be erased from the Name-Erasure Book rather than to see his people punished for the episode with the golden calf.

Ouaknin and Rotnemer emphasize that Moses had ten names. Nine of them had been explained and one remained hidden and secret in the Egyptian language. It only reached us in its Hebrew translation: Moses. And if Moses leads his people out of Egypt, if he allows the people access to freedom, these authors propose that we should ask about the relation between polynomy and freedom, "between the mosaic of names as a staging, not only of multiple qualities, but of multiple polymorphic and polyphonic identifications". The mosaic of names makes the unique identity explode in an identifying process that preserves a living psychic space because it is open to change and adaptation. The Biblical Book of Exodus and Deuteronomy, the Book of Names, emphasize that liberation that leads to freedom goes through the polynomic explosion thanks to which the person embarks

on a long voyage of self-identification and dis-identification. The exodus is a voyage into the Name, towards the impossible radical identification with oneself, the authors suggest.

These examples, like many others in the Bible, account for the fact that, for the Old Testament, the name is the result of an act of signifying creation: motivated and never arbitrary.

The name of God

To name is to call into life, but in the process of humanization involved it also serves to make us aware of our mortal condition. The consideration of the name of God in theology is an arduous problem and is complex to discuss. For monotheistic religions, the value of the name of God reveals shared symbolism. In these religions, God is unnameable, beyond any possible naming. His name is above all names.

Only the Unnameable God is immortal. He is this name that we must never pronounce, since this would reduce him to something human. God is always an open question; his name is a simple question about Him. His real name remains hidden, is a secret, and is revealed only to whom God wishes to reveal it. The Revelation is the revelation of his true name (Panikkar (1969).

It is not possible to speak to God, but only to invoke him, since God's discourse does not belong to common language; in effect, his name is justified only in the vocative.

God's name cannot be spoken in vain, since any name of God is vain, a false name. God is beyond all possible nomination, is not a substance and has no name, but is a question. He is a simple pronoun and even an interrogative pronoun: who?

There are only substitutes of the true name of God. The terms used to speak of Him have a status either of metaphoric appellations, paraphrases, or epithets. For example: "The Almighty", "The Magnanimous", "The King of Heaven", etc.

The substitute name, a metonymic review, an asymptotic curve towards the Name, is proof of human inability to name God, to access his essence through his name.

It is interesting to turn to the marginal Hebrew texts, as does Markale (1983), in order to emphasize more sharply the value of the

name of God and the power a person would acquire with the possession of this name. This author recalls that Lilith

disputes with Adam a question of supremacy, symbolised sexually by the man's and the woman's respective positions during sexual intercourse. Lilith did not want to accept the man's primacy, and decided to make a final effort: she invoked the ineffable name of the Creator. Thereupon she miraculously received wings and flew through the air and out of the earthly Paradise. [p. 29]

Independently of the meaning intended in this story, Lilith performs an essential act: she invokes the name of God. Not just any name, but, rather, the ineffable, that is to say, the one that must not be spoken, that is not said, since in principle it is assumed to be unknown. The mere fact of pronouncing this true name gives Lilith absolute power over the Eternal. God cannot therefore deny what she requests and concedes Lilith a safe conduct to escape far from Adam's despotic power. Markale points out that as long as Lilith remained submitted to Adam, she also was in relation to the Creator. However, at the moment she pronounces the ineffable name, it is the Creator that is blinded by his own image. He can only obey Lilith, even though he later takes revenge by transforming her into a nocturnal bird. The names that are commonly used to name God, explains Markale, are metaphoric: Lord (the elder), Teacher (who knows the most), Dom (houseowner), Father, The Eternal, Yahweh (He that is).

Pronunciation of the true, secret name reverses the power. Lilith obtains her power over the Absolute from her knowledge of the true name of God. This highlights to what extent this knowledge gives her immense power over Him: "the name contains the power and whoever knows the name possesses the power".

For this reason it is forbidden to swear by invoking God. Any person that names him, even by using foul language, dares to put God at risk.

When the witnesses of the Evangels define the disciple as "he who believes in his Name", remarks Goldstain (1982), they do not expect simply recognition of his divinity or even acceptance of the truth of his word, but unreserved submission to his power. They offer up their entire life through commitment to only one Master and subjection to his sovereignty. In this sense, before speaking the Name given to Jesus

that is above any name, genuflection is required. For this reason, people are baptised "in the name of Christ". Also, it is the Lord, "in his name", that calls on the believer to belong to him, marked with the sign of his property; hence, the *Signatio*, the cross drawn on the forehead of the neophyte (*ibid.*).

It is also in Jesus' name that the Apostles perform miracles the day after Pentecost. Goldstain adds that to announce the Lord's message is to preach his Name, to be his disciple is to invoke his Name, to be his witness is to suffer for his Name. A Christian is defined as one who invokes the Name of Jesus.

To pronounce the name of Christ, continues Goldstain, attributed to this Man, is what constitutes him as decisive for the truth of his life. The achievement of this transformation is recognition of Jesus as the one who manifests, in truth, the meaning of the titles by which he is identified. Jesus is the one that cannot really be named, since his true name is "above all names". God in the Bible is not designated by his true name; He is who he is, as he revealed to Moses.

Since early Christianity, it has been forbidden to pronounce the name of God; only substitute names are allowed.

In an eloquent text concerning blasphemy, Benveniste (1974) stresses the wish to disobey the Biblical prohibition to pronounce the name of God. Blasphemy consists in "replacing the name of God with its insult"; that is to say, the attempt aims first at the name of God as such. The taboo that affects it is a linguistic taboo: the name of God must not pass through the mouth. This word is not communicative but only expressive, although it has a meaning. The name of God is blasphemed since only in this way, by pronouncing his name, can he be reached, either to move him or to wound him.

To speak the name of God reveals an impossible attempt. God is beyond the act of naming: since he transcends being, it is inappropriate to give him a name. To do this would reduce him to an anthropomorphic dimension.

When the Pope, the representative of God on earth for Catholics, dies, it is interesting to observe how this death is confirmed. After the physicians have established the death certificate, the Cardinal called the "Camarlengo" intervenes, since it is he who must guarantee the procedures of succession. First, beyond the death certificate signed by a physician, he himself must certify the Pope's death by his own means. According to tradition, the procedure consists in calling the

Pope three times, using his baptismal name, in the presence of other prelates. After having spoken his name three times, if the Pope does not respond to this call, he is considered really dead for the Catholic Church and the certificate is written. The certificate signed by the physician is not enough for the Church.

The Old Testament, Antoine shows, paraphrasing Proust, is presented at all times as *In search of the lost Name*, whereas the Evangelists are the *Book of the Verb*, that is to say, the Name found. Given that it is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, although He creates things by naming them and consecrates his Prophets by giving them a new name, He keeps none for himself. He is the Ineffable, the One whose name nobody will ever know.

Regarding the powers of calling, of vocation that the name possesses in the Bible, we may recall those that tell how Yahveh remodelled the name of Abraham in function of his prophetic work and Christ modifies those of Magdalene the sinner, John the precursor, and the Apostles Saul and Simon when he gives them a new mission. The etymology defines the mission of the person who receives a name. This new creation through the name, in communion with God, which is repeated in a partly comparable way in the poetic universe, is in the image of God, the inventor of forms.

In contrast, in polytheistic religions the plurality of Gods leads to a plurality of names. However, each name of God does not cover the divinity, since other names also refer to the divinity. The plurality of the Gods, proved by their diverse names, thus leads us to discover that there is a unity among the Gods. Actually, this diversity only indicates the multiple manifestations of one unique, supreme power. In this sense, the names of the Gods are either not the true name of God or are one name of God or one name of one God.

For their part, the parents in some way participate, in the act of naming their newborn boy or girl, in a divine quality: that of naming the fruit of their creation. However, since they can name only because they are named, they remain anchored to their human, mortal condition, a quality already announced in the act that named them. Every newborn has something of the divine (do we not often hear from those gathered around his crib that he is divine?) and of being-for-death.

When they name their child, the parents participate in the symbolic work of creation. It is perhaps their only "divine" contribution. For the mother and father, being a mother and being a father

raises them to the category of procreating beings and, simultaneously, transmitters of a name. But giving a child a first name not only gives him a “proper” name, but also inscribes him in a manner that is articulated into an imaginary and symbolic family history.

If the Revelation is the revelation of the name of God, then could we not say that in the act of naming a child there is in some way a revelation: revelation of the family myth? And if the child subsequently develops a symptom, could not the attempt to decipher the origin of this name orientate us towards a more subtle understanding of what it is that both veils and reveals the pathogenic familial repressed in this name?

If the Prophets and mythical heroes of so many cycles of adventures receive a special name, it is because they act in a certain way. When it is a question of children, however, the mission that parents may expect them, consciously or unconsciously, to perform precedes the choice of the name, and it is its meaning, conscious or unconscious, that orientates his fate, sometimes too effectively.

The secret name in Hinduism (Bäumer, 1969)

In India, even today, it is forbidden to utter the name of certain persons. A wife must never speak her husband’s name, either in his presence or in his absence. The mere speaking of the name strips the person and gives him over to strange forces, whether good or evil, although obviously the fear of the evil ones prevails. At the very moment the name is pronounced, the mystery of the person is revealed, and becomes both individual and an indissoluble part of the community. As long as the community is intact, it is unnecessary to pronounce the name. An example cited by Bäumer is quite eloquent in this respect. In a tribe in central India, a very special rite is used for divorce: the main act in this ritual is the breaking of a shaft of wheat as each spouse simultaneously pronounces the other’s name. This act indicates the divorce. It means that the intimacy of marriage, preserved by the silence of the names, is broken by their pronunciation, which unbinds the spouses and restores their reciprocal liberty.

The forbidden name, the taboo name, and the secret name are not the same. A child never has less than two names, since one of them must remain secret. At first, only the parents know it; the child learns

it later, when he is presented to a teacher, in the Upanayana rite. It is simultaneously communicated to the Guru. According to another tradition, it is the Guru who gives the secret name during the Upanayana rite.

The father must whisper the word *vak* three times into the child's ear in order to initiate him into the word (Veda); he also assigns him a secret name as he tells him, "You are the Veda." The Veda is both the sacred and mystic word *par excellence*, and it is not by chance that the secret name is given in relation to it.

The name, states Bäumler, not only grants simply protection, but also the force it contains. But to achieve it, the child needs several names, and for this reason he may receive up to eight. Although the name expresses one of the person's powers, this force can never be fully and adequately expressed and, consequently, something is always left over. This residue is inside the secret name, since it represents the person's core. Whereas other names are adopted for use in social life, the secret name is reserved for very special occasions such as religious ceremonies, the moment of initiation, marriage, etc. In this sense, the secret name is considered a sacred name.

In Hinduism, belief in the immediate effect of the pronunciation of a name is connected theologically to the belief in the power of the word (*vak*). All Hindu philosophy of the word testifies to the great importance of the word as an original and originating power. "Word" is, however, an abstraction of the "name", since the "name" is the first manifestation of the word. In this sense, Bäumler states, Sanskrit is without doubt a "nominal" language.

The gods also have secret names: "the secret name is precisely the *amṛta*, the drink of immortality". Originally, the gods were mortal and had names like mortals; with the *amṛta* they obtain immortality and a secret name that withdraws them from the influence of mortals.

The secret name does not have simply a meaning in the cult but is directly related to creation. Indra put chaos into order with the power that emanates from her secret name. Therefore, in Hinduism, nomination has not only a classificatory or identifying function, but also restores order to the profane and religious world. It is through nomination that the world acquires a certain order that makes it liveable. Both the name of the divinity and of persons has a sacred meaning for Hinduism. There is true mysticism of the name closely

connected to religion. In effect, the name of the divinity, known and used by all, is not its true name; the mystery inherent to it must remain intact.

The tradition of the secret around the true name of persons proves that they may never be left to the responsibility of the profane domain. Neither may they be totally known by others, not even those closest. Just as for the gods, there is a dimension of otherness that remains mysterious and unknowable, which represents the essence of the individual.

The name for Buddha (Panikkar, 1969)

As we have seen, the Name of God cannot be spoken, but only invoked, since the Name of God is ineffable.

Buddha goes further. For Buddha, elimination of the name of God is the religious movement *par excellence*. Any pronunciation of the name of God, and even all thought of it, are considered blasphemies. According to Buddha, it would be hypocrisy to forbid images of God or to pronounce his name if at the same time it were permitted to think of God. Panikkar states that for Buddhism, God has no name because he is not.

In this perspective, asking about the name of God means asking about his identity, confining him in our categories, even if we say that his name is secret or unknowable. Buddha has no name because there is nothing that has that name, he cannot be identified by a name. The principle of identity would destroy him: there can be no God identical to God, to himself.

Buddha's silence is not an answer; he does not answer through silence; he simply does not answer, his silence is simply his refusal to answer. He questions the question and also the person who asks it and had erroneously identified with it.

Summarizing what concerns the name of God in the history of religion and in general, Panikkar concludes that there is an initial crisis suffered by the divine name, since the plurality of names suggests a plurality of gods; at the same time, the tradition of the secret name of God appears.

The names of God are not his true name, which remains hidden and secret; God reveals it to whomever he wants to reveal it. It is to

his followers that the divinity unveils his true name. The Revelation is the revelation of this name. The essence of the secret name remains unknown: thus, we come to the beautiful and suggestive formulation of God as a simple question.

Giving a name: is it imperative to name a newborn child?

“Thirsting to know what God knows,
Judah Leon gave himself over to permutations
Of letters and complex variations
And at last pronounced the Name that is the Key”

(Borges, 1964)

For the ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia to name means to call to life; a being does not exist until it has received a name (André-Leickman, 1983).

Nobody may carry a name if that person has not been named; fundamentally, nobody may carry a name if that person has not been named by another person. The act of naming enables the child to enter the order of human relations. To have, to possess, and carry a name means having acquired a place in a symbolic system. No one escapes the assignment of a proper name.

A proper name designates the condensation of the personal presence operated by a singular word in the midst of language forms. The name itself is a language form like others. For Tesnière (1966, cited in Nédoncelle, 1969) a name is not situated among empty words (such as the definite article, which is simply a grammatical tool devoid of

semantic meaning), but among full words (which express thoughts directly). The proper name is not the only one that represents the person, since the personal sign pronouns such as “I”, “you”, etc.) also refer to the person. The name, however, is the condensation of the person’s presence, which is provided autonomy since, unlike a personal sign, it does not demand a complement of determination by a gesture towards a given person. The name is the person without error, designated by its simple power of invocation in reference to the sentence.

In Mesopotamia, according to the tradition described, an individual cannot live without a name, since without a name the person does not exist. In order to make an enemy disappear from human memory, condemn him to death or to eternal damnation, it is enough to erase his name so that “it can be found neither in heaven nor on earth”. Even statues in the temples consecrated to God, as André-Leickman remarks, have a name and are considered “alive” beyond death in order to avoid their destruction. This author explains that an inscription on a statue says, “He who destroys this inscription . . . let An [a divinity] make him forget his own name” (p. 16), and the pious man asks his descendants to call him regularly in order to make him live eternally.

The perforating intrusion of the name produces an implosion in the coalescence of signs. The name obstinately designates the advance of writing, the space it perforates: the space that produces and detaches the words from the immobile present and preserves their development (Mathieu, 1983).

For the Eskimos, as we have seen, a being that has not received a name is not considered a human person, to the extreme that a newborn that has not received a name may be suppressed without this being considered murder.

The birth certificate and naming aim to unbind the subject from the phantom of a unitary and fusional origin, according to Clerget (1990). He states that, strictly speaking, we do not carry a name, but belong to it.

The name indelibly seals the child’s body and gives him the right to be recognized in his singular identity. It grants him a title that makes this child an irreplaceable being.

Naming is an act whose property is to make a hole in the One (*ibid.*) of omnipotent narcissism. This means that nomination places a

limit on narcissistic expansion, confronting the subject with partition (conscious–unconscious), the limits of symbolic castration, and the lack represented so that each being may mourn completeness. Mourning of narcissism understood as the wish to be One, unitary utopia, totalizing and pure ego with no *alter* (Green, 1976).

At the call of the enamoured nymph, Echo, Narcissus remains indifferent, ignoring her sighs. Being called makes no hole in Narcissus, who prefers to drown instead of responding to the call of his name.

Two seven-year-old girls, Cecile and Aline, arrive at a transit home by order of a judge. Nothing seems to differentiate these monozygotic twins; neither the sad expressions of their faces, nor the movement of their long blonde hair, nor their yellow dresses, nor their shared history as abused children. Only their first names, Cecile and Aline, guarantee the recognition of a unique identity, of continuity in their interrupted histories that include breaks and separations since early childhood, only as long as this singularity is recognized by others. Since the social workers at the home were fascinated by their likeness, as if they were “two drops of water” (those of Narcissus?), they tended to call them both Celine . . .

It is not my purpose to discuss the problems of twins, which would lead us down other roads. I cite this clinical vignette because it contributes a counter-example of what the act of naming means. The social workers, fascinated by the effect of the double, convert differentiated identities, two bodies, into a confusion of One. Celine, as they called both twins without differentiation, becomes a negative, desubjectivizing name.

The positive aspect of naming separates and distinguishes and makes the subject an irreplaceable being. “Biological birth is not enough to separate the newborn child from the supernatural world or from the invisible”, according to Journet (1990), who adds that the moment of giving a name is one of the privileged moments when the infant is anchored in human society.

Functions of the name

The name designates the person in that person’s singular and immutable transcendence, and also consecrates the person’s originality. The

name and the subject interpenetrate each other and this unity holds true at all times and in all places (Vergote, 1969).

The name is not like a coat that is hung up and can be snatched away or torn to pieces; all to the contrary, it is a perfectly fitted jacket or, more precisely, it is like skin, since it cannot be ripped up or taken off without hurting the person.

Life, as Vasse (1974) writes, goes through man more than he goes through it. "In the body that goes through it, life is spoken as what was already there before the body, and the traces it has left there are the proper name" (p. 184).

The first name, like a second skin, envelops the child and serves as a boundary between his body and the other's. Naming, as an act of recognition, is indissolubly connected to the symbolic function of parentality (a term I use to denote the functions carried out jointly by the mother and the father).

In effect, when a child is born, his arrival into the world does not in itself guarantee the child's inscription in a symbolic universe. This possibility needs to be offered by the Other, by the language of his forebears and the lineage that precedes him.

Ouaknin and Rotnemer (1993) consider that the name has essentially three functions: identification, filiation, and project.

Among the Jews, only first names define identity and genealogy. When a child is born, if it is a boy, it is named for the first time during the ceremony of circumcision; his given Jewish name intervenes at that moment, followed by "son of . . ." and his father's first name. For example, Moshe Ben Yaacov: Moses, son of Jacob.

In the case of a girl, at the moment of her naming (which is optional, unlike circumcision), she is given a first name, followed by "daughter of . . ." and her mother's first name. For example, Dvora Bat Rah'el: Deborah, daughter of Rachel.

These authors emphasize the late appearance of family names in relation to first names, as we have seen in preceding chapters. In medieval times, nicknames appear first, which crystallize into family names, transmitted throughout the different generations, and frequently refer to places, professions, and physical or spiritual characteristics.

For these authors, the given name also enunciates a function as a project; in Hebrew they always have a meaning—even modern names—and suggest that this meaning tends to be one of the criteria

for their choice. All this shows us clearly that wishes for the child are tied into the choice of the given name: "each given name contains a history, a meaning and quite specific subtleties".

The child's insertion in the symbolic universe begins before birth and even before conception, at the moment the child is spoken by its parents' desire.

The first mark of the first symbolic inscription is produced with the choice of the given name, a privileged moment: symbolic coitus between maternal and paternal lineages that precedes or follows the primal scene of conception.

As Molino (1982) describes, the name serves to identify, classify, and signify, even though the canonical function of the proper name is to identify. We may see in the brief vignette below to what point identification with a name may subsist, encrypted, even beyond a change of sex with an apparent change of name.

Captain of the Yale University tennis team and later an eminent ophthalmologist, married and the father of a boy, Richard Radley decides to become Renée Richards. The tennis world closes its doors to him when he signs up in the female category; the society that accepted Dr Radley, the male tennis player, rejects the female player, Dr Richards. Regarding this relatively new cultural fact, with its possibility of transformation, as is transsexualism, and beyond the individual and cultural consequences a change of sex may have, it seems interesting to emphasize, in this example, the choice of the new given name. In effect, beyond the meaning of Renée (re-born), for his return to life with a different sexual identity, the captain of the tennis team chose a different first name that contains the former one. This is true in regard to the initials R and R, preserved in the two identities, and in the given name, now his family name in his second identity. The subject had decided to change sex and in order to achieve it he undergoes an operation that transforms him irreversibly. However, even with a different sexual identity and a different social identity, in practice the person preserves his entire original name through the choice of his last name and also confirms the initials of his former first and last names.

Re-born (Renée) to another sexual and social identity, his body drastically and irreversibly transformed, he does preserve, in the choice of his new name the only immutable trace of his former identity. The first name transcends the extreme modifications of his body and preserves the essence of his original identity.

Lévi-Strauss (1962, p. 359) describes two extreme types of proper names. In one case, the name is an identifying mark that confirms, by application of a rule, the pertinence of the individual thus named to a pre-ordained class (social group in a group system, birth status in a status system). In another case, the name is a free creation by the individual who names and expresses, through what he names, a transitory state of his own subjectivity. However, Lévi-Strauss asks whether we can say that either of these cases is true naming. The choice is not between identification of the other by his assignation to a class or, with the pretext of giving him a name, to identify oneself through the other. And Lévi-Strauss concludes,

It is never naming or classification of the other if the name given is a function of the person's characteristics or if one classifies with the belief that one is free of following any rule, the other is named "freely", that is to say, in function of his characteristics. Most frequently, both are done at the same time. [p. 240]

According to Gardiner (cited by Lévi-Strauss) there are "disincarnate" names and "incarnate" names. The former are chosen from a compulsory and restricted list (like the calendar saints); therefore, they include a large number of individuals; the latter names concern one single individual.

Molino (1982) states that in all cultures, nomination obeys more or less strict rules and gives more or less room for the initiative of the person who bestows the name. Here, we see two very different perspectives of analysis. On the one hand, there are rules of production (which Molino calls the poietics of the proper name); on the other hand, the result of their application (which Molino calls the neutral level of this symbolic system).

Molino differs from Lévi-Strauss when he suggests that nomination does not obey only principles of classification: it is not a system, since names are added infinitely. As proof, he points out that botanical species have a limited number of names, whereas in people their number may be infinite: "A species is defined by a single hierarchical classification; an individual carries a virtual infinity of independent classifications" (p. 18).

A man called Peter is a man who has been told, "Your name is Peter." Whether during a baptism ceremony or in a broader sense at

the moment when his name is given, the act of saying to Peter, "I name you Peter" took place. In this sense, names are arbitrary, since they are given. Baptism and interpellation, as Molino says, are quite specific language acts reserved for anthroponomy.

It is interesting to stress that names that do not belong to persons (for example, geographic names) do not involve interpellation.

An example cited by Lévi-Strauss accounts for the "dialogued" character of this interpellation. Each individual of the Wik Munkan people who live in the western part of the Cape York Peninsula in Australia, possess three proper names: a "navel" name or *nämp kort'n*; a large name, *nämp pi'in*; and a small name, *nämp many*. All the large and small names derive from the totem or its attributes.

Only "navel" names may come from another clan and even from a different sex than its carrier. Shortly after the child's birth, but before the expulsion of the placenta, a qualified person pulls on the umbilical cord, first enumerating the male names of the maternal lineage. The name pronounced just when the placenta emerges is the one given to the child. This does not mean that the cord may not be manipulated to guarantee the wished-for name, but in any case it is interesting to note that, like the Eskimos, this Australian people introduces a dialectic aspect between the giver and the future carrier in the form of an interplay of interpellation when the moment arrives to give the name, as if consensus were required between the giver and the receiver of the name.

Granger (1982) also differs from Lévi-Strauss, who, as we recall, conceives of the act of naming as solely classificatory. He stresses that the proper name is different from the deictic, which is simply a forefinger pointing: it could be said that it has no meaning in itself. The proper name, in contrast, contains a supposition of meaning. Granger insists on the pragmatic function of the proper name, a function that enables him to connote meanings. This connotative potential is even richer when the proper name does not have too precise a semantic impact. Because of its connotative richness, the proper name approximates the poetic word. The proper name, because of its essentially pragmatic function, even when it is far removed from any semantic intention, may have a meaning. For the linguist Granger, the meaning of the proper name is an oblique meaning.

This author thinks that what is essential in naming is that the mere presence of this name in naming defines this act as interpellation.

The proper name is what it is because it is able to function in an interpellation.

Every sign may be reused as a proper name if it may become the tool of virtual interpellation. However, this interpellation is effective on condition that it is spoken to the individual. In this case, remarks Granger, the semantic character of the sign is less important. Descriptive or not, its value in language swings completely from a semantic plane to a pragmatic one. By pragmatic, Granger means everything that concerns the relation between enunciation and the circumstances of enunciation.

The proper name may be surrounded freely by connotations, which grants it, according to Granger, exceptional poetic power. The literature abounds in examples, but there are even more in the creations of children's language. We recall that, for this author, the proper name is not a deictic or simply a finger pointing at the subject with this gesture and devoid of meaning. Just the opposite: the proper name always includes a supposition of meaning.

Bromberger (1982) also disagrees with linguists who think that the proper name is a deictic form whose only function is to designate and identify an individual. He stresses that if the only function of the names of persons were to designate a unique individual constantly and in a unique way, as affirmed by Benveniste, we could not understand why certain societies institutionalize the reception of a different name by the same individual at each stage of his life in order to mark the changes produced in each person by the passage of time.

In reference to naming systems, with a view contrary to that of Lévi-Strauss, Bromberger states that "the better they classify, the less they identify". Bromberger explains that the name functions both as a classifier and as a symbol, and, thus, reflects a set of beliefs and convictions. In this perspective, it is not individuation that prevails over classification, but "the symbol that prevails over the sign". He concludes that naming is much more than identifying.

To emphasize the distance between himself and those who insist on the classificatory value of names, he highlights that it is precisely in the choice of the child's given name that the classificatory function remains subordinated to the particular intentions of the parents and the child's environment. When they choose their child's first name, the parents take into account their own wishes concerning the child much more than any classificatory procedure. Their wishes may be

relatively conscious, as in societies with oral transmission, without excluding the unconscious ramifications inherent to everything human, or completely unconscious, as occurs more frequently in our contemporary urban societies.

In Western societies, the meaning of first names has become opaque, since they are chosen from a previous list. This is not the case, as we have observed, in most peoples of antiquity or in tribal Africa, where the meaning of names is relatively transparent, since they are a free creation of the name givers, generally the parents and sometimes with contributions from their familial and social environment.

However, it seems to me, and this is the thesis of my book, that in our societies the meaning has not disappeared. I am not referring to the literal meaning of first names described in dictionaries of names. I am talking about the personal motivations of the parents and the mythopoietic conditions of the choice of the given name, which I consider has retreated into the unconscious register. Although they are veiled by the mechanisms of unconscious repression, they operate as always active forces. This meaning, partly conscious, and in any case with broad ramifications in the giver's unconscious, acts as an anchor point for the receptor's personality and is even able, without the receiver's awareness, to influence his fate.

In modern linguistics, pragmatics has insisted on the performative value of the act of naming, which is to say that it has highlighted a fundamental characteristic of the proper name: its presence in the enunciation of an interpellation. In the case we are discussing, the parental act of naming, although interpellation is virtual, none the less it loses none of the strength of its meaning.

The pragmatic approach in linguistics enables us to progress noticeably in our formulation, since it demonstrates how every name contains an implicit relation. For linguistics, the relation included in the act of naming is a dual relation; there is an "I" that names a "you". At least, the parental couple intervenes in the choice of the child's name and consequently it is: "we name you". It is originally an imaginary interpellation, since the child is included in the parents' discourse that is materialized in the reality of the name attributed when the child is born (Canestri & Tesone, 1989).

In its mythopoiesis, the given name contains others in the "we" that refer to those who precede us. In effect, before I was "I", the "we" precedes and constitutes us. As de Mijolla (1986) points out, each

member of the family is both unique and collective; this author suggests that each of us represents a supplementary pawn on a vast chess board beyond the specific value or privileged form reached, a configuration constructed long before our arrival into the world; this occurs in *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (Carroll, 1968) in which the places of King and Queen were already taken (see below in Chapter Eight, "The name and literature").

Thus, before we arrive in the world, a complex network of familial relations precedes us and unconsciously determines partially, since several generations intervene, the choice of the child's given name.

The generations that precede us institute and construct us in the interplay of the voice like an envelope of sound, and of the gaze as a visual envelope. The primordial other that is the maternal gaze and voice, but also the paternal, in the tertiary relation assumed by the introduction of the symbolic Law of the Name of the father, which is not an executer of the Law, but only its carrier. To be one, we need first to be three, and finally two. This is the complex mathematics of identity. We cannot be one except within the tertiary structure of the Oedipus complex, which confronts us with lack, loss of omnipotence, and the differences of sexes and generations.

Freud (1909b) recalls how he described this in a similar way to Little Hans, the five-year-old boy who was his patient for a brief time: "Long before he was in the world", I went on, "I had known that a little Hans would come who would be so fond of his mother that he would be bound to feel afraid of his father because of it" (p. 42). Beyond the therapeutic value of this intervention, which generated some perplexity and irony in Hans about Freud's function as a divine power, it is undeniable that Freud wanted to place him in a genealogy that partly determines the place the child comes to occupy.

The *princeps* function of the family is to give the child a place that generates otherness. It is through the interpellation of his given name that the child begins to recognize himself as a being-separate-from his parents. He answers to his given name long before he can say "I", an ontological anteriority that confirms him in his own identity and precedes the possibility of his announcing himself with his personal pronoun separated from the "you".

The arrival of a child reactivates the parents' own infantile relations with the parents of their infancy and redefines their relations

with them and also perhaps with their grandparents. Each generation is relocated in the chain of filiation as a link that presumes a life project as well as the acceptance of the passage of time and death. The parents themselves are tied to their own parents by sentiments, conscious and unconscious representations, whose persistence and vivacity may influence the relation with their children. The child receives the unavoidable weight of the parents' imaginary expectations and, like a transgenerational mirror, receives the reflection of a gaze that is mixed with familial relations that preceded his birth. Even so, an initial violence is inevitable, since the parents attribute meaning to his first gestures and vocalizations.

The Oedipal triangle of one generation is constructed from the traces of the Oedipal triangles of the preceding generations. The child that will come to occupy the vertex of the triangle is the depository of a succession of triangles that may go back infinitely. However, the child is not a passive navigator subjected to the force of transgenerational winds that sweep him dangerously on to the rocks on the coast. He skirts the course charted for him by his given name and, like a seasoned sailor, takes the tiller of his existence. In effect, the given name may be experienced as an inherited dwelling that he needs to make his own and is reconstructed and reappropriated while it is being inhabited.

To occupy a place is to give it movement and vitality in the chaining together of familial places. And, via this path, to accept and allow into oneself those others that have constituted us and to make them paradoxically familiar, in the sense that they are companions to contain our anguish rather than shadows that act despite us. To receive and to transmit are essentially human acts. To receive a given name and then in turn to be a giver: this is an attribute, a symbolic donation, which occupies the centre of gravity of the inaugural act that opens humanization.

The secret name

We have seen that for the Bantu there are three types of names: the first is chosen by the parents at the moment of birth, the second is received at the moment of puberty, and the third, the "relation name", is the one by which the person is identified in daily life.

Only the third one may be pronounced freely, and it is the only one used by the community. The first two are a zealously guarded secret, a protective measure, since if an enemy were to come into possession of the true name, that person would acquire enormous power over the name-bearer.

Possession of the material sound of the name is equal, in the Bantu belief system, to domination and possession of the person. This highlights the extent to which the name *is* the person. The need to keep secret one of the names is a characteristic common to many peoples, for whom it is still a valid custom.

In ancient Egypt, the name was considered an accumulator of internal strength, a reservoir of latent energies, whose enunciation unleashed dangers. Revelation of the proper name gave the other total power over the person interpellated by his proper name. It was considered a "key word" to dominate the other (Garnot, 1948).

In her remarkable article on the secret name in Hinduism, as we saw above, Bäumer (1969) summarizes its function and transcendence. Even today, it is forbidden to pronounce the name of certain persons. In this belief, the woman must not pronounce her husband's or her father's name.

In the Mahabharata, it is written that the person must never be called by his name and that his name must be included among the taboos. It is common practice for the name considered the true essence of the person to be replaced by relational titles.

Belief in the immediate effect of the pronunciation of the name is connected to the belief in the power of words; its first manifestation is precisely the name.

A name opens the doors of the treasure house (open Sesame!) and, with this, access to wealth. Anyone who forgets it remains shut inside and dies, surrounded by useless gold.

When the child receives its name it becomes whatever the name expresses. The name gives him protection as well as the strength contained in the name. The mere chance pronunciation of his name denudes the person, lifts the veils of his mysteries and subjects him, defenceless, to evil powers.

The theme of the secret name is present in most legends. A secret name defends Rome from enemy attack and its revelation would expose it to defeat and sacking. Mythological narratives, as Markale (1983) observes, are replete with anecdotes in which each adversary

challenges the other to try to call him by his real name. The heroes of legend never use their authentic name; they preserve it rigorously secret, and only use another that is called the war name.

It operates as a real protective sound shield. As long as the enemy is not in possession of his true name, he may consider himself protected.

The war name is not chosen at random. Markale cites the example of Cúchulainn, hero of an Irish epic of the Ulster cycle. His baptismal name is Setanta, but, following a certain event in his infancy, he is called only Cúchulainn, which means the Hound of Culann. This war name reveals his function: Culann, the ironsmith of the Ulates, is a very important figure in ancient societies. Through Culann, the entire Ulates society is assumed to be protected by Cúchulainn.

The war name protects both the hero and the community. It designates his mission and defines his social role. Thus, when the young Setanta is six years old, Markale tells us, he is attacked by Culann's terrifying hound, a real monster that he defeats and kills. However, Culann is furious at having lost his hound, which was his protective guardian. The young boy tells him that he will now be Culann's hound.

A Druid hears this proposal and asks him, "Then why don't you call yourself Cû-Chulain?" The boy would like to refuse; he prefers his name Setanta. But the Druid makes him understand that it is a question of obligation rather than of his wishes. In this example, we see that the attribution of a war name always includes a sacred element

Another example cited by Markale is the legend of the Grail cycle, by Chrétien de Troyes. The hero of the adventure begins as the "Son of the Widow Lady". He acquires the name Percival when he leaves the mysterious castle where he caught a glimpse of the Grail Cortège without asking the redeeming question. He receives his name from the enigmatic Pucelle as a real curse: he is Percival the Accursed, the Failed, since he failed in his mission. He is, therefore, condemned to find the way out of the king's closed palace, to "perforate the depth of the valley" (in French, "percer" means to perforate, and "val" is valley. Therefore, Perceval means "perforates the valley"), in order to discover what is hidden there; thus, his name designates his mission and justifies the personage. Names held publicly are never chosen at random but respond, in general, to the expectations of the people and to the mission expected of them. They tend to model the character according to the wishes of the people.

The relation name is not only a protective shield against others, as we described in the case of the war name; it is equally a mask. In many societies, the use of the mask is quite common and corresponds to the need of social play.

However, in legends that update ancient myths, there is no need of a relation title or a mask: a name is enough. On the stage of an ancient Greek theatre the hero differentiates himself from the others by introducing himself and saying, "I am a such and such . . ." Only later, to facilitate understanding, the custom of wearing a mask appeared. But this mask is only a visual double of the name's sound (Markale, 1983).

The relation name, or public name, is the one the subject puts into social circulation in order to hide by omission his true name, the one that is the very essence of the person. This one must stay out of reach of others, potential enemies that might want to harm him. The true name, a reflection of survival, must remain secret.

The secret of the name

Although the use of a secret name is not practised in Europe, it could be said that the given name always holds a secret: something hidden in the meanderings of whatever the choice of the name transmits of parental desire. The name comes to situate itself as a knot where the parental lineages converge, a riddle forever open towards what could have inspired the choice of the name, an uninterrupted series of causes and consequences of the child's fate.

It is said that someone "is called" to indicate perhaps that the name may have more than one meaning, that it convokes us with a call that is, from its origins and even before birth, an inter-call. The name is given us by another, by others, and these others are present in its interstices, its morphemes, and its signifiers as a memory of a mythical family history. When we come into the world we are plural. The name is a vestige that is written, outlined and scribbled by many hands.

In a conscious or unconscious way, the parents choose names that contain expectations, desires, and sometimes even a mission. Although this is evident in the choice of names in certain African

communities, as we have seen, it is less transparent in Western urban communities, where names are chosen from a list and not created especially for each child.

However, these desires, almost always unconscious, persist and may influence the child's fate, superimposing a precipitation of fluctuating memories that acquire a future through the condensate of the name. Many are the voices expressed in the enunciation of a child's name and sometimes keep secret what determined it. This is not a repressed secret, but one that is encysted in the name. Since it is not necessarily pathogenic, it may remain veiled for a whole lifetime without producing effects. Or it may orientate the subject's life in spite of himself, in the manner of a family mandate obeyed as an obligation, an itinerary charted beforehand by hidden but nevertheless active helmsmen. The effect may be more disturbing if it is not the person's own secret, constructed and zealously kept as a condition of being able to think. It is, more precisely, a secret that precedes the constitution of our psyche, which it influences without our knowledge. It is both a constitutive and an alienating secret, an inevitable alienation that indicates that we are always the product of a primal scene from which we have been excluded forever. Just as we have not engendered ourselves, neither have we been able to name ourselves, unless we decide to change our name. Even so, underneath this new skin the ineffable birth name will always remain.

The riddles investigated in psychoanalysis pertain to the order of the unconscious and are, therefore, not known until they are revealed by analysis. The secret contained in the given name acquires meaning only in the function of the symbolic place to which it refers in a trans-generational chain. This secret is kept as a reserve for a purely parental signifier.

Each individual's search for identity, thanks to which the subject is constituted in relation to the other as an individual and as a sexed subject that comes to occupy a certain place, is inscribed in a debate on the secret. What mark, what scarring, what trace does the subject carry that makes him recognizable as a member of his nuclear lineage? The secret sign of his pertinence, the determinant force of the unconscious inscriptions, the secret mark of his filiation, of his place in the sexual order, of the origins of pleasure and desire, the origins of suffering and his mortal condition, are inscribed in a more or less decipherable way in his given name.

The child does not choose his name, his parents, or his own body. When he comes into the world, he comes to occupy a place of love or hate, the fruit of desire or of error, inhabits a vital space or fills a void.

René (which, in French, besides being a given name, sounds like “reborn”), five years old and withdrawn, a victim of psychotic de-structuring and evaluated in the frame of a consultation in a Child Psychiatry Department in Paris, was born following the death of his older brother. His identity was recognized only as a rebirth of his dead older brother, an instrument to deny the cadaver, whose signs of decomposition none the less persist in him.

As we have been showing, the child is not a *tabula rasa*, free of any mark; a text precedes him and prologues him: it is the ante-text. This ante-text, its characters written by the parental pen, recalls the family myth in its writing. The ante-text, like a trilogy, puts the different interfamilial and intergenerational tragedies on stage and contributes their weave to the cloth of an inter-text. Only upon this ante-text may the subject scribble his own, an intergenerational palimpsest by which every (auto)biography is plucked apart.

To receive a name, to accept the parental gift, means that the blood of ancestors runs in our veins.

Naming a child is not simply a question of placing him socially or introducing him into the classificatory system described by Lévi-Strauss (1962b). It also inscribes him in a symbolic family history: the signifier of the name is chained to the parental signifiers that run through the generations.

Usually, language allows us to change one term for another, a similarity accounted for by dictionaries of synonyms. With persons, this is not possible.

The given name has some degree of resonance with the personal pronoun “I”: both provide an anchor point for everything the subject says or does. Neither of them, as Vergote (1969) points out, prevents representation of the person, but is a representation of the person that acquires more linguistic autonomy.

For Vergote, the similarity between the name and the linguistic *shifter* that is the personal pronoun (I) must not disguise the radical difference between them. In effect, the “I” refers me to my solitary interrogation, whereas my name comes to me only with the interpellation of a dialectic summons.

The question “who am I?” animates all philosophy, this author states, because it indicates the dehiscence of the I in relation to itself. The I cannot be based on any original integrity or coincidence with itself, since the I that asks is always an other. From the moment it appears, the I is split between a conscious and an unconscious. From this splitting inherent to the I is born a question that by itself can no longer close or block off the conscious I that asks.

Only the name permits identification of the subject within the very splitting that the I opens in search of its identity. However, the name does not enable us to go beyond the question, since it does not contribute a meaning able to block it. The name, Vergote proposes, is devoid of meaning. From this perspective, he maintains that the name is the original non-meaning, the support of any act by which the “I” signifies itself. Multiple networks of signifiers are woven around this zero point.

Because it lacks semantic value, Vergote continues, the name defeats any epistemic attempt. To signify the person, the name must not be an indicator of signification but a pure signifier. But does this pure signifier that this author considers the name to be, perhaps its most paradoxical aspect, bear no relation to parental signifiers? And interconnected with these signifiers, would the subject’s zero point not tend to be displaced in a progressive slide back towards the mythical time of those origins?

Since Saussure, we have known that the tie that binds the signifier to the signified is arbitrary and that, consequently, every linguistic sign is equally arbitrary. The sign resists all haphazard or isolated modification, since the choice is based on a collective convention of all the persons who speak this language (Saussure’s speaking masses).

What happens to proper names? Like the other linguistic signs, they are part of the language and their use is inseparable from the use of the word; however, their formation does not comply with the notion of a collective contract. It is the parents, totally independently, who choose a given name, which in antiquity and in certain communities is motivated. In this sense, they participate in the formation of a symbol, since there is no void between the signifier and the signified. Therefore, we differ from Vergote’s opinion and state that, paradoxically, the name always has a meaning, even though it remains hidden and unconscious, that is connected to the line of parental signifiers.

The relation between the signifier and the signified, whether fragile and rudimentary or evident and easily detectable, depends on the parental imaginary. The choice of the name has always been motivated and not arbitrary.

The name is attributed at the moment of birth, as Ouaknin and Rotnemer (1993) state, because its vocation is to remind us constantly that we need to be endlessly born and reborn. "I have a name; therefore this means that I have the infinite capacity of rebirth". They suggest that the Name is a "memorial of infancy", something of the newborn that we carry in ourselves as a gift: the gift of existence itself. In this sense, the Name is not such an immutable name, but, more precisely, an inaugural initial for a being with a future.

We have seen that, in certain societies, each individual has a secret name and a public name. The secret name is known only to the parents and the individual, since if another person knew it he would acquire power over that individual.

In some legends, when a hero interpellates his adversary and cries out a challenge, he pronounces his public name, the one everybody knows. The combat then takes place in conditions of equality: two personalities confront each other, symbolically, through an armed struggle.

In these legendary narratives, when a hero "names" his adversary, that is to say, pronounces his secret name, his true name, he calls up magical powers and takes possession of his adversary through assimilation of his name. Secret names exist in this manner, but perhaps there is also a secret dimension in every name.

What if all given names had this secret, hidden, masked, encrypted, underground dimension whose archaeological excavations might enable us to apprehend more of the concealed part of the family myth?

The nominative hypothesis in Cratylus

In Plato's time, two schools opposed each other in regard to the pertinence of names. One of them maintained, like Hermogenes, that the creation of language is a question of convention; the other thought, like Cratylus, that names are the exact representation of things. Through Socrates, Plato (1967) postulates first, in opposition to

Hermogenes, that names represent the essence of things; then, in the second part of the text titled *Cratylus*, he tells Cratylus that he would be well advised to include certain restrictions to this theory that would nuance his perspective.

Through Cratylus, Plato maintains that names are an imitation of things, that for each thing there is “a naturally appropriate name and that it has not been attributed by anyone because of convention but that nature has given each name its own meaning”. Hence, there is a natural relation between things and their names.

For Plato, the name results from imitation “of the essence of things through syllables and letters”. Thus, for example, the “r” serves to account for movement; the “i”, an expression of everything subtle and particularly capable of going through all things, serves to imitate the movement of the wind. The “d” and the “t”, which compress the tongue by applying pressure to it, serve to imitate chaining and stopping . . . According to Cratylus, since the tongue slides easily in pronouncing the “l”, it includes by imitation words that designate what is smooth, the very action of sliding, what is shiny and all things of this order. As the “g” has the property to stop this sliding of the tongue, it was used to imitate what is viscous, soft, or sticky. For its part, the “n”, which keeps the voice inside the mouth, forms names that refer to the inside, the internal. The “a” is the sound of “mega” (large) and the “e” refers to length because its traces are long. The “o” is necessary to designate what is round.

In this way, “the legislator seems to reduce the different notions to letters and syllables by creating a sign and a name for each being and from there, by imitation, composes the rest with these elements” (p. 453). The name, therefore, is a vocal imitation of the imitated object “and he who imitates with his voice names that which he imitates”.

Thus, the name is defined as a mere representation of the object. Cratylus confirms his position by saying that it is “absolutely preferable to represent what one wishes to represent with an imitation provided with similarity and not by resorting to whatever means are at hand” (p. 462). None the less, Plato recognizes, through Socrates, that “the study of names is not a simple question” and concedes that “one has to admit that the use of names, which is a kind of convention, contributes to represent what we have in the mind through words” (p. 466).

Socrates demonstrates to Cratylus, who believes that all names are appropriate, that since the name is an image of the object it designates, it may be more or less exact, like the image born of a painter's brush. It must even be inexact, or at least incomplete, if it is not to be confused with the original. He adds that it is enough for the original character to be recognizable and that small inaccuracies do not prevent people from understanding the meaning of a word, and finally accepts that the creation of language must leave a wide margin for convention.

However it may be, "the name," states Socrates, "is an instrument able to grasp and distinguish reality, as is the spindle is to unravel threads" (p. 472).

Contemporary logicians maintain that a proper name is a signifier devoid of meaning or value. In other words, in Saussurian terms, as Slatka reminds us, the proper name is not a linguistic sign. A mystery immediately develops: if it lacks meaning, how can the proper name acquire metaphoric sense?

Although we differ from the platonic conception, since we adhere to the conventional concept of the name, there is still, in what constitutes the proper name, a force that stems from the name giver. Impregnated by their own phantoms and desires, the parents give their child, through the name, a pre-form which he may inhabit without question, escape in horror, or appropriate for himself by getting round it.

About *Cratylus*, we emphasize that "names instruct and it can be said that when we know the names we also know the things."

CHAPTER SIX

From the name's determining force to its signifying force

"If (as the Greek states in the Cratylus)
The name is archetype of the thing,
In the letters of *rose* is the rose
And all the Nile in the word *Nile*"

(Borges, 1964, p. 885)

The given name possesses signifying force and is the point of articulation between the ante-text (family myth) and the text (the subject). When we speak of signifying force of the given name, we mean that the child is influenced by the force of parental signifiers unconsciously related to this name. Thus, we differ from other authors, such as Abraham (1965) and Stekel (cited by Abraham), who speak of the determining force of the name from the semantic point of view. For these authors, what influences the individual's fate is the meaning or semantic value of the family name.

In his text, Abraham mentions the case of two of his obsessional patients, in whom he had found an "agreement between the meaning of their family names and the content of their obsessional ideas". He also cites an example from Goethe: a certain Mittler (mediator in

German) to whom he attributes the ability to “appease and resolve internal disputes in families and also in the neighbourhood, first for isolated inhabitants and then for communities and several land-owners” (p. 114).

The author maintains that in certain families a character trait is transmitted that is expressed by the family name. He cites a family that, according to him, was distinguished by pride befitting its last name. Abraham states that in these cases

it is quite probable that an ancestor received or took this name because of a certain characteristic. The character trait might have been transmitted by itself, but it becomes an obligation when the family name implies for the descendants a precise instigation to conform to it.
[p. 114]

He presents the example of the case of the historian Ottokar Lorenz, who wrote the biography of King Ottokar of Bohemia.

Although we accept that a person’s name is not neutral, to the point that the person may identify with its semantic value, we think that we would be well advised at this time to relativize the semantic value of the family name which, in our culture, lacks the weight it had in antiquity, since it no longer carries such weight.

In our opinion, patri- or matrilineal transmission of the family name, which has become more or less automatic, removes that determinant force observed by Abraham.

Although the last name may give us indications that orientate us regarding ethnic, cultural, or class origins, this investigation of the name, which we could call metonymic, does not help us to understand parental desire.

In any case, its transmission follows mechanisms of social organization and its regulation depends only on communal rules.

If the act of naming may be separated into transmission of the family name and choice of the given name, is it not fundamentally through the latter that parental desire is expressed?

If there is a “determinant” force (we prefer to call it a “signifying” force), is it not expressed by the unconscious reasons behind this choice?

As we have seen above, in antiquity and in peoples with oral tradition, as in tribal Africa, phantoms and parental desires are more trans-

parent, since the name results from an act of creation and is something new, unique, and signifying. The name's semantization thus transcribes the parents' desires in relation to their child.

A name is never neutral; it involves many relations between the person who carries it and the source from which it comes. In this sense, the given name is only a "proper" name if it is inserted into familial and social symbolic history. It is the point where maternal and paternal lineages converge.

In today's Western culture, this is no longer possible, since the given name is chosen from a previously established list. None the less, whether it is a question of the use, neutral only in appearance, of the saints on the calendar or the names of the grandparents or the godparents, or a simple choice because of phonetically similar cadence or the use of a name in fashion, there is always a singular choice, and this singularity seals the family shield into the child's name. The unconscious character of the reasons that motivate this choice does not prevent the family shield from stamping indelible characters into the writing of this name.

The name often imposes itself on us rather than being chosen consciously and, although we do not know the reasons that motivate it, determine our choice. Perhaps it is precisely in this case that the act of naming is even more meaningful.

The lack of meaning (explicit meaning) in the given name does not mean that it has no signifying effect, since it lies at the crossroads of parental desire concerning the child.

The poem below, written by the parents of a newborn boy, for whom they chose the name Max, illustrates the signifying force of this choice, and all that these parents have put, consciously and playfully, into the choice of the name.

MAX

On a tous cherché le prénom [We all searched for the name,]
 C'était vraiment un jeu de cons . . . ! [A game quite inane!]
 Il ne s'appelle pas Barnabé, [His name isn't Barnaby,]
 Et c'est pourtant un beau bébé! [Though he's a lovely baby!]

Nous avons pensé à Victor, [We had thought of Victor,]
 Hélas, nous avons tort. [Too bad, what an error!]
 Nous songions aussi à Hector; [We dreamed he'd be called Hector;]
 Ce n'est pas très joli d'accord. [Not too pretty, we're sure.]

Il ne s'appelle pas Isaïe, [His name's not Isai,]
 Ni Henri, ni Mitsubishi. [Nor Henry, nor Mitsubishi]
 Il ne s'appelle pas Raoul, [We don't call him Raoul,]
 Et cependant Raoul, c'est cool. [Although Raoul is cool.]

Il s'appelle Max et c'est relax! [We call him Max and now we relax!]
 Que fera-t-il ? Joueur de sax'? [What will he do? Toot on the sax?]
 Astronome sur une parallaxe? [Calculate our parallax?]
 Bureaucrate sortant des fax? [Compose and send fax?]
 Inspecteur des impôts, des taxes? [Figure out income tax?]
 Matheux cafouillant sur des axes? [Make software for Macs?]
 Mais, avant, bombant le thorax, [But first, he'll pump up his thorax],
 Il nous en fera voir un max! [And show us who's a max!]

*Filiation: transgenerational transmission of
 parental desire in the choice of their child's name*

*The psychical apparatus as strata of writing that
 are constantly rewritten*

In the choice of the given name there is inscription of parental desire and in the same act there is transcription. The name is the mobile sediment of a family myth in suspension that engages the child. It is the frame, the foundation, and the baseboard of his future identity.

The name is a compromise between maternal and paternal desires concerning their child. Sometimes this compromise is condensed in a single name and sometimes several are required. If the child's given name coincides with the father's, the second or third name acquires value for the purposes of differentiation. Do we not say, when someone signs with a pseudonym, that the person does not want to commit himself?

The associative chains of the parents' dreams for the child they would like to have are condensed and criss-cross in the over-determined given name. The signifier of our name contains, in foundational alchemy, our parents' desires before our birth. The lines of the name hold imprints impressed into us by others, an interweaving of threads that runs through the generations.

However, we only write ourselves by writing, according to Derrida (1967), alluding to the subject's participation in the writing of his own text. Psychic inscriptions, as Moscovici (1984) points out, function as

layers of text; as each layer is revealed it constantly rewrites the other and also rewrites itself without ever reaching an end point. Rather than having a fate, it is a question of discovering the possible fates in us so that we can choose the one closest to our subjectivity. Each link in the chain fits into the plot of another history and is thus inserted into a broader weave, a virtually infinite text. There is a hint of the total library of Borges in these psychic layers.

On to the ante-text, which is an inter-text: the child used his own imprint to print his own text and also appropriates his proper name. The given name is the point of articulation between the texts of this familial palimpsest that spans several generations. (The palimpsest was traditionally thought to be a hand-written document from which, for reasons of economy, the original writing had been erased and thereby lost, in order to write a fresh text. Now, there are techniques to scan antique documents to show that it is possible to identify vestiges of the first text, which actually disappeared only to our visual perception.)

Sometimes it is necessary to examine this family book, to follow its movements, record its characters, and recognize this manuscript with intertwined letters—an intertwining that runs through the generations—in order to enable the child to appropriate the proper name that has been attributed to him (Testone, 1988).

The traces of others are inscribed in the story of the name; these stories run through intertwined generations, the texts of the family myth that will commit the child that are printed one over the other.

Given that in the child's chosen name the associative chains of the dreams of parents and the whole family in regard to the unborn child criss-cross, interweave, and fuse together, over-determined, the name preserves the vestiges of others as if in wax: a superimposition of vestiges that run through generations and inhabit the child. Filiation, which symbolizes and institutes transmission of the child's subjectivity, cannot be reduced to biological procreation.

Regarding the functioning and presence of traces in psychic life, Derrida (1967) suggests that we think of life as a trace with determinant force that operates before the being exists as a presence.

Freud (1985a) proposes, as we know, a conception of the psychic apparatus as a system of simultaneous and successive superimposed inscriptions that are organized and reorganized retroactively: "our psychological mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the

material present in the form of memory-traces being subjected from time to time to a *re-arrangement* in accordance with fresh circumstances—to a *re-transcription*” (p. 233). For Freud, the psychic apparatus and memory are like layers of transcriptions where “every later transcript inhibits its predecessor and drains off the excitatory process from it” (p. 235).

This Freudian conception is compatible with the idea of an unconscious intergenerational palimpsest condensed in the subject’s given name, which results from the sedimentation of different layers of stratification of successive generations.

If we accept this proposal, the ante-text that is the given name can be conceived of not as an immobile statue chiselled in stone once and for all, but as a kinetic sculpture that incorporates new orientations into its movement and takes different forms through incessant reformulation.

The subject’s writing of his own text is not added to the ante-text that precedes it like a page in a diary. In effect, he rewrites it constantly and modifies its initial meaning.

The family’s mythical history remains anchored, at least partially, in the birth name. However, the layers of inscriptions are not geological maps easily identifiable in a detectable stratification in which the time sequence is projected vertically in space. These layers possess their own dynamics and constantly interact.

Narrative acquires, notes Milmaniene (2005), transcendent value for the constitution of the subject, since he is anchored in historical temporality where times past re-signified afterwards are interwoven polyphonically.

From this viewpoint, unlike Lévi-Strauss’s proposal, naming a child does not only identify it socially or include it in a classificatory system. Naming complies with anthropological classificatory law, but the law of desire, which has its own constrictions, is tied into the story of this law. It is, thus, that the parents in the act of naming unknowingly obey two laws: the classificatory law and the law of unconscious desire (Canestri & Tesone, 1989).

Was it not from the names of Cleopatra and Ptolemy that Champollion was able to decipher hieroglyphics and articulate and interpret texts previously impossible to translate?

Genealogy serves to manufacture subjects, states Legendre (2000). It materializes the differentiation of human beings who, at the most,

become similar but never identical. Each one must become another and, in this differentiation, naming punctuates the generations. The chain of generations must place a limit on narcissism that aims to become eternal by reproducing the identical like clones repeated infinitely; a fantasy that the advance of genetics may empower. The name enables us to indicate difference. By naming the individual, we liberate ourselves from a gaze that could misidentify the generations.

Lineage or genealogy is translated by a name that indicates the boundary, as the skin envelops the subject and distinguishes him from others. The force of genealogical arrangements is provided, according to Legendre, by a principle of refutation of the family magma, a principle that introduces the division of places for the subject's succession in these places. Subjectivity is prefabricated before birth. This author considers that the Oedipus complex requires genealogical reproduction. The genealogical principle means that without foundational discourse, there is no human life.

At the beginning, the name and the face join in the mirror encounter (the mirror stage). When called by his name, the child stops looking at his mirror image and turns around towards the person who calls him and thereby topples the alienating gaze that encapsulates him. The calling of his name induces him to extricate himself from his fascination with his image, his double (unlike Narcissus, who remains deaf to Echo's sighs and calls and drowns in his own image). Calling him by name provokes the cut-off, or separation, and the subject is able to recognize himself in his difference (Graber, 1990).

We carry our name and are carried by it. What we believe we carry carries us. Perhaps when we believe that we are only carrying it, it may crush us, as suggested by Clerget (1990).

Thus, as we observed among the Eskimos, the name, an eternally living principle, possesses certain intrinsic capacities that act on the body it inhabits. The carrier of a certain name will be skilful or inept in this or that activity, depending on the qualities and aptitudes inherent to this name. A name is attributed to a child, but a child is also attributed to a name.

Regis, a six-year-old boy, an only child with a privileged place in his family, is going to have a little brother. His father, Roger, and his mother, Veronica, knowing that they are going to have a boy, express the wish to call him Roman. In the first place because they like this name, and then

because it starts with the letter R. The letter R is the initial of the names of the father and the son, as well as those of the father's and mother's brothers, both named René. Their only nephew is called Remus. The letter R had acquired lineage value and had become the emblem of family identity. But Regis did not want his brother to be called Roman. Jealous at the perspective of the "intruder's" birth, he could only conceive relations of rivalry with him.

Identifying with Asterix, the hero of the Gallic comic strip, he foresaw violent disputes with the future Roman, since, as Regis said, "The Gauls and the Romans have always fought." Regis thus expresses the wish that his brother be called Alexander, no less a warrior's name than the other one. However, his parents' acceptance of this name had beneficial effects for Regis, since it enabled him to mitigate his fantasies of rivalry and death towards his future brother. Perhaps this example gives us a glimpse of two factors of transformation of Regis's fantasies and emotions. On the one hand, the possibility of intervening in his wish over the choice of the given name and, on the other hand, the possibility of excluding his brother symbolically in some way from the transmission of family identity and, consequently, from the family itself.

As we shall see in the next chapter, Jones (1953) narrates the participation of another child in the choice of his unborn brother's name: Sigmund Freud at age ten. In the course of a "family council" held for this reason, he suggests the name Alexander, inspired by the military exploits of the Macedonian conqueror. His proposal was accepted by his parents, as is relatively frequent in many families in which older siblings participate in the choice of the name for the brother or sister to be born. As Clerget (1990) states, "The name is our departure point. When we answer to our name we react to this call although we do not identify with it, and we answer from the place from which we are called" (p. 53). What is inherent to the name, this author continues, "is not an appropriation but a dis-appropriation that results in a relation of belonging. Not appropriation but rather propitiation; it is an intercession able to engender the person's future".

The transgenerational unconscious perpetrates interpolations of texts and assemblages that defy chronology. This may produce texts that upset the lineal order of the generations; for example, choosing for a child the grandfather's or grandmother's given name may induce, for better or for worse, a relationship with the father equal to the relationship he had with his own father.

An Italian couple of militant leftists called their children, respectively, Ribo, Lucio, and Nario. Fortunately for them (we do not know whether it was fortunate for their children), having had three children enabled them to record, through the choice of these names, their "RiboLucioNario" (i.e., RevoLutioNary) wishes. We may legitimately wonder to what point this might have determined the number of children the couple had! We might add that we know nothing about their children's political choice.

Seeman (1976) realizes intuitively that "in the Freudian system proper names . . . which partly conceal and partly reveal forbidden preoccupations, the names given to children become potential sources of information about the parents" (p. 92).

In a paper dedicated to name changes and their relation to identity, Falk (1975) proposes that these changes are directly related to strong emotions that prevailed between the parents.

Berenstein (1976) suggests that the name identifies not only a person, but a whole family group and historical moment. For this author, the name thus appears as "an indication of the unconscious family structure".

Sanguinetti (1987) states,

We must leave a free space for that process of interiorisation of the Name and of adaptation to the Name that consciously or unconsciously will develop in the inner orifice of the person who has been marked with this sign and constrained to take it over, unless he resorts to the mask of a pseudonym, which becomes infallible proof of the fact or legal correction of his name. [p. 42]

When a psychopathological symptom is produced, the given name should be considered a cryptogram whose deciphering may be useful in liberating the child from an anchor point that is necessary for his filiation but which presents the risk of binding him to this symptom. Then it is necessary to unravel the interstices of the name, "the ananke", whatever determines and sets up an obstacle to the acceptance of his subjectivity. Thereafter, he may preserve the same characters, but is now unbound from any dimension of subjection.

Freud and names

Freud had a passion for naming. His numerous papers, clinical and theoretical discoveries gave him an excellent opportunity to name the results of his investigations.

Proper names occupy the centre of his theorizations. Freud addresses this explicitly in *Totem and Taboo*, but also in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and in the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*.

The importance he gave to names began in childhood. As we have seen, Jones (1953) tells us that when Freud was ten years old, his father Jacob called a “family council”, one of the meetings he held regularly with the whole family in order to discuss family issues. They had to choose a name for the child that was going to be born, Freud’s youngest sibling. It was Sigmund who did so, by proposing Alexander. His choice was motivated by the admiration inspired by the generosity and military exploits of this conqueror. For the purpose of justifying his choice, he recites before the family the entire history of the Macedonian victories, something surprising for a boy of that age.

To illustrate the importance Freud assigned to proper names, we exemplify with the names that he as a father chose for his own

children. He did not choose them at random: Matilde for Matilde Breuer, the wife of his teacher and friend; Martin for Jean-Martin Charcot, his teacher and chief of the Neurology Department of the Salpêtrière Hospital where he spent six months; Oliver for Oliver Cromwell, the hero of his youth; Ernst for Ernst Brücke, his teacher when he was doing research in neurology; Sofia for Sofia Hammerschlag, a friend of the family, and Anna for Anna Hammerschlag, who was Freud's favourite patient and perhaps the Irma of the famous dream. Freud held the parents of Sofia and Anna Hammerschlag in very high esteem and their father was his professor in his youth, taught him the humanities and the Bible, and was the only person, Jones observes, that he never criticized.

If Freud's last child had been a boy, Freud would have named him Wilhelm after his friend Fliess. In a letter to Fliess (1985b) he writes, "You will not have any objections to my calling my next son Wilhelm! If *he* turns out to be a girl, *she* will be called Anna". Since Freud's esteem for Fliess did not last, Jones is pleased that it was finally a girl that was born. This girl grew up to be a psychoanalyst and accompanied her father in London until his death in 1938.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a), Freud says that he did not choose his children's names indifferently and

insisted on their names being chosen, not according to the fashion of the moment, but in memory of people I have been fond of. Their names made the children into "revenants" [resuscitated]. And after all, I reflected, was not having children our only path to *immortality*? [p. 487].

Insisting, no doubt, that what is transmitted from one generation to the next is more than the germinal plasma and is condensed particularly in the choice of the given name.

When he was twenty-three, Freud changed his given birth name, Segismund, to Sigmund. After that, he always signs his letters not as S. Freud, which could have meant Solomon, nor Sig. Freud, which could have meant Segismund, but Sigm. Freud.

What was the reason for this change? Much ink has flowed in attempts to explain what is inexplicable outside his own subjectivity, since we do not even know whether he knew it himself. In any case, as Granoff (1975) observes, "If Freud considers it necessary to modify

his given name, it is because he could not enjoy it" (p. 144). We need to understand what is at stake in the rejection of a given name: what is the fate of the rejected pieces? Where do they go?

Beyond the motivations that led Freud to choose his children's names with great care, or what motivated him to change his given name when he was an adult, he always gave a privileged place to names as a form of compromise between the diverse psychic forces at work inside the psychical apparatus.

In *Totem and Taboo* (1912–1913), Freud cites certain works of anthropology and emphasizes the importance that names acquire in some societies. In Melanesia, a boy may not speak his sister's name. This prohibition, which comes into force during the puberty ceremony, must be obeyed throughout the rest of his life. In the Gazelle Peninsula in New Britain, Papua New Guinea, "a sister, after her marriage, is not allowed to converse with her brother; she never utters his name, but designates him by another word" (*ibid.*, p. 10).

In this system, speaking the sister's or brother's given name is the same as committing incest, since pronouncing the name is like touching the body.

In Australia, the new name the boy receives when he is initiated into maturity is his most personal property; therefore, it must remain secret, since if anybody learnt it an enemy could use it to do him harm. To possess his name is to possess his body.

Freud highlights a custom that is fairly widespread in some peoples, which concerns the taboo against pronouncing the name of a dead person. Sometimes, this prohibition is limited to the mourning period, sometimes beyond it, but it generally loses intensity over time. Its purpose is to avoid the return of the spirit when its name is mentioned.

The Masai in Africa found a solution that consists in changing the dead person's name immediately after his death. From that moment on, this name may be mentioned without fear, since all the prohibitions now apply to the old name. They assume that the spirit does not know his new name and will, therefore, not answer when it is spoken.

The Australian tribes of Adelaide and Encounter Bay are so "consistently careful that after a death everyone bearing the same name as the dead man's, or a very similar one, changes it for another".

For "savages", Freud remarks, a name is an essential part of the personality:

they treat words in every sense as things. As I have pointed out elsewhere, our own children do the same. They are never ready to accept a similarity between two words as having no meaning; they consistently assume that if two things are called by similar-sounding names this must imply the existence of some deep-lying point of agreement between them. [*ibid.*, p. 56]

Freud considers that the name has “become to a very remarkable extent bound up with his personality. So, too, psycho-analytic practice comes upon frequent confirmations of this in the evidence it finds of the importance of names in unconscious mental activities” (*ibid.*).

Freud emphasizes that the neurotic behaves in relation to names like the “savage”. He cites the case of one of his female patients who had made the decision to avoid writing her name for fear that it might “fall into the hands of someone who might then be in possession of a portion of her personality” (*ibid.*).

It is about the psychical mechanisms of the forgetting of proper names through slips of the memory that Freud writes extensively. He discusses them in the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* (1916–1917) and in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901b). A name may condense several associative chains or be situated at their intersection.

Freud (1916–1917) tells one of his young patients about his thesis that

in spite of an apparently arbitrary choice, it is impossible to think of a name at random which does not turn out to be closely determined by the immediate circumstances, the characteristics of the subject of the experiment and his situation at the moment. [p. 107]

Freud knew that his patient had a very active social life, knew many people, and had at his disposal a profusion of women’s names. To the surprise of both, when Freud asks this patient to tell him a woman’s name, he is silent for awhile and finally says that only one woman’s name and no other comes to mind: *Albine*. Freud asks him to associate and asks him how many women he knows by that name. Curiously, he did not know any *Albine*, and nothing occurred to him in relation to this name. Freud is able to associate this choice with the moment of the analytic process and the characteristics of his patient:

The man had an unusually fair complexion and in conversation during the treatment I had often jokingly called him an albino. We were engaged at the time in determining the feminine part of his constitution. So it was he himself who was this 'Albine', the woman who was the most interesting to him at the moment. [*ibid.*, p. 108]

On 26 August 1898, Freud writes to Fliess:

You know how one can forget a name and substitute part of another one for it; you could swear it was correct, although invariably it turns out to be wrong. That happened to me recently with the name of the poet who wrote *Andreas Hofer* ("Zu Mantua in Baden"). It must be something with an *au*—Lindau, Feldau. Of course, the man's name is Julius *Mosen*; the "Julius" had not slipped my memory. Now, I was able to prove (1) that I had repressed the name Mosen because of certain connections; (2) that infantile material played a part in this repression; (3) that the substitute names that were pushed into the foreground were formed, like symptoms, from both groups of material. [1985c, p. 324]

Freud goes on to lament that a problem of confidentiality prevents him from revealing his associations to the example. In this example, his first discovery in this respect, Freud highlights that, like a dream or a symptom, that is to say, like any other compromise formation, the name may be the knot that condenses the intersections of several unconscious associative chains around which the threads of contradictory and clashing desires are twined.

In psychical life, as we know, conflicting forces interact in a constant state of tension. Freud defines psychical life as a veritable battlefield, or an arena where opposing tendencies wage combat.

The paradigmatic example of what these conflicting forces are able to do with names is described by Freud (1901b) in his wonderful narration of the forgetting of the name of the Italian painter Luca Signorelli. We will follow Freud through all the complexity of what determined the forgetting by examining the threads of this network. It is both the forgetting of a proper name and a false memory with substitute names. These substitute names are often identified as being incorrect, but "they keep on returning and force themselves on us with great persistence" (pp. 1–2). This displacement is not arbitrary, Freud proposes, but takes place according to relations that may be

established between the name that is missing and the substitute names. "The process that should lead to the reproduction of the missing name has been so to speak *displaced* and has therefore led to an incorrect substitute" (p. 2).

Freud was driving, in the company of a lawyer from Berlin, from Ragusa in Dalmatia to a station in Herzegovina in Bosnia. The conversation concerned Italy and Freud asked his travelling companion "whether he had ever been to Orvieto and looked at the famous frescoes that decorated the Cathedral there, painted by . . ." (p. 2). Although Freud had been in this city many times and admired the painter who had done the frescoes of Judgement Day, he could not remember the name of Signorelli. Instead of this name, two other Italian painters of the Milan school came to mind: Botticelli and Boltraffio, which he immediately recognized as incorrect. He then made an effort to remember the subject of the conversation that preceded the forgetting, in an attempt to understand the disturbing effect that it might have had. Freud recalled that they had been talking about the Turks that inhabited Bosnia and Herzegovina. A colleague had told him that

they are accustomed to show great confidence in their doctor and great resignation to fate. If one has to inform them that nothing can be done for a sick person, their reply is: 'Herr [Sir], what is there to be said? If he could be saved, I know you would have saved him.' [*ibid.*, p. 3]

Freud remarked that several names may be included in an associative chain: Bosnia, Herzegovina, Herr (Sir) and the three including Signorelli, Boltraffio, and Botticelli.

Then he realized that the subject of conversation concealed another that Freud had thought about but had omitted: the sexual customs of the Turks of Bosnia. He recalls that a colleague had told him that they set exaggerated value on sexual pleasures and that when they had a sexual problem, they were totally desperate, which contrasted with their resignation to death. And without saying so, he recalled in silence that one of this colleague's patients had once told him: "'Herr, you must know that when *that* comes to an end then life is of no value'" (*ibid.*).

Freud did not share these thoughts with the travelling companion he barely knew, since he considered it incorrect, and for that reason

kept it to himself. But this silence allowed him to leave out another thought that was much more disturbing for him: the connection between death and sexuality. In effect, he had recently received, in a brief visit to Trafoi, the news of the suicide of an ex-patient affected by incurable sexual disorders.

He is not unaware of the phonic similarity between Trafoi and Boltraffio, another element in the signifying chain that runs between Signorelli and Botticelli–Boltraffio

Freud suggests that the forgetting of the name of Signorelli is not produced by any peculiarity of the name itself but by his wish to forget the sad news that one of his patients or ex-patients has committed suicide. That is to say, Freud wished to forget one thing and instead forgot something else: “The disinclination to remember was aimed against one content; the inability to remember emerged in another”, and “my intention to forget something was neither a complete success nor a complete failure” (*ibid.*, p. 4).

The name Signor, Sir in Italian, is associated with Herr, Sir in German, which was the way the Turkish patient addressed his physician, and with the Her in Herzegovina. Therefore, we find the name Signorelli is cut in two. One part of the name is in Signor and the other part in elli, which, in the form of syllables, is found in one of the painters initially evoked: Botticelli. We also find the conjunction of syllables between the Bo in Bosnia and the Bo in Boltraffio. Finally, we also find Trafoi and Boltraffio cut into two: traffio in Boltraffio with the three last letters reversed, and the Bo in Bosnia and in Botticelli.

This is a clear example of the operation of the unconscious “without consideration for the sense or for the acoustic demarcation of the syllables” (*ibid.*, p. 5). The names are cut up by the effects of repression that separates the syllables and puts them together like a jigsaw puzzle that is assembled with the pieces of several puzzles at once.

Freud (1901b) provides another lovely example, which although it concerns a place name, shows in the same way what the unconscious is capable of doing with a proper name. Quite eloquent in its apparent simplicity, I will quote it *in extenso*:

Two men, an older and a younger one, who six months before had made a trip together in Sicily, were exchanging recollections of those pleasant and memorable days. “Let’s see”, said the younger, “what was the name of the place where we spent the night before making our

trip to Selinunte? Wasn't it Calatafimi?" The older one rejected it: "No, it certainly wasn't, but I've forgotten the name too, although I recall most clearly all the details of our stay there. I only need to find someone else has forgotten a name, and it at once makes me forget it too. Let's look for the name. But the only thing that occurs to me is Caltanissetta, which certainly isn't right." "No," said the younger man, "the name begins with a 'w' or has a 'w' in it." "But there's no 'w' in Italian," objected the older. "I really meant a 'v', and I only said 'w' because I'm so used to it in my own language." The older man still opposed the 'v'. "As a matter of fact," he declared, "I believe I've forgotten a lot of the Sicilian names already; this would be a good time to make some experiments. For example, what was the name of the place on a hill that was called Enna in antiquity? Oh, I know—Castrogiovanni." The next moment the younger man had recalled the lost name as well. "Castelvetrano," he exclaimed, and was pleased at being able to point to the 'v' he had insisted on. For a short while the older one had no sense of recognition; but after he had accepted the name it was for him to explain why he had forgotten it. "Obviously," he said, "because the second half, '-vetrano', sounds like 'veteran'. I know I don't much like to think about *growing old*, and I have strange reactions when I'm reminded of it. For instance, I recently charged a very dear friend of mine in the strangest terms with having 'left his youth far behind him', for the reason that once before, in the middle of the most flattering remarks about me, he had added that I was 'no longer a young man'. Another sign that my resistance was directed against the second half of the name Castelvetrano is that the initial sound recurred in the substitute name Caltanissetta." "What about the name Caltanissetta itself?" asked the younger man. "That," confessed the older one, "has always seemed to me like a pet name for a young woman." [*ibid.*, p. 31]

Then he adds that the name Enna was also a substitute name. And that he realized that the name Castrogiovanni, with the help of a rationalization, reminded him of youth ("giovane") in the same way as Castelvetrano evoked the idea of old age ("veteran"). Personally, I would add that perhaps the *Castro* (castration) of *Castrogiovanni* was not neutral either.

Freud suggests the existence of unconscious motivations of forgetting as well as slips of memory of proper names. In the criss-crossing of the unconscious associative chains where the name is located, both forgetting and false-substitute remembering are generated, a true

compromise formation between the forgetting motivated by resistance and the false memory pushed forward by the return of the repressed. The psychical apparatus cuts up proper names and the fragments, syllables or letters, are used to construct other names or to bring up another name associated with it from the depths of the unconscious.

With respect to what is transmitted in the choice of a child's name as a desire of the parents, could we perhaps imagine a similar but reverse process? That is to say, that when the parents choose a given name, the name may emerge, in the form of fragments of other names, desires, and associative chains to form a name that is the one that best condenses, from the depths of their unconscious, the mosaic of desires and expectations for the future child.

A father who had been condemned by the French Courts of Law for physically abusing his four children, when asked why he had chosen those given names, what it was that he had been looking for in each of them as a common denominator, told us the following: the names Catherine, Ghislaine, Hubert, and Josephine had been chosen because they contained the letter "h", which in French is called "hache". The same word for the letter "hache" is used to name the tool "hache", in English a "hatchet": an instrument able to express unheard of violence, the same that this father had wreaked on his children. In his criteria for choosing the names of his children, could we not say that the violence he would use on them later was foretold by the "hatchet" inserted in their spelling, such terrible violence that it motivated the intervention of the Courts as an extreme measure to protect them from this peculiar "woodcutter"?

In "The forgetting of proper names" (in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 1901b), Freud shows us not only the mechanism of forgetting, but also the irresistible emergence of substitute names that are forced on the subject independently of his will.

A little girl born blind had, during her psychotherapy, a little sister, named Claire by her parents. In session, she tells her therapist, "Claire, she sees clearly [in French, "clair"]. Thus summarizing, in a condensed phrase, how the name chosen for her sister carried her parents' wish, perhaps to exorcise the fear of having a second blind daughter.

The proper name, stated Barthes (1972), is in some way the linguistic form of reminiscence. Conflict and the repressed intervene in the

forgetting of the proper name. In the Signorelli example, Freud's wish to repress ideas associated with sexuality and death is clear. Then we find the different disassembled fragments of the name Signorelli, regrouped in associated ideas and names. In forgetting, it is the movement of disassembly and dispersion that prevails.

Could we conceive that in the choice of the child's proper name, as in Boltraffio and Botticelli, the name insists, is imposed from the depths of the unconscious and decides its choice? In this sense, the given name functions like a phonetic puzzle, a condensation of the different phonemes articulated with latent ideas that come together out of the unconscious.

Names, like day residues in the case of dreams, offer the unconscious something indispensable: the support necessary to transfer meaning that enables it to bypass censorship; a meaning that acquires density in its transgenerational meanderings, a vertical voyage that runs through the generations. It is in this sense that the choice of the given name is always a compromise: in the first place, between the diverse unconscious forces operating in each of the parents; then between the effects of the criss-crossing of their unconscious, which produce a new psychic event that pertains only to this relationship. The child's given name is its privileged core.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The name in literature

The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland *and* Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There, *by Lewis Carroll*

For Lewis Carroll, professor of Mathematics and Logic at Oxford, going through the looking-glass meant discovering a different logic. Sensitive to language and plays on words, alert to meanings, he does not neglect sounds: “Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves” (p. 99), he has the Duchess say in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Perceptive of the condensation of meaning in each word and of the polysemy inherent to language, Lewis Carroll does not hesitate to create neologisms to explain the kaleidoscopic explosion of meanings. Where this explosion is perhaps most obvious is in the poem proposed by Humpty Dumpty and recited by Alice:

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogroves,
And the mome raths outgrabe. [1968, p. 223]

“That’s enough to begin with,” Humpty Dumpty interrupted: “there are plenty of hard words there. ‘Brillig’ means four o’clock in the afternoon—the time when you begin *broiling* things for dinner.”

"That'll do very well," said Alice: "and 'slithy'?"

"Well, 'slithy' means 'lithe and slimy'. 'Lithe' is the same as 'active'. You see it's like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word." [*ibid.*, pp. 223–224]

And thus, one by one, Humpty Dumpty explains the multiplicity of meanings a word may contain, which is particularly true for names, as he himself suggests.

"'Toves' are something like badgers—they're something like lizards—and they're something like corkscrews . . . they make their nests under sun-dials—also they live on cheese. . . . To 'gyre' is to go round and round like a gyroscope. To 'gimble' is to make holes like a gimblet . . . '[the] wabe' . . . [is] because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it—. . . 'mimsy' is 'flimsy and miserable' . . . and a 'borogove' is a thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round—something like a live mop. . . . a 'rath' is a sort of green pig: but 'mome' . . . I think it's short for 'from home'—meaning that they'd lost their way . . . 'outgrabing' is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle. . . [pp. 224–225]

With such exquisite taste for language and the meanings nesting into each other like Russian dolls, all that a name could contain would not be a matter of indifference to Lewis Carroll.

See, for example, the successive transformations of his own name. Born in Daresbury, England, son of Pastor Dodgson, he was named Charles Lutwidge. When he was quite young and a student at Oxford, he published poems in a magazine, *The Train*, a short-lived publication that did, however, give him a taste for reading. In 1856, the chief editor asked him to sign his work with a pseudonym instead of his initials, as he had been doing. Charles proposed the name Dares, the first syllable of his place of birth, Daresbury, which means "dares" and "challenges". Since this idea was rejected, he proposed four others: (1) Edgar Cuthwellis; (2) Edgar U. C. Westhill (both are anagrams of Charles Lutwidge); (3) Louis Carroll; (4) Lewis Carroll. The last proposal was chosen, in which we recognize a transformation of his two given names: Lewis is a derivative of Lutwidge (Louis) and Carroll derives from Carolus, equivalent in Latin to Charles. We may deduce from this successive invention of pseudonyms that in each case it is a transformation of his given name, as if, in the choice of a

pseudonym, he had not been able or had not wanted to renounce to this privileged imprint, the essence of his identity.

From then on, he signs his literary work with this fictional name, and reserves his real name for his works on logic and mathematics.

In *Alice in Wonderland* (1968), Lewis Carroll has Alice say, in reply to the Queen's insistent question as to what her name is, "so please your Majesty" (p. 87), as if, subjected to the Queen's power, she had felt pressured to change her name in order to accommodate her identity to the one the Queen would have preferred. But she quickly recovers and adds, to herself, "they're only a pack of cards, after all. I needn't be afraid of them!" (*ibid.*) And Alice, affirming her identity, does not change her name.

However, it is especially in *Through the Looking-Glass* that Lewis Carroll examines the given name more specifically.

In the chapter, "Looking-glass insects", the Gnat buzzing around Alice's head remarks,

"I suppose you don't want to lose your name?"

"No, indeed," Alice said, a little anxiously.

"And yet I don't know," the Gnat went on in a careless tone: "only think how convenient it would be if you could manage to go home without it! For instance, if the governess wanted to call you to your lessons, she would call out 'Come here—,' and there she would have to leave off, because there wouldn't be any name for her to call, and of course you wouldn't have to go, you know."

"That would never do, I'm sure," said Alice: "the governess would never think of excusing me lessons for that. If she couldn't remember my name, she'd call me 'Miss,' as the servants do."

"Well, if she said 'Miss,' and didn't say anything more," the Gnat remarked, "of course you'd miss your lessons. That's a joke. I wish *you* had made it!" [pp. 179–180]

Lewis Carroll, through this play on words, emphasizes that outside the act of naming, it is impossible to address a person unequivocally and to call a person by any other name may lead to confusion, thus stressing the pragmatic and interpellating character of the act of naming.

Further on in the same chapter, when Alice comes to an open field with a wood on the other side of it, she wonders pensively,

"This must be the wood . . . where things have no names. I wonder what'll become of *my* name when I go in? I shouldn't like to lose it at all—because they'd have to give me another, and it would be almost certain to be an ugly one. But then the fun would be, trying to find the creature that had got my old name! That's just like the advertisements, you know, when people lose dogs—'answers to the name of "Dash": had on a brass collar'—just fancy calling everything you met 'Alice' till one of them answered! Only they wouldn't answer at all, if they were wise." [pp. 180–181]

It seems quite inconceivable to Alice that her name, which almost has a life of its own, might not find a body to inhabit.

As she walks through the trees, Alice no longer recognizes the names of the things she touches and her anxiety culminates when she realizes that she no longer remembers her own name: "Then it really *has* happened, after all! And now, who am I? I *will* remember, if I can! I'm determined to do it!" Desperate, she makes an effort to evoke it, but cannot remember her name, only what she assumes its initial to be: "L, I *know* it begins with L!"

This is perhaps a wink from the author who, identifying with his character, Alice, gives her an initial that is the first letter of his own names both in fantasy, Lewis, and in his second authentic name from which it derives, Lutwidge. In any case, much to Alice's relief, the Fawn in the woods tells her its own name and thereby helps Alice to remember her real name.

In Chapter VI, when Alice comes to the sheep's tent, she decides to buy an egg. A strange and singular business, reflects Alice, since all the objects turn into trees as soon as she approaches. She believed that the same would occur with the egg.

However, the egg only got larger and more human. When Alice got to within a few metres of it, she saw that it had eyes, a nose, and a mouth. And when she got very close, she saw quite clearly that it was Humpty Dumpty himself.

"It can't be anybody else!" she said to herself. "I'm as certain of it, as if his name were written all over his face!"

His name could have been written a hundred times, easily, on that enormous face. Humpty Dumpty was sitting, with his legs crossed like a Turk, on . . . such a narrow [wall] that Alice quite wondered how he could keep his balance.

Later and after a long silence, looking away from Alice as he spoke, Humpty Dumpty complains, “to be called an egg—*very* [provoking]!”

“I said you *looked* like an egg, Sir,” Alice gently explained. “And some eggs are very pretty, you know,” she added, hoping to turn her remark into a sort of compliment.

“Some people,” said Humpty Dumpty, looking away from her as usual, “have no more sense than a baby!”

Alice, confused, didn’t know what to answer and stood still, reciting to herself:

“Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall;
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the King’s horses and all the King’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty in his place again.”

“Don’t stand chattering to yourself like that,” Humpty Dumpty said, looking at her for the first time, “but tell me your name and your business.”

“My *name* is Alice, but—”

“It’s a stupid name enough!” Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. “What does it mean?”

“*Must* a name mean something?” Alice asked doubtfully.

“Of course it must,” Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: “*my* name means the shape I am—and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.”

For Lewis Carroll, the signifying force of the name always has a meaning for the person. However, he adheres fairly closely to Socrates’ conception in *Cratylus*, where the latter suggests that the name is a direct representation of the object, as if it were the shape of the object that determined the name. In our perspective, the meaning of the name is not necessarily suggested by the object or the person to be named, as in the case of Humpty Dumpty, the sound of which might invoke roundness.

Alice’s name, however, is not devoid of meaning, although it doubtless remains more hidden, ensconced in its interstices and unconscious. What Lewis Carroll, the sharp-witted linguist, probably

means when he speaks through Humpty Dumpty is that like an onion, the name contains several layers of meaning that envelop the person and give him an identity that is in a constant process of evolution and transformation.

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, *by William Shakespeare*

A paradigm of impossible love prematurely cut short, *Romeo and Juliet* is doubtless Shakespeare's best-known tragedy. Everybody knows of the passion of these young Italians and the tragic and brutal outcome of their love story, chained to the enmity and rivalry between their two families, the Capulets and the Montagues. The courtly love scene whose scenario was the balcony of a palace in Verona has inspired whole generations of lovers in search of a balcony that, unlike those young Veronese, would put them in reach of the myth of total love.

However, we do not know, and Shakespeare in any case does not say, what the reason was for such bloody rivalry. Fate, the Greek *fatum*, takes the form of a transgenerational spider's web that ensnares Romeo and Juliet.

Romeo and Juliet, the Montagues and the Capulets: in the final analysis, it is the names that are the real protagonists of the Shakespearean tragedy. Romeo and Juliet were never able to take possession of their given names and to inscribe their own desire in them. They fell into the trap of crossfire between their respective family names, an infernal machine that drives them to their death.

Their given names contain a promise of love that the deadliness driven by their family names killed even before it could be experienced. The weight of their family names and their filiation was even more crushing because of their condition as only children. The burden of the family quarrels could not be shared and diluted in the midst of a fratria.

At the end of the first act, after the first dialogue between the lovers, which suggestively mixes the image of the pilgrim that kisses the hands of a saint and the lips of his beloved, we see Juliet's reaction, pleasantly surprised by this young man who had dared to kiss her. She asks her nurse who he is and she answers, "His name is Romeo, and a Montague, / The only son of your great enemy"

(Shakespeare, 1984a, p. 699). Thus, from the outset, the given name, Romeo, like an aria in an opera that announces the movements to come, is crushed under the weight of his family name, Montague. This given name, Romeo, is not chosen at random by Shakespeare. Etymologically it means; “pilgrim on the way to Rome”.

In Act II, Scene I, Juliet sets the pace for the importance of the names in this tragedy. She says:

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name [family name],
or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
and I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Then she adds,

'Tis but thy name [family name] that is my enemy.
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. Oh, be some other [family] name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name—which is no part of thee—
Take all myself (*ibid.*, p. 700).

Juliet defines the real actors of the tragedy and tries to modify the forces of fate condensed in their family names. She implores Romeo to reject his family name, to be only Romeo, the only condition for her to love him. Juliet, for her part, declares that she is willing to renounce her condition as a Capulet if their union requires it. Thus, Juliet highlights in her ardent discourse that true identity resides in the given name. It is this name, in the first person singular, rather than the family name, that connects the person to his condition as a desiring subject.

Romeo answers that he takes what she said literally: “Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized.” Juliet replies, “What man are thou that, thus bescreen'd in night / So stumblest on my counsel?”

Romeo then says, "By a name / I know not how to tell thee who I am: / My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself, / Because it is an enemy to thee; / Had I it written, I would tear the word" (*ibid.*, p. 701).

Romeo would like to loosen and untie the threads of the spider's web of his family name to which he feels bound. If he accepts that he is a Montague, he renounces being Romeo, as well as Juliet, something Juliet soon addresses.

JULIET: My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound.
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO: Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

In the oscillation of his identity, Romeo cannot renounce the part of his fate that is condensed in his family name, unless he also renounces his given name. This is the crossroads from which he cannot escape. What follows in the tragedy shows us that the facts are inclined in favour of the infernal machine, the crusher of illusions, rather than on the side of free choice.

Married in secret with the complicity of Friar Laurence in "a contract of eternal ties of love, confirmed by the mutual union of the hands, sealed by the sacred kiss on the lips, reinforced by the interchange of rings", as Shakespeare describes this type of marriage in *Twelfth Night* (1984b).

The Capulet Tybalt, who tries to kill Romeo, is finally stabbed to death by Romeo. This act earns Romeo expulsion from the city of Verona and exile in the city of Mantua.

Saved by the Prince from the death sentence according to the laws of the city, Romeo is not happy, but instead thinks that exile is the same as death or worse:

ROMEO: There is no world without Verona walls
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death. Then 'banished'
Is death misterm'd. Calling death 'banished'
Thou cutt'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smil'st upon the stroke that murders me"
(Shakespeare, 1984a, p. 709).

Juliet, torn by the death of Tybalt, her cousin, at Romeo's hand, weeps more, however, over Romeo's expulsion.

In love with Romeo, she confesses all her love in these words: “and every tongue that speaks / But Romeo’s name speaks heavenly eloquence” (*ibid.*, p. 708), thus showing that her beloved is for her, above all, an eloquent name.

When Romeo asks about Juliet’s condition after he has killed her cousin and himself been exiled from the city, the Nurse answers,

O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps,
And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls, and then on Romeo cries,
And then down falls again. (*ibid.*, pp. 709–710).

ROMEO: As if that name
Shot from the deadly level of a gun
Did murder her as that name’s cursed hand
Murder’d her kinsman. O, tell me, friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion.

Thus, we see that the true protagonists of the tragedy are the names that kill: Romeo, naïve but not innocent, would like to cut out this name that betrays him and makes him a murderer. But this name, in filigree, is not so much the name Romeo, always hesitant and unfinished, but the name of Montague, the tyrannical name that condemns him to his fate. The infernal machine of the family names crushes in its path not only Mercutio and Tybalt the Capulet, but also Paris, the “county”, Juliet’s unlucky fiancé; Romeo and Juliet add themselves, their identity explosion killing Montague’s wife and Juliet’s mother, both dead of grief.

Thus, Romeo and Juliet, Juliet and Romeo, fell by the wayside in their search for love. Madly in love, they are lost in the sinister history of the Capulets and the Montagues, and find no union except in their dead bodies; death of the soul, death of desire, death of the given names above all.

If I Were You, by Julien Green (1950)

The plot of this novel is organized around the hero, named Fabian, who, through a pact with the Devil, acquires the power to transform himself into another person.

“If I were you, if I took the colour of your hair, your fixed ideas, your dreams, the weight of your body, if I followed your instincts, if I had the ideas of your mind, the needs of your body, if I were you, the other, the beloved or the adversary . . . Who never had this dream of changing identity, of being elsewhere?” [p. 9]

suggests Julien Green. In the novel, this power is granted to Fabian: “A new Proteus, he may transform himself into whoever he wishes by whispering his name into the ear of the man or woman he wishes to be” (author’s translation).

It is interesting to remark that it is precisely on the basis of the given name that this power is granted him. By pronouncing the other’s name, breathing this name into the ear, followed by some words we never learn, Fabian has the power to transform himself into that person. However, the novelist says,

the memory of who he really is, Fabian, resides in the depths of his memory, like the footprints of a hare in the grass. To become himself again will require great effort; but once he has found his skin again, his heart will not be able to bear the weight of the sentiments of all those he was. He will be broken. Is it death? Is it awakening? Will it have been only a dream or will it be the infernal cycle of condemnation to eternally recommence the search for himself? [*ibid.*]

Melanie Klein wrote an article on this text by Green “almost as if he were a patient”. She explores new aspects of projective identification, particularly the change of the subject’s identity. By intrusion into the other, the subject takes possession of him and acquires his identity. However, it is obviously a vacillating pseudo-identity.

The question of whether we would be better off in another’s skin is a question that has always obsessed humanity. Who has not dreamed of being different, changing identity, becoming this or that person who represents our model of well-being in the way of the shapes our idealizations may take?

Who has never dreamed of going beyond the boundaries of his own body to transfer his soul to another body: more beautiful, younger, or simply different, in reaction to our conflicts with our own body or our being?

However, the novelist warns us about our neighbour’s apparent calm, which is sometimes misleading, since in every human life “there is drama, and it most often remains secret”.

We will try to follow the evolution, in the novel's plot, of the name of the main character as the guiding thread of his identity in the course of its successive transformations.

The novel's hero, Fabian, was obviously unhappy with himself. Torn between the melancholy reality of his existence as an employee in an office that he hated and his daydreams dedicated to star-gazing, there was no possible synthesis. Tired, lifeless, he found no real meaning in what was his life: "Nothing ever happens to me. This is not a life; much less a youth". At the age of twenty-three, he still submitted to a mother who oppressed him, to the point of placing obstacles in the way of any amorous encounter he might have desired. His father, who had died when Fabian was in grammar school, had squandered all his money on gambling. Klein (1957) emphasizes that Fabian's complaints and rebellion against fate are related to his resentment against his father, whose lack of responsibility deprived him of higher education and prospects for the future. The idea of suicide had crossed his mind more than once, but he did not dare to take steps in that direction. Paradoxically, he loved life and pleasure too much to have the courage to kill himself. For the people he met every day, he was the secretary of Mr Poujars, a narrow-minded office manager who had an excellent standard of living. Fabian earned his living by organizing papers and answering letters that were not even addressed to him.

For the civil registry, he was Especel, Fabian, Class 18, exempt number 1; for his concierge, he was the young man on the fifth floor on the patio, too poor to leave her interesting tips but a quiet, unassuming renter; for his mother, a good boy who celebrated Easter and if he did other things, his mother knew nothing and wanted to know nothing about it. [p. 29]

Thus, grey days with cloudy skies flowed by for Fabian.

The idea occurs to him of writing a novel, but he feels that he could not possibly imagine the lives of the characters of his daydreams. To do this, he would need to depart from himself, enter his character's body and incarnate it. Then he could see the world through other eyes, because we never see the world that others see. However, considering that it is impossible to become someone else, he is discouraged and goes out. Through Fabian's problems, Julien Green

tells us about the novelist's mind, about the art of imagining the plot of a novel: the creation of characters, the capacity to slip into each one's skin and to make them speak for themselves.

What bored Fabian most about his life was that he was always going to be the same person, tied to the boundaries of his body. Exhausted by moaning about his disillusionment, he meets a character, Brittomart, a representative of the Devil, no less. He tells him that he is interested in Fabian's avidity and adds, "I like souls. As men of pleasure circle round a body, I circle round souls. My son, do you know what it is to desire a soul, to take refuge in a soul?"

Fabian, paralysed by the sentiment that human fate has something narrow and uniform about it, is sensitized to Brittomart's arguments in favour of his proposition to realize his dream to depart from himself and become another. The Devil's representative promises him:

"you will be transformed into whomever you wish. All human experience, spread all around you, is available to you. You will know only what you are interested in knowing about suffering, and will enjoy all possible pleasures. Fabian, I give you the world."

In view of Fabian's doubts in spite of such a tempting offer, the Devil insists:

"You must know that your personality is enclosed in your name. The whole rule of the metamorphoses that await you resides, effectively, in the two syllables that designate you and in some ways imprison you. By giving this name to a man or a woman ignorant of this secret law, you change personality with them. Thus, the first passerby is obliged to lodge this soul that is yours in his body, whereas his own soul immediately chooses to move into the house of flesh from which you have just escaped. Some words whose meaning will be strange to you, but which I will nonetheless teach you, will ensure the success of this delicate operation."

Seduced by this sort of metaphysical delusion, Fabian is going to seal a pact with the Devil through which he is going to enjoy the prospect of becoming another person whenever he wishes. He has only to whisper the formula the Devil has taught him into the ear of a person of his choice. It always includes the name of the other person, in order for him to take up lodging in the other's body. Fabian is

granted the singular power to roam the streets dreaming of who he wants to be.

In this sort of living soul migration, Fabian works his first transformation with his office manager, Mr Poujars, whom he always envied. He whispers some syllables into his ear and the effect is immediate. From the moment he experiences the transformation, he turns into the new personage; he not only lives in his body but also has his memories and sentiments.

However, the transformation is not entirely immediate. He goes through a transition during which he does not yet know what Poujars knows and begins to forget what Fabian knows.

Fabian, the one he was, remains outside his life, to such an extreme that he looks at him and realizes that he does not remember anything about him. However, he says he is happy "to have left that sad and badly dressed body". His first action, in the identity of Poujars, is to write a cheque for Fabian. Although Fabian is now in a lethargic state, he concludes that, thanks to this state, he will have a good awakening. However, he has some doubts about this and wonders whether he might not stay that way indefinitely: "Well! He will have a good surprise when he wakes up! Even more so if at that moment I could be me . . ."

It is very interesting to follow, in the novelist's imagination, Fabian's initial reflections in the skin of the new person. On the one hand he is sure that he is no longer in Fabian's body, since he does not experience Fabian's memories as his own, and on the other hand he has the feeling that he preserves his own ego: "everything that is left of my life in the appearance of Fabian is the name which I will have to remember at all costs, the formula without which I am lost and the certainty that I can escape from the body I occupy".

However, a pinch of anxiety seems to spring up in him. Probably to feel more confident of what he is doing, he writes in a notebook about the voyage of souls that he has just begun, afraid that he might forget his true identity: "Fabian, age twenty, tall and thin, messy hair, unsociable." He adds his home address, probably afraid to get lost: "Who knows whether some day I may not retrace my footsteps?"

Throughout his multiple transformations into various identities, the guiding red thread of his true identity is always his given name, written on that little piece of paper that goes round from pocket to pocket like the incomprehensible and immutable nucleus of his being.

Fabian, one word, the only anchor to his original identity, the only point of reference in the labyrinth of identity he entered so fearlessly.

We also find the importance given the name in another detail: the formula he was instructed to whisper into the ear of whoever he wanted to be.

Even though the hero of the novel seems to forget his identity in the course of his successive transformations, being at the mercy of his whims, it reappears whenever it is a question of the name. It is only at that moment that Fabian says, under the effects of another identity, "Give me news of myself." In spite of the mutations, it is only when his given name is spoken that he is able to recover the continuity of his ego and his identity. At this point the author of the novel tells us something that particularly interests us from our perspective: "at the centre of his being was that name."

During the three days when all these events occurred, the real Fabian lay unconscious, prostrate in his bed, cared for by his mother.

Now, this opportunity he was given to become his neighbour faces him with the fact that others, in spite of appearances, are no happier than he was in his identity as Fabian. Thus, he acquires a new sentiment: compassion for all these beings, because at last he knows how they really feel, although he is confused by self-pity, since he was converted into these characters without perspective or independent observation. In his rare moments of lucidity or of withdrawal into himself, he obsessively searches in his pocket for the little slip of paper that reminds him of his true identity by the name that is written there: Fabian.

However, in the course of his transformations, he encounters a limit. He was unable to transform himself into a child. It seems that in the novelist's imagination, transformations of identity may be done synchronically in a horizontal section but not diachronically in a vertical section. As if the person we were before were lost forever, buried beneath the weight of childhood amnesia; childhood perhaps protected by its innocence, so far from the notion of sin that is consubstantial with the Devil: "He had limits to the power he had received, and innocence was one of them. Only sin allowed him access to the souls."

However, it is a child that helps him to recognize his initial identity. In a chance encounter with Fabian, when he was inhabiting another identity, the child simply asks him his name and his

surprising and immediate reply was "Fabian", as if the child's question had irrepressibly awakened in him his own immutable childhood identity.

Throughout his transformations, Fabian realizes that these beings he had wanted to be, which from afar had shone so brightly, to the point that he had wanted to be transformed not into someone like them, but into them, were not as happy or as satisfied with themselves as they seemed to be.

When he was in the dwelling of the body of one of the personages, called Emmanuel, he had felt anguish that impregnated his whole being. His mind became tortured and inconsolable. Later, when he transformed into Camillus, young and handsome, he sees that he has fallen into a trap: "I had thought that because one is handsome and dresses smartly, one is necessarily happy; but he, Camillus was not." Intoxicated by the vertigo of these successive transformations, as he boundlessly sought happiness that, like the ferret in the woods, constantly escaped him, he confronts a sort of dark law that begins to terrify him. He had suffered in the body of Emmanuel and had been extremely unhappy in the body of Camillus, although in a different way. He then tries to stop this frenetic race towards the happiness he had intended to obtain by acquiring another's identity.

All that could still save him from this dispossession of himself, the absurd search for the mirage of well-being, was "something irreducible that he carried in the most secret recess of his memory: a name."

The image that had changed after each transformation had become alienating, since he could no longer recognise his original, authentic image, superimposed images that no mirror could help him to differentiate. He could forget the names of all the people he had incarnated in the course of his mutations; however, he could not forget the name Fabian. This impossibility was for Fabian the true and only healthy point that enabled him to return, with relief, to his true identity. The importance connected to Fabian's name, states Melanie Klein, shows that his identity is linked to parts of himself that he leaves intact and these are the parts that represent the nucleus of his personality; the name is an essential part of the magical formula. It was because he remembered his given name, the surface and nucleus of his identity, that Fabian was able to find himself again, relieved, in the dwelling of his own body.

East of Eden (1952), by John Steinbeck

This novel by Steinbeck is set in northern California, in the Salinas Valley. It tells the saga of two families throughout three generations: the Hamiltons, who have come over from Northern Ireland, and the Trasks, who came from a farm in Connecticut. Through their everyday lives and their complex relations with places and people, in which love and hate are intertwined, the author describes, through the pen of Samuel Hamilton's grandson, a fresco of life in the American West at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Strongly influenced by the religious spirit that governs, as a regulating principle, the social ties of those times, good and evil are present from the first moment in the action of each character in the novel. That is, since the arrival of the Spaniards.

Very sensitive to the value of names, Steinbeck begins his book by highlighting the names of places. In the first place, those of the patron saints: St Michael, St Bernard, and St Charles (San Miguel, San Bernardo, and San Carlos). Then, those of celebrations: Christmas, Nativity (Natividad, Nacimiento). Other places were named depending on the mood of the expedition: Good Hope (Buena Esperanza), Good View (Buena Vista), Loneliness (Soledad), pretty place (Chualar). Some places were named descriptively: Oak Pass (Paso de los Robles), The Laurels (Los Laureles), and Salt Beds (Salinas); yet others were named after an animal they had seen: Sparrow Hawks (Gavilanes), The Mole (El Topo), The Cats (Los Gatos). Then, the Americans arrived, and even more Spaniards baptised the places with descriptive names. The novelist explains that these descriptive names held great fascination for him, since each of them suggests a forgotten story. He particularly recalls New Sack (Bolsa Nueva), The Sash (Maure), Wild Horse Canyon (Cañon del Caballo Salvaje), and Shirt Bread (Pan de Camisa).

In his novel, the author is not only sensitive to place names. The names of people occupy a privileged place, essential for understanding the imaginary plot of his novelistic construction. In both the prelude and the outcome of the plot, the choice of names predicts the course and constitutes the cornerstone of Steinbeck's novel.

Samuel Hamilton and his wife Liza came from Northern Ireland. A farm family for several generations, they had always lived on the land in their stone house. "He brought with him his tiny Irish wife, a

tight hard woman humorless as a chicken" (p. 9), an austere Presbyterian locked into a system of moral values that thwarted all desire to enjoy the charms of life. They had nine children. Samuel had a talent for listening, which led people to trust him, the more so because of a certain strangeness lodged in his inner self, a certain ostracism that had not allowed him to integrate entirely into the community. "His slight strangeness set him apart and made him safe as a repository" (p. 11).

Adam Trask, born in 1862 on a farm in Connecticut, was the elder of two siblings whose father had enlisted in a regional militia. His father, who had boundless admiration for the army, was the decisive influence in Adam, as a young adult, joining the militia, even though he did not really want to. Adam's half brother, Charles, a violent boy with a quarrelsome and vindictive spirit, was Adam's tormentor from infancy to adulthood. Charles had the competitive spirit that led him to confront others in order to crush them, something that in our world is the same as success.

Adam's mother, Alice, "never complained, quarreled, laughed, or cried. Her mouth was trained to a line that concealed nothing and offered nothing too" (p. 21).

When he returns from the army, Adam decides to move to the Salinas Valley after having received an inheritance from his father, a fortune of doubtful origins, in spite of the principles he proudly boasted.

With the money from his inheritance, Adam constructs the project of leaving Connecticut to establish himself in the Salinas Valley in California with his young and rather surprising wife, Cathy. His brother Charles stays behind to take care of the family farm.

Although intelligent, Cathy Ames is described as a monstrous character: she "was born with the tendencies, or lack of them, which drove and forced her all of her life" (p. 72). Although Cathy's face reflected innocence, she seems possessed by the devil. Biblical references are frequent in the course of the novel and are the nucleus of reflections on life, where good and evil are in everlasting conflict. A series of events related to Cathy's life announce, in the novel, inexorable treacherousness: as a young adolescent she intentionally burns down her home, and both her parents die. In her escape, she offers herself as a prostitute in the establishment of a famous pimp, Edwards, who, in spite of his position as a professional, falls in love

with her. He pays dearly for this act, incomprehensible in this type of man, since, for someone like him, love is “a crippling emotion. It ruined his judgment, canceled his knowledge, weakened him” (p. 95). Cathy ridicules, abuses, and humiliates him, an attitude for which she finally pays dearly: Edwards beats her brutally and abandons her as she lies bleeding to death.

It is then that Adam, in the company of his brother, finds her by chance on the steps of his house. In spite of his brother’s opposition, Adam takes care of her. He does not know where she comes from or who she really is. It is enough for him to know that her name is Cathy. For this dry man who had experienced the horrors of war, who had become a tramp and been in jail, the presence of this woman had become a sign that presaged well-being: “Adam couldn’t remember ever having been so happy” (p. 115). He never wants to leave her and makes her his wife, but he did not bargain for her refusal to go to California. Adam constructed his dream and his project without the agreement of his new wife. His dream was his real companion; he constructed it alone, and it was fated that he would be left alone. He had no courage or objectives and not even a great desire to live before meeting Cathy.

However, he was never aware of it: his dream had blinded him to that extent. “Whatever Cathy may have been, she set off the glory in Adam . . . burned in his mind was an image of beauty and tenderness, a sweet and holy girl, precious beyond thinking, clean and living, and that image was Cathy to her husband, and nothing Cathy did or said could warp Adam’s Cathy” (p. 132). Adam believed that Cathy was his salvation, and did not realize that she would finally be his condemnation. Adam thought that nothing could stop his project, and so put it into practice. “He had only one worry, and that was for Cathy. She was not well” (p. 133). Pregnant by Adam against her will, Cathy calmly awaited the end of her pregnancy, living on a farm that she disliked with a man she did not love. It seemed as if she had gone away, leaving a mechanical doll in her place. Around her there was great activity. Adam, seeking his happiness, was constructing his Eden. Cathy had twins and, shortly afterwards, abandoned them, children and husband. Adam never in all his life completely understood this act. However, he remained extremely tied to her.

Behind her ex-husband’s back, Cathy, in a neighbouring city, goes back to prostitution under a false name that is, however, not too

different from her real name: Kate. For several years Cathy's new life and her ex-family's continue as parallel lives.

The fates of the Trasks and the Hamiltons had crossed because of water sources. Adam asked for the practical skills and talent of Samuel Hamilton to find sources of water, necessary for his farm if he was to bring verdure to the desert. Adam, as his Biblical name suggests, is in search of Paradise. He spares no means. To justify his haste to see his fields bloom, fields that were until then Californian desert, he argues, "remember my name is Adam. So far I've had no Eden, let alone been driven out" (p. 167).

For Samuel, the talented water-dowser, it was "the best reason I ever heard for making a garden" (*ibid.*). However, and as his name foretold, he never really visited Eden. The Eden he dreamed of would always be in the East . . . as the name of the novel announces. Adam's life is more like a hell than an Eden.

When Cathy abandons her husband, his farewell present is a bullet from a Colt 44 in her left shoulder. It is the timely arrival of Adam's Chinese servant, Lee, that enables Adam to spare her life.

Steinbeck's novel is very Greek, in the sense that he believes in *fatum*, predestination, with no margin for free choice: "some people exude futures, good or bad" (p. 209).

After his wife's departure, Adam lived on, self-absorbed; he seemed bogged down in mud that restricted his gestures and the movement of his thoughts. He was unable to take care of the twins: "he heard them cry and laugh, but he felt only a thin distaste for them. To Adam they were symbols of his loss" (p. 250).

Lee, the Chinese servant, took care of the twins and spoke to them in his language, the Cantonese dialect, and thereby kept them alive. His was the only face and the only voice that the twins heard for a long time.

However, Lee was not optimistic about the twins' future. He told Samuel, the waterfinder and neighbouring farmer, of his desperation about the unfortunate fate of the twins, deprived of a mother and rejected by their father. Although they were a year and three months old, they still had no names.

Samuel does not dismiss this situation. He asks the boys' names. Lee answers, "They don't have any names." Then Samuel expresses his surprise:

SAMUEL: You're making a joke, Lee.

LEE: I am not making jokes.

SAMUEL: What does he call them?

LEE: He calls them 'they'.

SAMUEL: I mean when he speaks to them.

LEE: When he speaks to them he calls 'you' one or both. [p.253]

Astonished and angry, Samuel reacts with violence: "I'll come. I'll bring a horse whip. No names! You're damn right I'll come, Lee."

The Chinese servant tells Hamilton, "You'll like the twins, Mr Hamilton. They're fine-looking boys" (p. 253).

Samuel tells his wife, Liza, what is going on in the neighbour's house; she asks him, "Do you think it is such an important matter that those babies have names right now?"

"Well, it seemed so to me," answers Samuel awkwardly, "this man has not admitted that his sons live. He has cut them off mid-air."

Then Liza, to emphasize the urgency of naming, gives her husband the following instructions: "If you do not get those boys named, there'll be no warm place in this house for you. Don't you dare come whining back, saying he wouldn't do it or he wouldn't listen. If you do I'll have to go myself" (p. 254).

To give himself impetus, Samuel takes his Bible with him, whose cover bears the names of his nine children. He recalls, "there's no place for getting a good name like the Bible . . . and the children's names are in it" (*ibid.*), as if his nine children accompanied him and sustained him through the presence of their names.

Samuel's arrival is not appreciated by Adam Trask, who guesses the reason: "You are not welcome!" shouts Adam. To which Samuel replies, "I'm told that out of some singular glory your loins got twins." Irritated, Adam replies rudely, something unusual for him, that he should mind his own business. The argument between the two men grows rougher. Samuel asks, "Adam, do you deserve your children?" (p. 256).

The two men fight, and Samuel, who was incapable of violence towards anybody, beats Adam up.

Samuel goes on shouting: "Do you deserve your children, man?"

"Your sons have no names!" yells Samuel, emphasizing with the sharpness of this short sentence to what point this was inconceivable for a human being. Adam answers: "Their mother left them motherless." And Samuel adds, "And you have left them fatherless. Can't

you feel the cold at night of a lone child ? What warm is there, what bird song, what possible morning can be good?" (p. 257).

Through Samuel's voice, Steinbeck emphasizes the twins' lack of names, as if, for the author, this lack of naming represented ignorance of the light of life, the fact of not having accessed it, and their exile from language.

This chapter, the twenty-second, is the heart of the story and also a masterpiece on the importance of naming to bring the newborn across the threshold into humanity.

Because he is Adam's friend, but especially because he respects the right of all children to be named, Sam offers to help Adam look for names for the children: "we'll think long and find good names to clothe them."

In this expression, Steinbeck reaches back to Goethe, who wrote that a name is a suit of clothes that fits the body perfectly, like a second skin.

Adam, destroyed, fallen and broken by his wife's unannounced escape, seemed more a ghost than a human being: "There was no interval from loveliness to horror, you see. I'm confused, confused" (p. 258). And he expresses his doubts about what he may encounter in his sons when they are adults.

Samuel concedes that names are a great mystery: "I never known whether the name is molded by the child or the child changed to fit the name. But I'm sure of this—whenever a human has a nickname it is a proof that the name given him was wrong. How do you favor the standard names—John, or James or Charles ?" (p. 261).

The name Charles reminds Adam of his brother, and, therefore, with the mention of the name, he "saw his brother peering out of the eyes of one of the boys". This phantom that touches his perception leads him to reject it in horror. At which Samuel observes, "Maybe that's what ghosts are." Steinbeck, through Samuel's voice, stresses that names search for a body, to the point that they sometimes seem like ghosts that have come to be incarnated.

As in native tribes, Samuel asks for the presence of Lee, the Chinese servant, to collaborate in the choice of the name. The three represent the adult community that is in a position not only to evoke a possible name, but also to find the right name to fit these children: "We're trying to think of names."

First they look at their physical similarities and differences, as if they were searching for traits or characteristics to inspire them. "It

would be a mistake to name them for qualities we think they have," said Samuel. "We might be wrong—so wrong. Maybe it would be good to give them a high mark to shoot at— name to live up to. The man I'm named called clear by the Lord God, and I've been listening all my life" (p. 262).

Adam, now calmer and recognizing Samuel's gesture as an act of love towards him and his children despite the initial violence, decides to participate, doubtfully but willingly, in the debate on the best and most suitable names. Samuel asks him about names in his family: "You have no family name you want—no inviting trap for a rich relative, no proud name to re-create?" No, Adam answers, "I'd like them to start fresh, insofar as that is possible" (p. 264). Starting with Adam's name, Samuel constructs a long and impassioned speech about the names of Cain and Abel in the Bible, the first sons born. And he observes how strange it is that Cain is the best known name in the world and that only one man, to his knowledge, was given that name.

Lee observes that it is perhaps for that reason that none of its meaning was lost, as if a name, even a Biblical name, could acquire the singularity of the person it came to inhabit. Names thus acquire new meaning whenever they are incarnated in a singular subject, modelled by the person who offers them a blueprint to inhabit.

Samuel highlights, in regard to the relationship between Cain and Abel, that God's reaction is quite contradictory. After murdering his brother, which Cain denies to God, God expels him from paradise and condemns him to wander and to be a vagabond, deprived of land—since he had spilled his brother's blood on to the earth—that might give him the richness of the soil. Cain replied to the Eternal: "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid. And I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden (p. 266).

Sam recalls that in the Bible Abel had no children, and that even though it seems strange, we are all descendants of Cain. What is supposedly sin is not born with each child; we are all his descendants, Steinbeck proposes. As our parents' children, we inherit part of the guilt that our predecessors accept only partially. The novelist directs this transgenerational guilt through fate in relation to names.

In the novel, Samuel says that Cain carried a mark, not to be destroyed but to be saved, a sacred contradiction of God. "This is the best-known story in the world because it is everybody's story. I think it is the symbol story of the human soul" (p. 268).

Adam asks Samuel to help him choose the twins' names. Samuel reminds him that of all the men who went out of Egypt, only two entered the Promised Land: Caleb and Joshua. "Joshua was a soldier—a general. I don't like soldiering," says Adam. Caleb was a captain, but not a general. When Adam says "Caleb . . . Caleb Trask", one of the twins wakes up and immediately cries out.

"You called his name," said Samuel. "You don't like Joshua and Caleb's name. He's the smart one—the dark one. See, the other one is awake too. Well, Aaron I've always liked, but he didn't make it to the Promised Land" (p. 270).

At that moment, the other twin gives an almost happy shout, which persuades Adam to choose this name. Samuel, who is happy that the attribution of names has occurred, celebrates: "Caleb and Aaron—now you are people and you have joined the fraternity and you have the right to be damned." Adam recognizes that his friend Samuel has been able to help him to insert his children into the community of men and thanks him with a deep sigh for having come: "There is a weight off me", no doubt as a result of his relief at finally having been able to inscribe his sons in a filiation, having given them vital existence that birth alone cannot guarantee if it is not followed by the act of naming.

This chapter is without doubt both the essence and the crossroads of this novel. As if it were a question from the Sphinx: the resolution of the riddle and the story woven in the course of three generations condensed around the choice of these names.

The rest of the story shows us how young Caleb and Aron (who had in adolescence removed an "a" because they teased him at school) struggle with life, burdened with all the weight of their family history.

In the novel's plot we observe the names' determination in the construction and outcome of the history of each character. It is not by erasing a vowel from his birth name, Aaron, that he can ease the burden of his Biblical name. Like the Biblical Aaron, Steinbeck's Aaron aspires to be ordained, and for a while it seems that his choice is to be a man of the cloth. His father's favourite because "he looks like him", as Caleb and Adam think, Aron never enters the Promised Land.

Distraught when he learns that his mother owns a brothel in a neighbouring city where she, too, practises prostitution, Aron Trask escapes in horror and unexpectedly enlists in the army. A thinly veiled suicide, he dies very young in action. As written in the Bible about Aaron, our Aron dies “at the entrance to the Promised Land”.

Caleb Trask, his twin, recovers the family farm that his father had to leave behind, although he cannot turn it into the paradise he would have liked; and yet, in his own way, he reaches the land considered promised. A land that Adam, expelled from Eden, could never reach in the Biblical story; in the novel, this also happens to Adam Trask and his son Aron, “who looked like him”, in the Salinas Valley in Steinbeck’s northern California.

In Steinbeck’s universe, names are determinant, over and above the appropriation attempted by each of the characters, thereby leaving the subject without ink to rewrite his own text, a subject unable to modify the forces of fate materialized in the meaning of his name. Steinbeck’s novel creates an oppressive atmosphere, perhaps because the subjectivity of each character is far from inhabiting their name. The Greek *fatum* that Steinbeck seems to adopt in this novel leaves no room for the unpredictable or for free choice in the text written by the subjects. The characters are forever imprisoned by a previously written text, a fate etched into the petrified names they carry that lead them inexorably to an unavoidable, tragical fate.

Proust and names

According to Roland Barthes (1972), writers use reminiscences especially in order to construct the novelized object. Proper names in particular have this evocative potential. This author states that proper names possess the three characteristics the narrator uses in his reminiscence: (1) the power to be essential (to designate only one referent); (2) the power of citation; (3) the power of exploration. Thus, Barthes says, the poetic event developed by Proust in his novel, *In Search of Lost Time*, or *Remembrance of Things Past*, is the discovery of Names. The proper name is at the centre of the novelistic system around which Proust constructs his narrations.

Barthes, in contrast to linguists or philosophers like Peirce or Russell, does not consider the proper name a simple sign that serves

only to designate, but rather a sign that “offers itself to exploration and deciphering”. The author adds: “if the proper name is a sign, it is a voluminous sign, a sign that always has a thick density of meaning which no use can diminish or flatten, unlike the common name, which only offers syntagmatic meaning” (p. 125). From this perspective, the proper name is the headquarters of hyper-semanticity, akin to, and just as evocative as, the poetic word. It is so evocative, Barthes considers, that the entire search grew out of certain names. Barthes cites Proust (1929) in this respect, when he says: “That *Guermites* was like the painting of a novel” (p. 15). Or also: “Thinking of names not as an inaccessible ideal but as a real milieu into which I could plunge.” From this vantage point, Proust joins Plato (1967) in the voice of Socrates when he states that the name is “an appropriate instrument to teach and to distinguish reality, as the spool is to untangle threads”.

The proper name acquires all its evocative power in Proust, acts as a crossroads, a condensation of associative chains that need to be expanded in order to access the nuances of reconstructive and constructive memory. That is to say, to access the very act of novel writing.

Antoine (1983) considers that the proper name often allows the author to voyage along the coasts of memory or remembered dream towards the shores of an active present or those of a dream whose name is like a matrix ready to liberate it; such is the name for Proust: a dynamic container.

Antoine cites passages chosen by Proust: “The name *Gilberte* passed near me . . . in action, to put it somehow”. Further on: “The very name *Gilberte* received, from all the beautiful extinguished names and even more from those still ardently burning to which, I became aware, they were related, a new and purely poetic determination” (Proust, 1929, p. 236). And also:

. . . for *Balbec*, as soon as he entered, it was as if a name had been opened slightly, a name which should have been kept hermetically shut and which, taking advantage of the escape he had unwisely afforded it, expelled all the images that had lived there until then: a tram, a coffee shop, people passing by the place, the branch of the *Comptoir d’Escompte* and irresistibly pushed out by external pressure and pneumatic force, submerged into the syllables which, now withdrawn, allowed it to surround the porch of the Persian church and

would never again contain them. Thus, in all the moments of his stay, the name Guermantes considered as a group of all the names that fit into it, suffered losses and recruited new elements, like those gardens where newly born flowers are always preparing to replace the ones that are wilting, and mix into a whole that seems to be the same . . . [Antoine, 1983, p. 113]

Antoine adds that he wishes to underscore the suggestive nature of Proust's work; it occupies: "a dynamic field and time through which the most genuine reality is engendered: the one that creates the fertility of art".

Barthes perceives in Proust the play of polysemy of the signifiers of the names, but especially all the mythopoietic, rhizomatous power, a generator of new meanings, which names provoke by their very evocation. Like a branching of memories that creates new foliage from the network of their roots, a real tree of life offers new fruits with each evocation.

Fernando Antonio Nogueira Pessoa and his heteronyms

During his lifetime, Pessoa published only one book in Portuguese, *Mensagem* (1934), and two in English; also a prolific poetic oeuvre in Portuguese, recently translated into Spanish by Santiago Kovadloff (2004). Almost all his literary production, an extraordinary group of unorganized manuscripts, was found in a famous box and published after his death in 1935.

Most of his writings were not signed with his own birth name but in the form of what he himself called heteronyms. No author had gone so far in the explosion of his personality. As Kovadloff (translator of Pessoa's works into Spanish) put it (Pessoa, 2002), Pessoa considers "heteronymous" all the poetry and prose that he does not recognize as his own and attributes to other authors "outside of his person", as Pessoa himself preferred to put it.

These heteronyms are not, in the strict sense, an expression of the literary identity he recognizes as his own or characters created by him, as often occurs in dramaturgy or in fictional literature. Nor are they pseudonyms, since Pessoa does not sign with another name behind which he wishes to hide. Heteronyms are "other forms of being" that are expressed in their own idiom and style.

Pessoa gives heteronyms authentic existence: each has its own date of birth, life, and profession. The heteronyms even argue amongst themselves through epistolary interchanges that acquire all the reality we find in the vivacity of their discussion.

Lopes, in *Pessoa por conhecer* (1990), identified at least seventy-two heteronyms, a practically infinite multiplication of identity, the dismemberment of a personality that was always in search of a being that could be found only in unbeing. Orthonymy becomes the neologism with which Pessoa denominates the production he signed with his own name. As if even when he used his signature he was trying to preserve a certain distance from himself with his ego in a nearly constant state of dehiscence.

On 8 March 1914, Pessoa inaugurates his system of heteronyms, which he continues to enrich throughout his lifetime as ramifications of identity. Among the most famous of these we mention Alberto Caeiro, a nature poet, primitive and uncultured; Ricardo Reis, an anarchistic and semi-Hellenistic physician; Álvaro de Campos, a "Whitman with a Greek poet inside"; Bernardo Soares, an obscure book-keeper of the Baixo quarter in Lisbon. Behind all these faces and labyrinths there was only one master builder, only one anguish of one being in search of himself (*Magazine Littéraire*, 1991).

The chronology of the birth of the heteronyms is very well described by de Cortanze (1991). As this author describes it, Pessoa sets the "birth" of Ricardo Reis in Porto on 19 November 1887, a year before his own birth. Educated in the Jesuit School, Ricardo Reis receives training as a Latinist and takes his degree in medicine. A confirmed monarchist, he exiles himself to Brazil in 1919. A highly cultivated poet, Reis imitates Horace and takes pleasure in agitating the syntax of the Portuguese language. Profoundly classical, it serves as counterpoint to the modernism of the poets of Orpheus and of Futuristic Portugal. He stops writing in 1933.

On 15 April 1889, the heteronym Alberto Caeiro is "born" in Lisbon. "Poet of nature", he insists all his life on seeming to be a primitive and uncultivated peasant. Hallowed teacher of the rest of the heteronyms, according to de Cortanze, he is always in search of things "as they are". He is the one who travels furthest on the path of esotericism.

On 15 October 1890, the heteronym Álvaro de Campos is "born" in Tavira, Algarve. After having studied naval mechanical engineering

in Glasgow, he travels in the Orient and returns to Lisbon. A writer about machines and futurism, he is the poet of “excessive expression”.

His “semi-heteronym”, Bernardo de Soares, an obscure office employee in the Baixo quarter in Lisbon, the principal, but not the only, “author” of the *Book of Anxieties*, he perhaps condenses that anxious living shared by all the heteronyms. “Not being my personality,” confesses Pessoa a year before his death, “his is not different from mine, but only a simple mutation” (cited in Zenith, 2002). It is with the voice of Bernardo Soares that Pessoa says “my fatherland is the Portuguese language”, which does not prevent Pessoa from writing in English and French.

In January, 1935, shortly before his death, Pessoa writes a long letter to Adolfo Casais Monteiro (cited in de Cortanze, 1991), in which he explains the genesis of the heteronym:

As a child, I already had a tendency to create a fictitious world around me, to surround myself with friends and acquaintances who had never existed . . . Since I have had the notion of being what I call me, I remember having mentally constructed—external appearance, behaviour, character and history—several imaginary characters that were visible to me and belonged to me as much as the things in what we call, sometimes abusively, real life. [p. 8]

A lonely child, Pessoa liked to create imaginary characters: playmates later transformed into writing companions, a literary polyhedron from which several styles were refracted and even several literary languages.

Pessoa never set out to write a book, as Lopes states (*Magazine Littéraire*, 1991), in the manner of someone who begins to construct a work that he later claims as his property. Pessoa wrote about himself in a state of explosion, following his inspiration, his person incarnating those “others” into whom he split his whole life. Lopes quotes a fragment in which we see the degree of fragmentation of himself involved in this style: “And like things scattered / Explosions of Being / I break my soul into pieces / And into diverse persons”.

This fragmentation reverberates in the multiplication of heteronyms as if the names had acquired enough autonomy to write for themselves, outside the author. This multiplication of names is a great literary puzzle that I have no pretension of revealing. However, it is exciting to find the interweave Pessoa has crafted with naming, as if

he had meant to construct his own creation, not only literary, but also of his ego, but never achieved it. In this sense, Pessoa is quite modern, since he does not consider the ego unitary and constituted once and for all by intermediary names, and pushes the decentering of the ego to the limits of what is bearable. As highlighted by Schneider (1984), "The poet persisted in not joining the two edges of the wound of existing: in Pessoa's name and face, many people and barely an unfinished ego" (p. 232).

Schneider wonders whether we can prevent the rupture of an identity by organizing its dispersion into multiple personalities and adds:

How can we say that Pessoa was divided by the names and fragmented by identities without showing that before, there was an entity to parcel out and that it was called Pessoa! Nothing is less sure . . . we could not do without Pessoa as the subject of propositions, as the name of a person, a name-being . . . a name connected to a being by a relationship, however tenuous, of necessary designation. [p. 235]

Pessoa would himself answer these questions, suggests Schneider, quoting him *in extenso*:

I composed two or three things in irregular verse (not in the style of Álvaro de Campos) and I abandoned the project. However, in the confused half-light, I glimpsed a vague portrait of the person who wrote these verses (without my knowledge, Ricardo Reis had been born). A year and a half or two years later, I thought I would tease Sâ-Carneiro and invented a bucolic poet, a bit complicated, and presented him, I don't remember how, as if he were a real being. I dedicated several days in vain to this project. One day, when I had finally given up,—it was March 8th, 1914—I walked over to a chest of drawers and, grabbing a pile of papers, began to write standing up, as I do whenever I can. I wrote about thirty poems in a row, in a sort of ecstasy whose nature I can't identify. It was the day of triumph of my life and I will never see another one like it. I had begun with a title, *The keeper of herds*. And what followed was the apparition of someone inside me, who I called Alberto Caeiro. Forgive me this absurdity: my teacher had appeared in me. I felt it immediately. This was so true that, as soon as I had finished the thirty poems, I wrote on another piece of paper, also without stopping, *Oblique rain* by Fernando Pessoa, immediately and totally . . . It was the journey back from Fernando Pessoa–Alberto Caeiro to Fernando Pessoa alone. Or better said: it was

Fernando Pessoa's reaction to his inexistence as Alberto Caeiro . . . Once Alberto Caeiro was born, I tried to find, unconsciously and instinctively, certain disciples for him. I pulled the latent Ricardo Reis out of his false paganism, discovered a name for him and adapted it to him because, at that moment, I could see him. And suddenly, a derivation opposed to Reis, another individual, emerged with force. Straight away, without interruption or corrections, *Triumphal ode* by Álvaro de Campos emerged. The ode with this name and the man with the name he carries. [p. 236]

In this text, we clearly perceive that the boundary between Pessoa and his heteronyms was minimal. No more than a gesture lay between the bareness of expressing himself barefaced and the interposition of a mask. He is not content to create characters that manifest themselves in direct discourse, but also uses procedures inherent to the narrative genre. He even wrote a book—using the name of Álvaro de Campos—in which he and his main characters meet each other, express themselves, and react to each other, using indirect or direct discourse. Thus, Campos narrates and places Pessoa in the scene (Lopes, 1991).

Like stratified layers of texts, or Russian dolls, Pessoa's heteronyms are both superimposed and also fit into each other without ever coming to a synthesis. There is no envelope of the ego. It remains fractured, exploded, always in the no-being of despair, in search of identities for lack of one identity.

All the unrest seems to be contained more in a "setting in the abyss" than in a setting of himself. Pessoa is the paradox of theatre; by being oneself and being the other, his real dramaturgy is found in the poetic creation of heteronyms (Léglise-Costa, 1991).

As a child, Pessoa goes to an English language school. After he lost his father when he was five, his mother re-marries the consul of Portugal in Durban, an English colony. As a result of being educated in an English-speaking school, this language will be one of his writing languages. As Bréchon (1991) writes, in the great game of heteronyms, the English language poet has his own role. It is the one whose mask is not a personality but the language itself.

In this perspective, we find his heteronym who writes in English, Alexander Search, and his heteronym who writes in French, Jean Seul, as if his identity Search had been induced by his deep and authentic loneliness (*seul* means "alone" in French).

In search of his identity, Pessoa enquires into his adolescence in English through Alexander Search, as Malpique (2006) points out: "Who am I?" Alexander asks.

Thus, he experiences the disquieting strangeness of recognizing himself as an Other, writes and thinks in English, a language that enables Pessoa—the author maintains—"to hide and protect Fernando's intimate fragility". From adolescence on, Pessoa expresses a mind in expansion that "opens up to awareness of a plural ego, diversified and always becoming".

However, in spite of the nominal dismembering of his ego, it is evident that his name remains anchored in the creation of his main heteronyms. In Bernardo Soares, we find echoes of his real name: only a B instead of an F and an R instead of an N in the name; and in the family name, the last three letters of his own at the beginning, the second and third at the end (Goloboff, 1991). Poetry is at the centre of this creation: alliterations and onomastic playing intertwine the names of the authors, as Jakobson highlights in his study dedicated to Pessoa (cited in Schneider, 1984). The name Ricardo Reis is an imperfect anagram of Alberto Caiero, and only a few syllables are added to the latter heteronym to become Álvaro de Campos.

Even though Pessoa multiplies names, whether in despair or in omnipotence, each preserves in its hollow places the same secret fissure through which being escapes. Whereas the pseudonym is a game and anonymity an escape, the heteronym is dispersion (*ibid.*).

Referring to the polyglotism of Jakobson, who liked to say that he spoke Russian in nineteen languages, we may say that Pessoa speaks his ego in seventy-two heteronyms; as many, perhaps, as languages: many authors and only one body.

Pessoa does not control his heteronyms, but is possessed by them. It is not he who speaks through them, but they who speak to him to tell him who he is. It is an ego without an envelope, or with an envelope made of porous membrane through which fragments of identity escape in a loss of being. It is both an escape and a search, a voyage outside of himself in search of himself.

Schneider considers that a person needs more names in order not to be than to be. Certain bulimics of being need more than one name to construct their own mask, "more than one ego to make an ego of their own".

Schneider seems to think that this unfinished quality in the life and work of Pessoa is locked into his name:

He wanted to erase the traces, disorient and put on a mask to make himself invisible, to avoid having a fate by exhausting himself and exhausting many people . . . but he did not escape what was written previously: before his birth, before his writing and his suffering: written in his name, *Pessoa*. [p. 252]

Pessoa, in Portuguese, means *person*, the theatrical mask that hides the face and represents the subject. And also “nobody” (*personne* in French). Do we not say that “nobody’s here” to signify the absence of a subject? Can the weight of his name have had a heavy role in his identity multiplication? An answer is impossible. However, in any case, in this unstable vacillation of identity in the heteronyms, what marvellous and prolific literary creation! From the interstices of the determining force of his name, he was doubtless able to liberate not only a multiplicity of identities but mainly an unheard of form of poetic creation. Pessoa not only is not nobody. He is the greatest of all the Portuguese poets and his name is among the most original in all the history of poetic creation.

“The name on the tip of the tongue” by Pascal Quignard

Quignard wrote a short, concise, and condensed but highly significant text. He titled it; “The name on the tip of the tongue” (1993). Why address the name on the tip of the tongue and not the word on the tip of the tongue? He does not say. Could it be because, in the final analysis, every word in any language is connected to the name? As if the name were always in filigree behind each word; as if the word contained a name that over-determines it.

In any case, Quignard considers that the name may inspire a vocation and even compel a person to become a writer. We shall see what he says about his own name:

I identified completely with the way my mother’s way of thinking acquired movement in me as she walked sadly along the canals and paths where a word had got lost. A mother who would leave aside anything she might be doing, become distant, staring at nothing,

waiting for the word she was missing. Her children would help her with their silence; they were on the lookout as she was. For the word on the tip of the tongue, the lost word, to return. Later, I identified with my mother's father. Then I identified with my mother's grandfather. In so doing, I simply justified an identification programmed by my mother before my arrival to air, since the two names associated with the first of mine (Pascal) were theirs: Charles, Edmond. Since I was a child, it seemed I had acquired knowledge of philology, grammar and Roman from my grandfather. Both had taught at the Sorbonne. Both had collected books. In this way I absurdly tried to go back in time; which first threw me into the ruins of Ur and then pushed me into the most ancient caves with silent and illustrated walls. Our lives are subject to strange tyrannies that are mistakes. It is curious how books I wrote acquired fame by digging up old ghosts of unknown dead that had more future in them than the living. Books are these shadows of the fields. [p. 63]

Sometimes, it is not on the main name, the one most used, that the weight of parental choice falls. Sometimes, its weight is distributed in the other names, whatever their order in the sequence, even though they remain silent, including family nicknames. Thus, Quignard seems to recognize his passion for writing in the interstices of Charles and Edmond, the names of his grandfathers, who acted as tutelary ghosts thirsting for his writings; hands that guide his pen and also force him to write to "survive". Perhaps this was the only way to satisfy the demands of ghosts that would otherwise become threatening.

Quignard continues,

I was a child that had fallen into the form of this silent interchange with language that is lacking. It was that silent watching; I became that silence, that child 'retained' in the word, absent in the form of silence. This childhood depression came on after we moved to The Hague, because it took me far away from a German girl who took care of me while my mother was in bed ill whom I called Mutti. I fell mute. I managed to bury myself in that name, more beloved than my mother's, which unfortunately was a command. It wasn't a name on the tip of the tongue but on the tip of my body, and the silence of my body was the only thing able to make its warmth become an act of presence. I don't write out of desire or habit or will or profession. I wrote to survive. I wrote because it was the only way to speak silently.

To speak mutely, to hunt down the missing word, to read, to write, is the same. Because it was the only way to stay warm in that name without exiling myself from all language like madmen or like rocks that are unhappy as themselves, like beasts or the dead. [p. 65]

Faced with mourning the loss of his nanny, whose maternal function had probably acquired more value because of the emptiness of the presence-absence of his mother, the child Pascal identifies with her as a way of preserving her inside himself, or, what is the same, with her name. Mutti, mute in Italian, is the only way Pascal Quignard finds to preserve his maternal protective image in himself. At the edge of the abyss of impossible mourning to preserve Mutti in himself, he becomes "Mu . . . te". He makes this mutism the condition of his writing. Source of his vocation as a writer, he thereby seeks to alleviate his sadness of an orphan child deprived of a maternal function, in order to cure his hurt and mitigate his pain. Paradoxically, also for his readers' pleasure.

State terrorism in Argentina and children seized by the military power (1976–1983)

The theft of children's identity:
restitution of their identity and recovery
of their given names and family names

The *coup d'état* on 24 March 1976, perpetrated with the consent of certain sectors of civilian and political society and the financial establishment, took power and opened what we know to be the most dramatic chapter in contemporary Argentinian history. The repressive power of the so-called "security" forces, preceded by "death squads" that began to act before the *coup d'état* (among these was the infamous Triple A), pursued all opponents, whether because they were militants, because of their ideas, or their disagreement with the despotic regime installed. It is common knowledge that the toll of this repressive action was the forced disappearance of an estimated 30,000 persons (9,500 were enumerated by the CONADEP (National Committee on the Disappearance of Persons, 1984)), of whom 80% were between eighteen and thirty-five years of age and 30% were women, of whom 10% were pregnant. The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo (Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo) calculate that between 400 and 500 children were seized by the security forces.

The forced disappearance of persons is a very complex matter from the legal point of view, since the people responsible for it endeavour to leave no evidence of the seizure of the "disappeared" person, the consequence of which has most frequently been the

murder of the victims. This was legally proven to have been part of joint action with the security forces of other Latin American countries, the so-called Condor plan, with the evident consent of the USA's foreign policy at a time when the paranoia of the "internal enemy" reigned. The military power carried out organized and systematic repressive action, including on the children of the "disappeared". It is no longer possible to ignore that during those years, an incalculable number of dead were buried as *Nomen Nescio* (no name) including many children.

The messianic action that the military attributed to itself involved a methodology that spanned several generations. In the name of the "defence of the Christian family" and "Western values", the military appropriated the children of the "disappeared" persons in order to avoid, according to their peculiar conception of a "good upbringing", their upbringing in the same families that had brought up persons considered "subversives", in the jargon of the time. All this in name of "Christian morals" and "Western values", values that those in power obviously defined in a sinister, omniscient, and univocal way. Many children born in captivity were later kidnapped and put up for "adoption". These thefts of children were also orchestrated in order to leave no trace of the crimes of kidnapping and murder, committed with total impunity. The power used the complicity of many institutions related to children, and even the Courts, which validated their actions by giving children in adoption and simultaneously refusing to give information to their real families. The methodology involved concealment of the change of identity or acceptance of admission of children to institutions for minors as NN, making it factually impossible to reunite them with their legitimate families.

Those in power intended to model the psyche of several generations thereby. The systematic theft of children, the abject booty of war, aimed to give them to families connected to that power, presuming that they would be in a position to bring them up according to their ideology. Most of these families were accomplices in this criminal act. Only a few, registered in the adoption lists in the Courts, knew nothing of the children's origins.

In 1977, a dozen women joined together to create an association that denounced the kidnapping of the children; they did so with immense courage and risk to their lives in the midst of the repressive period. The first name of this organization was: "Grandmothers of the

Plaza de Mayo with disappeared grandchildren"; they later shortened it to the name "Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo", by which they are now known.

The military power relied on the silence of accomplices in some of the mass media and certain sectors of the civil, political, and religious institutions, something that was not, however, able to discourage the grandmothers, who, apart from their labyrinthine actions in the Argentine Courts, also filed accusations in the international human rights organizations.

In April, 1978, the Grandmothers (there were still twelve) succeeded in getting the Supreme Court of Justice of the nation to receive a writ in which they claimed their disappeared grandchildren. In July of that year, the Court declared its incompetence in the name of the "principle of separation of power of the State on which our republican regime of government is based", as if the republic had not already been abused. In their petition, the twelve grandmothers asked

that the children designated as NN not be given in custody for the purpose of adoption from March 1976 in the entire country pending substantiation of the recourse of *Habeus Corpus* and procedures to determine the origin of the cases of children under three years of age given in adoption from March 1976 in the entire country, in order to determine whether they may be the grandson or granddaughter of one of the petitioners" [Herrera & Tenenbaum, 2001]

Already, in 1978, the Grandmothers foresaw the horrors that would be produced by illegal adoptions granted with the complicity of judges and administrative officials.

In response to the refusals of the military power and official institutions, the Grandmothers demonstrated great persistence and ingenuity, even valiantly risking their lives, and changed their methodology. Thereafter, in order to find kidnapped children, they investigated on their own, distributing pamphlets, pasting posters on walls, and publishing photos in those newspapers that would accept them. Obviously, the return to democracy in 1983 made these searches much more possible.

In January 1984, the first cadavers buried as NN during the military dictatorship were exhumed. The sinister horror was multiplied

when it was found that among the bodies murdered by the impact of bullets shot into their backs were the bodies of two children aged five and six years. Roberto and Barbara Lanouscou were members of a family with three children. In a third small coffin, where one might think the little sister, Matilde Lanouscou, six months old, would be, a stuffed bear and a pacifier were found. There were no human vestiges. It was all a horrible scenario to conceal the kidnapping of the little girl, who had not yet been found. Once the killing machine had started up, it was not enough to cause physical death; all trace of nomination had to be eliminated. It could be said that the crime had been double, a crime of the body and of the name, even more “dangerous” as the representative of the density of its own identity.

The bodies buried as NN were numerous, as if erasure of the name were enough to annul the past existence of the murdered person. The intention to leave no trace of this ignominy is the same as the intention to leave no trace of nomination. It is not enough for the despotic regime to appropriate these people, make them disappear and murder them. It requires a simultaneous attack on the essence of the subject that is reflected in his name. To make a body and also its name disappear are two faces of the same crime.

In relation to the children still alive, no evidence could unquestionably demonstrate the bond of kinship, since the parents had also been murdered. This meant that the legitimate claim of the grandparents depended on chance. It was not enough to find the disappeared–kidnapped child, which was encouraging in itself; they also had to obtain proof of kinship. This became possible only later, thanks to the scientific contribution of immunological histocompatibility developed in the USA by Dr Mary Claire King in 1984 and used in Argentina since that year at the request of the Grandmothers. The reliability of these tests is 99.95% with respect to kinship between grandchildren and their grandparents and/or aunts and uncles.

After the return to democracy in 1983, the trial of the military juntas that took place in Buenos Aires in 1985 demonstrated on the judicial scene the existence of a formal plan for the kidnapping, torture in clandestine centres, and subsequent murder of opponents of the regime as well as their families. Their children had been murdered or stolen and given to other families, most of which were accomplices of the regime.

The process of restitution

The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo struggled bravely to find the children, now young adults, with the objective of giving back their identity and returning them to their legitimate families. This struggle, that today no longer meets with opposition, was not initially accepted by the population as a whole or by all the mass media. Demonstrating the mechanisms of negation of their role as executioners, most of the kidnappers pretended that they had become the children's adoptive parents and argued that it would cause unnecessary trauma to tell them the truth about their origins in order to return them to their biological grandparents.

A team of paediatricians, psychiatrists, and psychologists worked with the grandmothers from the beginning, contributing their containment and professional knowledge to guarantee the restitution of the children to their real family in the best possible conditions for the child.

After experimenting with different procedures, the process that was chosen was the following.

- The judge, guarantor of the recovery of the child's identity and of his restitution to his legitimate family, explains the law and the importance of knowing the truth to the child.
- It is fundamental that this separation take place immediately, even if it may initially be traumatic for the child. This trauma empowers, in the sense that it de-alienates the child by restoring his right to know his origins, the recovery of his given name and family name, which the kidnappers had attempted to erase, even the least trace. The judge is in charge of formulating the prohibition that must operate against the kidnappers to the benefit of the higher interest of the child. It is the judge that notifies the child of the historical truth of his origin, the circumstances of his kidnapping, and the terrible end his real parents suffered.
- The child is contained by the legitimate relatives, who are seconded by a team of psychologists and psychiatrists that facilitate the setting of the reunion.
- It is also the judge who must explain to the grandparents the bond that has been legitimized by judicial decision.

- The kidnappers are placed at the disposition of the Law to account for the crime committed.
- It is extremely important that no uniformed person be present during this act of justice.

We may imagine the intensity of the emotional content of this act of restitution. I will cite *in extenso* a grandmother's narrative (Herrera & Tenenbaum, 2001) that is extremely moving. Her story, told in the first person, highlights in an exemplary manner how important a name may be to recover an identity, a name apparently lost forever but which was there, waiting to come forward with force and intensity.

Paula Eva Logares was "disappeared" when she was twenty-three months old with her parents, Monica Gripson and Claudio Logares. Argentine citizens, they were abducted in Montevideo. Elsa, her grandmother, who lived in Buenos Aires, stayed on throughout the month of June, waiting. Like a good citizen, she still thought that she could find someone who was arrested and had only to ask for them at a police station. She still had no suspicion of that sinister condition of being "disappeared". Her search began in Uruguay and continued in Argentina. Elsa thought that Paula was with Monica, her mother. She wrote letters to the president of Uruguay and innocently asked him to return her little Paula when she is four years old, after the time the little one needed to be with her mother. Time, she thought, that the security services would grant. Elsa still could not imagine the horror to come: "for me it was catastrophic to understand that they were separated. Now I understand that this was absolute innocence or stupidity". This incapacity to conceive the sinister is not, obviously, a sign of stupidity, as Elsa seems to reproach herself with, but of humanity. Someone who is respectful of the other's humanity cannot accept the ignominy of beings that function as an ominous machine of destruction and death.

Elsa turned to the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who helped her in her search. A photo of her granddaughter, taken in 1980, with the Buenos Aires city centre in the background, was addressed anonymously to an NGO for the Defence of Human Rights with the information that the child was registered as the birth child of a police commissioner. According to this denunciation, the girl's name was Paula Lavallen or Luivallen. Looking at the photo, Elsa recognized her without any doubt as her granddaughter and continued the search

with the same determination but now with more encouragement. At that time, Paula was four. Elsa succeeded in finding the address and passed by and passed by again on her street in an attempt to see her. She tried unsuccessfully to contact her, until one day she finally found herself facing her granddaughter and a person who fetches her at the school gate. Obviously, at that time the grandmothers could not count on the judicial institutions of the dictatorship to identify and return children to their legitimate families. One day, Elsa discovered that the family of abductors had moved. She was desperate. She cannot find out the new address, but her search continued and then democracy arrived. After that moment, the Association of Grandmothers was free to put up posters with the photos of children seized, and certain newspapers and magazines would also publish them. A neighbouring couple spontaneously sent her the new address where Paula was living with her kidnappers.

“One day”, Elsa tells, “I saw her again as she was getting off the school bus carrying a little doll and wearing a pink pinafore. It was a shock for me. The little girl greatly resembles her mamma and it was like seeing Monica small again, standing there on the sidewalk. At the same time I felt disorientated. Paula was seven by now. Why was she wearing a kindergarten pinafore? She had to be in second grade; I didn’t understand it. Later I learned that the Lavallens had registered her as newborn at the moment she was seized. Paula was living as if she were two years younger.”

From that moment on, Elsa frequented the neighbourhood daily, and in order to familiarize the neighbours with her presence without raising suspicion, she carried a shopping basket and did her shopping there. Meanwhile, the lawyers of the Association prepared the legal presentation. They needed to find the false birth certificate, but did not have the exact name. The lawyers had found the name Lavallen on a list of torturers, but did not know whether it was the appropriator’s surname. Then one day, one of Elsa’s daughters approached Paula and asked her, “What’s your name?” Paula answered, “Paula Luisa Lavallen”. Thus, they were able to confirm the correct family name and only the given name was missing. One day, a lady who was a neighbour of the Lavallens went to the Association and asked to speak to Paula’s grandmother. The woman was afraid, but at the same time full of conviction. She said, “I think that if the child has a family that is looking for her, the best place she can be is with that family because

this house is not for a little girl and less for an adolescent when she's ten or twelve years old." She tells her of her fears about the way Lavallen touched and treated the girl. How these people were bringing up the girl "for" the plans of Lavallen. She had the impression that he did not have a healthy relationship with the child. Paula later recalled that Lavallen told her that girls do not talk to boys because they are bad and dirty and that one day she would marry him. On 13 December 1983, the day after the swearing-in of the elected President with the advent of democracy, the lawyers presented the writ to the Courts. When the court ordered the child to be withdrawn from the Lavallen family, Lavallen presented to the Court a "real" birth certificate, according to which Paula was supposedly his daughter. The document was authentic, and therefore it was necessary to demonstrate that the facts were false. Since the histocompatibility blood tests did not yet exist as an element of proof, they had to wait until 3 August 1984, when this type of test could be done in Argentina. When this finally happened and it was confirmed by certification that she was Paula Eva Logares, the child was still not returned to her grandparents, who were called in by the Court on 13 December 1984. The Association of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo sent two psychologists, a paediatrician, and the lawyers. Only then did the judge rule that the child must be returned to her legitimate family.

It is moving to quote Grandmother Elsa's entire account of their reunion (Herrera & Tenenbaum, 2001):

The child cried a lot, kicked a lot, didn't need sedation, didn't want to eat and dozed for a little while. Until they told me that I could go in. We went in with my husband to talk to her and she, crying very angrily, said who was I. I told her that I was the mamma of her mamma. "That's a lie," she shouted, "my mamma is Raquel and my dad is Ruben." "That's what they say," I told her, "I say something different. If I'm the mamma of your parents and I'm not their mamma, then those people are not your parents by any means." She began to shout and tell me that I was nobody, that all I wanted was to destroy her family. Later I told her that I had brought a photo for her to see and to hear what she thought of it, to see if she remembered her parents. I had had some enlargements made of photos of her parents holding her in their arms. She looked at them and threw them on the desk. "This is not true," said Paula, "because they're too new to be from the time you say." I said I was sorry but that I had had the photo

enlarged so that she could see her parents' faces better, and the old photos were at home for her to look at. She looked at one of the last ones that we had of her when she was with us and said, "Yes, this one is quite like one there is at home." I calculated that it would be a photograph they took of her soon after seizing her. She stared at the photo of her mother and didn't say anything. She stared at the photo of her father and cried and cried and couldn't stop crying. Then I told her, "You know what you used to call your papa?" "No," she answered. "You called him Calio." When I told this to her she looked at me and repeated very softly, in the same tone of voice she had had when she said Calio to her papa when she was tiny: "Calio, Calio." Then she began to weep, howling.

It was like a new birth. As the paediatrician who assisted both Paula and her grandmother very pertinently said, this moment was equivalent to the rupture of an abscess. It was a very painful moment.

That afternoon, Paula went to the house of her legitimate family, wanted to go to the bathroom and did not ask where it was. She seemed to recognize the place. She went into the room in the back, her room in the past, where she had slept so often. Paula asked what her parents were like and asked to see photos. In 1988, Paula finally recovered her given name and her family name. Her grandmother says that when the judge's secretary handed her the new identity document,

Little Paula smiles and hugs me. I knew that Paula's identity was important for me, but I didn't have the exact dimension of what it really meant: it meant that I had her with me. The law officially recognized her presence and, beyond Paula, the existence of Monica and Claudio. They had existed and were alive and present in their daughter.

In recent years, the Association of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo announced that of the children born in illegal detention centres, up to that period (June 2008), they had been able to recover ninety grandchildren that had been seized during the military dictatorship.

One of the last of these is Sebastian, who is now twenty-nine. He was born on 27 March 1978, when his mother Adriana was detained in an illegal centre in the city of La Plata.

She had been abducted when she was five months pregnant, at the same time as Sebastian's father, Gaspar, who became one of the many

victims of the infamous ESMA (Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada [Naval Mechanics School]).

Sebastian was already a young adult when his half-sister told him that he had been “adopted”, as she was. As he considered the dates, he was curious to know whether he might have been one of the children stolen during the dictatorship. He visited the website of the Association of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and seemed to recognize his grandparents because of their physical resemblance. He contacted the Association and had a DNA test that confirmed his intuition. From the moment he learnt of his true origin and his true family name, he chose and added José as his second name, the same name his parents had chosen in case the baby were a boy; Josephine if it were a girl. From that time on, Sebastian is Sebastian José, inscribed in his parents’ desire and his true filiation.

*Considerations on filiation and nomination
in reference to the theft of children*

The repressive action that included the theft of children was neither disorganized nor random. It was the consequence of an orchestrated plan, based on the “Doctrine of National Security” and of “the internal enemy”, the objective of which was not only to make those who opposed the regime disappear, but also to punish their families, with the intention of producing a real disintegration of several generations. The theft of children and their “adoption” by families in ideological connivance with the regime and often connected to the security forces, was part of a plan of ideological “cleansing” with strong messianic characteristics. With the desire to interrupt the chain of generations, the power intended to indoctrinate these children in the “true values”, in violent denial of the ignominy and sinister character of these acts that are incompatible with any ethical value.

It is paradoxical that, after the restoration of democracy in 1983 and the trials of restitution of children to their legitimate families, some people were able to maintain that restitution was not advisable. They argued that the families that had brought these children up had become their adoptive parents and that they had brought them up with “love”; consequently, their restitution to their biological family, unknown until then, added a supplementary trauma.

It is not inapplicable to stress that aside from the crime of kidnapping children and falsification of public documents, those in power committed other, no less serious crimes, such as non-respect of the rights of these children, duly considered by the Convention on the Rights of Children, to have a name, to know their identity, and to be situated in their filiation. This power violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights approved by the United Nations, and the American Convention on Human Rights of San Jose, Costa Rica, approved in 1969. All these conventions and treaties insist on children's right to have their identity, to be registered in the name of one or both parents and to have a name of their parents' choice in the lineage of their filiation.

This subject is obviously vast and merits discussion *in extenso*. We choose to discuss the perspective that concerns the traumata caused to children and their psychic consequences, highlighting in particular the axis-line of filiation and nomination and the value acquired by true nomination when the child recovers his identity at the moment of legal restitution to his legitimate family.

The families imposed on the child by the security organisms were often participants in the infernal machine that had abducted and murdered their own parents. As the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo emphasize (Las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, 1997), we cannot speak in terms of adoption in these cases, as some people tried to do later, but of violent seizure. These children were not abandoned by their parents, but were instead torn forcefully from their legitimate families.

These are children separated from their parents, who in most cases were tortured, often in the presence of their children, who were used in these circumstances as a supplementary factor of pressure, then murdered. Those in power refused to return these children to their true families and disavowed the abduction of which they were victims.

After such a criminal act, the child is left in a situation that inflicts severe psychic damage, particularly at the level of his identity, confusion about his origins, denial of the horror on which the appropriating families thought they could build relations of affection and paternity. Like a malignant infiltrator, the traumatic effects extend over the child's entire psycho-somatic condition, exerting a deleterious influence on the child's life, with unpredictable times of latency and the ability to make their disastrous influence felt lastingly.

Restitution of the child's identity and history, as well as restitution of the child to his legitimate family, are the first steps that are necessary before there are attempts to repair the damage suffered. It is evident that the moment of restitution is traumatic for the child, but this is a structuring trauma, unlike the dissolving trauma suffered in abduction. Restitution "is a founding act based on the articulation of truth and justice". The situations of these children are "frauds and falsifications without law and without truth". Beginning with restitution,

not only are memory traces actualized, but body memories as well, because the body remembers. The body "listens", the body "sees", the body "says", and in the reunion with the universe of the original family, the body "knows". This body intervenes as an organizer that permits access to the constitutive foundations. [Equipo Interdisciplinario, *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo*, 1988, p. 14]

This is a body where the unsymbolized traumatic remains inscribed in children who did not yet have the use of verbal language. The experience of children born when their mothers were illegally detained, having been abducted immediately or sometimes a few hours after their birth, led us to think that there may be a psychic trace in the child previous to birth, denominated "pre-primary identification" (Bianchedi, Bianchedi, Braun, Pelento, & Puget, 1989). In traumatic situations like those that we have been describing, it remains "split off, enclosed or cloistered inside a shell without being destroyed or drowned". Restitution operates as a "permeabiliser of this protective layer of the cyst and liberates the potential of identification carried in its nucleus".

For these authors, restitution generates a change in the judgements of existence and attribution that were subverted at the time of their abduction: Who am I? Where do I come from? Who desires my well-being? The child must go through "dis-identification" from the false parental images as a first step towards acceptance of his true identity. This cannot be done without the re-semanticization of experiences experienced. The authentic narration of what really happened contributes clarification to the silenced signifiers that remained suspended and awaiting symbolizing representations.

As Lo Giudice writes (2005), the usurpation and its traces produced in these children by their abduction cannot be erased magically;

however, it is possible to open a space for the construction of a historical truth to prevent the murder of memory. These children often face a struggle between a “compelling memory that forbids forgetting” and a “forbidden memory that compels forgetting”.

As Legendre (1985) points out, the institutional bond that family life assumes “is the work of genealogy, which sustains the thread of life and reminds the subject of his assignation” (p. 56) to a given place. The child cannot create this place for himself, since it needs to be constructed by those who go before him. Like a void that waits to be filled, this place is given him in the first place by his parents, in the imaginary that precedes his birth. In this sense, and as Legendre stresses, a family album is different from a book of photos. It institutes order through the generations. The objective of this succession of places is the creation of otherness, the main goal of the family, as it avoids the indiscriminate magma that would be produced otherwise. The family institution must validate a genealogy that puts the places into order, that is to say, into the order of the sexes and the generations.

The subject, as Legendre remarks, is trans-individual, since he is defined by legal and psychological categories of genealogy. His identity is pre-figured by those that precede him. Through them, the child finds an anchor point in order to occupy his place in the genealogy and construct his future. The parental function serves, of course, as a guideline in the genealogical device, and this is the lack that is cruelly inscribed in these abducted children. It is in no way comparable to real adoption. In the latter, the parental function is fully assumed in an adoptive genealogy that does not lose significance, since it is constructed on the basis of respect for identity and the truth about the origins. The paternal function, whether biological or adoptive, must be exercised as the carrier of a symbolic Law that transcends the carrier and in accordance with which the paternal function submits to the same symbolic Law that it carries. This is what it transmits to the children: acceptance of symbolic castration and the lack that every human being must face. For this reason, genealogy exceeds the father–mother–child trio and includes society as a whole.

Quite the opposite, these abductors cannot possibly assume a parental function, since it was buried together with the bodies of the murdered parents. The parental function cannot be based on a crime of lese humanity, constructed with lies and travesties of truth. As highlighted by Ulloa (1985), in these conditions, the child is debased to the

condition of a “fetish-object” appropriated as war booty in a sham of parenthood.

Legendre (1985) reminds us that

the family is not a juxtaposition of individuals; it is an entity which consequently has places with structural value and names and is organised legally. The family entity is a stage production instituting the representation of the Oedipus. [p. 83]

In order to function, the institutional aspect of the family needs to impose limits on drive discharge. However, this setting of limits, as Legendre states, “puts the system of prohibitions onto the legal scene”.

When abductors seize children, they do not carry out a symbolic act of adoption by appropriating them, but instead make them objects of their drives of mastery, which are displayed in that context. They are positioned in the register of the drive without limits. This appropriation of the child as a part object at the service of deadly omnipotence involves a crime of the soul. Rather than acting as a carrier of symbolic Law, the abductor defies it and pretends to be the enforcer of the Law. The sinister effect is the generation of subversion of the Law, since it secretes pus in the form of putrid law. As Legendre highlights, we cannot enounce “I want” without reference to the Law. The Law wants before we do. Quite the opposite, the abductor says, “the Law exists for me *if I want*” . . . Thus, he imposes himself as the absolute referent. It is doubtless no mere coincidence that Commissioner Lavallen’s neighbour was afraid, considering the relational mode she observed, of an incestuous passage into act by the abductor in the future, when Paula reached puberty.

Actually, states Legendre, the institution of genealogy consists in regulating incestuous desires in relation to the Law by placing limits on incest. Institutional systems are constructed on this basis, as they articulate the prohibited with symbolic Law. This is the Law written in capital letters: “in order to stipulate that it is a question of the limit on absolute Desire, the desire of impossible identity”.

Like a hollow, the place the child comes to occupy is a place created by the discourse of the parents that prefigure his arrival. The choice of the name, as we have been saying throughout this book, is a crucial moment of the child’s symbolic inclusion in parental desire

and in a family lineage. Like a stamp of origin, the name carries the trace that returns it eternally to the desiring discourse of the parents that give him existence even before birth.

The tool of the metamorphosis that ensures the subject's inclusion in the categories of genealogy is the naming, states Legendre. As he explains it in this respect: "naming, this technique to civilize the subject", which serves to construct otherness.

In the process of returning their identity to "disappeared-appropriated" children, we were able to see to what point the recovery of their names was essential. This recovery of their names and family names seems obvious for the first children recovered, who were very small. But it is, too, for example, in the case of Sebastian, who, in spite of his twenty-nine years, feels the need for, and chooses to add to the name with which he had lived until then, the name José, which had been chosen by his parents. He not only recovers his family name, by virtue of which he is inscribed in a true lineage, but also the name José, which facilitates his reunion with his parents' desire for life.

The importance of the given name is particularly moving and eloquent in the story of Paula, Elsa's granddaughter, who, at the moment of restitution, is initially furious at the announcement of such a radical change in her life and refuses to believe who her real parents were. Against all hope, it was enough for her grandmother to murmur her father's name, Claudio, in her ear the same way she used to say it when she was a baby, "Calio", for Paula to break into disconsolate tears. The power of the phonic reminiscence of her father's name operated as a certainty of her true origin, even though she was not yet two years old at the time of the abduction.

From the beginning of psychic life, mental capacities are exerted first on acoustic material. The sound space, states Anzieu (1976), is the first psychic space, a space that is protected but not hermetically closed. The sound mirror is previous to the visual mirror. The Self is formed as a sound envelope in the experience of the bath of sound, concomitant with the experience of breast-feeding. This sound bath prefigures the skin-ego, its double face orientated inwards and outwards, since the sound envelope is composed of sounds emitted alternately by the environment and by the baby.

Thus, we perceive the significance that the sonority of her father's name acquired for Paula, its value as condensation of a whole familial symbolical history. The mere enunciation of the father's name, its

material sound, was enough for new fragrances to bloom. Like the chords of a primitive instrument, like enchanted music, Paula is suddenly put into contact with her origin that was encysted in the form of sound. The sound of the name brings her father's body into her presence. At the instant Paula hears her father's name, spoken the same way she used to say it when she was tiny, something swings from uncertainty and dissolving traumatic confusion towards the possible initiation of mourning on the basis of the truth of her legitimate filiation. This name, a sound reminiscence, the source of constituting emotion, confirms her in the certainty of her filiation. From Paula Luisa Lavallen, the child kidnapped by Commissioner Lavallen, she is again Paula Eva Logares, the desired child, inserted in a genealogy, the daughter of her parents Monica and Claudio Logares and granddaughter of Elsa.

From 1976 to 2008, thirty-two years have passed since the *coup d'état*, and the children appropriated at that time are now young adults. The ways to search for the truth take other roads before the law. In February of 2008 (*Página 12*), the first lawsuit was presented in which the young woman appropriated during the dictatorship sued the couple that brought her up as if she were theirs. Maria Eugenia Sampallo Barragan lived until 2001 without knowing her true identity. At the time of the trial she was thirty, although she cannot know the exact date or the place where she was born in captivity. Her appropriators had given her different versions of her "adoption", without sparing aggression. For example, on one occasion her appropriator shouted, "You're an ingrate, if it weren't for me, you'd have ended up in a ditch!", a sentence whose sordidness she fully understood only many years later. Maria Eugenia knows now that she is the daughter of two disappeared persons, Mirta Mabel Barragan and Leonardo Sampallo. Mirta was six months pregnant when they seized her with her son Gustavo, three, and her partner Leonardo. The boy was left in a police station, from which his father rescued him, and for a long time, now with his relatives, he spoke of the "little brother" his mamma was expecting. This was crucial because it informed the family that a boy or girl had perhaps been born in captivity. About Mirta and Leonardo, it is now known that they were in the "El Atletico" ["The Athletic"] clandestine detention centre and then in "El Banco" ["The Bank"]. Mirta was removed from there in February to give birth; it is possible that Maria Eugenia was born in the Military

Hospital. From that moment, nothing more is known about her parents. The Gomez-Rivas couple received the baby girl three months later through a negotiation with the military officer Berthier, a friend of the appropriator.

Maria Eugenia decided to sue her appropriators after they, following their trial, opened a counter-suit in which they accused her and all the witnesses of lying: a great example of the degree of perverse denial and disavowal that reigned during the dictatorship, the ramifications of which still persist against all evidence. At the moment these lines are being written, the oral trial continues, but it is interesting to highlight the importance it may have for the young woman appropriated if the guilty parties are sanctioned, not now as a way to restore the truth of her filiation, confirmed by DNA tests, but to liberate her from the de-structuring traumata of her own perceptions, having grown up in the maddening confusion of an alienating lie whose deleterious effects may still be manifested despite the time that has passed. In this sense, beyond the condemnation of a crime, it is important to underscore that the judicial scene may acquire symbolic value that may soothe the broken psyche of this young woman appropriated shortly after her birth.

The given name in psychoanalytical clinical work

The desire to have a child may be open to all that is unpredictable and unknown in each future being. But this desire may also crystallize towards a certain child and sometimes acquire an excessively definite character. These two types of desire do not necessarily coincide. The desire to have a child is the desire to continue the chain of generations, to call up life, to share with a partner a bond of love that is open to the being that will come, to whom his parents may give the gift of their generous love. The desire to have a certain child perhaps assumes a more egotistical form, in which each of the parents seeks to project himself into the unborn child in the hope that the child will cure his own narcissistic wounds. If the shape of this imaginary child is too precise, there is a risk of misunderstandings, and the real child will find it difficult to affirm his own subjectivity, being compelled to satisfy expectations for the parents' dream child. The mould will, therefore, be too confining and will become asphyxiating. A child has an advantage when his parents desire his birth in the airiest way possible, open to the myriad facets of the child's forever evolving singularity.

The parents enounce the child even before his conception: their discourse concerning the child gradually creates a place that will be

offered to him. This discourse precedes the child and lends him imaginary existence previous to his real existence. The child inaugurates a sketched-out subjectivity at the moment this fantasy is materialized in a name. We do not choose the child's name or names at first. It is interesting to also consider all those fancied names, whose existence is temporary, as if awaiting a choice, and are examined and put aside before the name or names finally chosen are kept. These names may be chosen by the parents alone or may be suggested by grandparents, siblings, or other members of the family; sometimes even by the community, as we have seen in some African tribes. However it may occur, the name is always at the crossroads of parental signifiers.

In this choice that involves both conscious and unconscious desire, the familial repressed is never absent. It is difficult to ascertain the determining reasons with precision. How could it be otherwise? We never measure the unconscious length of our choices. This name may take us back to the image of a dear grandparent, an aunt or uncle who pampered us, a dead child whose mourning was never worked through and we would like to bring back to life, the name of an old love, a childhood friend, a literary character, a piece of music, a sports idol, a historical personage, etc.

The roots of the name reach far back in time. In the family genealogical tree, each name is both a root and a new shoot that springs from the soil of the ancestors and reappears in the verdure of the leaves of new generations.

We have seen how important the name is for transmission of the parents' desire, a generational anchor, even though it alienates at the beginning. The parents' expectations—of which the name assigned the child is in part a depositary—cannot avoid having a violence of meaning, since the child is attributed a name that precedes his own subjectivity. However, this primary violence is necessary for the foundation of the subject, as Aulagnier proposes (2001). The child is spoken of long before he can speak for himself. He is constituted by desires that are not his own but which, none the less, form a scaffolding for the structure of his future identity. They remain there in filigree, waiting for the child to take possession of his desire and his name.

As soon as parental fantasms find anchorage in the child's name or names, even before his birth, they draw an indelible sketch of his subjectivity. The name has a pre-forming and inductive effect on this

identity, the necessary basis of his identity. What the parents desire is incarnated in the child's name; violence that truly pre-forms the child's identity from the outside but is necessary because it is the original and essential constitutive element of his psyche. It is the beginning of a meaning, that is to say, of a search for meaning that will never be obliterated, since the child later makes it his own in the course of an incessant search.

In the sixteenth century, as Barthes recalls (1981), Montaigne wrote: "This is I" and not "I am this", which is perfectly legitimate, since the subject is constituted by everything that comes to him and by everything he does. The subject is not really himself until the end, as a product, Barthes concludes.

It is only in psychotic fantasies of self-engenderment that the primal scene of parental coitus is negated; consequently, the name cannot be experienced as the product of this union that is both a biological joining of the couple and of fantasms of the parental lineages.

Therefore, we stress that the child is first of all spoken and then named in the "fantasmaticization" that precedes his birth and finally, after his birth and sometimes before, called into interlocation through an interplay of reciprocal demands. The name, the ego's envelope of sound, surrounds the child and protects his ego from its initial fragility, and this mirror of sound anticipates sought-for unity. It is in the mother's gaze that the child recognizes himself.

What does the baby see when he turns his eyes to his mother's face? Generally, he sees himself, Winnicott (1971, p. 111) answers. To this importance of the sense of sight in mother-infant interchange, we may add the sense of hearing; in effect, the enunciation of the name intervenes with an interpellating function as a mirror of sound. Mental capacities are exercised at first on acoustic material and the ego is formed as a sound envelope in the experience of the bath of sound, concomitant to that of nursing (Anzieu, 1976). It is in the enunciation of my name that I exist as a subject. I exist in a reflection that is both visual in my mother's gaze and auditory in the sound of her voice that calls me. This occurs also in children who have some kind of sensory deficit, in whom a deficit of sight or hearing finds compensation in tactile and olfactory sensoriality.

The wild boy of Aveyron probably suffered the lack of this visual and sound and even tactile mirror. But even before reaching this

extreme, certain deficiencies may be produced when the mother is depressive, as Green (1980) so aptly pointed out in his article on the “dead mother”, this term denotes a mother who is apparently present but is empty inside because of the depression that affects her. She is a mother who cannot contain the child’s psychic life, since she has no capacity for the “reverie” described by Bion.

Simultaneous interpellation by the father enables the child to include the third, thanks to which he accesses symbolic Law. It is difficult to construct psychic life without this interplay with parents or substitutes that exercise this function.

In the subtle interchange of gazes and in the inflections and tones of voice, the child perceives the authenticity of affective interchange with his parents. It is through the enunciation that interpellates his name that the child realizes the nuances of an expression of love, a reproach, a request, an order, a question, recognition, or happiness.

When a psychopathological symptom is produced in childhood, the name may acquire particular value. It operates as if it were next to an intersection of roads where the symptom is declared and asks us questions.

In the following descriptions, which are fragments of discourses of patients in psychotherapy, we will try to transmit the vivacity of clinical work with those fantasms of the patient’s history that inhabit the inner folds of the name in the form of a symptom.

*Gilles, between the name of the genitor
and the name of the father*

Gilles was thirty-four years old when he came to my office with problems of irritability, insomnia, and a diffuse malaise that paralysed him in his professional life. A drug addict, he struggled against a long-standing cocaine dependency. Although he is not unaware of the damage it causes him, it is impossible for him to stop it completely and he consumes several times a week. A merchant, he is a partner in a men’s clothing business, an area related to his problems. Although he has gained recognition in the commercial milieu in the city where he lives, he is unable to figure formally in the registry of the business of which he is a partner, since he was inhibited legally, having signed cheques without funds a few years previously, which led to a criminal

conviction. For this reason, the business was registered in his partner's name, even though he had fewer qualifications in this area. Quite clever at negotiations with the famous fashion designers with whom he was the privileged interlocutor, Gilles was paradoxically compelled to ask his partner to sign all the cheques and to take legal responsibility for the firm. On paper, Gilles was only an employee of the company, when in practice it was he who contributed the knowledge and talent that guaranteed its success.

Since his parents' separation, Gilles had grown up surrounded or, one could say, almost enveloped, by women: his mother in the first place, but also his maternal grandmother and three elder sisters. His parents had separated when he was very small, and relations between Gilles and his father had been distant. He reached adolescence almost without any masculine referent and at that time he, unlike his sisters, felt a need to try to be closer to his father, a father who had always been forbidden him by his mother, in search of masculine imagoes. After much searching for information, he managed to locate him in the same city where he lives and anxiously generates a meeting. Having finally been able to find his biological father fascinated him and, in search of a model of masculine identification he had never had, Gilles leapt into a whirlwind of wanting to imitate him at any cost; a desperate way to provide himself with a shell of masculine identity in reaction to his anxieties about his sexual identity. The chance discovery that his father had suffered a criminal conviction leading to several years in jail did not, however, shake his interest in this encounter in his vertiginous search for identity. A compulsive gambler, his father regularly visited casinos and illegal gambling establishments; to "celebrate" their reunion, he took his son with him and initiated him not only in gambling, but also in cocaine consumption. Thus, Gilles at eighteen, in dramatic identification with his biological father, became a gambler and a drug addict like him, with him.

His father also initiated Gilles, under pressure, to commit commercial crimes in complicity with him. On one occasion, his father compelled him to sign cheques without funds, which later led to the criminal conviction and commercial inhibition mentioned at the beginning of this vignette.

"Condemned" is the sensation that runs through Gilles's youth, condemned to lack of a father and condemned to continue, in his desperate search for masculine identity, to identify with a father who

had never occupied the place of a symbolic father. Gilles had sought a father and did not realize that he had found only his biological genitor, a professional swindler, but above all a swindler of filial affects.

At the time of our first interview, Gilles maintained a relationship of distrust towards his father and was not unaware that it was best for him to stay away from him, but had not been able to do so. He continued to listen to his genitor's deadly siren songs.

It is not my intention to narrate all of Gilles's psychotherapy or the variety of its transference movements. I will highlight only one aspect in connection with his name, which seemed very eloquent since it acquired particular value for his therapeutic process. One day he told me what had happened when he went to renew his identity document. When he filled out the form, he realized that he had written Gilles Luc and not Gilles Roger, as he was really named. Roger was both his father's name and his own second name. Therefore, instead of writing Roger, the name he shared with his father, he wrote Luc, the given name of his maternal grandfather. Gilles had never met this grandfather, who died before he was born, but the stories about his grandfather that he heard when he was small were still quite vivid in his memory. He had the image of someone very upright, with traditional values and especially a taste for work and honesty. Through this slip of the pen or memory, I had the impression that Gilles was trying to find another close masculine referent that would offer him a more protective possibility of identity, or, at least, one that would not place him at risk. He then discovered that his maternal grandfather could become a figure that would function in his imaginary as a forebear who would provide an identification that would be different from his own genitor, a tutelary reference that would protect him from his father's and his own destructivity. This moment in his therapy and all the work done around names had a mutative effect on Gilles.

He gradually began to clear up his legal and commercial situation. He paid the debts that had caused the commercial difficulties and was finally able to become a legal partner of his business firm. He no longer needed another to represent him, in the process of which his own name disappeared behind another's name. His slip involving the familial names and his subsequent move away from an irresistible, deadly identification with a biological genitor who never assumed a real paternal function were quite revealing of all that was operating in his own psychic dynamics throughout his psychotherapy.

From the moment he glimpsed possibilities of masculine identity other than resembling his genitor, he became aware of his quality as a symbolic orphan and his need to mourn a father. He was able to dis-identify from a lethal genitor and to mourn the father he had never found after all. His biological genitor had not offered him a paternal function, but only a mockery of it. Gilles's unconscious transmutation of the names revealed his desire to dis-identify from an essentially lethal genitor. Through the transference relation, he discovered other possible models of masculine identification. The slip of the pen regarding the names when he wrote them on the form to renew his identity document, a slip that revealed his desire to be named after his maternal grandfather, is inscribed in a movement of masculine identification in harmony with respect for the law. However, it is primarily a question of his desire to be part of a symbolic Law, a source both of prohibition and permission for his masculine identity. In other terms, to wear new men's clothes, other possible envelopes for his vacillating identity, materialized in the fact that the men's clothing he sells carries his own name, now incorporated in the firm that sells it. In other words, his signature is inscribed in male clothing that he can inhabit without destroying himself.

Dominique and incest in the folds of the name, or ig-nominy

A telephone call to my office: I hear a woman's voice with a surprising distance between facility of expression and a small child's intonation. At the interview we arranged when she requested an appointment, I meet a woman (I will call her Dominique) approximately forty years of age, a descendant of the French high bourgeoisie. She is very elegantly dressed in clothing that totally envelops her. A brilliant lawyer, her professional life is crowned with success. Her affective life is intense, although Dominique has never shared her everyday life with a man, since she prefers to create relationships in which she controls the distances. Struggling against a depression that could affect her professional activity, she chooses to come to see me with the knowledge that, at that time, I was in charge of a Centre of Psychotherapy (Centre Médico-psycho-pédagogique in Paris) specializing in problems of physical and sexual violence. We could say that she orientated her initiative with the idea that my institutional function, related

to these problems, would approximate me to a narrative that had until then been unspeakable. In the development of the cure, I understood that, in her imaginary, my work in this field and the many narratives of incest I had listened to had made me an interlocutor who would be able to understand her. Her expectation was that my listening would enable her to break out of the traumatic cystic cloister whose unrelenting enclosure confined her to desperate solitude. Apart from the filter of my institutional experience, my function as a psychoanalyst, someone who would listen to her, would enable me to consider the real of her perception in the chain of her fantasmatic experience. In this type of repeatedly suffered damage, perceptual repudiation is frequently added to the trauma of incest itself. The abusing father commits the act of incest while at the same time he tells the child that it is not incest, a statement whose status oscillates between denial and disavowal. This perceptual repudiation is triply maddening, since it attacks the child's perception and leaves her in a state of psychic breakdown because of the incestuous act, with the confusion of not being able to trust her own perceptions and finally, also in a state of orphanhood because of the loss of her father, since in the incestuous act the paternal function is murdered. Only a vague genitor is left.

When she was twelve, Dominique had been deflowered by her father. Arguing his position as a physician, the incestuous act was perpetrated in his office, the penetration done digitally in the name of medicine and of the necessary knowledge a physician must have of the other's body, even his daughter's. This scene was repeated for years until Dominique was compelled to leave her family home at eighteen, the only way she could survive psychically.

Her father occupied a place of unquestionable power among his colleagues and in his family. Whenever this "dedicated" clinician came near his daughter's body, Dominique felt, as her father ran his hands over her body, that he meant to appropriate her, empty her of her contents, make her his own and vampirize her budding femininity: as if he demanded her immobile offering in the name of supposed filial love, frozen in a repetitive scenario.

Dominique's genitor could go into violent fits of rage at the slightest movement towards autonomy on her part, and, consequently, Dominique had been unable to make any friendships with girls or boys of her own age. On the rare occasions when Dominique tried to confide in her mother to tell her about what was happening, she

encountered only a wall without any capacity to listen. The same happened with one of her sisters, the only person in her family she had had the courage to tell, but the reaction she received was not commensurate with the seriousness of what she had told her sister.

Her nascent femininity “vampirized”, her perceptions repudiated, her thinking attacked, Dominique remained silent for twenty-two years until she was able to “say it” to someone outside her family. She chose to do it in a therapeutic setting.

Since she belonged to an endogamous medical family, my own medical training anguished her, although my condition as a foreigner relieved her. One day, evoking the children her father had had in a second marriage, Dominique told me of the disgust she felt whenever her father, apparently committing a slip of the tongue, addressed her half-sister by her own name, calling her Dominique, as if he confounded her sister with her. I tell her that she probably experiences this as if her father, by possessing the name, possessed her and seized her body as he had also done with her. Then and only then, Dominique tells me that the name by which I know her is not her own, and that only after my intervention did she understand why she had this need to be furtive. This meant that for months she presented herself with a false identity.

We have already had occasion to describe how the name seals the child’s body indelibly, giving him the right to be recognized in his singular identity. The name, like the skin, contains the child and indicates the boundary between his body and the other’s. Hiding her name, making it a travesty, and dressing in enveloping clothing was Dominique’s way of protecting her body from domination by others, a last barrier around her skin-ego, like a wall behind which her femininity would be protected from any incestuous vampirization. Much later, thanks to confidence acquired in positive transference that was only possible to build up very gradually, Dominique finally told me her real name. An important detail: her real name was bisexual. (In effect, like Dominique, the fictitious name chosen to present this patient, in French some names are written or pronounced in the same way for females and males without indication of gender difference.) Strangely . . . or not, Dominique’s name was the same as her father’s, a fantasm of hermaphroditism that is so common in incestuous fathers, sealed in the case of Dominique and her father by the consubstantiation of their two identical names.

Noelia in her ontological affirmation

Noelia is hospitalized in the Children's and Juvenile Psychiatry Department of the Buenos Aires Children's Hospital due to sudden weight loss and self-induced vomiting. Her situation is presented to me in the frame of a supervision of the hospitalization team in psychopathology in this hospital, where I work regularly.

At the time of the consultation, Noelia is twelve years old; her family comprises two sisters, Veronica, twenty-two, and Elena, nineteen, her mother, Maria, forty-nine, and her father, Pedro, fifty-nine. The three girls were adopted from different biological parents. However, Noelia's singularity in comparison to her sisters was not negligible. Her biological mother had died when Noelia was twenty-six days old as a consequence of leukaemia diagnosed before her pregnancy. This means that the pregnancy had increased her mother's risk of death, a mother whose name she did not know. An important detail: Noelia, who had been adopted legally, had a biological father who was her adoptive mother's brother. I describe this as a "detail" only because the adoptive mother had provided this information as a minor, almost accessory, fact of Noelia's life.

Noelia had never asked her biological mother's name and a thick, dark blanket covered her family history. The family had a very close relationship with Jorge, Noelia's biological father, who sometimes came to visit them. When he came, Noelia called him uncle or simply Jorge, never daddy, since she supposedly knew nothing of their real relation.

When she was born it was her Aunt Maria rather than her biological mother who proposed a name for her: Deborah. Her biological mother wanted to call her Monica. Finally, her biological father registered her in the Civil Registry as Noelia on his own decision.

Since she was very small, Noelia had suffered spontaneous vomiting fairly regularly and several times required hospitalization due to dehydration. At nine, she had her first menstruation. This precociousness did not help her but only added anxieties to a body and mind too immature for her age. When she was ten, she suffered pharmacological intoxication, probably a consequence of a thinly disguised suicide attempt but in any case never recognized as such by her family.

In the course of her hospitalization, Noelia had a recurrent nightmare: "I escape from the ward, go up to the terrace and throw myself

into the void." The pregnant imagery of this dream and her dark thoughts cause the team to fear that she might attempt suicide. Noelia is followed very closely by the hospitalization team, both in individual sessions and in family sessions.

It was difficult for the medical team to discern and reconstruct the family history. Noelia is not in any condition to tell a story, much less her own history: she babbles only small, diverse bits and pieces of history, unrepresentable puzzles that she is unable to put together. Brought up in a familial magma where places are confused, she is unable to fully occupy her own.

Noelia calls her biological father "uncle", does not know the name of her biological mother; her adoptive father is quite distant from the very close relationship between his wife Maria and his brother-in-law Jorge. Fantasies of incest occupy all the fantasmatic interstices, not because it had occurred in acts but because Noelia is unable to place herself between her adoptive father, her adoptive mother, her "uncle-father" and her biological mother, murdered in the girl's imaginary by this "incestuous" couple. For this reason, it was no surprise to learn that Maria had been regularly subjected to incest by her own father when she was an adolescent.

Noelia lived in an incestual atmosphere (a neologism coined by Racamier to describe an atmosphere propitious for incest, even though an incestuous act has not yet occurred) in which a confusion of places and generations was constantly floating. She tells the medical team the story of a rape of which she says, very vaguely, she was the victim. A gynaecological examination was negative, disproving penetration, and yet doubts persist regarding a story whose shape is undefined. Noelia, who presents a structure with a hysterical base, has mythomaniac tendencies, but, given the characteristics of her intimate environment, it is not appropriate to entirely rule out an intra- or extra-familial act of incest. Noelia enounces her complaint with respect to this familial magma, "both families demand that I accept the situation", as if the family group implicitly asked Noelia to accept confusion in the service of incestuous jouissance.

Maria even goes as far as to tell her one day, during a family session, speaking about Noelia, "my brother and I know that we have a child in common."

Noelia has another dream with content similar to the former dreams: "They touch my shoulder, I turn around, there is a blinding

light. My mother tells me that I need to have strength to go on, that she was going to have other nephews, and then I throw myself off." About the mother in the dream, she says that she has the feeling it was her biological mother, the first representation of her that she has. The nephews in the dream are her biological brothers. We again see her attraction to the void, which the medical team fears so greatly, a stage representation and spatial projection of her own inner void. But also a desperate attempt to meet a mother again, probably her biological mother: an attraction to finding her once again in what lies beyond the leap into the abyss.

In spite of her age, Noelia had had two "boyfriends"; sexual precociousness and eroticization that covered up a lack of affection. Aside from her eating disorders, obviously quite severe, Noelia was at risk of suffering sexual violence. The eroticization was a mask to veil her feeling of orphanhood and to cover over the void of an empty shell of identity.

Noelia, an uncommon name in Argentina, sounds like "not her" in Spanish. In the choice of her name, her father had marked her with the impossibility of identity to the point that only in non-being could she paradoxically approach her original identity. In the gaze of her biological father, a gaze that her adoptive parents had been unable to modify, she was condemned to an ontological void. It is difficult to know what her biological father felt at the moment his daughter was born, which announced both life and death (of Noelia's mother). We also do not know what supplement of *jouissance* it gave him to "have a daughter in common with his sister".

Noelia was at the centre of incestuous crossroads as the "daughter" of this brother-sister couple, since the incestuous act consists not only in having sexual relations with members of the family. Incest, according to Legendre (1985), is the attempt to occupy all the places at the same time: to be father, mother, uncle, aunt, daughter, son, etc. Genealogy dictates rules and places that refer to subjects and not simply bodies counted. Genealogy, as Legendre points out, may produce otherness only when the successive places are recognized without confusion. Genealogy is translated into a name that situates the subject in the perspective of instituting symbolization. For Legendre, incest consists in the following: one no longer knows who is who, since unconsciously all places are equivalent. Filial order is a founding principle with an institutional essence that permits the *who's who?*

The definition of different places is the founding principle that enables the subject to be constituted and create his identity.

Noelia was walled up in this family that functioned incestuously: she could not ask and she could not even ask herself. There was no place in this family for Noelia: forced to remain locked in non-identity formed by an announcement when she was born of the ontological denial of her existence contained in her name.

Noelia will only be able to preserve her name in a vital way to the extent that she is able to make it her own and in some way become “yes-her”. But to do this she will need long and deep psychotherapeutic work in order to allow this brother–sister couple to renounce the lethal *jouissance* inherent to incestuous *jouissance*, *incest-tueuse* [in French, incest-murderer], soul murder, to enable them to offer Noelia a place with a clearly defined shape: a base for her assumption as a subject.

Eurydice’s voice and the sound mirror of her name

Clinical work with the patient I will call Eurydice took place in the frame of an institution for psychological assistance by telephone (SOS Famille en Péril, Paris) whose objective is the prevention of domestic violence towards children in the city of Paris, which I co-ordinated for several years. To facilitate the reader’s understanding of the context of this clinical approach, I will briefly describe the modality of institutional work. The service, whose name is “SOS Family in Danger”, is part of a non-profit association that provides many services and actions to protect children “in danger”. Created in 1984 by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, SOS was the first telephone assistance service for the purpose of preventing abuse of children and adolescents in France, and since 1987 has been financed by the Municipality of Paris.

This service provides psychological assistance by telephone, orientated mainly towards parents, but also to children and adolescents, or the family milieu in a broader sense, that are going through a situation of family crisis with risks of physical and/or sexual abuse of minors. The telephone interviews may be singular or multiple and may be spaced out or frequent and regular, by telephone only, or followed by traditional face-to-face interviews.

The modality and frequency of psychological assistance depends on the demand and type of relationship that can be created. There is no charge for consultations and the person asking for help may do it anonymously.

This telephone service functions every day from Monday through Friday from 8.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. It is staffed only by psychologists with psychoanalytic training. The persons soliciting assistance are offered the opportunity to call again or to make an appointment with the same psychologist with whom they established the first contact.

Experience shows that parents who solicit psychological assistance are not at the extreme limits of abuse, but that if they are not offered assistance the family situation may worsen considerably.

The telephone interview, with its option of anonymity, is not, of course, the only type of help proposed. It is part of a vast network of transdisciplinary actions in collaboration with social workers, educators, paediatricians, substitute families, lawyers, juvenile judges, etc., whose aim is to implement a plan of assistance for families; physical and/or sexual abuse needs a multiplicity of different but complementary services as well as co-ordination of actions that address the psychological, social, and legal aspects of their problems.

A significant number of persons who telephone prefer to preserve their anonymity. This is not surprising, since most calls concern intra-familial violence. Many violent parents cannot bring themselves to consult a specialist spontaneously to talk about the deep disquiet that is flooding them.

This impossibility that causes them to avoid traditional consultations does not prevent a certain number of parents from asking for help anonymously.

Is this due only to fear of the legal consequences to which they are exposed if they consult in their own name? Our clinical practice led us to propose the hypothesis that the need of violent parents to preserve their anonymity derives especially from their particular mode of psychic functioning.

The chaotic experience of their own body and the attempt to abolish all infantile drive expression compels violent parents to avoid the body-to-body contact of a traditional consultation that might dissolve them. By circumventing the face-to-face situation of an interview, they save their body from a gaze that for them is the same as touching.

Feelings of shame invade them and lead them to avoid the other's eyes, perceived as disapproving and dangerous. By telephone, the absence of the gaze and the use of the voice as the substrate of communication allow them to overcome this persecutory experience, and offers the person who calls a sound envelope, an envelope that he longs for, of which his narcissistic defect deprives him.

Although the telephone call remains anonymous from the perspective of his social identification, the singularity of the person who calls does not, however, disappear. The modulations of the voice, its roughness or its melody, allow the person calling to speak about his suffering in a very intimate way since the voice—like a “sound-print”—represents his being.

The objective is to offer violent, potentially abusive parents a substrate of communication—by telephone and anonymous—and a sound container for their narcissistic wounds, to enable them to establish a bearable therapeutic relation.

The psychopathology of a large number of violent parents, aside from the concomitant psychiatric classification, develops around a nucleus of severely disturbed narcissism that prevents them from establishing an appropriate distance in relation to others. Presence is experienced as intrusion and absence as an abysmal void.

Precarious in its function as a protective screen from the outside and external aggressions, the psychic skin is equally unable to protect them from their drive motions. In interchange with others, they fear either fragmentation or liquefaction. The psychic skin of violent parents is a perforated envelope through which the other may invade them and dispossess them of themselves.

How do we establish a relation with someone who experiences all relations with others as dissolving his own narcissistic armour? How do we overcome this paradox? Perhaps the continuity of the relation established with violent parents depends on a thin line . . . and I would say . . . sometimes a telephone line.

A woman I will call Eurydice, as I proposed above (in allusion to the woman in the myth liberated from hell for the first time by a voice, Orpheus's voice), contacts our service. At that moment she is thirty-two years old, has a child of three, and is four months pregnant. Her call was motivated by her fear of being excessively violent with her son. Although her violence towards her son had been manifested before, it had increased alarmingly since the outset of her pregnancy.

Her own mother had “gone mad”, she said, and was hospitalized when her younger sister was born. Identifying with her mother, she was afraid she would go mad herself at the moment of the delivery.

In the beginning she called at long intervals and talked to different members of the team at random, depending on the times of her calls.

She was perceived to be the same person afterwards, during the weekly meeting at which contents of calls were discussed. Eurydice had always addressed each of the professionals who had listened to her as if it were the first call, as if she were a different person in each call. She expressed herself in a monotonous, mechanical voice devoid of emotion. Her story was reduced to a merely narrative flow of her experiences and worries.

Later, she began to present herself in terms of her problem: “I am the person who is pregnant and is afraid she might beat her three-year-old son”, etc. However, on one occasion she was able to speak her name to a female psychologist.

One day, she calls at a time when she thought she would find a psychologist of Brazilian origin who is part of the team and whom she recognized by her accent. The following dialogue ensued:

E: Ah, you’re not the Brazilian psychologist.

Psychologist: No.

E: Ah! Excuse me, I don’t recognize voices.

Psychologist: But aren’t you Eurydice? Haven’t you called other times?

E: (with an expression of surprise and joy in her voice) I didn’t think you could remember my name, that what I said might be of any importance.

For Eurydice, this group recognition of her identity meant more than social recognition: it was recognition that it was she who suffered, she in her human unity and not in the fragmentation of split-off aspects of her personality, stripped of life, reduced to a purely material enunciation and then projected into the different members of the team.

Until then, Eurydice had produced diverse, invariant statements, independent of the situation and the interlocutor. From the moment she felt recognized, thanks to this “narcissizing” sound mirror, she conceived herself as capable of an act of enunciation and able to introduce her being into her word act.

From that day on, she was able to speak in her own name, and a tenuous relation began to form with the psychologist who had recognized her; from then on she called her regularly on the days she was available. The recognition she felt, based on the recognition of her voice and her name, occurred one or two months before she gave birth to a baby girl.

Around the time of her delivery, she spoke a lot about her mother and about the violence she herself had suffered when she was small, when her mother used to beat her violently and lock her in the basement.

When her mother was hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital, Eurydice was eight and was brought up by a godmother and a father who also used physical violence on her.

But what had anguished her most when she was small had not been the fact that her father beat her but his concomitant gaze, experienced as transgressive: "he had a disquieting gaze, full of desire, strange", Eurydice complained.

The issue of the gaze was a recurrent theme in the course of the calls. Eurydice fears people's gaze and judgement. She immediately feels invaded and observed by her neighbours; her universe moves in a paranoid atmosphere.

Speaking of her mother, she had said, "It's not the beatings that hurt me the most but my mother's expression while she was hitting me."

Eurydice's calls, regular for two years, were not made at the same hour and had no pre-established duration. However, they were addressed to the same psychologist on the days she was available.

Although the setting hangs on a thin line, as we said before, this does not mean that it does not exist.

During the call an implicit agreement is reached not to pass into act, as well as a reciprocal adjustment to not seeing or being looked at, the exclusiveness of verbal telephone communication, which is added to the acceptance of social anonymity, if this option is the one chosen. This involves neither the professional's anonymity nor the patient's subjective anonymity.

The telephone relation assumes that the specialist recognizes the need of violent parents to keep others at a distance, since the other is experienced as an excessively intrusive object and, inversely, the longing of these parents to find in this other, at an acceptable distance

and far from the control of the other's gaze, a container for their suffering. Thus, it is an attempt to create a tenuous relation protected from an encounter perceived as destructive for the object and for the ego.

This leads us to privilege the temporal aspects of the setting. Through a certain control over the time and duration of the call, violent parents have the impression that the dangerous quality they attribute to consultations is thereby disarmed.

This means that the specialists need to accept that the person who calls will regulate the session and that their words will be interrupted until the next and uncertain call.

Violent parents fear dependence on any relationship and, therefore, this distance protects them from the splitting of their psychic space, which was originally fusional and was later sutured to become precariously narcissistic.

Invisibility ensures violent parents the cohesiveness of their fragile narcissistic structures. The absence of the trilogy: to see, to be seen, to see that one is seen, perhaps allows exhumation of the unspeakable that is first of all unthinkable. To listen to the unheard of, as Green (1969) says, "is to go into the invisible, into beyond the visible". Whereas the exhibitionist shows in order not to tell, violent parents hide in order not to tell. Abusive parents have a need to hide their violence, but especially to hide.

Many violent parents have themselves been subjected to the omnipotent control of their parents' gaze, which prevented them from manifesting any vital impulse and demanded a deadly petrification of their movements.

To hide, to stay out of sight of the inquisitorial, scrutinizing eye of their parents was the same as finding their own space; this confusion between psychic space and real space persists in their psychic functioning. They retain the fear of being dominated by the gaze that controls their movements but also their thoughts. The gaze as fear, as Bion would say, of "imminent annihilation".

In his book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault (1995) stresses that disciplinary power imposes a principle of compulsory visibility on those subjected to it. In a disciplinary regime the subjects must be seen. It is the fact of being watched without interruption and of always being in sight that keeps the disciplinary individual subjected and submitted.

In this book he reminds us that Bentham's "panopticon" was the architectural form of the prison where the power of sight to control prisoners reached its culmination. The panopticon device demonstrated that a glass prison with bright lighting and a jailor's scrutiny controlled prisoners more effectively than the shadows of an isolated cell.

In avoiding the other's gaze, violent parents attempt to liberate themselves of the control of that other registered as omnipotent, a condition they perhaps need in order to be able to think. However, they simultaneously protect themselves from the feelings of shame that invade them through the other's gaze. The gaze, like the mirror in the tale of Snow White, reflects a deformed and depreciated image of themselves.

Could it be the gaze that Oedipus is really escaping? When he becomes aware of the horror of incest, Oedipus implores punishment, saying, ". . . or kill me or cast me into the sea, where you will never see me again" (Sophocle, 1954, p. 11). When he puts out his eyes, the chorus says that he tells his eyes that in this way "they would not see either the evils he had suffered or the evils he had done . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 10). Does Oedipus punish himself when he blinds himself, or does he intend to avoid the suffering and shame of seeing that he is being scrutinized and censured by those eyes?

Another interesting aspect to emphasize is the gaze in abuse and the importance of the eye-hand axis at the moment of violence.

As our patient Eurydice said, what had most anguished her retroactively about the scenes of violence she had suffered as a child was not as much the isolated hand that beat her as the concomitant hateful look.

Perhaps what acquires traumatic value is not only the hand that beats but the meaning it acquires when synchronized with the disintegrating gaze. By avoiding one of the poles of this line, the gaze, perhaps they are trying to avoid the traumatic re-actualization of these scenes of childhood violence. However, this avoidance of the gaze avoids not only the re-actualization of death drives, but also another aspect, no less important, which is its erotogenic dimension.

Our patient Eurydice referred to her father's gaze, which she experiences as transgressive and perturbing. May we suggest that in abuse this erotogenic dimension of the gaze is always present? Although it

is true that at the base of all repetition compulsion we find the death drive, how can we imagine its repetition without libidinal jouissance? This is certainly a question of Thanatos, but always impregnated by Eros. And in this case, could this aspect of jouissance be the main source of those feelings of shame?

In any case, if Eros appears, it is there as a desperate attempt to appease the sickle of Thanatos. In our preoccupation with the devastating effect of the death drives that emanate from violent parents towards their children, we have perhaps neglected the death drives that operate in the psyche of violent parents.

How can we ask them to hate others less than they hate themselves? The great difficulty when we propose help for violent parents resides, it seems, in the narcissistic isolation with which they shield themselves. Their narcissism is not the cement that guarantees the ego's unity and constitutes life narcissism, as exhaustively analysed by Green (1980).

Quite the opposite, the narcissism of violent parents is like the last snow of winter that is in danger of melting with the first rainstorm, forming an avalanche that sweeps down fragments of the ego, negative narcissism and death narcissism. They carry death inside in order not to die: this paradox deserves our reflection to help us understand the psychic functioning of violent parents.

The external object, Green states, becomes what he calls the trauma-object. The ego not only defends itself precariously from internal drives, but must also struggle resolutely against the external object's autonomy, which threatens its evanescent unity. Destructive drives are orientated either towards the external object or towards the ego. The subject is inhabited by death drives as a last attempt to keep his psychic ego from collapsing. The paradox appears again: death is carried inside in order to avoid dying.

Each situation, especially the birth of children, in the life of subjects who struggle with infantile dependence—the child's and simultaneously his own—provokes the reopening of old but ever-present narcissistic wounds and questioning of the fragile scaffolding of its structure.

Didn't our patient Eurydice ask for help when she foresaw her delivery? Was her fear of going mad as her mother did only a fear of repeating family history, or was it a perception of the drive chaos that the proximity of this birth laid bare?

Borderline patients as Green (1996) describes them—and as many violent parents like Eurydice probably are—need “spatial distance in relation to the object to be materially established, that is, acted out in the real”.

The opportunity to be helped by telephone allows them to preserve this real distance, perhaps a previous condition of any relationship. Considering the internal objectal void in violent parents, the offer of an always present and fantasmatically available object through a telephone number calms the fragmentation anxieties and crises of drives to which they feel subjected.

For a time, the psychologist functions as an external object that is not entirely outside. He will be subjected to the vicissitudes of omnipotent manipulation of the object: oscillation between possession and ejection.

The therapist’s physical presence is now not a need, and the erased image of his body acquires hallucinatory aspects. Only the voice, with its material sound, acts as support for the intersubjective dimension of the relation. In the case of Eurydice, it was the material sound of her given name, the sound envelope of her own subjectivity, and the identity that connected her to herself despite the social anonymity of her call.

The mythological Eurydice was saved from hell the first time by the modulations of Orpheus’s voice. The gods allow Orpheus to take his wife back into the daylight on condition that he refrains from looking at her before leaving hell.

However, in spite of having accepted this condition, doubt induces him to turn around to look at Eurydice and the immediate consequence of breaking the agreement with the gods is Eurydice’s second and final death. From then on, Orpheus is forbidden all access to the Underworld.

Unlike Orpheus, our therapeutic relation with Eurydice took place in the absence of any gaze or mirror reflection. But not in the absence of a sound envelope or a sound mirror, which included mainly the sound of her given name, perhaps the previous condition that enabled us to help her leave behind the hell of her fragmented drive chaos against which she unsuccessfully struggled.

Thus, we see that in this type of clinical work, absence of the gaze does not mean absence of recognition of the other’s subjectivity and suffering. Like a sound mirror, the recognition of her given name had

an integrative effect on a dehiscent ego and enabled Eurydice to talk, perhaps for the first time, from the marrow of her being.

*Christian–Christos: the budding palaeontologist
or the search for family bones*

The family we will call S comes to an ambulatory psychotherapy centre (Centre Médico-Psycho-Pédagogique), where I was in charge, to consult as a result of the proposal of a social worker who for several months had been carrying out Educational Action by order of the Juvenile Court. Judicial action had been requested by the mother, who had complained of her husband's abuse of the children, especially the elder. However, it is not the distress caused by family violence that motivates the psychological consultation. This family's fragile demand is motivated by the scholastic problems of the elder son, particularly with written language, the only sign of suffering to which the family was particularly sensitive. The family consisted of a couple, the father, Mr S, thirty-six, and the mother, Mrs S, thirty, and their two sons, Christos, seven, and Daniel, four. Mr S is a corpulent man of medium height who speaks French with great difficulty. He makes warm and spontaneous contact and likes to talk about himself. A mechanic by profession, he works for companies that hire him temporarily. Of Greek origin and orphaned from infancy, he grew up in his native country and lived either with aunts or in boarding schools. His three older brothers died in the Greek civil war. When he was seventeen, he began to travel and lived for different periods of time in Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, and Russia. He tells us that he had moved around in order to see different people and countries and that during his stays he had learnt the different languages in each of these places.

Mr S has lived in France since he was twenty-seven, when he was forced to leave his native country for political reasons. Since the military government in power in Greece revoked his citizenship, at the time of the initial consultation he has no nationality.

During his successive migrations, his real given name was deformed progressively on his documents to become S, his current name on his identity document. In France, his workmates never call him by his name, but address him as "Greek", or, more frequently, as

"Zorba". His wife calls him an equivalent in French of his name in Greek, even though he likes his real name.

Mrs S is Portuguese, a rather thin woman with a fragile appearance, brown hair, and listless, lifeless eyes. She shows a certain inhibition about expressing and communicating her emotions to us. She immigrated to France for economic reasons when she was twenty-two. She is an only child whose parents live in a town in Portugal.

During the interviews, Mrs S speaks very little and is withdrawn. However, whenever she intervenes she makes an effort to speak French well, pays great attention to the adequate use of words and tries to construct with correct syntax, which is difficult for her.

Mr and Mrs S meet shortly after their arrival in France, and Mrs S soon gets pregnant. Christos was born in France, but lived for two years (between his first and third years of life) with his maternal grandparents in Portugal.

As Mrs S needed to work, she preferred her parents to take care of the child rather than entrust him to a day-care centre. We know very little about Mrs S's fantasmatic and emotional experiences during her pregnancy; only that "there were no problems" and the delivery was normal.

Christos was breast-fed until he was three months old, and then prematurely switched to solid food. We were unable to obtain any information about his years in Portugal, although Christos seems to have had harmonious motor development; when he returned to France at age three, he spoke almost only Portuguese. The father tells us that his elder son very much likes to learn languages. Besides French, his father teaches him words in Greek and Croatian at the child's request. The language spoken in the family is French, a choice imposed by the mother. Not only is it the means of communication between the parents—which is understandable—but is the only language Mrs S uses to address her children.

Mr S, who enjoys practising several languages, learnt Portuguese during a vacation in his wife's country. He can carry on an informal conversation in this language and does so with pleasure when Portuguese neighbours visit them.

In contrast, even on those occasions, Mrs S feels the need to speak French, an attitude she also preserves during their vacation in Portugal. In her family, Mrs S paradoxically imposes an implicit prohibition on speaking in Portuguese, in spite of which her elder son, even in France,

is happy to find opportunities to speak Portuguese and goes out of his way to meet schoolmates with whom he can do so.

During the interviews, the parents are obviously very worried about Christos's future at school, which is still the centre of their conscious preoccupations.

The parents accuse each other of responsibility for Christos's temporary failure at school, which they fear may be definitive. Their methods of upbringing are quite dissimilar and lead to violent quarrels between them. The mother describes the father as too severe and violent towards Christos. She also reprimands him for preventing his son from expressing the least aggressiveness.

Mr S considers his wife too permissive with the child and reproves her for giving in to his whims.

Christos-Christian

Christos, aged seven, is a thin, weak child, perhaps a bit tall for his age. At the time of the consultation, he is in first grade at school. He has been diagnosed with dyslexia including reversal, confusion, and forgetting letters of words. His problems in reading and writing are associated with a certain lack of motor co-ordination, which also makes him quite clumsy in gym classes. He is very careful to co-operate with us as his anxious gaze searches for the effects his words provoke.

Shy, but communicative and amiable, he oscillates between keeping excessive distance between us and seeking body contact with others.

The movements of his body are inhibited and his appearance is rather stiff. His inhibition is expressed both in his physical posture and in the lines of his drawings.

When we ask him his name, he says Christian, but immediately explains that at school they sometimes call him Christo(s) (in colloquial French, the "s" is not pronounced).

Later we learn that his mother always calls him Christian and his father quite often calls him Christos (in Greek the "s" is pronounced).

It is obvious that this opening question—asked in such a simple way of most children when we meet them—does not produce an easy or immediate response in Christos. This conflictive vacillation in relation to his name had not been mentioned during the interviews with

his parents. However, we later realized that Mrs S called her son Christian or spoke of him simply as “my son”.

When we asked him what he would prefer to be called, he says rather dubiously: Christian. This attitude, quite revealing in itself, allows us to highlight identity problems that are found at the centre of familial conflict.

In free drawing, he draws a man in his car, a cactus (in the shape of a cross) and sand; then a hole, a dog, a bone, a church, a farm, a saloon, and above, pine trees surrounded by mountains (Figure 1). All this is presented in a very fragmented way. It is difficult for Christos to organize a narrative related to his drawing and especially to establish imaginary links between its different elements.

He prefers to attempt first to write the story. Then he tells us that the dog is going to take “giant steps” to get near the bone and finally “eat the bone” (translation note: “bone” is “os” in French) (see Figure 1). This dog that will eat the bone (“os”) occupies a central position on the sheet of paper. It is the only element of the drawing that is not coloured, a lonely, isolated, and forlorn figure. The bone is oversized in relation to the dog: a signifying knot in which we see how the image functions as narrative.

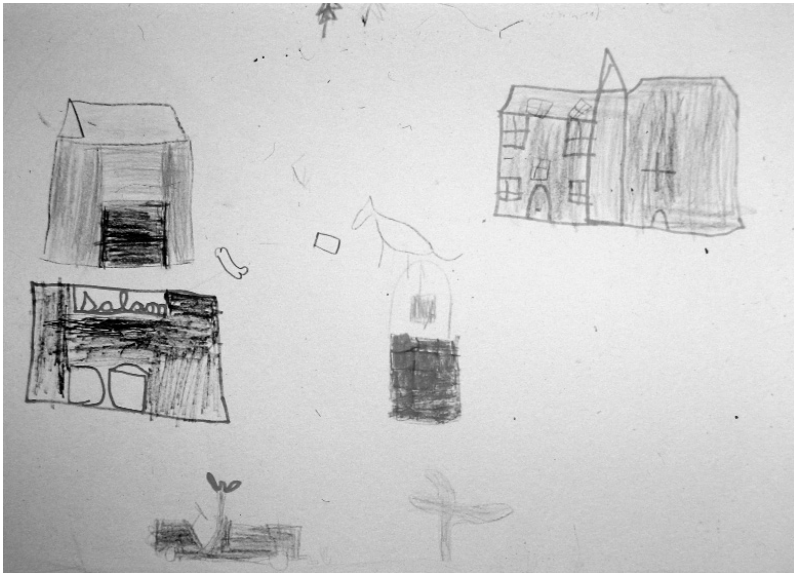


Figure 1. The dog is going to take “giant steps” in order to reach and finally “eat the bone” (‘os’).

The “saloon” is full of people drinking. The man driving the car in the desert is going to the big city to buy things for his family.

Later, the church becomes part church, part cemetery, and part home of this man. Five children and their parents live there (at first, Christos had said that there were four persons in all). Then he adds three windows in black.

During another interview and perhaps at one of the moments when his narration acquires most vivacity he tells us that he wants to be a “searcher for prehistoric bones”. He had gone to the Museum of Man and had read a book about whales, mammoths, and prehistoric men.

It seems that Christos suffers greatly from his difficulties at school, of which he is quite aware and about which he talks to us on several occasions. Paradoxically or not, he highly cathects reading, especially comics and books that refer to “things of the past”.

Christos expresses his desire to be helped, a desire he verbalizes very clearly, something surprising in a child his age.

Comments

We consider that the migratory impact activated an anguishing revision of identity in the S family, an impact that crystallized in the vacillations of identity in Christos.

It is probable that the migration provoked a double fracture in both Mr and Mrs S: in relation to their origins and in relation to their current milieu. In some way, they had broken off from their history without being able to integrate or inscribe it in the new culture they wanted to access.

Mrs S, in particular, aspires to a new identity in an imaginary search or a mirage that comforts her with the illusion of having integrated.

It is true that this may be experienced with all the excitement of being present at one’s own birth, or, more precisely, second birth, like the mythological phoenix. Who has never dreamed of redoing everything? To be different, the artisan of one’s own genesis according to one’s ideals, dreams, or desires?

These fantasies are often expressed by projecting them into the subject’s children, which transforms these children into narcissistic pseudopods of parental desires.

Mrs S had tried to over-adapt to French life and had paid the price in the form of a nearly complete break from her history. Knowingly, she valued only what was French. But this over-adaptation was only on an imaginary plane, since in the perspective of her real life she was confined to the apartment. She was unable to become literate in French and established no relations with her surroundings.

Mr S was unappreciated by his wife and was also a persecutory witness of Mrs S's false self

Christos, a prisoner of this narcissistic realization, had become the desired, eroticized subject and, therefore, the fetish-object to remedy their lack.

For his mother, the word Christos was her means to seize the word for herself, a narcissistic extension of the hope that he would cure her wounds.

This confusion leads his mother to adopt a very seductive attitude towards Christos and she is unable to refuse any of his wishes. In her imaginary, there was no room for a third to compel her to comply with limits imposed by symbolic Law.

Hindered in his paternal function and perhaps precisely for this reason, Mr S finds no other way to manifest it except through violence, the only means he uses in the belief that he is imposing the Law. The more seductive his wife is, the more violent he becomes, an infernal circle with Christos as the victim.

Fortunately, Christos does not feel comfortable in the place he has been assigned and his anxiety is crystallized in a symptom that reveals his suffering. It is in his failure at school, where the mother's libidinal cathexis is greatest, that he manifests himself as a subject, unconsciously refusing to be alienated in his mother's desire.

His swing of identity between Christian and Christos is quite revealing of the family's identity problem, the weight of which falls on the child. We know that the name is the first symbolic inscription of the human being and even precedes our birth.

Christos, the name assigned at the moment of birth, preserves its value only for the father, who, strangely enough, had chosen for his son the name of Christ, the Messiah who saves human beings and provides access to the Father. That is to say, a name that reconciled him with his origins and perhaps allowed him to mitigate his pain for the gradual deformation of his own, suffered in the course of his successive migrations.

For his mother, her elder son became Christian, a name that signified for her his successful inscription in a French universe from which she felt excluded. The French language his mother speaks to him is not his mother tongue, but a language emptied of affective contents, a mask of forced identity that leaves him out in the cold.

The child, who was still searching for a way to get out of his Oedipus situation, is bogged down between a seductive mother and generator of a false self and a violent father disabled for functioning as a symbolic third; his hesitation when he tells us his name expresses his difficulty in finding a point of escape.

The unconscious parental conflicts in relation to their origins are revealed in the search that Christos makes effective when he is attracted to study history and “things of the past”.

This is the reason for his eagerness to establish genuine communication that, as he himself assumed, could only be successful on the basis of the story of his parents.

His desire to break out of the nets in which his mother trapped him could be clearly seen in his efforts to identify with his father, a solution he unconsciously dramatizes by becoming Christos.

In his drawing, the dog that takes giant steps to get to the big bone (“os”) and eat it is perhaps himself in his efforts to appropriate the bone (“os”) in the name Christos; a search that attempts to take the path of oral identification generated by his own libidinal organization.

Christian–Christos share the same root, “Christ”, and it is the signifier “bone” (“os”) that he needs in order to be contained in the name chosen by his father.

Could we say that for this child the desire to incorporate the bone and the search for “things of the past” represent both the search for familial origins and also the desire to identify with his father and find his filiation?

Much later, in the course of his psychotherapy, we understood that the father’s mythical history also generated obstacles to Christos’s acceptance of his name.

Psychotherapy

We proposed individual psychotherapy for Christos and regular interviews with the parents. The therapeutic relation with the S family continued for nearly one school year.

It was particularly interesting to note the way the parents' discourse intertwined with the material of the sessions with Christos, since their correlation was not thematic but symbolic. In any case, the lifting of the familial repressed enabled Christos to advance in the resolution of his conflicts.

Thus, at one moment at the end of four months of treatment, we learnt that Christos had the same name as Mr S's dead brother.

Unlike my customary way of working, I had not asked the names of the parents' siblings in the first interview, as if unconsciously they had induced me to leave the familial repressed untouched.

For Mr S, his brother's death acquired great importance because, by displacement of the Oedipus complex, the latter came to represent his own father. This older brother, named Christos as we said, had had a paternal role for Mr S, who was left fatherless from the age of three.

When Mr S was six, his older brothers die in the Greek civil war. This dramatic fact led us to wonder whether, in an Oedipal perspective, Mr S might consider himself responsible for these violent deaths; particularly for "murdering" his eldest brother, the paternal representative. His manic defences probably led him to deny the reality of this death.

Through his name, Mr S's son Christos is thus positioned as manic reparation of this original murder, a living character that would erase all trace of Oedipal guilt. But if his son really succeeded in becoming Christos instead of Christian, he would in some way represent the fantasm of this "murdered" brother-father: the persecutory return of the avenger.

The name Christos chosen by the father indicated a compromise between the desire for manic reparation and the fear of the return of the persecutory repressed, a compromise borne by his son. Christos was burdened by the death of his paternal uncle and his father's unworked-through mourning.

We later understood Christos's insistence on drawing cemeteries next to churches, a theme that was present from the first drawing in the first consultation and was repeated in the material of his psychotherapy.

We realized that the first drawing in the first interview was exemplary, since it condensed most of Christos's problems. Although these problems were developed in the course of the psychotherapy, that first drawing already alluded to the essential themes of Christos's

unconscious conflicts. His first drawing, like the overture of an opera, announced in some way the subsequent developments.

In the church in his first drawing, partly cemetery and partly family house, Christos had told us at first that four persons were living. Then he corrected himself and said that there were five children and their parents. He had added three black windows to the four red coloured windows.

Could these three persons more (or less), these three window-tombs coloured black, evoke Mr S's three dead brothers: the impossible mourning of this paternal repressed?

Also, could the bone the dog ate in the first drawing be understood as an attempt by Christos to internalize the family bones or to internalize the death that had until then remained denied?

In any case, from the moment the problem of mourning was worked on in the interviews with the parents, something occurred which produced changes in Christos's graphic production and the symbolic order to which they referred.

The cemetery-churches are no longer a part of his drawings and vacillations about his name disappear. After that time, he signs his drawings as Christos.

As Mr S began to work through the deaths of his three brothers, in particular that of the eldest, Christos became less persecutory for him and the physical violence towards his son was gradually diluted.

Now that Christos was liberated from problems that were not his own but inhabited him and placed obstacles to his name, he was able to find his identity.

He no longer needed to take "giant steps" to span two generations and internalize the bone ("os") of Christos.

One day, he drew a magician (a combined figure of the therapist and himself) who "sees a dog appear"; however, it is a livelier dog than the one in the initial drawing. Inside of it, a bone can be seen, probably the bone ("os") that finally allows him to be Christos. On the back of his drawing, he crosses out the name Christian and signs Christos, a mutative moment of great import (Figure 2).

The disorders in his written language practically disappear in the months following this session. From the moment Christos was able to "write himself", he could write a language that until then had been a mask for his identity.

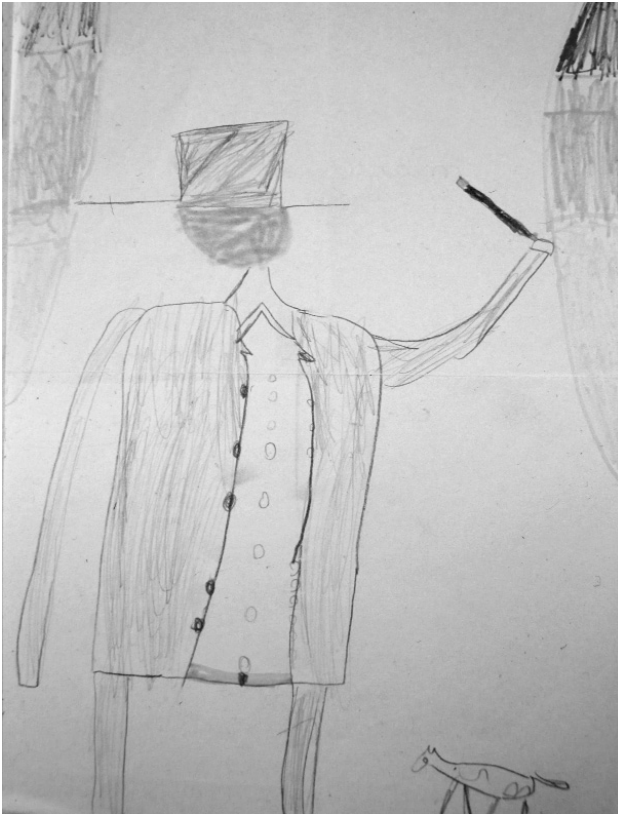


Figure 2. Character that “sees a dog appear”. Inside this dog we see the bone (“os”) that it has been able to incorporate–internalize.

By damaging the words, he resisted the place assigned him by his mother’s desire and at the same time denounced an identity that did not belong to him. Could we say that Christian–Christos was the compromise of the family repressed?

The child’s symptom, the symptom child, or the fantasm form, perhaps of the family compromise, in which the structural conflict insists and is revealed where the links are most fragile (or more solid . . . who knows): in the child himself.

The over-determined meaning of the symptom had to be found not only in the child’s intra-psyche life but also in the networks of familial signifiers that emerge from the familial equation, condensed in identity problems concerning the child’s name.

It was necessary to reflect not only on Christos's family, but on Christos, a budding palaeontologist in search of the meaning of his name in the midst of his own family.

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De la théorie de la séduction à la séduction traumatique¹

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Seductio : le mot latin indique séparation, détournement, dévoiement; nous rappelle à très juste titre Michèle Bertrand³. Et elle s'interroge: "par quelle errance des mots, la séduction en est-elle venue à signifier l'attrance ou la fascination qu'un objet ou un être exerce au point qu'on n'y puisse résister ? Ou faut-il, en cet appel venu de l'extérieur, voir une intrusion, une effraction, qui divise l'homme avec lui même ?".

Dans la primitive théorie de la séduction l'enfant subissait passivement de la part d'un adulte une scène réelle d'abus sexuel. Cette théorie, élaborée par Freud entre 1895 et 1897 attribue un rôle déterminant dans l'étiologie des névroses aux souvenirs de scènes réelles de séduction, ceci est connu.

Parler de la théorie de la séduction n'implique pas seulement reconnaître une fonction étiologique importante aux scènes dites de séduction en ce qui concerne le traumatisme, cela devient prépondérant pour expliquer l'origine du mécanisme de refoulement. L'effet traumatique requiert deux scènes séparées par la puberté. Le premier temps de la séduction proprement dite est une scène où le sujet ne peut pas intégrer l'expérience. Cette scène est refoulée. Dans un deuxième temps seulement, une seconde scène, pas nécessairement sexuelle mais liée associativement au souvenir de la première, produit son évocation. Le souvenir produit un effet plus important que l'incident lui même, en vertu de l'afflux d'excitations déclenchées par ce dernier. Ultérieurement Freud, c'est bien connu, postule que les scènes de séduction sont pour la plupart le produit de reconstructions fantasmatiques, découverte corrélative à la psychosexualité infantile et à la mise en perspective du complexe d'Oedipe. Dans la lettre du 21-9-97⁴ à Fliess, Freud insistera davantage sur l'importance de la réalité psychique. Ce sera l'après-coup, la resignification a posteriori qui donnera la véritable dimension traumatique à la première scène. Trois semaines après cette lettre, Freud énonce sa première postulation du complexe d'Oedipe (lettre du 15-10-1897).

Suite à ce renoncement qui s'avéra partiel, la voie reste ouverte à l'apparition des concepts cruciaux comme celui de fantasme, et de psychosexualité infantile. Il n'abandonne pourtant pas complètement la théorie de la

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³ Bertrand, M. "La séduction dans la littérature psychanalytique", in Etudes freudiennes, 27, Paris, 1986.

⁴ Freud, S. Lettres à W.Fliess(1887-1902) in La naissance de la psychanalyse, Paris, PUF (1956)

séduction ainsi qu'il le précise dans "*Fragment d'une analyse d'hystérie(Dora)*"(1905)⁵. Freud dira dans une note en bas de page, qu'il a été "*plus loin dans cette théorie sans l'abandonner, c'est à dire que je la déclare aujourd'hui non pas fausse mais incomplète*".

Ceci étant, il ne faut pas confondre, comme le fait Masson⁶, les faits réels de séduction que peuvent subir les enfants et la théorie de la séduction proprement dite, échafaudage théorique destiné à expliquer l'émergence de la sexualité et le mécanisme du refoulement.

Comme le souligne Laplanche⁷ ce livre " dont le titre se réfère à la suppression (en anglais) ou à l'abandon de la théorie de la séduction, ignore jusqu'au premier mot de cette théorie". Freud dira dans les *Nouvelles Conférences*⁸ (1931) que la séduction maternelle, moyennant les soins prodigués à l'enfant est un fait universel: "*ce fut effectivement la mère qui, dans l'accomplissement des soins corporels, nécessairement provoqua et peut-être même éveilla pour la première fois des sensations de plaisir dans l'organe génital*". Freud accorde à la mère le statut de première séductrice, permettant ainsi de libidiniser son corps. On trouve l'une des manifestations culturelles les plus claires de cette libidinisation corporelle dans certaines tribus africaines où les femmes massent entièrement le corps de l'enfant pendant sa première année de vie.

Laplanche⁹ propose une théorie de la séduction généralisée positionnant la mère (et dans ce sens reprend il les formulations de Freud, comme le souligne Green), à la place de l'agent de la séduction originaire, ou de la séduction précoce, en vertu des soins corporels, qui incluent l'allaitement au sein et le contact étroit entre le corps de la mère et celui de l'enfant. Il s'agit d'une séduction nécessaire-affirme Laplanche- inscrite dans la situation même. Depuis cette perspective théorique, il propose une reinterrogation sur la paire activité-passivité. Et Laplanche¹⁰ souligne que " la passivité, l'activité ne sont à définir ni par l'initiative du geste, ni par la pénétration ou par un quelconque élément comportemental. La passivité est toute entière dans l'inadéquation à symboliser ce qui survient en nous de la part de l'autre. La passivité de la séduction, génératrice du trauma interne, n'est pas la passivité gestuelle ou comportementale. L'enfant qui regarde avidement la scène originaire est aussi passif, au sens de Spinoza, que celui qui est masturbé par sa mère, dans la mesure où il y a une inadéquation fondamentale de sa compréhension au message proposé".

Par le terme de séduction originaire, Laplanche qualifie une situation fondamentale où l'adulte propose à l'enfant des signifiants non verbaux, voire comportementaux, imprégnés de significations sexuelles

⁵ Freud, S. (1905) *Fragment d'une Analyse d'Hystérie (Dora)* in *Cinq Psychanalyses*, PUF, Paris (1979).

⁶ Masson, J. " *Le réel escamoté*, Paris, Aubier, 1984.

⁷ Laplanche, J. " *De la théorie de la séduction restreinte à la théorie de la séduction généralisé* ", Ed. *Etudes Freudiennes*, N° 27, Paris, 1986.

⁸ Freud, S. (1931) *Nouvelles Conférences*, Paris, Gallimard (1983)

⁹ Laplanche, J. *Idem* 5

inconscientes et il les appelle *signifiants énigmatiques*. Il ajoute: “ le sein lui même, organe apparemment naturel de la lactation, peut-on négliger encore son investissement sexuel et inconscient majeur par la femme” ? De la même manière la scène originaire devient elle même séduction originaire, dans la mesure où elle impose des images, fragments de scénarios traumatisants, inassimilables parce que partiellement obscurs pour les acteurs eux-mêmes. Laplanche¹¹ inclut dans la séduction des situations ou communications qui ne constituent en rien l’abus sexuel et considère que “l’énigme, celle dont le ressort est inconscient, est séduction par elle même”.

De même que dans un texte préalable j’avais proposé¹² – en accord avec Racamier- que l’inceste n’est pas l’oedipe sinon tout le contraire, je remarque maintenant que les violences sexuelles que peuvent subir les enfants de la part d’un adulte ne font pas partie de la théorie de la séduction et il est important de les distinguer. La théorie de la séduction généralisée, développée par Laplanche et anticipée par Freud, est constitutive et fondatrice de la psychosexualité, du refoulement et stimulante de la capacité de représentation.

Par contre, quand la sexualité de l’adulte fait irruption dans le corps de l’enfant en forçant par effraction la barrière de pare-excitation, l’adulte perce l’enveloppe psychique représenté par le Moi-Peau de l’enfant et provoque un vécu traumatique avec des conséquences psychiques qui ont une grave potentialité pathogène. On est à mille lieux de la théorie de la séduction comprise comme constitutive de l’appareil psychique. Dans le cas de l’abus sexuel je dirais que les signifiants ne sont plus énigmatiques comme dans le cas de la séduction originaire, bien au contraire, ils sont trop chargés de signification. Il s’agit d’une signification qui lui vient du dehors, ce qui comporte pour l’enfant un *trop plein de signification* : ce sens greffé par l’adulte dans la vie pulsionnelle de l’enfant constitue une violence majeure. Je pense, et dans ce sens je m’éloigne de la conception de Laplanche, que la violence ne réside pas tellement dans la nécessité de traduction qui s’impose à l’enfant, sinon dans la nécessité qu’aura l’enfant de déconstruire *ce plus de sens* qui ne lui appartient pas complètement. L’énigme est un sens à construire, à révéler. *Le signifiant inoculé à l’enfant par l’abuseur sera un sens à déconstruire*. L’abuseur inscrit une trace dans la topologie de la superficie corporelle de l’enfant, modifiant dramatiquement le cours de son organisation libidinale et induit une surcharge pulsionnelle qui fait effraction dans la barrière de pare-excitation. Le quantitatif prend une valeur qualitative. Dans “*L’étiologie de l’hystérie*”(1896)¹³ Freud dit à propos des agressions sexuelles: “ ce qui se

¹⁰ Laplanche, J. “Traumatisme, traduction, transfert et autres trans(es)”, Psa.Univ, 11, Paris, 1986.

¹¹ Idem 5

¹² Tesone, J.E. “ Une activité peu masculine: l’inceste père-fille” in R.F.P. , Tome LXII, PUF, Paris, 1998

¹³ Freud, S. (1896) L’étiologie de l’hystérie, in Névrose, psychose et perversion, PUF, Paris, 1973.

produit en réalité c'est une transmission¹⁴ de la maladie, une infection dans l'enfance". L'image est forte et souligne, me semble-t-il, l'idée d'invasion, d'assaut et permanence de quelque chose de l'abuseur dans l'abusé, au-delà de l'effet traumatique par surcharge des stimuli. En plus de l'aspect purement économique compte tenu de la surcharge pulsionnelle exercée sur l'enfant, il y a une surcharge sémantique, *un plus de signifiante* que l'enfant devra plus tard déconstruire pour ne pas rester attrapé dans la géographie libidinale imposée par l'agresseur. Bien que l'enfant ne soit pas une *tabula rasa* sur laquelle l'agresseur imprime ses pulsions, la psychosexualité de l'enfant-c'est bien connu- le précède, le cours de la carte libidinale de l'enfant peut, tout de même, se voir orientée malgré lui. L'acte abusif ne libidinise pas le corps de l'enfant comme le font les caresses parentales de la séduction primaire. Bien au contraire, l'abus le congèle, le pétrifie, l'imprégnant de pulsion de mort, trace percée avec un poinçon qui le contraint à la compulsion, à la répétition.

Dans la séduction primaire les caresses sont porteuses de la pulsion de vie et tendent à lier les pulsions partielles, donnant à l'enfant la possibilité d'esquisser des mouvements d'intégration d'un moi corporel rudimentaire..

Dans la séduction traumatique prévaut la pulsion de mort qui, au lieu de favoriser l'intégration pulsionnelle, induit une fonction que Green¹⁵ appelle "la fonction desobjectalisante de la pulsion de mort". L'enfant n'a pas un statut de sujet mais d'objet partiel. La sexualité, externe-interne, devient non pas source de vie et de liaison, mais un objet persécutoire mortifère responsable de déliaison des pulsions et de la pensée.

Si la pulsion de mort est desobjectalisante pour l'autre, elle l'est aussi, et simultanément pour le sujet d'où elle émane. Plus il sentira son moi menacé par un narcissisme vacillant et qui flanche, plus il voudra maîtriser, exercer l'emprise de l'objet, tentative désespérée de garder une précaire unité.

Et ici la clinique pose à la théorie la question suivante: l'objet de la pulsion est-il toujours contingent ? Dans "*Pulsions et destins des pulsions*"¹⁶(1915) Freud dit au sujet de l'objet: "*il est ce qu'il y a de plus variable dans la pulsion*"...et plus loin il ajoute: "*Il peut être remplacé à volonté tout au long des destins que connaît la pulsion*". Green¹⁷ pense pourtant, que Freud n'a pas proposé un système fermé qui niait l'importance de l'objet. La contingence de l'objet est peut-être particulièrement valable dans le modèle de la perversion, mais dans le modèle de la mélancolie, la perte de l'objet est irremplaçable et seule l'identification du moi avec l'objet perdu peut limiter le traumatisme.

¹⁴ Le traducteur en français de ce texte souligne que ce terme en allemand, *Übertragung*, est traduit techniquement par "transfert".

¹⁵ Green, A. "Pulsion de mort, narcissisme négatif, fonction désobjectalisante", in *Le travail du Négatif*, Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1993.

¹⁶ Freud, S. "Pulsions et destins des pulsions", in *Métopsychoanalyse*, Gallimard, Paris, 1940.

¹⁷ Green, A. "La sexualité a-t-elle un quelconque rapport avec la psychanalyse ?", RFP, LX, 3, Paris, PUF, 1996.

Dans le cas particulier de l'inceste, l'enfant n'a pas un statut de sujet sinon d'objet partiel des pulsions partielles du parent abuseur. Et dans ce lien incestueux, il me semble que l'enfant-objet partiel n'est pas contingent pour les pulsions partielles du parent abuseur. La problématique narcissique si fréquente chez les parents incestueux, requiert comme objet partiel celui qui se rapproche le plus du point de vue de ses exigences narcissiques. C'est à dire, ses propres enfants, comme pseudopodes, comme émanation narcissique qui les situe entre une partie de son propre corps et un objet externe. Dans ce cas là, l'objet de la pulsion ne me paraît pas contingent, il exige un lien de filiation, voie détournée de la libido narcissique. Nous ne sommes pas encore dans le clone mais nous risquons d'y arriver. Il est intéressant de citer Claude Balier¹⁸ psychanalyste avec expérience dans le milieu carcéral, qui signale que la plupart des auteurs d'inceste qui se trouvaient en prison n'avaient pas commis de délits à caractère pédophilique. Ce qui confirme que les parents incestueux ne rentrent pas dans la qualification générale de pédophilie, sinon qu'ils constituent une catégorie particulière de perversion où l'objet de leurs pulsions doit avoir un nécessaire rapport de filiation.

Et pourquoi est-ce que je parle des pulsions et non pas d'amour ou éventuellement de haine, dans la mesure où il s'agit des relations entre parents et enfants ? Et bien, parce que dans le royaume de la pulsion partielle, on ne peut parler ni d'amour ni de haine. Dans *Pulsions et destins des pulsions* Freud dit que “ *les termes d'amour et de haine ne doivent pas être utilisés pour les relations des pulsions à leurs objets mais réservés pour les relations du moi total aux objets*” et plus loin il ajoute “ *les stades préliminaires de l'amour se présentent comme des buts sexuels provisoires pendant que les pulsions sexuelles accomplissent leur développement compliqué. Le premier but que nous reconnaissons, c'est incorporer ou dévorer, un type d'amour qui est compatible avec la suppression de l'existence de l'objet dans son individualité et qui peut donc être qualifié d'ambivalent. Au stade supérieur qu'est l'organisation prégénitale sadique-anale, la tendance vers l'objet apparaît sous la forme d'une poussée d'emprise, pour laquelle endommager ou détruire l'objet n'entre pas en ligne de compte. Cette forme, ce stade préliminaire de l'amour peut à peine se distinguer de la haine dans son comportement vis-à-vis de l'objet*”.

L'enfant devient donc un objet non pas contingent mais nécessaire pour le fragile échafaudage narcissique du parent abuseur. Le lien incestueux, nie l'existence de l'enfant comme sujet séparé de ses parents. Le parent incestueux ne libidinise pas l'enfant, il vampirise sa sexualité naissante, il prétend contrôler chez l'enfant ce qu'il ne réussit pas à synthétiser lui même de sa propre organisation libidinale.

¹⁸ Balier, C. “ Inceste...fusion...” in *Psychanalyse des comportements sexuels violents*, Paris, PUF, 1996.

C'est à dire sa propre anarchie pulsionnelle et la menace que celle-ci impose à son narcissisme et à son expansion, d'autant plus grandiose que sa structure narcissique est précaire. Par tous les moyens l'abuseur nie la primauté du génital et prétend ignorer l'angoisse de castration à tout prix. Prix que l'enfant paiera à sa place. Dans un travail précédent¹⁹ je demandais: " que se passe-t-il lors de l'échange corporel entre un père incestueux et sa fille ? Que veut le père incestueux?" Et j'avais l'hypothèse selon laquelle "l'homme incestueux cherche à se fondre dans le corps de sa fille, à ne faire qu'un avec elle, à lui voler sa féminité naissante pour posséder alors les attributs des deux sexes". Et dans le même travail, je proposais l'idée que l'acte incestueux " prend très souvent une valeur d'équivalent masturbatoire". C'est dire que la sexualité de l'homme incestueux demeurerait foncièrement auto-érotique, en ce sens que la fonction du lien charnel établi avec la fille serait réduite à la satisfaction d'un auto-érotisme an-objectal. Ce type d'auto-érotisme se différencierait d'une part de l'auto-érotisme de type objectal, tel que le décrit T. Bokanowski²⁰, auto-érotisme caractérisé par sa valeur de liaison et de libidinisation, et qui a préalablement bénéficié des qualités de la relation du sujet avec son objet. Il se différencierait d'autre part, de l'auto-érotisme anti-objectal, dépourvu celui-là de capacités de liaison et de relibidinisation. Dans le cas qui nous intéresse, l'objet est présent, bien que ne possédant à vrai dire pas un véritable statut d'objet mais plutôt une valeur d'appendice narcissique. La relation pourrait être rapprochée de ce qui se passe dans l'auto-érotisme anti-objectal, bien qu'elle soit plus mortifère encore, du fait d'un apport incessant d'excitation non élaborable par l'enfant.

Quoiqu'il en soit, "le statut de l'objet sera déterminé par la pulsion", remarque Green²¹. Pour cet auteur l'objet est le révélateur de la pulsion et il suggère que la théorie de la pulsion devrait être revue pour y inclure le rôle de la réponse de l'objet. La véritable relation met en relation un Ça constitué des pulsions et un objet.

¹⁹ Tesone, J.E. " Une activité peu masculine: l'inceste père-fille" in R.F.P. , Tome LXII, PUF, Paris, 1998.

²⁰ Bokanowski T. (1993) Auto-érotisme et troubles de la sexualité, in *Les troubles de la sexualité*, Monographies de la RFP, Paris, PUF.

²¹ Green, A. "L'intrapsychique et l'intersubjectif", Ed. Lanctot, Montréal, 1998.

Si comme le propose Green²² - probablement inspiré par Platon- nous acceptons que le narcissisme soit représenté comme une sphère, il me paraît justifié de représenter graphiquement la tentative du père incestueux comme un triangle aux angles ouverts, entouré d'une circonférence circonscrite. Autrement dit, dans son utopie expansionniste, le père abuseur prétend effacer les angles du triangle oedipien en l'enfermant dans la mégalomanie de l'Un.

L'inceste est une attaque majeure de la triangulation oedipienne dans une vaine tentative pour nier les conséquences logiques de la confrontation oedipienne, à savoir, la castration symbolique, le déclin de l'omnipotence et l'élaboration du manque. Le désir incestueux, dit P.Légendre - si tant est qu'on puisse ici parler de désir véritable - est un désir de toute-puissance, un désir d'impossible. La loi de l'interdiction de l'inceste étant là pour mettre une limite à ce désir absolu. Dieu et la Sainte Famille, remarque P.Légendre²³, ne connaissent pas l'inceste car à Dieu rien ne manque.

On retrouve chez le père incestueux ce que Rosolato²⁴ décrivait jadis pour le pervers : au père symbolisé il substitue le père idéalisé, père sur lequel il a projeté sa toute-puissance narcissique, le situant ainsi, tout comme lui, hors la castration et, par la même, hors de la Loi. L'enfant prend alors une valeur fétichique au service de son déni du manque.

La famille incestueuse ou même celle où règne un climat incestuel, exprime la carence de l'acceptation de l'altérité. L'équation illustrant ce type de famille serait : $1+1+1 = 1$, et non $1+1+1 = 3$.

Souvent l'acte incestueux ne possède pas de valeur représentationnelle pour le père incestueux. Si comme le suggère Bataille,²⁵ la transgression lève l'interdit sans le supprimer, l'inceste, n'étant pas représenté comme une interdiction, ne peut alors être envisagé comme une simple transgression. Le narcissisme de l'homme incestueux « soutient l'illusion de l'an-oedipe (non de l'anti-oedipe, mais du non

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Legendre P. (1985) *L'Inestimable objet de la transmission*, Paris, Fayard, 1985.

²⁴ Rosolato, G. (1967) *Le Fétichisme*, dans *Le désir et la perversion*, Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1967.

²⁵ G. Bataille (1957) *L'Erotisme*, Paris, Ed. de Minuit.

oedipe) en ce qu'il ne connaît que le Moi-Je ». (Green)²⁶. Ajoutons à cela que le narcissisme du père abuseur n'est pas le ciment garantissant l'unité du moi caractéristique du narcissisme de vie. Il est au contraire visqueux, gluant, létal : narcissisme négatif ou de mort. Empruntant les termes utilisés par O. Kernberg²⁷, on pourrait dire à propos de la relation entre le père abuseur et sa fille, qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une relation de soi-même à l'objet (qui disparaît), mais de soi-même à soi-même. Serait-ce un simple jeu de mots que de dire de soi-même à non-même (ni soi-même, ni autre), dans la mesure où l'inceste n'efface pas l'irréductibilité de l'objet, et cela malgré la confusion qui règne entre sujet et objet ? « La main d'un autre fait trembler le miroir de Narcisse », nous dit J. McDougall²⁸, et la main de cet autre pourrait bien être ici celle de l'enfant qui, en se posant tant bien que mal comme sujet, vient briser la relation spéculaire qui tente d'imposer le géniteur.

Dans un article fameux Ferenczi,²⁹ a souligné que la confusion provient du fait que l'adulte répond à la demande de tendresse de l'enfant avec le langage de l'érotisation. La première réaction de l'enfant, dit Ferenczi, serait le refus, la haine, le dégoût et une violente résistance. Pourtant, dans la mesure où la contrainte persiste, et par introjection de l'agresseur, ce dernier disparaît en tant que réalité extérieure. L'enfant introjecte le sentiment de culpabilité, et l'acte, vécu initialement comme anodin, réclame par la suite un châtement. Ainsi, il est fréquent que des enfants ayant subi un inceste, soit victimes d'accidents à répétition, ou bien fassent de franches tentatives de suicide. Confusion, identification à l'agresseur, culpabilité, manque de confiance dans sa propre perception, sentiment de honte (en particulier pour ce qui touche au corps), troubles de l'identité sexuelle, tels sont les effets chez l'enfant de l'acte incestueux. De ce fait il se produit très souvent un clivage dans le moi, ce qui entraîne de graves conséquences quant à l'évolution psychosexuelle ultérieure.

²⁶ Op. cit. pp169

²⁷ O. Kernberg (1976) Narcissisme normal et narcissisme pathologique, in *N.R.P.*, 13, Paris, Gallimard.

²⁸ Mc Dougall J. (1976) Narcisse en quête d'une source, in *N.R.P.*, 13, Paris, Gallimard.

²⁹ Ferenczi S. (1932) Confusion de langue entre les adultes et l'enfant, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris, Payot, 1968.

L'enfant incesté est un enfant qui devient par la même occasion orphelin. Au traumatisme de l'inceste s'ajoute le traumatisme de la perte de la fonction parentale laissée vacante par le passage à l'acte de ses parents. L'enfant incesté est un enfant désespéré, en désarroi, en détresse, à la fois, face à ses propres pulsions et face au monde externe.

Revenons au sens étymologique de séduction qui dans le cas de la séduction traumatique prend toute sa valeur sémantique: du latin *seducere*, c'est à dire séparer, sens que je rappelais au début de mon intervention. Dans la séduction traumatique, et encore plus dans le cas de l'inceste, la violence de l'intrusion dans l'enfant d'une sexualité chargée d'une signification qui ne lui appartient pas, le sépare de lui même, le sépare de sa condition de sujet, le sépare d'une fonction parentale capable de contenir sa propre pulsionnalité.

Comme démarche préalable pour pouvoir émerger en tant que sujet du désir, **l'enfant devra déconstruire le plus de signifiante que l'abuseur a inoculé à sa sexualité en devenir**, et dans le cas particulier de l'inceste, rencontrer à nouveau la fonction symbolique parentale qui fut barrée par ses propres géniteurs.

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hoeffler (1912-1914), il paracheva sa formation par une analyse avec Karl Abraham, puis Hanns Sachs. Membre de l'Association psychanalytique de Berlin (B.P.V.) depuis 1919, puis chargé d'enseignement à l'Institut psychanalytique de Berlin (B.P.I.), il siégea au comité directeur de l'Association psychanalytique internationale (A.P.I.) en 1925.

Marié une première fois avec le Dr Josine Müller née Ebsen, analyste d'enfants (1884-1930), il divorça en 1925, puis épousa l'analyste jungienne Ada Schott (son analysante en formation), dont il eut deux enfants (Hans en 1926, Elke en 1927).

En 1933, après la prise de pouvoir par les nazis, il fut nommé président provisoire du comité « aryanisé » de la Société psychanalytique allemande (D.P.G.). Il y remplit les fonctions de rédacteur, trésorier, chargé de la formation, président de la Commission des candidatures, et s'occupa essentiellement de l'adaptation idéologique de l'institution au régime national-socialiste. De 1922 à 1938, il fut successivement organisateur et directeur de la formation au B.P.I., puis à l'Institut allemand de recherche psychologique et de psychothérapie (D.I.P.F. ou Institut Göring).

En 1938, il fut nommé par le Pr Matthias H. Göring administrateur de tutelle de la Société psychanalytique de Vienne, de la polyclinique de Berlin et des Éditions psychanalytiques, mais il échoua dans cette mission car les nationaux-socialistes doutaient de sa loyauté. Il fut alors interdit d'analyse personnelle ou didactique et d'enseignement à l'Institut Göring ; ce qu'il invoqua ultérieurement pour se prétendre « victime » des nazis.

Le 16 octobre 1945, la reconstruction de la D.P.G. lui fut confiée et il en fut nommé président. Malgré ses affinités jungiennes (il avait fait une tranche d'analyse avec la jungienne Gertrud Weller), il se vit considéré comme le représentant de la psychanalyse « orthodoxe » et, dans les deux cahiers parus de la *Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* (1949), il fit l'inventaire du savoir analytique. Ses vives dissensions personnelles et théoriques avec le Dr Harald Schultz-Hencke, le fondateur médical de la néoanalyse, qui avait réussi à obtenir de l'État une reconnaissance de la profession (financement de la psychanalyse et des psychothérapies par les caisses de retraite et d'assurance maladie dans le Zentralinstitut für psychogene Erkrankungen, « Institut central des maladies psychogènes »), trouvèrent leur

épilogue lors d'une confrontation officielle au premier congrès de l'A.P.I. après la guerre, en 1949 à Zurich. Celle-ci aboutit à la création de l'Association psychanalytique allemande (D.P.V.) le 10 juin 1950, qui offrit dès lors une formation classique à l'Institut psychanalytique de Berlin. Les membres restés à la D.P.G. en voulurent à leur président d'avoir secrètement formé une nouvelle association. Au congrès d'Amsterdam de l'A.P.I. en 1951, seule la D.P.V. fut admise.

Tout en exerçant comme analyste, Carl Müller-Braunschweig enseigna la psychanalyse à l'Université libre de Berlin (F.U.). Il était surtout intéressé par l'articulation entre l'anthropologie et la psychanalyse. À partir de 1920 et jusqu'à la prise de pouvoir par les nazis, il a régulièrement écrit dans l'*Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, dans la *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaften* et dans *Imago*, entre autres. Après la guerre, il s'est essentiellement livré à une exégèse détaillée des œuvres de Freud.

Regine Locket

Bibliogr. : Locket R. (1985, 1994) ; Müller-Braunschweig C. (1933, 1948, 1955).

Compléments : Allemagne ; Berliner Psychoanalytisches Institut ; Deutsches Institut für Psychologische Forschung und Psychotherapie (« Institut Göring ») ; Göring, Matthias Heinrich ; International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies ; scissions psychanalytiques.

multilinguisme et psychanalyse

Le multilinguisme se réfère à la possibilité de comprendre et parler plusieurs langues. Ce terme général concerne aussi bien le pluri-lingue (qui a appris à parler plusieurs langues simultanément) que le polyglotte (qui a appris d'autres langues après avoir acquis solidement sa langue maternelle). Il peut être employé comme terme générique lorsque les deux situations ne sont pas à différencier.

Dans le domaine de la psychanalyse, ce terme, dont l'apparition est difficile à dater, a été redéfini récemment dans un ouvrage collectif, *La Babele dell'inconscio* (Amati Mehler et

al., 1990, « La Babel de l'inconscient »). Il y avait auparavant un relatif désintérêt quant à l'incidence du multilinguisme dans la situation analytique, désintérêt qui apparaît d'autant plus surprenant que l'histoire du mouvement psychanalytique est elle-même traversée par des migrations, des transmutations de langues, et cela depuis l'époque des premiers patients de Freud à Vienne.

Pour nombre d'entre eux, en effet, l'allemand n'était pas la langue maternelle (le plus célèbre demeure l'Homme aux loups, mais on peut évoquer aussi Mlle Lucy, ou encore certains analystes, comme la princesse Bonaparte, et bien d'autres). Freud fut d'ailleurs amené à analyser directement en anglais un certain nombre de ses patients anglophones, l'anglais étant devenu à la fin de sa vie la langue qu'il utilisait principalement dans son travail. Ainsi, dans les premiers temps du mouvement psychanalytique, était-il rare que l'analyste et son patient partagent une unique et même langue.

Le multilinguisme du patient, comme le pluri- ou monolinguisme de l'analyste, posent des questions très épineuses quant au cadre et à la technique analytique, mais aussi quant à l'ensemble de l'appareil conceptuel. Et s'il n'est peut-être pas nécessaire de proposer un mode de fonctionnement psychique propre aux multilingues, il n'en reste pas moins vrai que les parcours singuliers que le multilinguisme ajoute aux méandres de l'Inconscient méritent d'être suivis.

Dès la *Contribution à la conception des aphasies* (1891b), l'attention de Freud est retenue par la question du passage d'une langue à l'autre. Il y souligne « la perte de nouvelles acquisitions de langage à la suite de n'importe quel dommage de l'appareil du langage en tant que superassociations, alors qu'est maintenue la langue maternelle ». Dans le même ouvrage, les différences entre les représentations de mot et les représentations de chose permettront plus tard (« L'Inconscient », 1915e) de définir ce qui singularise le fonctionnement de l'Inconscient du système Préconscient-Conscient. Le rapport entre la représentation de mot et la représentation de chose dessine une trame cruciale du contexte multilingue.

Si nous acceptons l'idée que le multilingue enrichit le tissu de son Préconscient avec d'autres représentations de mot, il est légitime de se demander ce qu'il advient de leurs

liens avec les représentations de chose. Les deux systèmes se réfèrent-ils toujours à la même représentation de chose ou, au contraire, la représentation de chose change-t-elle aussi ? La réponse ne fait pas l'unanimité tantôt on considère que la représentation de chose reste la même, tantôt on introduit un écart qui renvoie à deux représentations de chose distinctes. Dans cette dernière hypothèse, les représentations de chose feraient néanmoins partie du même complexe associatif, l'écart étant alors le résultat d'un investissement particulier de la représentation de chose par le représentant-affect de la pulsion, le plus important selon Freud. On peut souligner avec Erwin Stengel (1939) qu'une nouvelle langue établit un nouveau rapport libidinal avec le mot et la chose à laquelle il renvoie.

La seconde langue peut venir au secours d'un système de refoulement vacillant, être un signe de clivage ou d'isolement, ou bien produire une nouvelle richesse symbolique. Ce sont les vicissitudes personnelles du sujet qui vont déterminer si l'autre langue est au service de la résistance ou permet au contraire une plus grande plasticité intrapsychique perlaborative.

Enfin, le multilinguisme ne saurait nous faire oublier que chez le sujet unilingue doit aussi s'opérer un acte de traduction, aussi bien dans tout acte de communication avec autrui qu'à l'intérieur de la vie psychique entre les instances intrapsychiques elles-mêmes.

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Bibliogr. : Amati Mehler J. et al. (1990) ; Freud S. (1891b) ; Stengel E. (1939) ; Tesone J.E. (1996) ; Urbatey L. de (1988).

Compléments : aphasie ; linguistique et psychanalyse.

Musatti, Cesare

Psychanalyste et psychologue italien, Cesare Musatti est né à Dolo (Venise) le 21 septembre 1897 et mort à Milan le 20 mars 1989. Il a été le chef de file de la première génération de psychanalystes italiens.

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APROXIMACIONES PSICOANALÍTICAS AL LENGUAJE LITERARIO



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EN LA PUNTA DE LAS LENGUAS. CUANDO EL DISCURSO EN ANÁLISIS O LA ESCRITURA LITERARIA UTILIZAN OTRAS LENGUAS QUE LA MATERNA

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*...que ma propre langue
soit la langue étrangère qui deviendra la plus proche.*

André du Bouchet, *Ici en deux*, Mercure de France, 1986.

El discurso en análisis y la literatura, ya sea la prosa o la poesía, tienen mucho en común. No pretendo agotar todas las semejanzas y diferencias sino remarcar algunas líneas de pensamiento que me surgen desde mi lugar de analista que trabaja en varios idiomas y desde mi propia experiencia como analizante en más de un idioma. Enriquecido como lector de autores que han utilizado otra lengua que la materna en su escritura y como escritor en dos lenguas, el castellano y el francés.

Cuando de manera inadvertida se puede pensar que el uso de la lengua materna fuese la lógicamente elegida como medio de expresión verbal, se puede constatar que ciertos escritores o analizantes, han preferido expresarse en otro idioma. Como toda elección, las motivaciones son siempre subjetivas, pero es interesante subrayar algunos puntos en común.

Mi reflexión lleva necesariamente a interrogarme sobre la lengua llamada materna y qué sucede cuando una persona, ya sea en análisis o en su quehacer literario, cambia de idioma. Existen numerosos ejemplos en el mundo literario y obviamente en la historia del psicoanálisis.

Ahora bien, cabe preguntarse previamente: ¿La lengua de la madre es realmente la lengua materna? El interrogante no es una tautología y su respuesta es menos evidente de lo que parece, necesitando un cierto recorrido previo.

Existe una alienación esencial inherente a la lengua, propia de toda lengua, que es siempre lengua del otro. La lengua llamada materna no es nunca puramente natural, ni propia, ni habitable. No hay un hábitat posible sin la

diferencia que introduce el exilio y la consiguiente nostalgia. No
guas propias de origen, hay lengua propia a la llegada, luego del re
que desaliena del deseo del otro. En algunas ocasiones la lengua de la
no es tanto la lengua que habla la madre al niño en su cotidianeidad
la lengua que desea la madre, que no siempre coincide de manera u
con su propia lengua. Jacques Derrida (1996: 35) se pregunta qué
lengua, quién la posee verdaderamente, a quién ella posee: "¿La lengua
una posesión que posee o que es poseída? ¿Qué hay de ese ser-en-su-c
la lengua hacia donde no cesaremos de retornar?" Más adelante el fil
francés agrega "mi lengua, la sola que me escucho hablar, es la lengua
otro" (p. 47). La lengua materna decía Dante (1305-1307) es aquella
hablamos sin ninguna regla, imitando a nuestra nodriza. Envoltorio son
baño de lenguaje que el niño reconoce como siendo la lengua de la m
aún antes de haber nacido. ¿Es posible sin embargo mantener esta afirm
sin cuestionarla? Confrontado al duelo de la separación del cuerpo a cue
con la madre, el bebé alucina primero el objeto primario, aparece el llamo
los lloros y el grito luego; el laleo y los primeros fonemas más tarde. Relac
intra-cavitaria con la madre al inicio, se produce la aparición del lengu
para compensar la ausencia, que aproxima y separa a la vez, introduciend
la extranjería del otro, más allá que sea su propia madre. La lengua de
madre, enraizada en su vivencia pulsional, vehicula a la vez la universalidad
del lenguaje y el deseo materno. La palabra de la madre imprime en el ni
el sello de la alienación primera al sentido de su propio discurso, violenci
interpretativa originaria, impuesta por la madre al niño, de la cual habla
Piera Aulagnier. Sin olvidar que "tal violencia es necesaria para que el grito
devenga llamado y no mero ruido, la sonrisa signo de amor y no simple juego
de músculos, el amamantamiento deseo de dar vida y no simple oferta de
calorías" (Castoriadis-Aulagnier, 1975: 54).

La lengua materna –pienso– requiere una distancia con la lengua de la
madre. Demanda reconocer la lengua de la madre como la lengua de otro,
hacerla menos solemne, desprenderse de lo originario presuntamente natu
ral de la lengua, desacralizarla. La lengua materna exige poder hacerla propia
en algún momento, atribuirle un sentido singular para el sujeto. Lograr rea
lizar el duelo de la fusión inicial, poder dejar la confusión del Uno absoluto.
Es bueno desear la lengua materna para desprenderse luego y reinventarla
finalmente.

Derrida subraya que el "de" de la lengua *de* la madre "significa no tanto
la propiedad como de donde proviene: la lengua es del otro, venida del otro,
la venida del otro" (p. 127). En ese sentido, se puede decir que la lengua
materna es una lengua de partida, luego no se encuentran sino lenguas de

recorrido, o incluso de llegada, movimiento hecho explícito por el plurilingüe, pero del cual el monolingüe no está exento: "nunca tenemos una sola lengua, el monolingüismo no hace nunca uno consigo mismo" (Derrida, 1996: 123). Retomando los conceptos Winicottianos, ¿podríamos decir que la lengua materna sería esa área transicional de objeto encontrado-creado? La lengua de la madre es antes que todo una lengua "afectada", es decir atravesada por un movimiento afectivo. A veces envolviendo y conteniendo, a veces generando angustia vampírica o incestuosa.

El pasaje de la lengua de la madre a la lengua materna supone el corte con el cuerpo a cuerpo de la fusión inicial, el abandono de esa lengua de comprensión perfecta a la cual hace referencia el mito de Babel. Pasaje que supone la inclusión del tercero, la instancia paterna del *logos* y la asunción de la falta. Exige una cierta deconstrucción de la saturación del *demasiado sentido* de la lengua de la madre para poder partir a la búsqueda, nunca del todo alcanzable, del sentido de su propia lengua, es decir de la lengua tamizada por su deseo y el efecto que él mismo anuda a su discurso. "Desear, no es encontrar. Es buscar. Es desolidarizarse de sí, de la sociedad, del lenguaje, de lo que fue, de la madre, de aquello de lo cual hemos salido, del otro que incorpora" (Quignard, 1998: 170). Hablar supone una pérdida: desde que el sujeto habla no es más un sujeto hecho para el goce del Otro materno, y nada viene a significarle lo que es (Chaboudez, 1994).

Ese recorrido puede hacerse por la cadena de significantes del mismo idioma materno, o requerir el pasaje por otras lenguas, llamadas extranjeras. Lo cual plantea en psicoanálisis un campo clínico sumamente sugestivo, como es el uso en sesión, de manera aislada, o en el curso del análisis, de otra lengua que aquella que le enseñó a uno su nodriza. Ya sea por parte del analizante, del analista, o de ambos.

El lenguaje, ya sea en análisis o en la literatura, no abarca nunca lo real, siempre queda un resto indecible. El empleo de más de una lengua puede brindar la ilusión que con varias lenguas se logra asir completamente la cosa. Se puede lograr un sentido, pero no se agota nunca su significado. La enunciación se desliza a través del significante.

Ser consciente, contrariamente a Cratilo, que no existe una naturalidad evidente entre la cosa y la palabra que la nombra, es admitir la arbitrariedad del signo. Así, el objeto "mesa" puede ser también "table" en francés y "table" en inglés, que aunque se escriba de la misma manera no tiene la misma sonoridad. La música de una lengua, su prosodia, es tan o más significativa que las reglas de la gramática y el contenido semántico de las palabras.

El empleo de un idioma no tiene solo un aspecto comunicacional, como si fuera un utensilio del cual uno se sirve. Es ante todo la expresión de la

subjetividad del enunciante en un complejo sistema de relaciones de significados compartidos y no compartidos. Pero cada idioma es sobre todo un sistema de pensamiento: base de sustentación, como si fuera una matriz ineludible a partir de la cual el sujeto construye su modo de pensar. No se piensa de la misma manera en un idioma o en otro. Hay expresiones, estructuras de la lengua que influyen en nuestro recorrido asociativo. Por ejemplo, en castellano se utiliza la afirmación simple para sostenerla, cuando en francés se utiliza a menudo la doble negación. Si bien la doble negación vale como afirmación, es una afirmación con más matices, no tan enfática como el castellano. La afirmación en castellano no abre a la duda. En francés se desliza un interrogante, quizá no ajeno al cogito cartesiano.

¿EXISTE UN APARATO PSÍQUICO DIFERENTE EN EL MULTILINGÜE?

A partir de la descripción del "aparato del lenguaje" y de sus trastornos realizada por Freud (1891) en *La concepción de las afasias*, la relación entre lenguaje y pensamiento no ha cesado de interrogar a los psicoanalistas, así como las relaciones entre el lenguaje y el afecto. Sabemos que el destino de la representación y el del afecto pueden ser separados, teniendo en cuenta que el último eslabón del proceso de "psiquización" se cumple con la representación de palabra (Green, 1973). Ahora bien, ¿qué ocurre cuando la representación de palabra incluye más de una lengua? ¿Cuando, entre los destinos posibles del afecto, se encuentra el recorrido a través de las lenguas? Al respecto, debemos notar el matiz que existe entre plurilingüismo y poliglotismo. En efecto, aprender varias lenguas simultáneamente desde la más temprana edad –ser "plurilingüe"– probablemente no tenga la misma incidencia intrapsíquica que el hecho de aprender una lengua extranjera más tardíamente –ser políglota– cuando la lengua materna se encuentra ya sólidamente adquirida. Podemos, sin embargo, conservar el término más general de multilingüismo cuando no es necesario diferenciar el poliglotismo del plurilingüismo, como lo sugieren Amati-Mehler y otros (1990).

La historia del movimiento psicoanalítico se halla atravesada por migraciones, transmutaciones de lenguas, y esto desde la época de los primeros pacientes de Freud en Viena. Para la mayoría, el alemán era una segunda lengua, como fue el caso para uno de los más célebres, el llamado Hombre de los Lobos, y también para la Señorita Lucy y numerosos americanos que llegaron hasta Viena. Con algunos, fue necesario que Freud hablara en inglés (Flegenheimer, 1989).

En vez de seguir los caminos aparentemente conocidos de la lengua materna, el multilingüe prefiere a veces recurrir a los pequeños senderos forestales,

al abrigo del calor, al abrigo de la otra lengua. ¿Cómo calificarla: prestada, extranjera, de adopción? Si hablo de calor es porque el psicoanálisis tiene que ver con el lenguaje, por supuesto, pero sobre todo con el afecto y con la pulsión (Tesone, 2000). De este modo, el recorrido se alarga: "la pulsión es menos un vínculo que un circuito" (Green, 1973: 228).

Cuando el poliglota elige analizarse en una lengua que no es la que recibimos imitando sin ninguna regla a nuestra nodriza (Dante, circa 1305-1307), mantiene deliberadamente sus distancias alejándose de la voz del objeto primario, fuente de una excitación demasiado grande. Si el circuito es más corto, el sujeto teme la sobrecarga afectiva, teme el cortocircuito. ¿Qué hubiera ocurrido si Edipo, ese célebre migrante, no hubiera hablado la misma lengua que la esfinge? ¿Hubría podido rodear la ciudad de Tebas y evitar así la tragedia? Si aceptamos la idea de que en el transvasamiento de las lenguas el multilingüe enriquece el tejido de su preconsciente con otras representaciones de palabra, ¿qué ocurre entonces con el afecto? (Tesone, 1996).

A partir de estas preguntas y de algunas viñetas clínicas intentaremos seguir la singularidad del recorrido psíquico en un paciente que eligió de manera deliberada analizarse en una lengua distinta de su lengua materna y del valor que adquirió en su imaginario el *Retablo de Brera*, célebre pintura de Piero della Francesca.

Luego haremos hincapié, por analogía, en algunos autores que cambiaron de lengua al escribir ficciones noveladas.

EL ENCUENTRO CON LUCIANO

El encuentro tiene lugar en una época de mi vida en la cual residía en París. La primera entrevista se desarrolla en francés; nada más común en Francia, si no fuera por el hecho de que el francés no es la lengua materna de Luciano, y tampoco la mía. Sin embargo, la situación es más trivial de lo que parece. En efecto, me tienta pensar que el analista y su paciente nunca comparten realmente la misma lengua. Como si la unidad de lengua pudiera engañar, permitiera escuchar más fácilmente al inconsciente del analizando.

Menos trivial es, sin embargo, la elección implícita de Luciano de analizarse en la lengua de su país de adopción. El colega que me lo derivó había pensado que mi conocimiento de la cultura italiana podía ser provechoso para la cura. Pero debemos aclarar que Luciano no había buscado especialmente un analista italo-parlante, lo que hubiera sido posible para él en una ciudad tan cosmopolita como París. No obstante, le hago saber a Luciano

que comprendo el italiano y que puede utilizar dicha lengua si tuviera gusto o si sintiera la necesidad de hacerlo.

El análisis de Luciano me dejó la impresión de haber viajado mucho. Viaje a través del espacio del psiquismo individual, de los intersticios del entre-dos (y del entre-tres) de la relación paciente-analista, de los espacios entre las generaciones, para volver, después de ese recorrido, a una nueva perspectiva del espacio intrapsíquico. Un nuevo *topos*, pero también una nueva geografía. Viaje también a través del tiempo, retorno hacia el pasado, retorno tal vez hacia el futuro contenido en germen en ese pasado. Y sobre todo, viaje a través de las lenguas. Las que utilizamos de una manera explícita: el francés, nuestra lengua de intercambio prevalente (la de su mujer, la de sus hijos); el italiano (su lengua materna), solamente algunas palabras o frases siempre cargadas de un contenido emocional intenso (lengua de su madre, de sus abuelos maternos, de su hermano); el inglés (en raras oportunidades, en las cuales la lengua francesa vacilaba en su función de paraexcitación de una pulsionalidad demasiado invasora). Las que se hallaban en filigrana pero no por eso menos presentes: la lengua de su padre (que Luciano no habla pero comprende (un dialecto del norte de Italia, muy cercano al alemán), el dialecto de la ciudad en que nació, y el español (su lengua materna).

Viaje también a través de otro lenguaje, el lenguaje musical, presente a lo largo de todo su análisis, si tenemos en cuenta que Luciano era un apasionado de la música. Finalmente, musicalidad de nuestros acentos respectivos; el suyo, apenas reconocible, el mío (que le había permitido adquirir la casi certeza de que mi lengua materna –el español– era originaria de América Latina, probablemente de Argentina..., aunque de origen italiano, tal como lo sigue mi apellido).

En la trama tejida por el entrelazamiento de varias lenguas, el francés tuvo por momentos una función de extraterritorialidad, de *no-man's-land* al abrigo de los conflictos. De para-excitación, conteniendo una pulsionalidad experimentada como demasiado peligrosa, o de área transicional; a menudo, una función de tercerización de nuestra relación.

Luciano ya no contaba con un diccionario italiano en su casa. Si en alguna oportunidad necesitaba encontrar el sentido de una palabra en italiano, recurría a un diccionario francés-italiano primero, para encontrar luego la palabra equivalente en francés que le permitiría aprender su sentido. Me dirá: "Siempre necesito una transferencia". Como lo sugiere Penot (1994: 1594), "algo del analista sería percibido de entrada por el inconsciente del paciente como una *oferta a transferir*". Ya en la primera sesión se anuncia un movimiento transferencial materno intenso, que toma rápidamente una

forma arcaica. Educado por sus padres, pero también por una abuela materna omnipresente, su imago materna estará fusionada entre su madre y la abuela. Imago escindida en dos imagos terroríficas: una representada por su madre, imagen de un fantasma corporizado, ni totalmente viva ni totalmente muerta, con la cual entabló una relación de posesividad vampirizante. La otra, la de la abuela, representa una imagen seductora, forma perversa de una madre abusiva sexualmente. A la imago omnipotente de la madre, él agregaba una imago igualmente potente —si no más—: la de su abuela. Perpetuo balanceo entre dos imagos femeninas arcaicas terroríficas, ambas abusivas. Una vampírica, congelada, petrificante, que paralizaba toda manifestación de vida. La otra, relacionada con una abuela seductora, incestuosa, desbaratadora de toda norma, en particular de la del padre, que permanece a distancia, eternamente impotente frente al poder de las mujeres.

Una lógica binaria reinaba en el mundo afectivo familiar encerrado de su infancia:

Si soy complaciente con mi madre, tornándome tan disponible como ella lo quiere, descuido a mi padre; y si soy generoso de mi amor para con mi padre, es a mi madre a quien voy a decepcionar. Mi padre es malo, mi madre es buena. Esta idea que creí tener durante mi infancia, no sé si mi madre contribuyó para que yo la tuviera, pero sé que mi abuela sí. Me contaba en secreto cosas que ahora me chocan. Por ejemplo, que durante la noche de bodas de mis padres, mi padre se habría manejado como un puerco, brutalmente, sexualmente perverso. Por detrás de esta idea estaba la idea más general de que no solamente mi padre, sino todos los hombres, eran así. Esto no se corresponde con la imagen que, ya adulto, tenía yo de mi padre, pero la imagen que me dio mi abuela, sin duda, marcó mi relación de infancia con él.

Así se expresa la contradicción en la cual se encuentra atrapado Luciano: si afirma su virilidad, se convierte inexorablemente en el hombre tan detestado por su abuela. Acceder al "mundo racional", germánico, de su padre, se torna entonces su único medio de abandonar el "mundo irracional", latino, de su madre.

En la discordia posible de linajes, la filiación suele ser una elección. Jorge Luis Borges, por ejemplo, en su texto "El Sur", más allá de su origen en parte europeo y la influencia que tuvieron en él el idioma y la literatura inglesa, cuenta, de manera autobiográfica, bajo un seudónimo:

El hombre desembarcó en Buenos Aires en 1871, se llamaba Johannes Dahlmann y era pastor de la iglesia evangélica; en 1939, uno de sus nietos, Juan Dahlmann, era secretario de una biblioteca municipal en

la calle Córdoba y se sentía hondamente argentino. Su abuelo materno había sido aquel Francisco Flores, del 2 de infantería de línea, que murió en la frontera de Buenos Aires, lanceado por indios de Catriel; en la discordia de sus dos linajes, Juan Dahlmann (tal vez a impulso de la sangre germánica) eligió el de ese pasado romántico, o de muerte romántica. Un estuche con el daguerrotipo de un hombre inexpresivo y barbado, una vieja espada, la dicha y el coraje de ciertas músicas, el hábito de estrofas del Martín Fierro, los años, el desgano y la soledad fomentaron ese criollismo algo voluntario, pero nunca ostentoso (Borges, 1974: 525).

En el linaje de Luciano, la imagen que se había forjado de su padre oscilaba entre la de un hombre dulce, gentil, justo, pero eternamente impotente ante el poder de las mujeres, y la de un hombre potente pero brutal, más cercano al relato de la abuela, y cuya violencia sexual podía volverse contra él.

El recuerdo de un pequeño juego verbal de su infancia traído a sesión es tal vez revelador del lugar que ocupaba Luciano entre su madre y su abuela. Le preguntaban –soplándole las respuestas por adelantado–: “¿Qué le trajo Luciano a la familia?” (como si el niño hubiera sido un objeto parcial-regalo). “¿Qué le trajo Luciano a la abuela?” Y Luciano contestaba: “La cabeza de seda” (por sus cabellos rubios y sedosos). Se suponía que a la madre le había traído los ojos azules; a su hermano, las manitos que hacen monerías... y ¿a su padre? ¿Qué le trajo Luciano a su papá? Y Luciano debía contestar: “*Il pinpin*” (el pito), esto en medio de una gran carcajada de todo el mundo. ¿De todo el mundo? No recordaba si su padre estaba allí.

Si la madre y la abuela pensaban que ese objeto parcial fálico debía serle llevado al padre, es que sin duda, según ellas, le hacía falta terriblemente. En todo caso, el objeto parcial fálico parecía estar sobre todo destinado a garantizar la potencia fálica de esas dos mujeres. Para Luciano, las cosas ocurrían de este modo: convirtiéndose en el pene del padre, evitaba que este último fuera castrado y escapaba él mismo a la castración... de la madre fálica. En todo caso lo fijó en una posición alienante de ser el falo materno.

En el transcurso de la misma sesión, Luciano relata otro recuerdo. Me explica que el trabajo de su padre hacía que este tuviera que estar ausente periódicamente varias noches por semana. “Iba a dormir con mi madre. Sensación increíblemente fuerte de las piernas de mi madre que buscaban las mías debajo de las frazadas. Aún hoy siento un gran placer, cuando me despierto, en frotar mis pies uno contra el otro”. Esta imagen de una madre pulsional hiperexcitante, en general atribuida a la abuela, va a permanecer escindida mucho tiempo, “en espera”. “En mi casa, no es Dios Padre sino Dios Madre”. Un calendario ilustrado, colgado en un muro de su casa y que

mostraba diferentes episodios del Infierno de Dante, no ayudaba a tranquilizarlo. "Algunas de esas imágenes están grabadas en mi mente, en particular una con hombres donde solamente sus cabezas sobresalían del hielo, como de un lago congelado. Yo pensaba que el infierno era fuego, no sabía que había lugares fríos".

Tal es la paradoja del niño edípico que fue Luciano: seducir a su madre atraería tal vez la cólera de su padre; pero no seducirla, ¿no produciría acaso su propia muerte?

Luciano va entonces a destacarse en el arte de la seducción: "Seducir es para mí algo vital", me dijo un día. Es el preferido de su madre, de sus profesores de la escuela, tiene incluso una relación amorosa con una profesora de su colegio. Para Luciano, la cuestión del sexo de los ángeles no es una simple discusión bizantina, lo reenvía al temor del dominio materno (Pragier, 1986). Temor que resurgirá muy a menudo en la transferencia, a lo largo de la cura. La lengua italiana y sus referencias culturales fueron de este modo utilizadas para seducirme defensivamente, aunque permanecían vivas por su enlace con la vida imaginaria.

La multitud de imágenes de la "Virgen con el niño" que adornaban la casa de su infancia y, en particular, un cuadro en la habitación de sus padres habían llamado su atención. La Virgen reinaba siempre, manteniendo para sí sola el niño entre sus brazos. De todas las vírgenes, aquella que había sin duda cristalizado su deseo era una reproducción de Piero della Francesca: *El retablo de Brera*. La imagen constituye el soporte imaginario privilegiado de su vínculo con la madre. Este cuadro muestra a la Virgen sentada con el niño dormido en brazos en una iglesia. La diáda está rodeada de seis santos, cuatro ángeles y un mecenas. Por encima de la cabeza de la Virgen se halla suspendido un huevo bastante misterioso. Por un efecto de perspectiva, se sitúa exactamente por encima de la cabeza de la diáda. El niño, con los ojos cerrados, parece estar a punto de caer de las rodillas de la Virgen. Luciano me dice que ese huevo siempre le había hecho pensar en la relación con su madre. En el cuadro, pensaba, "es inconcebible que el huevo se rompa. Esto también me da un poco de vergüenza, por qué no poner bigotes como en *La Gioconda*; podríamos imaginar un huevo roto en el cuadro de Piero della Francesca, pero yo no soy un buen iconoclasta".

No pudiendo "poner bigotes", introducir un tercero en la relación encerrada, encapsulada con su madre, Luciano, que, según sus propias palabras, no es "un buen iconoclasta", no encontrará otra salida que la escisión y la represión redobladas por el cambio de lengua. Para no romper el huevo, "dejará" el divino niño a su madre, al mismo tiempo arrobamiento edípico y ofrenda a la potencia materna. Y es "sin el niño" que cruzará los Alpes, no teniendo

el niño derecho de estada en Francia. En este punto, el análisis se tornará inquietante para él, ya que, denunciando la escisión, le recordaba que el niño en él se hallaba aún en el interior del huevo que Luciano debería romper si quería realmente dejar el vínculo fusional con su madre. Esta imposibilidad de romper el huevo se veía reforzada por el temor que entonces su madre o él murieran. "*Mors tua vita mia*" (tu muerte mi vida), me había dicho. El cuadro representa una Virgen de Piedad que sostiene en sus rodillas el cuerpo endormecido o inanimado de su hijo, prefigurando la Pasión. La imagen anuncia el dolor. Alude al sufrimiento de la cruz, la muerte y la redención. Este cuadro confrontaba a Luciano con el dolor de la separación con su madre, vivida como la muerte de ambos. En su lógica, si abandonaba la posición de ser el falo de la madre se desmoronaban ambos. Para conservar su vida, pero sobre todo su relación de completud con su madre, el huevo permanecerá largo tiempo intacto. En la iconografía cristiana, el huevo representa a la vez la fertilidad y la inmaculada concepción (Réau, 1957). Evitar la lengua italiana le permitía justamente conservar en el trasfondo esta relación encapsulada donde no había un lugar ni para el tercero ni para la escena primaria.

Si la pintura había quedado indisolublemente unida a su madre, la escultura, en cambio, lo acercaba a su padre. Luciano encontraba que la escultura era más sincera, con un costado más abrupto, más franco. De niño, un recuerdo de un viaje a Florencia con su padre le había dado la esperanza de poder identificarse con él. Sorprendido por el hecho de que la estatua de Neptuno tuviera "pelos en su sexo", su padre lo había tranquilizado diciéndole que, más tarde, él también los tendría. Sin embargo, el camino de la identificación con su padre quedará durante mucho tiempo cortado para Luciano, mientras la cáscara del huevo no pueda ser abierta y la plenitud encubierta cuestionada.

En su primer año de análisis, Luciano es "*bravo*" (amable) conmigo. Y, en lo que a mí respecta, no caben dudas de que siento un verdadero placer en conducir un análisis plurilingüe. Así pues, Luciano pone la riqueza de sus asociaciones, de su vida fantasmática, lo extendido de su cultura, pero también el empleo intermitente de la lengua italiana al servicio de intentos de seducción hacia mi persona.

Luciano tendrá un sueño que se tornará muy expresivo a partir del momento en que realiza asociaciones en italiano: estaba en mi consultorio y había una mesa que él notaba que estaba un poco tambaleante. Para arreglarla, intenta pasar una vela a lo largo de la acanaladura. Asocia cajón (*cassetto*) con pene (*cazzo*) y pequeño pene (*cazzetto*), y recuerda lo expresado por un compañero de colegio: "*Mi è caduto il pennelleto, mi è caduto il pene nel letto*" (se me cayó el pincelito, se me cayó el pene en la cama). Elocuente de su angustia de castración.

Luciano va a hablar de la relación difícil, violenta, que existía entre su hermano y su madre. Su hermano había sido uno de los ángeles destronados por parte de la madre, caídos en el infierno. Luciano me cuenta que de niño, todo su esfuerzo estaba dirigido a no parecerse a su hermano, temiendo sufrir el mismo destino. Tenía que mostrarse excesivamente amable para no contrariar a una madre frágil, "en porcellana" (de porcelana)... y luego aclara, "es la palabra *porcellona* (chancha gorda) la que se me apareció inmediatamente después".

Luciano asocia con una película, un *western spaghetti* en el cual dos hermanos eran complementarios "para defender mejor a su madre".

Le pregunto: "para defenderla mejor, o para defenderse mejor de ella?" Luciano responde: "La idea que se me aparece es que mi hermano y yo hubiéramos tenido dos posibilidades: reconocer que mi madre estaba loca, para defendernos mejor de ella, o secundarla en su locura, como si no pasara nada. En casa, todos estábamos allí para esconder el hecho de que mi madre estaba loca. Teníamos que tomar nosotros mismos la forma física de sus delirios para que ella no se diera cuenta de que estaba loca. Me acuerdo de una leyenda siciliana: la historia de una familia de nobles que tuvo un hijo enano. Pusieron un montón de enanos en el jardín. Incluso, habrían empleado servidores enanos. Así, el niño no notaba que en el mundo existía algo más que enanos..."

Su sentimiento de agobio me hizo tomar conciencia de que durante ese período del análisis, en mi contratransferencia, me sentía yo mismo un poco como un psicoanalista enano, impotente, identificado -pienso- con el niño que había sido Luciano, desconcertado ante la omnipotencia del dominio materno. Teniendo en cuenta sus asociaciones, pero también mi vivencia contratransferencial, le diré, poco antes del final de la sesión, que seguramente él se sintió como un enano ante una madre tan potente en su fragilidad.

Subraya que está realizando un análisis en Francia, disciplina creada por un austríaco, y en un país percibido por él como un país del norte. Que esta disciplina pertenezca a un mundo no latino lo tranquiliza. Dice que el psicoanálisis forma parte de "ese arsenal de armas de las cuales yo me defiendo...", luego rectifica: "que intento adquirir para defenderme". Consciente de su lapsus, agrega que represento para él un personaje ambiguo. En su mente, el psicoanálisis no existe en Italia, aunque él sabe muy bien que esto no es exacto. Da por sentado que el psicoanálisis no forma parte de las herramientas culturales de un intelectual italiano, aunque reconoce que se niega a saber si tiene razón o está equivocado.

Luciano vuelve sobre la ambigüedad de mi papel: "formado en una disciplina no latina, siendo usted originario de una cultura latina, de lengua

española, hablando italiano, y amando usted probablemente a Italia". Él dice: "Es la primera vez que me planteo la pregunta de su relación afectiva con Italia. Me molestaría que la amara y me molestaría que no la amara. Hago un poco como los niños que quieren ser los únicos en amar a su madre, pero también los únicos en detestarla".

En el amor, como en el odio, Luciano quiere estar seguro de ser el único en ocupar las valencias de su madre.

LA LINGUA BIFORCUTA O EL PODER FÁLICO DE LA LENGUA

Luciano trae a sesión una pesadilla: "Llegaba a una región de excavaciones. No iba allí para excavar, no era mi intención. Yo sabía que no era querido allí. Cada persona que participaba de la excavación llevaba una insignia con su nombre. Estoy sentado y una enorme serpiente de cascabel se me acerca, sube alrededor de mi cuerpo. Me invade el pánico, me digo que es el momento de mi muerte. La serpiente me muerde a la altura de mi sexo. En ese punto, me despierto muy angustiado". Luciano asocia la serpiente a la publicidad de una lapicera en la cual se ve una cobra... especialmente angustiante por tener escamas de plástico. Asocia luego con el verbo italiano *suonare*, es decir, tocar un instrumento, y con el juego de palabras de un personaje en *Un amor de Swann* que habla del "*serpent à sonnetes*", serpiente de cascabel (aludiendo a alguien que viene a tocar piano)...

Luciano se da cuenta de que cascabel [*sonnette*¹] es el anagrama de mi apellido, el que se encuentra justo por debajo del timbre [*sonnette*] en la puerta de entrada de mi consultorio. Este descubrimiento lo irrita y se muestra un poco impaciente, me pregunta qué puedo estar haciendo yo ahí, en ese sueño. Pronuncia mi nombre "a la italiana". Me recuerda que en el mensaje de mi contestador yo pronuncio mi nombre "a la francesa", lo que también lo irrita, así como mi pertenencia a la cultura hispanoparlante, y agrega: "Como si, para mí, usted fuera italiano..."

Luciano me dice que muy al principio él se había preguntado:

Y si, por casualidad, él fuera italiano, yo que estoy analizándome en francés... nunca me animé a hablar demasiado el italiano, solo una palabra, una frase. Con respecto a usted, yo tenía una incertidumbre: hasta qué punto entendía usted el italiano, en qué medida quería yo hablar en italiano. La lengua italiana, una lengua con la cual no me siento francamente cómodo. Tengo la impresión de que el italiano suena como una lengua artificial, escolar, sin sorpresa; al fin de cuen-

¹ Coloco entre corchetes las palabras en el idioma original del texto, sin lo cual los deslizamientos asociativos no pueden comprenderse

tas, aburrida... Cuando llegué a Francia, mis opiniones expresadas en francés se tornaban mucho más tajantes que en italiano. Tenía que decir en dos palabras lo que yo pensaba. ¿Habré perdido o ganado algo por el hecho de hablar en francés? Para mí, Francia representa la vida adulta e Italia, mi infancia y mi adolescencia. Leer en italiano sigue siendo para mí algo muy lúdico, como un juguete maravilloso, y es por esa razón que me cuesta tanto concentrarme.

Después, Luciano recuerda a un amigo, un profesor de filosofía de su escuela, a quien hubiera deseado más de una vez cerrarle el pico.

Le digo que es eso, sobre todo, lo que hubiera querido hacerle a la serpiente de cascabel. Luciano me aclara que en las películas de cowboys, que miraba cuando era adolescente, los indios usaban una expresión: "*Avere la lingua biforcuta*" (tener la lengua bífida) para decirle a alguien que mentía, que usaba un doble lenguaje. Y se pregunta: "¿Soy mejor cuando hablo francés o italiano?" (Pregunta que se hace también con respecto a mí). Y Luciano continúa preguntándose si se encuentra más simpático en francés o en italiano. Me dice que mi conocimiento de la cultura italiana me torna más simpático a sus ojos, pero también más amenazante.

Intervengo diciendo que mi bilingüismo francés-italiano, "mi lengua *biforcuta* (bifurcada)", son sentidos por él como una amenaza; en particular, para su masculinidad. Luciano piensa que desde el inicio huye de la lengua italiana. Dice:

En el sueño, usted es la serpiente... o sea que la amenaza proviene de la boca... el poder de la palabra. Para mí, el dominio de la lengua italiana era la familia de mi madre. Ellos despreciaban a mi padre... porque le costaba escribir una carta. Mi padre no dominaba la lengua italiana en sus matices formales. Cada vez que tenía que escribir una carta, se peleaba con mi madre. Me encontré con mi mujer en la misma situación que mi padre con mi madre. Siento siempre la necesidad de recurrir a mi mujer para que verifique mis cartas

En el sueño, la representación de la serpiente provista de una lengua bifurcada es una doble representación fálica que condensa, a semejanza de la Medusa, renegación y angustia de castración. Luciano tiene miedo de mi poder fálico..., pero en una transferencia materna dentro de la cual tomaría una posición pasiva homosexual con respecto al padre), Luciano puede entonces pensar en renegar la diferencia de los sexos. Pero teme padecer así —como su padre— el destino de hombre castrado por su madre. Luciano, después de haberme explicado que recurría a la ayuda de su mujer (como su padre lo hacía

con la madre de Luciano) para todo lo concerniente al aspecto formal de la lengua, me formula la misma pregunta: "¿Se dice así?". La terceridad en la relación de Luciano conmigo está vectorizada por la lengua francesa, lengua que, según decía, tomaba para él "un carácter más tajante", por oposición al "juguete maravilloso" representado por el italiano, equivalente masturbatorio de carácter incestuoso, que le permite conservar la ilusión de ser el falo materno. Desde el fondo de su angustia de castración, Luciano se pregunta: "¿Habré perdido o ganado algo por el hecho de hablar en francés?". En otras palabras: ¿es mejor ser el falo o tenerlo?

Las palabras que se me aparecen en italiano, no tengo ganas de aplicarlas a mi padre. Como si las palabras en francés no pudieran afectar a mi padre. En italiano, correspondería a las palabras que mi abuela profería contra él. Esos pensamientos expresados en italiano no quiero compartírselos con mi abuela. Si tuviera que pensar que mi padre era un pobre tipo, debería ser mi propio pensamiento. Y ese pensamiento no tiene que afectar el amor que siento por mi padre. Me prohíbo pensarlo en italiano porque eso no me pertenece completamente. Como si el francés fuera una lengua que inventé para mi propio uso.

Una afectividad distinta aparece mediatizada por las aventuras de Corto Maltés, un héroe de historieta cuyo autor, Hugo Pratt, había sido el ídolo de su adolescencia. Me hablará de una historia intitulada "Tango", que transcurre en Buenos Aires. Luciano me aclara que solo muy recientemente empezó a escuchar tango, "como si no hubiese querido acercarme a esa música por temor a quererla".

Le hago notar que, así como con el tango, tal vez él tenía temor de quererme, y que el héroe de Hugo Pratt, un italiano que había vivido largo tiempo en Argentina, servía entonces como un mediador de afectos entre él y yo. Luciano parece poder abandonar una homosexualidad primaria, fusional, indiferenciada —fuente de angustia—, para pasar a una homosexualidad edípica en la cual el amor homosexual incluye la relación ternaria y abre a la bisexualidad psíquica (Denis, 1984). Así, el vínculo interno con su imago materna, que funcionaba a manera de obstáculo para que Luciano pudiera apropiarse de la herencia simbólica paterna, parece estar en buena medida reorganizado. Se puso en marcha un proceso mutativo que posibilitaba una mejor identificación con sus dos padres y su subjetivación sexual. Recordemos aquí lo que dicen Cournut y Cournut (1993: 1553): "El horror *feminae* se transfigura en capacidades de identificaciones bilaterales y recíprocas bajo el sello de la bisexualidad psíquica".

Luciano habla de su mujer, de la cual ha adquirido una imagen menos mágica y mucho más carnal. Dice que le gusta llamarla "la mia amante", palabra que prefiere usar en vez de querida [*maîtresse*²]. Me dirá: "En francés, esta palabra tiene forzosamente una connotación extraconyugal, una relación en la cual la querida [*maîtresse*] se convierte en querida [*maîtresse*] del hombre que sucumbe entonces a su poder. En esa palabra hay algo doloroso". Le parece que la palabra *amante* es "mucho más simpática".

Me comenta luego acerca de un llamado telefónico de su madre, y me repite tal cual sus palabras: "*Se tu fossi rimasto qui vicino a me avrei potuto apprendere il francese come A. ha appreso l'italiano vicino a te*" (si te hubieras quedado aquí al lado mío, yo hubiera podido aprender el francés como A. [su mujer] aprendió el italiano a tu lado). Luciano encuentra este comentario al mismo tiempo cómico y grotesco, y agrega: "Esta historia de lengua de más... que se torna algo importante".

Me doy cuenta de que, varias veces a lo largo de su análisis, Luciano había traído las palabras de su madre directamente en italiano, a diferencia de los demás personajes de su infancia. Hasta ese momento me parecía que tenía que hospedar las palabras en italiano tal cual venían, en la integralidad de su fuerza pulsional, y que esto tenía en Luciano una función mucho más importante que las asociaciones a las cuales reenviaban. Le digo: "me trae las palabras de su madre en italiano para que yo me ocupe de ella, sin que usted se vea confrontado directamente con su madre". Luciano dirá que alejándose de su madre entró en un mundo donde ella nada puede compartir con él, ni siquiera la lengua. Agrega: "Con A. (su mujer) quise compartir la lengua, tanto el italiano como el francés, ya que los dos dominábamos ambas lenguas. Esta mezcla de lenguas –con todo el costado erótico que tiene esto– puede hacerse porque el temor a una relación de poder no es un temor angustiante". Luego, Luciano trae un recuerdo de su infancia que, en el *après-coup*, lo angustia terriblemente: "Yo tenía un caramelo en la boca. No lo quería más. En vez de dejar que lo escupiera, mi madre me pidió que se lo pasara a su boca. ¡Mi primer beso de lengua fue con mi madre! Cuando descubrí, mucho más tarde, lo que era un beso de lengua, este recuerdo me avergonzaba". Este recuerdo

² La palabra *maîtresse* puede traducirse en el presente contexto como "amante" o "querida", pero posee en francés una connotación que no tiene en castellano, ya que *maîtresse* proviene de *maître*: "amo" o "dueño", lo cual explica las expresiones del paciente acerca del hombre que sucumbe al poder de ella.

reenvía, por supuesto, al carácter incestuoso de la relación de Luciano con su madre, y a la confusión de las lenguas de la cual hablaba Ferenczi (1932).

LA ACCA È MUTTA (LA LETRA H ES MUDA)

Luciano llega a una sesión quejándose de tener dolor en una pierna. Habla de un artículo que tradujo del italiano al francés. Al dar a corregir el mismo a su mujer, le subraya un error: había escrito psicoanálisis sin “h”³. Sorprendido de haber tenido ese error, me dice que el hecho de haber eludido la “h” lo reenvía a la palabra en italiano: “quise dejarle una pata italiana”. Luciano asocia la “h” con la palabra en inglés “ache” (que pronuncia en inglés “eich”) y me dice: “ache quiere decir dolor, sacando la h saco lo que me hace mal, la parte enfermiza”. Y agrega: “si no tengo más dolor, si no estoy enfermo, puedo interrumpir mi análisis con Ud.” Asocia luego con un sueño anterior en el cual su madre y yo le cortábamos los pies. Para Luciano, si la “enfermedad” era una relación de dependencia, el psicoanálisis sin “h” era un psicoanálisis sin dependencia, o sea sin pasivación.

Luciano asocia luego con un libro de cuentos de un autor italiano intitolado *Il libro degli errori* (el libro de los errores), en el cual cada cuento se construía a partir de dificultades de ortografía. Me comenta que en uno de esos cuentos la letra “h” se cansa de vivir en Italia porque no se la pronuncia –*la acca è mutta*– y no se siente reconocida. Enojada, la letra “h” parte a Alemania. En ese país tiene importancia porque se la pronuncia. Se produce entonces una catástrofe en Italia, pues se dan cuenta que tenía su utilidad; me aclara: “Por ejemplo, la palabra “*schiaivo*” (esclavo) no quiere decir nada sin la “h”. En el cuento, finalmente van a buscar la letra “h” para traerla de vuelta en Italia.

No se le escapa a Luciano que el alemán es una lengua muy próxima al dialecto de su padre, y que este último, al bajar de la montaña para instalarse en la llanura donde vivía su madre y la familia materna, había sido descalificado por la misma. Luciano: “me veo, siendo niño, quedándome en casa, mientras que los *h*⁴, mi padre y mi hermano, se iban juntos. Como si no hubieran reconocido mi virilidad”. Luego me reprocha el no reconocerla tampoco, pues habiendo atemperado “el poder maléfico” de su madre, continuaba siempre su análisis. Me cuenta que lo habían contactado en esos días de Italia para ir a realizar actividades relacionadas con su ocupación profesional y agrega: “por fin un reconocimiento que me viene de Italia”. Luego asocia con un

³ En francés se escribe “psychanalyse”, es decir con una “h”.

⁴ En alusión a que hombre en francés se dice “homme”.

recuerdo de su infancia: siendo niño había tenido dificultades para escribir la letra "h". Intervengo diciéndole que en italiano, hombre (*uomo*) se escribe sin "h" y que parecería que dejó Italia para poder devenir un hombre con "h", en Francia, pero que ahora devenir un hombre en Italia le parece mucho más posible. Luciano va a asociar con su partida a Francia, con su travesía de los Alpes, Alpes que había dejado su padre para descender a la llanura, habiendo así "perdido su virilidad". Y agrega: "atravesando los Alpes quise devenir un hombre como lo había sido mi padre, ahí donde mi padre había sido un modelo posible". Es decir, ahí donde no se sintiera el esclavo (*schiauo*) castrado de su madre, su objeto parcial fálico. Devenir finalmente un hombre post-ediípico, dejar la posición de falo materno para asumir su condición masculina transponiendo el ser por el tener.

EL AFECTO EN MOVIMIENTO ENTRE LAS PALABRAS Y LAS COSAS

Ibis, redibis, non morieris in bello.

Ibis, redibis non, morieris in bello.

[*Irás, volverás, no morirás en la guerra.*

Irás, no volverás, morirás en la guerra.]

La frase es retomada en el *Chronicon di Alberico delle tre Fontane* (siglo XIII) como ejemplo de la ambigüedad posible de los oráculos. Sin puntuación, la frase permite dos interpretaciones diametralmente opuestas. Gracias a esta ambigüedad, los oráculos se reservan una posibilidad de interpretación alternativa. A semejanza de la ausencia de puntuación, el pasaje por una lengua extranjera puede tener como objetivo introducir ambigüedad en la profecía del oráculo.

Me pareció que cada vez que Luciano utilizaba palabras en italiano, estas, particularmente sobredeterminadas, reenviaban a otra polisemia que la palabra correspondiente en la lengua francesa, y que, sobre todo, estaban especialmente cargadas de afecto. El uso exclusivo de la lengua italiana hubiera tornado el análisis de Luciano imposible, sin duda, confrontándolo demasiado directamente con una sobrecarga afectiva que hubiera entonces tenido un valor de fractura de un sistema de represión vacilante. Así, en un doble movimiento, Luciano, sembrando su discurso con algunas palabras en italiano, buscaba, a través de un procedimiento que yo calificaría de "pequeñas pinceladas", seducirme, al mismo tiempo que esperaba de mí que pudiera contener, conservando la barrera del incesto, su pulsionalidad sentida como demasiado amenazante.

El hecho de pasar por el francés, usando esporádicamente términos italianos, tuvo una función equivalente a la que propone Freud (1925) en su artículo acerca de la negación. No se trata tanto de “mi madre, no es mi madre, pero no es *mia mamma*”. La negación permanece implícita por el paso a la otra lengua. Freud (1925: 254) dice: “Vemos así cómo la función intelectual se separa aquí del proceso afectivo [...] Resulta de ello una especial aceptación intelectual de lo reprimido, mientras persiste lo que es esencial en la represión”. Esto permite levantar la barrera de la represión y, al mismo tiempo, mantenerla. De este modo, lo reprimido y, en particular, el representante-afecto se acercan a las orillas del análisis a través de las pequeñas tranquilizadoras de la lengua extranjera y no por las olas avasalladoras de la lengua materna. La adquisición de una lengua nueva, ¿acaso formaría parte de esa capacidad de extensión del sistema asociativo de las representaciones de palabra? En lo que a las afasias se refiere Freud (1891: 137) constata la pérdida de nuevas adquisiciones de lenguaje como superasociaciones luego de cualquier daño que ocurra en el aparato del lenguaje, en tanto que la lengua materna es conservada”. A la luz de estos dos comentarios, me parece legítimo concebir que las palabras de la lengua extranjera, para el políglota, sobreagregan como un doble sistema de representaciones de palabra (con superasociaciones), con una independencia relativa con respecto al complejo asociativo de la lengua materna, pero conservando sin embargo con estos ciertos vasos comunicantes.

Las representaciones de palabra “*madre*” y “*mamma*”, ¿acaso reenvían a la misma representación de cosa inconsciente? ¿O a dos representaciones de cosa distintas? Resulta tentador contestar que se crea una pequeña separación entre las dos representaciones que, sin embargo, pertenecen al mismo complejo asociativo. Lo que me parece esencial en la producción de esta separación es que la representación de cosa inconsciente sea investida de manera diferente por el representante-afecto de la pulsión, lo más importante del inconsciente, según Freud.

En mi opinión, es necesario que el aparato psíquico pueda admitir, tolerar, la sobreinvestidura de la representación de cosa, para que la ligadura entre la representación de palabra y la representación de cosa pueda establecerse. Es decir, para permitir un trabajo de simbolización. Si el sistema de para-excitación no puede establecerse convenientemente, si el yo-piel (Anzieu, 1985) deja de ser un mediador, la lengua materna no tiene más una función transicional. La hiperinvestidura necesaria para ligar la representación de cosa con la representación de palabra puede llegar a fundir la conexión de cosa de que la simbolización ocurra. Recordemos aquí a Louis Wolfson (1970),

el estudiante de lenguas esquizofrénicas –como se definía a sí mismo-, y su intento desesperado por inventar lenguas que pudieran remediar su vivencia de intrusión materna. Lenguas que permanecían como privadas, desprovistas de simbolización.

Para Luciano, por el contrario, la lengua extranjera contiene, como lo haría una piel nueva, lo demasiado pulsional de las palabras maternas y su contracara, lo demasiado de superyó paterno, tornando la envoltura sonora analítica tolerable, condición necesaria para que se vuelva fecunda. El hilo entre la representación de palabra y la representación de cosa se mantiene: simplemente, se ha alargado.

La nueva representación de cosa “*madre*”, ligada a la anterior, pero menos investida pulsionalmente, admite más fácilmente una sobreinvestidura que la ligue a la representación de palabra “*mamma*”. Es por un rodeo a través de las redes del complejo asociativo que se podrá acceder a la ligadura entre la representación de cosa “*mamma*” y su concomitante verbal.

Con respecto a ese movimiento continuo de búsqueda de simbolización podríamos decir que el representante-afecto de la pulsión es *pirandelliano*. Al modo de lo que se observa en la obra *Seis personajes en búsqueda de un autor*, está a la búsqueda de una representación. El encuentro puede producirse a condición de que la representación de cosa no provoque demasiado temor incestuoso; si no, se produce la transformación en angustia. No se puede comprender la dialéctica que existe entre la representación de cosa y la representación de palabra sin referirla al proceso ternario de significación que encontrará un sentido en el *après-coup* de la resignificación edípica.

La lengua italiana y el uso electivo que Luciano hacía de ella reenviaban a menudo en su transferencia a la rama materna, y a su relación encapsulada con la imago materna (el huevo de Piero della Francesca). La imagen del huevo en el cuadro del pintor italiano del siglo XV había provocado en Luciano un indudable encantamiento. Como si hubiera nacido por partenogénesis. Su exaltación secreta le hacía guardar encapsulado el italiano como lengua de intercambio exclusivo con su madre, lengua de la madre, lengua de la fusión que excluye al tercero. Posición imaginaria omnipotente, que le impedía renunciar a ser el falo materno. Fue desgarrador para Luciano lograr concebir que el huevo tenía que abrirse, y que su partida del otro lado de la frontera italiana no se lo garantizaba *per se*. Le fue necesario atravesar los Alpes, tener un nuevo envoltorio sonoro de la lengua extranjera, poner a distancia la lengua de la madre y de la abuela, concebir una escena primaria que no fuera destructora, tal cual se la había propuesto la abuela, sino portadora de creatividad. Aceptar estar excluido de la misma para poder finalmente acceder al padre permitiéndose libremente identificarse con él. No podía salir de la

cáscara sino identificándose con su padre y concibiendo que la renuncia a ser el falo de su madre le abría el acceso a tenerlo. Que había otro padre posible con el cual identificarse que aquel descalificado por su madre y su abuela en un discurso escuchado por Luciano en italiano.

Exilio de la lengua, de la tierra madre, pero también de la madre-patria. Mater, Pater: ¿no se trataría del exilio de la escena primaria, de ese encuentro que Luciano quería evitar entre el psicoanálisis austríaco paterno y la madre italiana? ¿De hacer como si hubiera partido porque había atravesado una frontera geográfica cuando en realidad permanecía encerrado en una cavidad de plenitud fálica con la madre, representada por el huevo del cuadro de Piero della Francesca ?

El recurso a una lengua adquirida secundariamente, propone Lagache (1956), ofrece al paciente mayores posibilidades de represión. Puede permitir el desarrollo de una cura que sería inabordable con el recurso exclusivo de la lengua materna. Permitió quizás a Luciano sortear la angustia de desmoronamiento si abandonaba su identificación imaginaria al falo materno, haciendo intervenir la Ley del padre en un idioma en el cual su padre no aparecía devaluado. El italiano habría funcionado como un idioma en el cual su identificación fálica adquiriría toda su plenitud, a diferencia del francés donde la ley paterna tenía cabida. Cabe recordar que el falo es el significante privilegiado de esta marca donde la parte del logos se conjuga con el advenimiento del deseo (Lacan, 1958).

Joyce Mc Dougall, analista de origen neozelandés residente en París hasta su muerte acaecida hace algunos años, contaba en un seminario que tuvo la oportunidad de hacer en la Sociedad Psicoanalítica de París lo ocurrido con un analizando cuya lengua de origen era el árabe pero que se analizaba en francés, la lengua en común del análisis. En una sesión, dicho paciente había exclamado improperios de una gran vulgaridad, algo que contrastaba con su estilo refinado y elegante. Joyce Mc Dougall, que no conocía el árabe, tuvo la genial idea de pedirle a su paciente si le podía decir de nuevo las mismas palabras pero en árabe. El paciente, luego de algunos segundos de enmudecimiento, le dice: pero Sra, ¿nunca podría decir eso a una dama! En su lengua materna, esas mismas palabras tenían otra carga de afecto y de represión.

La lengua única, adámica del antes de Babel, subrayan Amati-Mehler y otros (1990), posee un valor mítico. La fábula de Babel se reúne con el mito del Uno primordial, de la fusión, fuente de vértigo y de pánico si tenemos en cuenta la clínica de la psicosis, agregan estos mismos autores: "Solamente luego de la escisión y de la represión, esto podrá ser fuente de nostalgia, recuerdo del paraíso imaginario del cual nos hemos exiliado" (p. 349).

Una frase italiana muy conocida resume bastante bien el efecto del pasaje de una lengua a la otra y la imposibilidad de toda traducción: "*traduttore,*

traditore" (traductor, traidor). Ahora bien, desde el punto de vista psicoanalítico, podemos preguntarnos: *traditore*, ¿de qué?, ¿de quién, en realidad ¿del sentido del texto? ¿de la semántica? De todo eso, por supuesto: *traditore* de la lengua materna, de su sintaxis, de los matices de su gramática imposibles de reproducir fielmente en otra lengua. Pero sobre todo, *traditore* de la lengua de la madre, es decir, del discurso que dirige una madre a su hijo desde el momento mismo del nacimiento –a veces incluso desde antes–, de la obligación de sentido que impone al *infans* estrechándolo entre las redes de sus palabras. Esta obligación de sentido –Piera Aulagnier (1975) la llama violencia primaria– está en funcionamiento en toda relación madre-hijo. El poliglotismo torna explícita la traición necesaria con respecto al discurso de la madre, de la cual no está exento el unilingüe. Dejar atrás la lengua de la madre equivale a salirse de una relación fusional, de la confusión de dos voces que no se expresan más que al unísono.

El psicoanálisis no es un asunto de cosas. Contrariamente a las apariencias, tampoco es un mero asunto de palabras. Gillibert (1989) dice que el psicoanálisis se sitúa entre las palabras y las cosas, más cerca de la poesía, y, agregó, más cerca de la emoción. Se trata de seguir el recorrido del afecto, de dejar que se exprese a través de las lenguas y de las palabras que más le convienen.

CUANDO LOS SENDEROS DE LAS PLUMAS BIFURCAN EN DIFERENTES LENGUAS

Cuando un paciente o un escritor cambian de lengua es probable que se sientan más libres para expresar en dicho idioma sus vivencias más íntimas. Existe quizá cierta excitación en imaginar que uno se puede reinventar a sí mismo, devenir otro distinto del que fue en su lengua originaria, ser otro, o ser, mediante dicha extranjería, finalmente sujeto de su complejidad. La creación literaria de Pessoa y sus numerosos heterónimos son un bello ejemplo de la complejidad de la noción de autor. Hay algo de rizomático en toda lengua extranjera, raíces que se arborizan y en el mejor de los casos hacen más liviana la potencialidad creativa.

Este recorrido del afecto a través del diálogo entre las diferentes lenguas al interior del analizante plurilingüe surge también en el discurso narrativo de la literatura. Las lenguas se mezclan, entrechocan, discurren, se apelonan, antes que la pluma brinde una forma asequible para el lector. Si bien muchos autores han escrito en una lengua que no era la materna, no significa que la materna no aparezca en filigrana, ya sea en el estilo o en la prosodia musical de la escritura. A veces se puede expresar mejor en una lengua que en la otra.

Otras veces una lengua ofrece expresiones o giros idiomáticos que dan mejor cuenta de un sentimiento que en la otra.

Julia Kristeva (1995: 43) nos dice que no perdió su lengua materna. Que le vuelve en sueños cuando escucha hablar a su madre luego de varias horas de inmersión en el búlgaro. Aunque por “encima de dicha cripta escondida, sobre ese reservorio estancado que se agacha y se desliga, construí una nueva morada que habito y me habita”. Más adelante agrega: “de esos vasos comunicantes emerge una palabra extranjera a ella misma, ni de aquí ni de allá, una monstruosa intimidad”.

Para completar esta reflexión en torno al plurilingüismo literario, he seleccionado algunos autores que han cambiado de lengua en su escritura, del castellano hacia otro idioma o de otra lengua al castellano, y, de manera próxima a los analizantes, han elegido, por razones singulares, expresarse en otro idioma que el llamado materno. Presento a continuación un breve muestreo a modo de conclusión.

Jorge Semprún (Madrid 1923-París 2011), hijo de españoles, cuyo padre era un exiliado político del franquismo, nació en España y fue criado y educado en Francia, perfectamente bilingüe español-francés. Siendo muy joven, apenas veinte años, pero ya aventajado estudiante de filosofía en París, es detenido por la Gestapo y deportado a Buchenwald. Formaba parte de un comando de militantes comunistas de la resistencia. Permanecerá 18 meses en dicho campo, que lo marcará a fuego el resto de su vida. Cuando fue liberado el 11 de abril de 1945 por las fuerzas del General Patton, toma conciencia que no estaba ni vivo ni muerto, que era como un zombi. Tatuado con el número de la matrícula impuesta por los SS y con la letra S de *Spanier*, fue recluido en el pabellón de los españoles. Su cultura, su formación estaban impregnadas por la cultura francesa y por el medio de intelectuales que frecuentaba en París. Durante muchos años, Semprún intentó olvidar lo que habían hecho de él en Buchenwald y el olor del humo ocre de los hornos crematorios. Su intuición le decía que no era una experiencia, por utilizar una palabra de algo innombrable, que podía ser contada. Ya sea porque no encontraría las palabras para transmitir la dimensión del horror y del mal absoluto que había padecido en dicho campo de concentración, ya sea porque casi nadie podría escuchar tanto horror: “No porque la experiencia vivida sea indecible. Fue invivible, lo cual es toda otra cosa” (Semprún, 1994: 23).

No solo no pudo escribir sobre lo padecido sino que lo inhibió en la posibilidad misma de escribir. Tardíamente, para un intelectual de su talla, tan solo a partir de sus cuarenta años de vida, pudo contactar con la escritura y su primera novela, *Le grand voyage*, ganó el premio Formentor. Hasta ese

momento había elegido cruelmente entre la escritura y la vida, como evidencia el título que eligió justamente para el libro *L'écriture ou la vie* (1994) donde intenta transmitir el horror de Buchenwald..., cuarenta y siete años más tarde de haber sido liberado: "Había elegido una larga cura de afasia, de amnesia deliberada, para sobrevivir" (p. 205).

De lengua materna española, elige el idioma francés para escribirlo. Sin embargo su lengua materna está presente en filigrana a lo largo de su obra. Quizá no tanto de manera literal, sino en la música, en la prosodia de su escritura.

Pensando cómo haría para escribir sobre Buchenwald, Semprún tiene la intuición luego de una sesión de jazz que "la música sería la matriz nutritiva: su matriz, su estructura formal imaginaria. Construiré el texto como un pedazo de música, ¿por qué no? Bañaría en el ambiente de todas las músicas de la experiencia, no solo la del jazz. La música de las canciones de Zarah Leander que los S.S. difundían por el circuito de parlantes a todo momento. La música marcial durante la partida y llegada de los *kommandos* de trabajo. Y la música clandestina a través de la cual nuestro mundo se ligaba al de la libertad" (p.169).

No me parece casual que en el libro el autor se permita escribir sin traducción frases enteras en alemán, en inglés, en italiano, en español, según su musicalidad y contexto. ¿Quizá porque para describir tanto horror tuvo que recurrir a varias lenguas, un intento de dar cuenta de manera verosímil de lo real? ¿De intentar, a través de la multiplicidad de lenguas, una expresión más extendida? Un desesperado recurso para atrapar lo indecible en la red del poliglotismo.

Siendo resistente, confrontado a un soldado alemán ante el cual era matar o morir, tuvo serias dificultades en disparar, pues había escuchado previamente que el soldado canturreaba La Paloma. Aunque lo hacía en alemán, idioma que Semprún hablaba, el recuerdo de la canción española, tan cargada de afecto lo paralizó. Como si el solo hecho de escuchar la melodía lo hubiese propulsado a algo que hacía del soldado un familiar: "devenido inocente, en la plenitud de su existencia porque cantaba La Paloma... la infancia española en la figura".

Es una constante, tanto en el discurso en análisis como en literatura, que el afecto sea expresado en la lengua que convenga, a veces es la materna, a veces es una lengua llamada extranjera, pero que vehicula un quantum de afecto mejor condensado.

La poesía del escritor peruano César Vallejo lo acompaña desde su época de estudiante y durante toda su permanencia en cautiverio. Particularmente un poema que cita directamente en español (p. 178):

Me gusta la vida enormemente
Pero, desde luego,
Con mi muerte querida y mi café
Y viendo los castaños frondosos de París...

El autor bilingüe agrega que no lo traducirá al francés, permanecerá como "un secreto, un signo de connivencia con un posible lector hispanizante". Más adelante, leemos los versos de *España, aparta de mí este cáliz* (p. 202):

Al fin de la batalla,
Y muerto el combatiente, vino hacia él un hombre
Y le dijo: "¡No mueras, te amo tanto!"
Pero el cadáver ¡ay! siguió muriendo...

O sea que a pesar que Semprún dice que el francés es la lengua materna que él eligió para escribir el libro, numerosas situaciones particularmente cargadas de afecto son dichas en español... sin traducción. Algo así como la materia prima de su lenguaje, la madera sin tallar, la raíz a partir de la cual el lenguaje es posible... en cualquier lengua. Una búsqueda de eliminar "toda adiposidad verbal" (p. 195).

El fin de su exigencia interior de olvido se produce luego de un accidente en las afueras de París, al caerse de un tren en movimiento. Llevado a las urgencias, conmocionado, pregunta al médico en qué mes del calendario están. Le responde "août" (agosto en francés). Aunque escucha perfectamente "août", es la palabra "agosto" que le vuelve. El narrador agrega: "se me hacía la boca agua dándole vueltas a esa palabra bajo mi lengua" (p. 227). Y luego, como en un estado febril, se enardece al redescubrir que había siempre dos palabras para cada objeto, cada color, cada sentimiento: *Ciel, nuage, tristesse...* "cielo, nube, tristeza". Agrega: "de pronto, la palabra nieve [y no *neige*] apareció [...] su sentido más antiguo. El más primitivo quizá. ¿Acaso sería por esa razón por lo que la palabra nieve era inquietante?" Luego de haber podido contactar de manera tan vívida con su doble pertenencia lingüística, siente "le bonheur de vivre". Había podido pasar "de la deliciosa nada a la angustia de vivir". Y escribe su relato novelado de lo padecido en Buchenwald y que lo persiguió toda su vida. En un perpetuo balanceo, como Lola de Valence, "son coeur balance", entre el idioma francés y el español a pesar de su aparente elección: "había elegido el francés, lengua del exilio, como otra lengua materna, originaria. Me había elegido nuevos orígenes. Había hecho del exilio mi patria".

Luego de este monumental esfuerzo de escritura, de traer hacia sí la memoria en imágenes vivenciadas, Jorge Semprun había logrado la escritura y la vida.

Distinto es el caso de **Silvia Baron Supervielle** (Buenos Aires, 1934), de madre uruguaya y padre argentino de origen francés, que comienza su obra literaria en Buenos Aires en castellano, su lengua materna. Posteriormente se instala en el corazón de París, en l'Île St-Louis. Retoma tiempo después su escritura que late ya en lengua francesa. En la entrevista que le hiciera Ivonne Bordelois (*La Nación*, 24-08-2003), la escritora franco-argentina dice: "quiero que mi yo sea la historia de todos. Si hubiese escrito en español hubiese estado aprisionada por un enfoque muy personal"; como enuncia I. Bordelois, Francia significa para ella crear. Y agrega la lingüista una sugestiva frase muy evocadora del discurso narrativo en literatura como en análisis en relación con el desafío de la conciencia bilingüe: "el de recuperar raíces a través de follajes de otros bosques, el de las hermosas palabras de un idioma distinto que impone miradas, gestos y perspectivas imposibles en el mundo primordial y que por eso mismo lo apresan en un escorzo irremplazable". La comentarista argentina cita a la autora de "*La ligne et l'ombre*" respecto a su modo de concebir la escritura: "Un escritor se sirve de las lenguas para expresarse, pero su lengua verdadera emana de su mirada, su manera, su paso. Tiene por misión convertir esa lengua no formulada en un lenguaje imaginado y urdido solo por él".

El discurso enunciado en sesión como la escritura literaria están indisolublemente asociados a la representación visual, es la dimensión onírica de todo pensamiento en el cual la imagen condensa, como en el sueño, pensamientos complejos. Y cada idioma remite a imágenes distintas. No es el mismo caballo el de la llanura pampeana (que puede ser cimarrón, potro, palenqueado, manso de andar, de pecho, zarco, redomón, etc.) que el "*cheval*" de tiro de una llanura francesa. Detrás de la palabra caballo de la pampa hay una multiplicidad de variantes inexistente en otros lugares.

Héctor Bianciotti (1930-2012), maestro de la "autoficción", nació en Córdoba, Argentina, criado en la llanura, hijo de piemonteses migrados, pasó un corto período de su vida en un seminario franciscano del cual, sin vocación, sale muy joven. En 1955 se traslada a Italia, luego a Madrid antes de radicarse en Francia en el 1961. Publica varias novelas en castellano, algunas de ellas obtienen el premio Médicis a la mejor novela extranjera (1977) y el premio al Mejor Libro Extranjero (1983). Crítico literario de la revista *Le Nouvel Observateur* y el diario *Le Monde*, en 1985 publica su primera novela en francés, *Sans la miséricorde du Christ*, y obtiene el premio Fémina. En el año 1996 es elegido para incorporarse a la Académie Française. Es difícil saber qué lo lleva a cambiar de idioma en un momento sin duda bisagra en su vida. El autor francesiza el nombre de la protagonista de la novela, Adelaida Maresa, argentina como él, algo así como su doble femenino: "Adélaïde, he

empezado por verter al francés su nombre y su apellido" (p. 10). El nombre de pila, andamio de la identidad inicial, expresa el deseo de los padres y muchas veces es un "ante-texto que precede la llegada del niño" y sobre dicho pre-texto, "el niño vendrá a inscribir su propio texto, a apropiarse por la singularidad de sus trazas su propio texto" (Tesone, 2009: 5). Más adelante, el personaje de la novela de Bianciotti aclara (p. 36):

Yo, que ya no tengo idioma pero padezco varios –aunque a veces aproveche sus ventajas–, tengo unos sentimientos que varían según las palabras que utilizo. A veces me sucede que estoy desesperado en un idioma y apenas triste en otro... este idioma que he aprendido... no sé si habré entrado en él, pero siento que él ha entrado en mí... Aunque parezca extraño, le diré que camino de otra manera, la postura de mi cuerpo no es la misma, mis sentimientos son distintos... Todo se ha vuelto más reservado, más discreto, más íntimo... Decir "soledad" es referirme a algo vasto, universal... uno se siente un poco héroe... La palabra francesa *solitude*, en cambio, designa algo que solo nos pertenece a nosotros... Cuando aquí en Europa atravesamos una llanura, sabemos que pronto acabará... Allá, en cambio, la llanura es más lenta que el tiempo, solo el sol alcanza a recorrerla (p. 37).

Adélaïde, en viaje a sus orígenes piamonteses, dialecto que hablaban sus padres, prohibido para ella, pues había que hablar el idioma de los conquistadores, busca en vano quien lo hable. Gran decepción, pues la gente hablaba en italiano. Le pide a un habitante del lugar que le diga alguna palabra en piamontés. Escucha un sonido y da con lo que había estado buscando:

...un sonido, apenas una nota, una vocal, la quinta vocal; la vigésimoprimer letra del alfabeto francés; la letra *u*, el más íntimo de los sonidos, que no por azar aparece en la palabra *solitude*... Un sonido pequeño y cóncavo, una ínfima barquilla sonora, había transportado, escurriéndose por entre los ríos y el desorden de la sangre y de los años, los pensamientos más próximos a su corazón, el núcleo inasible de sí misma, para dejarla en la orilla de otro idioma donde, gracias a ese sonido, esa *u*, había iniciado una lenta navegación a ciegas. Ese sonido ensimismado era su raíz (p. 265).

Muy diferente ha sido el cambio de lengua para **Witold Gombobrowicz** (1904 Polonia-1929 Francia), quien publicó su primera novela, *Memorias de la Inmadurez*, en Polonia. Como respuesta a las numerosas críticas que recibe, escribe en 1937 *Ferdydurke*, novela contestataria de la cultura establecida que ahoga al sujeto, prohibida luego por el régimen comunista. Publicada nuevamente en Polonia tras el deshielo en el 1957, provocó tal revuelo que

fue prohibida de nuevo al año siguiente. Recién en el 1986 se vuelve a publicar. Considerada como obra mayor del siglo XX, Milan Kundera (1990: 23) consideró esta novela como una de las tres o cuatro de las más grandes escritas después de la muerte de Proust.

- Invitado a Argentina con una delegación polaca, su estadía lo sorprende con la invasión nazi de Polonia y decide permanecer en Argentina hasta 1963. No hablaré de su prolífica obra, sino del trabajo de publicación de *Ferdydurke* en castellano. Traducida por el autor asesorado por un comité de traducción, la misma se desarrolla en un café, entre partidas de ajedrez y billares, en la marginalidad en la que vivió Gombrowicz en Buenos Aires. La edición argentina, en 1947, es la primera traducción a una lengua extranjera. Las condiciones son extravagantes, casi delirantes: texto re-escrito por el autor que no dominaba el castellano, casi afásico en una inmadurez permanente, ayudado por un grupo de diez personas que no hablaban polaco, sin la existencia de un diccionario polaco-español. Es un nuevo libro que surge, sin perder el sarcasmo original y la sublevación del autor polaco hacia las formas establecidas de la cultura. Un aspecto estilístico lo constituye la serie de palabras inventadas por el autor, “algunas inventadas por el autor, otras surgidas de otras palabras polacas, las demás, de pura creación y que, prima facie, podrían desconcertar a los lectores” (p. 12). Los dos problemas capitales de la novela –señala el autor– son: “el de la Inmadurez y el de la Forma” (p.16). Todo su esfuerzo es tomar distancia con respecto a la forma: el cambio de idioma es, paradójicamente, un desafío de estilo y de forma.

Si bien el autor polaco no elige la lengua castellana sino que lo impulsa su exilio, se servirá más tarde (1961) de esta versión en español, para traducirla conjuntamente con un colaborador al francés. O sea que la novela tuvo un destino de trasvasamiento de lenguas que fueron potenciando la originalidad y fuerza creativa del autor polaco. El autor exilado precisa: “esta traducción fue efectuada por mí y solo de lejos se parece al texto original”. Destaca luego que, con la ayuda de todo un equipo, la tarea resultó “ardua, digamos oscura y fue llevada a cabo a ciegas, solo gracias a la noble y eficaz ayuda de hijos de este continente” (p. 21). Muchas veces no es el autor que elige una lengua, sino la lengua que elige un autor.

Para el escritor argentino Ricardo Piglia (2008),

...el castellano de Gombrowicz es el idioma de la desposesión. Nada que ver con el inglés de Nabokov, aprendido de chico con las institutrices inglesas. Gombrowicz aprende el castellano en Retiro, en los bares del puerto, con los muchachos, con los obreros, los marineros que frecuentaba; una lengua que está cerca de la circulación sexual y del intercambio con desconocidos. Retiro, con ese nombre tan

significativo, es la zona del Bajo, del llamado Paseo de Julio, la zona por donde va a vagar Emma Zunz, la Recova, los bares de mala vida, los piringundines. El español aparece ligado a los espacios secretos y a ciertas formas bajas de la vida social.

En el mismo artículo, Piglia cita un fragmento de una polémica conferencia que pronuncia Gombrowicz en castellano en Buenos Aires el 28 de agosto de 1947 que intituló "Contra los poetas": "Sería más razonable de mi parte no meterme en temas drásticos porque me encuentro en desventaja. Soy un forastero totalmente desconocido, carezco de autoridad y mi castellano es un niño de pocos años que apenas sabe hablar. No puedo hacer frases potentes, ni ágiles, ni distinguidas, ni finas, pero ¿quién sabe si esta dieta obligatoria no resultará buena para la salud? A veces me gustaría mandar a todos los escritores al extranjero, fuera de su propio idioma y fuera de todo ornamento y filigrana verbales para comprobar qué quedará de ellos entonces". Quizá en el fondo, todo autor escribe en un idiolecto, que no deja de ser para el lector una forma de lengua extranjera. En la perspectiva de Nancy Huston (Calgary, 1953), canadiense anglofónica de origen, residente desde hace varias décadas en Francia, "la extranjeridad es una metáfora del respeto que se debe al otro. Somos dos, cada uno de nosotros, al menos dos. Incluso dentro de una sola lengua, la comunicación es un milagro" (Huston, 1999: 37). La autora remarca que quien transita de una lengua a otra conoce al menos dos culturas y por lo tanto "conoce necesariamente el difícil paso de una a la otra y la dolorosa relativización de una por la otra". Más adelante agrega: "La adquisición de una segunda lengua anula el carácter *natural* de la lengua de origen y a partir de ahí, ya nada viene dado de entrada, ni en la una ni en la otra; ya nada le pertenece a uno por origen, por derecho ni por evidencia" (p. 43).

En el oficio de escritor, pasar de una lengua a la otra es poder balbucear nuevamente, sentirse un poco afásico, experimentar el desfasaje entre el pensamiento y una escasa posibilidad de ponerlo en palabras. Agudiza el sentido de la condensación. Propia del sueño, la condensación exige utilizar imágenes que den cuenta de la escasa riqueza semántica. En una lengua extranjera, dice la escritora franco-canadiense, "ningún lugar es un lugar común: todos son exóticos" (p. 46). Y se pregunta: "¿qué tipo de novela hubiese inventado Conrad si no hubiese abandonado el polaco? ¿Y por qué Kundera perdió el sentido del humor abandonando el checo?"

El quehacer literario como el discurso en análisis tienen una estructura de ficción que permite transformar el mundo interior, reinventarlo, para apropiárselo *in fine*. Luciano, como hemos visto, logra salir del huevo en el cual permanecía encapsulado y que le impedía ser. La escritora brasileña Clarice Lispector en su texto "Actualidad del huevo y la gallina" dice: "Un huevo

habrá sido tal vez un triángulo que tanto rodó por el espacio que se fue ovalando. Jamás pensar en el huevo es un modo de haberlo visto. ¿Será que sé del huevo? Es casi seguro que sé. De esta manera: existo, luego sé. Lo que yo no sé del huevo es lo que realmente importa. Lo que no sé del huevo me lo da el huevo mismo” (Lispector, 2004: 167). Sobre Luciano nos enseñó mucho el huevo del Retablo de Brera. Huevo cuya cáscara lo oprimía en un goce incesante. Para salir de dicho huevo, para saber quién era, tuvo que cambiar de lengua, alejarse cruzando los alpes. En el camino inverso de lo que propone Lispector, el huevo en Luciano de ovalado se fue triangulando; iconoclasta, le puso bigotes incluyendo al tercero excluido que era el padre. El huevo, transformado en la otra lengua, le permitió existir y luego saber.

La libido, afirma Ivonne Bordelois (2003: 12), “hace de las palabras su objeto y su habitación: entre la lengua parlante y la oreja escuchante hay una relación análoga a la que existe entre el falo (que en sánscrito se llama *lingam*) y la vulva”.

Los sonidos de las lenguas, como una partitura, producen ciertas melodías. En su melopea, como juguetes encantados, permiten jugar con las mismas para encontrar aquella o aquellas en la cuales el sujeto logra decir y escuchar abriendo los poros de sus afectos, ya sea en el discurso en análisis como en el acto de escritura. La otra lengua pone en relieve quizá que el encuentro con el Otro nos constituye. Y, en el encuentro con la extranjería, tanto la propia como la ajena, se potencia la fuerza creativa del lenguaje.

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KARNAC

Incest(s) and the negation of otherness

Juan Eduardo Tesone

Some papers condense knowledge of a problem in such an unconditional and impenetrable way that they leave no room for other ideas. The quality of Simona Argentieri's text (in the preceding chapter) lies, I would say, not only in its intertextual polysemy, but also and above all in its interstices. In a very open way, it allows several theories to circulate, suggests rather than concludes, and in this sense is extremely creative, evoking new reflections and encouraging us to use our capacity for reverie. Argentieri has managed to impart an aesthetic dimension to a text that none the less deals with an abject and ignominious theme. This is not because she embellishes it with arabesques, but because she turns a problem that is unspeakable and rarely thought about into something that can be expressed in words, thereby making it thinkable, and she gives clinical status to a problem that psychoanalytic theory hardly ever deals with. Psychoanalysts speak a great deal about the Oedipus complex and the prohibition of incest, but rarely of incest that has actually been carried out, perhaps echoing the paradoxical silence forced upon the child victim. In this sense, this symposium is highly relevant, given that it discusses issues about which, until recently, very little has been said, as if the foundations

of psychoanalytic theory and the status of fantasy could be found wanting in the face of clinical work with real-life events.

From the outset, as if composing the overture to an opera, Simona Argentieri announces the movements to come. Thinking about incest requires, she reminds us, a transdisciplinary approach that goes beyond the boundaries of psychoanalytic theory.

Referring to the universal nature of the prohibition of incest affirmed by Lévi-Strauss (1947), she takes as her focus its relation to the family. Eschewing any reductionist conception, she gives less emphasis to the biological links that, in constant evolution, may take on different modalities, than to the parental symbolic functions that involve gender identity. I would add that the maternal and paternal functions cannot be defined in isolation; they have to be seen in terms of a dialectic: the maternal function cannot be properly understood except through fantasy and symbolic interaction with the paternal function, and vice-versa. The Oedipus complex, of course, is not simply a prohibition against endogamy; it carries also an authorization that sanctions exogamy. Incest violates this double aspect of the symbolic law by transgressing the prohibition and annulling the urge towards exogamy. Incest as defined by Lévi-Strauss is extended by Françoise Héritier-Augé (1994) to include another type of incest that she calls the "second type" to differentiate it from the Lévi-Strauss model, which is of the first type. She conceives of the prohibition of incest as a problem of circulation of fluids from one body to the other. The basic criterion of incest—according to this anthropological model—is contact between identical humours. This involves what is most fundamental in human society: the construction of the categories of identical and different. If I mention Héritier's theory it is because incest of the Lévi-Strauss type—a beautiful metaphor, in Simona Argentieri's words—does not explain the prohibition in some communities against a man having sexual relations with the sister of his first wife. This second type of incest includes variants such as: a man having sex with each of two sisters, with his wife's daughter (identity of substance between mother and daughter) or symmetrically, a woman having sex with each of two brothers, a woman with her husband's son, etc. The idea is that these same humours are encountered through identical flesh by virtue of the fact that one partner is held in common. The incest

another person. Héritier-Augé's theory proposes a reinterpretation of incest as played out in Sophocles' tragedy: Oedipus, in the act of sexual intercourse with his mother, simultaneously encounters his father, who was in that very place before. One form of incest can conceal another variant, homosexual in nature, which in psychoanalysis has a significant clinical impact. Therefore, it would perhaps be preferable to speak of incests, in the plural, considering the many facets it may take on.

I invite you to follow me in a little imaginary game that, with a touch of humour and not a little despair, reminds us why each member of a family's symbolic structure must occupy only one place, why these places are not interchangeable, and why one person can occupy only one *locus* at any given time.

A psychoanalyst sees a young adult for an initial consultation and asks him what brings him in. The prospective patient replies, "Well, everything started when I married. What a mistake that was! I married a widow with a daughter twenty-five years old who became my stepdaughter. One day, my father visited us and, incredibly enough, fell in love with my stepdaughter. Shortly after, my father and my stepdaughter married. Suddenly, my stepdaughter became my stepmother. Some time later, my wife and I had a son who became my father's brother-in-law, since he is the half-brother of my stepdaughter, who is in turn my father's wife (and therefore my stepmother). Now, my baby is also the half-brother of my stepmother and is therefore a bit my uncle. My wife is also my stepgrandmother because she is the mother of my stepmother. And don't forget that my stepmother is also my stepdaughter. And if we go even further, we see that I am the husband of my stepgrandmother and therefore I am not only my wife's grandson as well as her husband, but also my own grandfather . . . Now you'll understand why I came to see you!"

This fictitious interview helps me to highlight the fact that the family creates and institutes three types of relation:

1. blood (brother, sister)
2. marital (wife, husband)
3. filial (son, daughter).

It is, in this sense, an institution, since it prescribes a certain order. It is clear that the prohibition of incest is not only a prohibition: at

the same time as it prohibits, it also makes for order. Each person occupies a defined place, the one assigned to him or her in the family constellation. When incest inverts the order of gender and of generation, the "symbolic network of family relations" is disorganized, as Simona Argentieri emphasizes.

The psychotic mother of a 16-year-old adolescent, Jérôme, said in her delusion that, in future reincarnations, she could become her son's sister, or her son could be her father, or she could even, with the vicissitudes of successive reincarnations, become her son's wife.

This brief psychotic vignette reveals that the incestuous act is not only physical intercourse; it is at the same time the omnipotent desire to occupy all the *loci* simultaneously: to be father-mother-daughter-son at the same time. The incestuous wish, says Legendre (1985), is a wish to be omnipotent: it desires what is impossible. The prohibition against incest is there to place a limit on this absolute desire. God and the Holy Family—as Legendre points out—know no incest, since God cannot be said to be "lacking" in anything.

The principal function of the family, I insist, is to create otherness. In this sense, it could be argued that motherhood and fatherhood are always, in fact, adoptive, since they require that the other person be acknowledged as such and that the self be part of a chain of transgenerational symbolic functions. Unlike the Oedipus situation, which integrates desire into the law, thereby allowing the emergence of otherness, incest blurs the limits between the members of a family and introduces confusion. Is incest the consequence of an Oedipus complex that is more intense than others? In an earlier paper, I argued—agreeing with Racamier—that incest is in fact quite the opposite. I suggested in that text that the oedipal triangle as such loses its characteristic features and is drawn into a narcissistic problem situation that has much more to do with the family unit as a whole (Tesone, 1994).

The transgression of incest implicitly carries its own denial, to the point that it is trivialized as if it were simply a particular form of family communication. Psychotic foreclosure or perverse disavowal is frequent in this type of family, as in the clinical example of the parental couple discussed by Simona Argentieri, who induced incest between siblings. To my mind, the fact that she uses

the word "genitors" and not "parents" is no coincidence, because in this family there were no parents, merely biological genitors. At the very moment the children were induced to commit the incestuous act, they became orphans, as it were—with no one to fulfil the parental role.

The author reminds us that a crucial moment in Freud's work was when he abandoned the theory of seduction-as-a-real-event in favour of the fantasy of seduction, a fantasy which all children share. Argentieri points out that Freud's fundamental clinical intuition was that the fantasy and the real event could have the same pathogenic effect. However, my own clinical experience leads me to believe that the traumatic distress of incest that has been carried out in reality has much a more devastating and deleterious effect on the psyche of a developing self than the organization of an infantile neurosis based on oedipal material that has not been integrated. The sheer weight of the quantitative factor, the ruthless impingement of the drives, bring in their wake even more devastating qualitative damage when the incest has been repeated over time; tantamount to repetitive trauma, it impregnates the psyche with the death drive.

It seems to me a good idea to highlight the radical difference between, on the one hand, the theory of seduction, which provides the very foundations for infantile psychosexuality and repression (which acts as a stimulus for the fantasy representation that leads to the Oedipus complex), and, on the other, the trauma of actual seduction. Laplanche (1986) coined the term "generalized seduction theory", by which he means that the mother is the agent of primary (early) seduction because of her role in taking care of her infant's body; maternal care includes the feeding situation and other intimate contact between her body and that of the infant. This is a necessary seduction, says Laplanche, because it is an integral part of the situation itself. As far as I am concerned, however (Testone 2001), the traumatic seduction that a child experiences does not fall within that seduction theory. Sexuality operates in such a situation not as a source of life and creator of links, but as a persecutory object that unbinds and has implications of death. The drive of the adult that suddenly bursts through into the child's experience, far from favouring ego integration, leads to what Green (1993) calls "the de-objectifying function of the death drive". The child/

part-object experienced as a pseudopodium of the adult's own ego has no contingent value as a true object for the incestuous genitor; it fulfils a narcissistic need that demands a link between direct descendants.

From that point of view, there is no "soft" form of incest. Even where there is no concomitant physical violence, the mental violence is always present, because the victim's consent does not come into it at all. I agree completely with Simona Argentieri that from the psychoanalytic standpoint it is sometimes difficult to establish the limits between active and passive, abuser and victim, seducer and seduced, since the bond that ties them together is an entangled web of projective and introjective identifications, in which an infinite series of mirror reflections is far too complex to be differentiated. However, I think we need to emphasize that it is precisely this entangled web that the incestuous genitor weaves, using a kind of hypnotic power to immobilize the child in the snares of the abuse. In this sense I would say that incest is always "hard". Children have no chance of making the effect of the incest meaningful as it occurs. They are trapped in the libidinal cartography of the incestuous genitor, subjected to a sexuality that is not totally their own. Later, in the best of cases, they will have to deconstruct this over-abundance of meaning (Testone 2001) produced by the injection of adult sexuality into the child's developing sexuality; without psychoanalytic treatment, this could leave indelible traces in their libidinal geography.

It is obvious that any psychoanalytic understanding of clinical work with cases of incest will depend on the theoretical perspective from which it is approached, as Simona Argentieri reminds us. With her exceptional capacity for synthesis, she has succeeded in summarizing the main points of the various theories. It is impossible for us to put aside all reference to theory; no clinical eye can look on the material before us without a theoretical backdrop, explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious. Theory does not prevent something from existing (*ça n'empêche pas d'exister*), as Charcot put it (Freud, 1892-94, p. 139), but it may sometimes hinder communication between colleagues. I suggest that we go along with Simona Argentieri when she proposes that our discussions avoid a clash of theoretical models, so that we can think together about the clinical challenge involved in dealing with the problem of incest. Quoting

Amati Mehler (1992), Argentieri emphasizes that the adult's capacity to love "depends not only on how the oedipal drama has been resolved, but also on how the process of differentiation between self and object has developed". She later goes on to say that the person who acts out incest in real life is incapable of acknowledging the other person as such. In my clinical experience as director of a Centre for Psychotherapy for Children and Adolescents¹ who have suffered sexual abuse or incest, I think that the difficulty in accepting otherness is a crucial factor in the psychopathology of incestuous parents and can be classified as one of the severe forms of narcissistic disorders. This perspective, it seems to me, can generate a condensed integration of several theories, depending on whether we emphasize the vicissitudes of the drives, ego-centred psychology, the psychology of the self or the psychology of object relations.

In the severe psychopathological pattern of the incestuous family, the expansive narcissism of the abusive genitor produces a massive attack on oedipal triangulation and wipes out the vertices that designate the various *loci* designated by the terms: father, mother, son, daughter.

If, as Bataille (1957) maintains, transgression lifts a prohibition without suppressing it, incest is not a simple violation of the prohibition of incest. It is as though the prohibition had no value as representation for the abusive parent. That is what the twenty-two-year-old patient, Y, is in fact telling his analyst, in Simona Argentieri's example, when he says that during his childhood he received his father's "visit" at night, and then in daytime life carried on in an apparently normal fashion. In other words, incest is not only traumatic because of the transgression involved and its resultant effect on the psyche, it is also an attempt "to drive the other person crazy" because the incestuous parent disqualifies the child's perception, denying the gravity of the ignominious act. Magritte, who in one of his paintings represented the image of a pipe, added the comment "This is not a pipe", in order to emphasize the gap between a thing itself and its image or representation. When incestuous genitors, who do not have the aesthetic talent of the Belgian artist, actually carry out the act, they send a paradoxical message to the child: "this is not incest", thereby stitching together the fantasy representation and the transgressive act itself. The effect is a double traumatic impact.

An adult patient, whom I will call F, said that when she was twelve years old she had been deflowered by her father, who had introduced his fingers into her vagina. In doing so, the father had not used gloves. This detail is important, since he was a gynaecologist. The incestuous act had taken place in his office. The father had performed those digital penetrations in the name of medicine and "the necessary knowledge a gynaecologist must have of a woman's body, even though she may be his daughter". This type of incest was repeated over the years, during which the transgression and its negation were superimposed.

The incestuous family finds it impossible to accept otherness as such. From the outside, the family group looks as though it consists of several members. But from the point of view of its mental functioning, there are no limits or boundaries to separate them. Such families operate as if the group was Hydra-like, with only one body but many heads. Expressed as an equation, its functioning would take the form: $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$ and not 3.

When an incestuous father uses his daughter's body to obtain a certain type of sexual pleasure, he negates her as a person, as a self distinct from him. In a relationship that I would define as narcissistic-omnipotent, this is the sense in which the father (or mother) abuses the child: the child's status as a separate self is denied.

Thus, for example, the incestuous father of an adolescent girl expressed his fear that his daughter might be sexually assaulted whenever she went out of doors, saying "*if anything should happen to me . . . er . . . her . . .*" That slip of the tongue reveals the non-differentiation that governed their relationship.

The incestuous act negates the fact that all human beings are necessarily "incomplete". It is a desperate attempt to avoid confronting—something we all must do—ambivalence and loss of the object. Denying that the irreducible existence of the other is *per se* a source of conflict for the ego, incest seeks to evacuate all conflict through the suppression of all otherness.

In their attempt to achieve these ends, the perpetrators do not hesitate to obliterate the child's desire and, consequently, thinking, leaving him or her mentally bewildered, the inevitable effect of the accumulation of trauma. Such children are forced into a paradoxical form of immobilization; their silence is perhaps a reflection of the representational nothingness into which they are sucked. In its

narcissistic expansion, the megalomaniac ego of the incestuous parents engulfs the other person, seen as a mere extension of themselves. The desire of the one is incompatible with that of the other. In their "totalizing utopia", incestuous parents experience themselves as having mastery over time and death. In their wish to throw their net over the child, they try to ignore the fact that the object, by virtue of his or her essential nature, real or fantasized, creates a conflicting relationship with the ego. The ego of the incestuous parent aims to entrap the object, but in so doing robs the other person of all vitality (Tesone, 1998).

A female patient, who had for years been subjected to an incestuous type of relationship with her father, had the following dream, which reveals both the relationship of merging and non-differentiation in which she found herself and her attempt to escape from it: "My father is holding me by the arm, I try to break loose but I can't. Then I bite his arm with all my strength, and suddenly I wake up. Actually, I was biting my own arm, so hard in fact that once I woke up, I could still see the teeth marks on it."

Narcissism—writes Green (1979)—sustains the illusion that a no-Oedipus situation (not anti-Oedipus but non-Oedipus) can exist in so far as it knows only the ego/I. "Like God, the ego considers itself self-created, without sex, that is, without sexual limits and without filiation, and therefore without kinship structure."

The incestuous sexual relationship is necessarily a form of masturbation, because here sexuality remains auto-erotic in the sense that it is played out as though the other person had no existence. The child's only function is to satisfy this object auto-eroticism. Paraphrasing M. de M'Uzan (1965), quoted by Couvreur (1995), I would say that there is a "spectrum of identity" between the abusive genitor and the abused child. In this case, there is no object-related libido as such; where ordinarily there would be two poles, that of the object-related libido and that of its narcissistic counterpart, with a to-and-fro movement between the two, here the situation is very much like what M. de M'Uzan describes as tension between two kinds of narcissistic libido: an "intra-ego" one and an "extra-ego" one.

There is an excellent example of this particular disposition of the libido in the patient Simona Argentieri calls V, who was afraid of

giving in to her incestuous impulses with her daughter through masturbation. This fantasy is concomitant with a regressive dimension of being sucked in by her own mother, for whom the "third person" of the oedipal triangle was excluded.

The myth of the Unique, that is, the illusion of being an omnipotent being without defect, is a fantasy shared by most abusive parents. Their children exist only as appendages to an ego that delights in its own grandiosity. The child has no value *per se* other than that of a narcissistic adjunct. The incestuous attempts of the abusive parent could be represented as a triangle, the vertices of which remain unclosed, set within a circumscribing circle (Tesone, 1994). In other words, through their expansionist utopia, abusive parents intend to undo the vertices of the oedipal triangle, encircling it within their megalomania of the Unique. Between the abusive father and his young daughter, there is no relationship like that between self and object; the disappearance of the object leaves only a relationship within the self. Here we find ourselves involved in a fantasy of the existence of a Double, the guarantee of narcissistic completeness.

The desperate quest of incestuous parents is often motivated—as Simona Argentieri emphasizes—by confusion between masculine and feminine, and the impossibility to mourn the loss of androgyny.

In his famous article on the confusion of tongues between children and adults, Ferenczi (1932) highlights the fact that confusion arises precisely when the adult responds to a request for tenderness from the child with the language of eroticization. The child's initial reaction, says Ferenczi, is one of rejection, hate, disgust, and violent resistance. However, when the intimidation persists, the aggressor is introjected and disappears as a figure in external reality. The aggressor feels no guilt, since guilt is projected into the child. And the child, by introjecting the guilt feelings evacuated by the adult, later demands punishment. Incest, as Simona Argentieri emphasizes, "constructs a complicated and complex architecture of guilt, ubiquitous in the case of the unconscious fantasy, and, paradoxically, inequitably distributed in cases where incest has actually been carried out".

This guilt often leads children who have experienced an incestuous relationship to have accidents repeatedly or even actually

attempt suicide; these are expressions of the internal need for punishment.

Confusion, identification with the aggressor, guilt, lack of confidence in the child's own perception, feelings of shame (especially as regards anything that involves the body) are the effects in the boy or girl of the incestuous act.

As Simona Argentieri reminds us, good and evil, what is good and what is bad—and therefore the feeling of guilt—remain in an area of confusion similar to that of perverse states of mind. Children who have been subjected to incest, and Simona Argentieri's patient A is illustrative in this sense, desperately attempt to escape from the confusion between eroticization and tenderness, and seek "a protective function" as Argentieri demonstrates so well. In this quest, however, their lack of discrimination sometimes leads them, via the compulsion to repeat, to put themselves in situations where they are once again victims.

What is the dominant affect in the incestuous relationship? In my view, hate supported by the death drive impregnates the relationship, which is, in fact, a non-relationship—or perhaps a type of archaic relationship in which love is not differentiated from hate in its effects. Eroticization aims to conceal the thanatic dimension, but all it achieves is the exclusion of any notion of line of descent: there are neither offspring nor ancestors, neither origin nor posterity. The incestuous act denies the fact of exclusion from the primal scene and aims at its destruction (if there is no primal scene, there is no exclusion).

Incest today

Argentieri asks whether the increased tolerance of atypical expressions of sexuality in contemporary society might tend to trivialize the incestuous act. McDougall (1995) speaks not of perversions but of neo-sexualities, that is, the many ways of expressing sexuality that both hetero- and homosexual adults may enjoy. McDougall reserves the term "perversion" for sexual relations that are imposed by one individual on another who does not consent to it or is not able to give consent because of his or her age. To this degree of trivialization, according to Simona Argentieri, we might add a

certain deficiency in parenting functions, with the consequent difficulty in imposing norms and limits. Argentieri proposes an attractive hypothesis when she suggests that what is undergoing such radical change is not the oedipal milestone as such but the defences that are employed against its integration. According to Simona Argentieri, in our psychoanalytic practice we are increasingly having to deal with mechanisms of splitting and disavowal, instead of the classic repression, or even with primitive states of mind governed by non-integration, confusion, and ambiguity. Would incest evoke less horror for these reasons? It is difficult to find an unequivocal answer, although I hope that by the end of this symposium we may be more able to answer that question. Simona Argentieri is perfectly justified in questioning the term "abuse", widely used today. It has come to include incest, thanks to the subtlety of contemporary language, one consequence of which is to lessen the dramatic impact of the term "incest" itself. I would add: if only "abuse" is prohibited, does this imply that "use" is not? An ambiguity that had best be avoided. This is why I agree with Simona Argentieri that we would do well to drop this term whenever we are referring to incest. I prefer to use the term "incestuous sexual violence", which unambiguously emphasizes its thanatic quality.

Simona Argentieri asks if the cultural and psychological barrier against incest is crumbling in contemporary society. It is not easy to find an answer to that question. I believe that what has occurred, as a consequence of contemporary interest in the human rights of children, is the removal of the taboo of silence. A problem hitherto banished from thought, negated, silenced, has become thinkable; it can be put into words and therefore be thought of as existing. I would say that the apparent increase in frequency is actually an increased capacity to conceive of incest as existing; it therefore becomes able to estimate its prevalence in quantitative terms, something that has been negated until now.

To conclude, I will refer briefly to the myth of Narcissus (Grimal, 1976). There are three versions:

- (a) In Ovid, Narcissus is loved by the nymph Echo, who, when Narcissus rejects her, goes off on her own; only a plaintive voice can be heard. Narcissus, after a day's hunting, goes

- down to a lake to slake his thirst, falls in love with his own image (which he does not recognize) and, leaning too far over, disappears into the water.
- (b) In Boethius, a young man falls in love with Narcissus. Narcissus gives him his sword, with which the young man commits suicide. After this, the scene at the lake is the same as in version (a).
- (c) In Pausanias, Narcissus has a twin sister. On her untimely death, Narcissus suffers unbearable pain. This pain disappears fleetingly one day when, contemplating himself in a lake, Narcissus believes he sees his sister's image.

In his interpretation of this myth, Nathan (1984) underlines the fact that Narcissus seems to abandon his suitors. But this is actually not so; on the contrary, Narcissus attempts to be reunited with them but "in a way that creates confusion between subject and object".

The three versions, writes Nathan,

have a common denominator: they evoke, each in its own specific register, Narcissus's attempt to be in one place and in its opposite, to be both emitter and receptor of his own voice, active and passive, man and woman, and yet still himself. To re-find, to love, to join with, or to be merged with his double of the opposite sex (or of the other world) is the taboo that Narcissus violates.

The Double, says Menahem (1995), cannot be considered to be a return of the repressed; it is the sudden emergence of something unthinkable and non-represented.

Is the horror of the incestuous act a response simply to the transgression of the prohibition of incest, or does it cover at the same time the transgression of the narcissistic taboo, thereby multiplying its devastating effect?

From the oedipal milestone to narcissistic mirror-images? As Baranes (1995) emphasizes, it seems that Oedipus must quite often give up his place on our psychoanalytic couches in favour of Narcissus, just as happens in the social and cultural domains. The prevalence of Narcissus over Oedipus is what characterizes incest, but perhaps it also generates the change in defensive modes witnessed in contemporary psychoanalytic practice, creating the

impression that actually performing the incestuous act is a much more frequent occurrence than in the past.

Note

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CHAPTER TWO

When a symbolic lack of parental functions produces pain without a subject

Juan-Eduardo Tesone

"I suffer knowing I am involved in myself, and I suffer this in a suffocation of conclusions. . . . The only real art is that of construction"

(Pessoa, 2002, translated for this edition)

The concept of fantasy in Freud inevitably refers to the concept of perception, based on what is inscribed in the subject from conscious or unconscious perceptions. Now, if Freud considers that in fantasy construction, as in dreams, the subject is always present, could we say that a person may have sensory experiences, events that remain outside the subjective field and, therefore, of fantasy? Furthermore, if this were true, what meta-psychological status and implications would they have in clinical work with whatever provokes a lasting psychic effect, an effect of memory outside the field of the lifting of repression and of fantasy? Is there parental lack that could produce psychic inscription without a subject (Tesone, 2009)?

Psychoanalysis in the past twenty years has turned its interest not only towards fantasy, but also to what may be figured or represented, in opposition not so much to what may not be represented as to what

is not represented but, rather, inscribed. As highlighted by Sara and Cesar Botella (1992), non-representation originates neither in repression nor in denial and is not an effect of the castration complex or the product of an ego mechanism. It is by taking into consideration a hole, a negativity manifested in psychic dynamics in the form of an alteration of a process, most frequently expressed as a defect in thinking, that they postulate it as being like memory without memories. In this regard, we re-encounter Bion's (1962) proposals regarding thoughts without a thinker.

The field of the traumatic paradigmatically questions what cannot be represented, putting the classical analytic device of making conscious the unconscious in tension and revealing that in this clinical work it is not enough to lift repression in order to enable a somewhat anaemic trace to become memory. Traumatic experience sometimes generates emptiness of figuration that swallows up any possible form of representation, prior to fantasy. How does inscription acquire perception of the disruptive fact? My objective is to open a road rather than to indicate an itinerary with respect to this enquiry.

"Her childhood had injured her to such a degree that she could not evoke it", suggests Quignard (1998, p. 35, translated for this edition), referring to Némie, the protagonist of his novel, *Vie Secrète* [Secret Life]. I would add, perhaps because pain might sweep away the possibility to represent it, too; non-figuration is a defence against unspeakable pain. "What pain are you talking about if I didn't feel it . . ." could be the eloquent phrasing of this extreme psychic resource.

Duras (1964, p. 47) writes of Lol V. Stein in her novel, *Le Ravissement de Lol V. Stein*, "suffering had not found in her anywhere to slip out". Later in the same novel (p. 58, translated for this edition) she wonders, "But what does suffering without a subject mean?"

In his paper, "Fear of breakdown", Winnicott (1974) states that this is perhaps fear of a past event whose experience has not yet been undergone. The need to go through this experience is equivalent to what, in the analysis of neurotics, might be the need to remember.

As we know, experiences are traumatic when they are disruptive, as Benyakar (2006) suggests, having caused processes of binding to fail, rendering them incapable of representation. Outside of what may be figured or represented, traumatic experience escapes the domain of the symbolic and, therefore, remains suspended in a fixed, slowed down time that cannot be worked through. Benyakar (2006) states that

the essence of the traumatic is invasion of the psyche by something heterogeneous, extraneous, impossible to metabolise, and which, thereby, transforms into something of one's own.

What is the status of something that has been experienced without being experienced, which is part of the psyche without being represented, that not having been symbolised has not been able to be subjectivised? In any case, we are far from fantasy and the intrinsic inclusion of the subject in the scene to which Freud referred.

Subjects who have suffered disruptive experience that has become traumatic are disquieting because they remain in a "no man's land" on the border, more unstructured than structured, yet not de-structured; they cannot decide to belong to any official classification, deprived of these letters of nobility. Or, rather, the agency of the letter is not written in a precise way.

We know that the concept of polyphony, elaborated by Bajtin, inspired by Mardi Gras literature and taken up by Ducrot in linguistics, questions the oneness of the speaking subject. Ducrot (1984) draws a distinction between the speaker, the being who produces an enunciation attributed to it, *vs.* the subject of the enunciation, which might make several voices speak. It is possible, Ducrot tells us, that some enunciations might not be the product of an individual subjectivity. In Ducrot's idea of enunciation, voices may appear that are not those of the speaker. These beings that might be expressed through an enunciation, even though no precise words may be attributed to them, Ducrot terms "enunciators". I ask, however, as a counterpart to polyphony, may enunciators exist without a speaker?

When Roussillon (1995) postulated the dual aspect of psychic reality, he tried to answer this question. On the one hand, the psyche concerns experiences that have successfully been inscribed in the representative system, subjected to the functioning of the pleasure-unpleasure principle and of the integration of wish fantasies made conflictual by consideration of reality; on the other hand, the psyche concerns what remains outside the integrative work of the life drives: split-off primary traumatic zones, crypts in search of representations which, being erratic, are subjected to the automatism of repetition. Meanwhile, deadly anxiety is expressed in pure form, as psychosomatic illness, or as repetition compulsion.

I disagree with Ferenczi (1984) when he states that trauma generates an arrest of all psychic activity. This total paralysis, he considers,

includes the “arrest of perception and at the same time of thought”. He adds that “it is not possible to defend against an impression that has not been received” and postulates that “no memory trace will remain of these impressions, not even in the unconscious, and consequently the origins of the commotion will be inaccessible to memory” (p. 551, translated for this edition).

I understand that Ferenczi is referring to difficulty in calling up remembrance memory. However, I do not think that there is no psychic inscription. Perhaps it is a question of what, in neuroscience, is called implicit memory, that is, sensations lacking representations or emotions that have never been memorised.

Freud (1937d, p. 260) stated that

even things that seem completely forgotten are present somehow and somewhere, and have merely been buried and made inaccessible to the subject. Indeed, it may, as we know, be doubted whether any psychical structure can really be the victim of total destruction.

That is to say that he does not consider that no inscription has been produced. The outstanding question is in what way this occurs.

Moreno (2002, p. 43) states that “the subject is affected by what is not represented”, and he calls this element an “indeterminate feature without representation”. Thus, a feature, according to Moreno, is “pure difference without representation that becomes a mark when a fact gives it meaning”. If a feature is to become a mark, he writes, a sanction must transform it into this mark, which separates the unmeaningful from the meaningful. I think that this difference consists in an affect suffered but, since it cannot be represented, it cannot be experienced and, thereby, be bound to a representation. It is as if the person had not been able to become aware of the trace of this feature, to such an extent that, in order to reveal the mark left in the psyche, this person must find a meaning to bind it.

The psychic apparatus tries to bind erratic anxiety, and representation is perhaps the most elaborate way to deactivate it. “In dreams we feel no horror that a sphinx is oppressing us, we dream of a sphinx in order to explain the horror we feel”, writes Borges (1960, p. 805, translated for this edition). The psychic apparatus does not permit anxiety to remain floating. Anxiety is Pirandellian, as in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Pirandello, 1993); anxiety is searching for a

representation to which it can be referred as its author. It is for this reason that, in clinical work with traumatic experience, construction takes on the value of interpretation. That is to say that it is not necessarily a search for construction that possesses historical truth, but, rather, it plays a role in the dynamics of the psychic apparatus. Freud (1937d) even proposes that the term reconstruction should replace the term interpretation.

It is no longer a question of re-establishing by deduction the original form of the text as Freud underscored in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–1913) or in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939a). Something is missing in a much more radical way: the archaeological metaphor of finding layers unmodified and stratified but perfectly recognisable meets its limit (Press, 2008).

It is less a matter of giving interpretative value to the traumatic scene, the perceptive conformation of which is impossible to ascertain, than of listening to pain awaiting suffering that the subject might finally experience; then, the subject may take the floating enunciate and make it his or her own as an experienced enunciation.

Who is narrating?

In the words of several young girls who had suffered incest, followed up in a centre specialising in outpatient psychotherapy for this complex problem, which I was responsible for co-ordinating for several years, the traumatic appears (Tesone, 2005) as a filigree throughout the narration of excitement that had been generated in the girl's body by a burglary: physical stimulation breaking in from the outside without her consent or desire. This body, which responds in an uncontrolled way to external excitation, becomes itself an external body, through a diversification of the ego. This body that made her feel things is not her body. It is a body she does not recognise as her own. The excitement produced does not, however, make her desirous, since it is desubjectivising excitation. It is violence added to the violence of penetration. Desire is not involved; it is excitation stolen from her and a fraud as well, since it triggers drive excitation without the subject's consent. The height of trauma is this brutish and brutal encounter with a desymbolising event that does not allow the subject to ensure the continuity of living (Assoun, 1999). The body thereby acquires an

extraterritorial quality with a jurisdiction of its own, which requires punishment. It is triply traumatic: due to the burglary and hypercathexis of the act in itself, due to alienating excitation produced without consent or desire, and due to the experience of desubjectivisation that it implies. It is *jouissance* associated with the death drive, unbinding of the drives that destructures and annihilates the desiring capacity. The enemy becomes not only the abuser, but also her own body, experienced with shame and even depreciation. It is an abused body that “deserves” punishment for having made her feel excitation in spite of herself, in an uncanny diversification of the ego. As if the girl were to say, “It didn’t happen to me; it happened to my body . . .” An unmetaphorised excitation, pure cathexis, mixed with anxiety, but excitation all the same. The damage is made flesh . . . in the body. The girl consequently feels disqualified, subjected to an experience not experienced as her own.

I consider that, in this clinical work, the analyst’s job is not just to lift repression in order to encourage memory and remembering. As Viderman (1970) suggests, the analyst’s task is not to reveal a hidden meaning, but to construct a meaning that never formed previous to the analytic relation. In the words of Green (1990), the analyst forms an absent meaning. The analyst creates the conditions necessary to enable traumatic experience to be qualified, thought about, experienced, and spoken about, beyond historical truth but close to experiential truth in its perceptive quality.

The discourse of trauma, as Davoine (1998) points out, is always carried by someone desubjectivised by knowledge inscribed in the body, to the point that it suspends both attribution judging as well as existence judging. When time is stopped, it is because a subject is needed in order to have time, and in order to have a subject and, therefore, repression, a succession of signifiers is necessary. In the case of trauma, the chain of signifiers is interrupted, and it is precisely at this place that time is stopped, awaiting a new signifier.

A patient, thirty-five years old, a professional woman, married, with a six-year-old boy, tells me after the first interviews, in a broken voice, babbling, barely audible, that this is the first time she is able to talk about incest she suffered from her father when she was aged between seven and twelve years old. She said, “I had to construct something in my life; if not I was afraid I would break down; only now can I talk.”

Might the devilish monster of traumatic experience appear in the form of the camel's question, "What do you want?" in the novel by the French author, Cazotte (1994), when it queries the fear-struck and also fascinated subject. Like Cazotte's devil in this novel, the devilishly traumatic changes shapes, maintaining great ambiguity. Traumatic experience sometimes frightens but sometimes fascinates. Whether springing from fascination or terror, the effect is the same: muteness. "Small sorrows are loquacious, great ones are mute," as Seneca said (quoted by Montaigne, 1992, p. 8, translated for this edition).

The person risks becoming an enunciate, deprived of enunciation. Even in some cases in which the person is able to speak compulsively of the traumatic experience, sometimes without modesty, this discourse is silenced, or, rather, is full of empty words.

In this case, the person is left flabbergasted, trapped in the seduction or terror of traumatic experience, not knowing what to do with it. The subject appears, in the best of cases, when the person is able to take responsibility for doing something different from what was experienced, by de-identifying from this traumatic experience.

At the centre mentioned above, the mother of an adolescent girl followed up in psychotherapy as a consequence of incest, who herself had experienced incest, came to the first interview, and when she introduced herself, instead of giving her name, said, "I am the incested woman." The traumatic experience became her identifying introduction instead, declining her identity with her own name. She "was" this enunciate. The damage suffered becomes installed as the paradoxical encysted marrow of an identity emptied of subjectivity. It is similar to what Benyakar (2005) calls the *introduit*, that is, something that remains encysted in the psychic apparatus without representative value. The person "is" the traumatic experience suffered. The person becomes the negative of his or her true subjectivity, oscillating between stifled muteness and Munch's scream, not finding words to tear this suffering out of the interstices of the person's being.

Sometimes, muteness in one language is unshackled in discourse that uses a different language, this passage through language called foreign perhaps facilitating verbal expression. If the subject is to verbalise suffering, to find his or her own voice, the person sometimes calls upon other languages. Far removed from the drive quality implicit in the mother tongue, they are able to express and say in an oblique way what, in the mother tongue, due to excess or deficiency,

cannot be put into words: a way to produce languages according to his or her desire, that is, languages of desire.

Luciano, a patient whose mother tongue was Italian, had his analysis with me in French but sometimes used Italian, in small brushstrokes, as if his discourse were the verbalisation of an Impressionist painting. He generally used it to quote phrases he attributed to his mother, as if he had an intra-cavity relationship with her and, at the same time, would have liked to keep her at a distance by having his analysis in French. For a long time I felt that I had to listen to his few words in Italian within the totality of their drive force, and that the hospitality I gave his words in Italian was more important than the content of associations to which they referred. One day, I underscored that he used the Italian language when he was quoting phrases spoken by his mother, as if he wanted me to take care of her directly, in her native tongue. Surprised and anguished in a way I had never perceived before, he added, using a mixture of Italian and French, "Just now I realised that 'mia mamma' gave me my first kiss on the mouth." He explained that once when he was a child, his mother had passed a piece of candy from her mouth into his, that their tongues had touched in an encounter experienced as never-ending. This anguish, expressed for the first time, could not be said but in Italian, a tongue he had acquired with an excessively incestuous drive quality. It had to go through a foreign language, in this case French, in order to pacify an excessively intrusive maternal tongue. Through his analysis in French, which has a different musicality and polysemy, he could express an anguish that in his mother tongue, burning red-hot, was impossible. This patient would probably never have been able to have analysis directly in his mother tongue, hypercathected with drive quality unspeakable in his native tongue. Through the French tongue, which was also his wife's tongue, he had been able to distance himself unconsciously from the disruptive aspect of a mother tongue whose words burned him, the foreign language thereby acquiring in itself a third-party function.

*The analytic function in clinical work on
traumatic experience without a subject*

The analytic function, after having listened to amorphous material, bits of thought, and snippets of affect, is to make a new film, as

proposed by Ferro (2002). I add that it is one in which the analyst-scripwriter may make the unspeakable of disruptive experience ("I am the incested woman") capable of figuration and, therefore, of being experienced, so that the first person singular is no longer the traumatic experience ("I am the incested woman"), but, rather, her own ego, rooted in her unconscious but freed from an alienating cystic wrapper. This requires, in Freud's words, the psychic work of construction, "by far the more appropriate description" (1937d, p. 261), shared by analysand and analyst, through which disruptive experience may finally be experienced in the first person singular.

The regression habitual in the cure leads us not so much to remembering, as is habitual in the analysis of neurotics, but to a zone of representative ambiguity in which representation becomes diffuse and is lost in a cone of shadow. To find it again, or even to produce it, would be the crossroads. However, this construction requires a previous step, which is the deconstruction of what was acting as a defence, that is, the defensive cyst of non-representation that remains split off as a pure mark awaiting meaning. Construction, in the best of cases, renders the membrane of the cyst porous and then the affect-representative of the drive breaks through the barrier, entering fluidly into circulation, without reticence, through the chain of unconscious signifiers. The hole in the chain of signifiers is then no longer an empty space aspiring to make nothingness of all meaning, but acts on a new meaning as a motor to construct meaning.

In patients subjected to traumatic experiences, the narrative ego is emptied of substance, an impersonal voice coming from far away, from some unknown memory or forgetfulness. We do not know who is speaking or to whom the person is speaking. Is it the other in me? Is it the voice of the cyst that replaced it that is speaking? The person searches endlessly for an ego; although it is always essentially dehiscent and unfinished, it may still find harmony with the subject. In order to access its own ego, connected to its conscious and unconscious affects, the narrative must be decanted from a flow of words lost in the haze of emotional-perceptive ambiguity in the defensive cyst.

Rather than a monolithic and unmoveable tower, the ego agency is like a variable geometric figure in continuous transformation, which, in spite of its polyhedron-like character, with many facets refracting its fragmentary nature, does not define the subject but, instead, places the subject on the axis of emotional responsibility.

Although the analyst is not a historian searching to re-establish historical truth of the facts but, instead, the subject's experiential truth, neither may the analyst completely abandon this search. Even though we know that the search for historical truth is destined to fail, the analyst's intervention cannot be based on a construction totally independent of what is understood of the truth of the facts. It is perhaps necessary to maintain constant tension between the search for historical truth and the mythic construction to preserve it from becoming a meticulously constructed but shaky delusion, to the point that the subject cannot get his or her footing. If not, the analytic process risks acquiring a heavy cathexis of projective suggestion on the analyst's part.

Dreams and dream production may operate then as an equivalent of remembrance. It is through dreams that the subject reappears; their perceptive intensity expresses a form of remembrance of the traumatic experience. "Free association" does not appear in the form of preconscious-conscious association, but is freed only as a transaction in dreams, a transaction that acquires the value of remembrance to the extent that the chain of dreams is taken up in the perspective of reconstruction. Sometimes, it is through dreams that the patient "remembers", and some of these scenes acquire value as memories of something that occurred.

A female patient, forty-five years old, was referred to me by her gynaecologist. His concern, not the patient's, was that she had never permitted penetration, in spite of having been married for twenty years. Her sexuality had not apparently required this form of expression, and her husband had accepted it. This impossibility would not have been a problem except that the patient did not allow any gynaecological examination that required penetration, and therefore could not have a pap test or other examinations. Obviously, we did not work on this symptom in a direct manner, but, rather, through the patient's free association. Therefore, her sexual life was not an apparent reason for concern. However, after nearly a year in therapy, a dream emerged whose manifest content was the following: "a man took her in a jeep and then in a deserted place something happened that she doesn't remember about the dream". In her associations, she recalls this man who was a friend of the family, and that one day when she was small, and although she had been in bed with fever, her mother, in her father's absence, had allowed him to take her for a ride in his jeep.

Now, in her adult's eyes, it seemed strange that her mother had accepted something as unusual as letting this man take her for a ride when she was feverish. She remembers a blanket covering her back, but what I am interested in highlighting is not so much the dream images or her associations, so evocative in themselves, but the intense feeling of suffocation and crushing she felt in her body in the dream, a feeling that was not associated with any image but whose intensity managed to wake her, deeply anguished.

Based on this dream and from the associations that followed, we "reconstructed" what might have happened, that is, the abuse by this man of which she has no memory. Her feeling in her body and her deep anguish acted, in my opinion, as a trigger to give meaning to her persistent rejection of penetration. Some part of what was disruptive had left a traumatic trace in her, so potentially painful that it led her to absent herself as a subject of pain, an extreme way to avoid it, until, through this and subsequent dreams, we were able to reconstruct what she probably suffered. When she told her husband the dream and what we had proposed as a hypothesis, he said that he was not surprised, since he had always thought she had suffered some type of abuse. Her difficulty in remembering the fact was associated, in my opinion, not only with the abuse itself, which probably occurred, but to her feeling of orphanhood due to her mother's lack of care; this was an unspeakable pain that lacerated her. Perhaps she preferred to disappear as the subject of abuse, even at the cost of her symptom, rather than to re-experience the iterated pain in her life of orphanhood due to the absence of a mother with her function of protection and caring that every child deserves.

Other situations had made her experience the pain of this absence, as, for example, when she was about eight years old, she used to have breakfast alone before going to school. For some time she went to school tipsy, because she began to drink vermouth without eating, which the school finally detected, alerting the family. Her father worked at night and was never present at breakfast time. Many other painful childhood memories emerged, but the most painful had been her actual experience of having been practically "handed over" to a person everybody referred to as "the crazy man". This person in real life finally committed suicide.

In this patient it was not so much the image of the dream, but, rather, the intensely experienced bodily feeling that was triggered and

operated as an “unremembered” memory at the preconscious–conscious level.

It is as if the regressive current of the psychic apparatus during sleep functioned to trigger an old perception, neither worked through nor integrated, an unmetabolised perceptual force whose handling had remained as if suspended, awaiting the moment to be expressed; the figurable quality of the affect-representative in the dream as a substitute for the unthinkable.

We know that in dreams the regressive current allows stimulation of the perceptual pole, precisely the one that, as a consequence of disruptive experience, cannot be expressed spontaneously: it requires a construction.

However, reconstruction or construction is always approximate. As Freud stated about reconstructions (1937d, p. 260), they “can often reach only a certain degree of probability”. Now, if the construction is the result of a vector of forces determined by the search for perceptual truth of the facts and the mythical construction of the scene undergone but not experienced by the subject, how do we validate the interest of this construction?

We know, as Freud highlights (1937d), that it is neither rejection nor conscious validation by the patient that enables us to infer how well grounded the proposed construction might be. Freud considers (1937d, p. 265) that in each construction “we do not pretend that an individual construction is anything more than a conjecture which awaits examination, confirmation or rejection”. He compares the attitude we should take with respect to effects of the suggested construction to a phrase spoken by a character in a comedy, *Nestroy's Farces*, who, to any question or objection, would reply only, “It will all become clear in the course of future developments” (1937d, p. 265).

This ironic analogy proposed by Freud has limits, since, obviously, not everything necessarily becomes clear in the course of analysis. As noted by Stoloff (2008), construction, like the work of dream interpretation, meets the limit of what may be known in the unconscious. Just as in dreams, in which meaning escapes us through its navel, there is something like a navel of construction that it is wise to preserve. In construction, the analyst must not pretend to have an all-embracing view of the analysand's unconscious. We would do well to accept that a remnant of unknowable meaning is always left. The challenge is not so much to find the meta-psychological foundation of the construction

itself for its validation, but, rather, the mutative effect of transformation the construction may achieve *après-coup* or *a posteriori* in the analysand.

In the transference relation of patients who have suffered disruptive experiences, it is particularly advisable to be aware of all the semiotics of figuration, in particular, the intonation of discourse through which we may access the unrepresented. A changing tone of voice as what is figurable in sounds of hesitations of lacunar memory of something experienced but not represented. The voice as a signifier that, through the enunciation of its sound variants, enables it to become a word cathected with affect: it allows passage from a certain affective aphasia to subjectivised discourse and emotions that flow out like a revitalising thermal spring.

Barthes (1973), in *Le plaisir du texte* (The pleasure of the text), underscores:

With my language I can do everything: even and especially, say nothing. I can do everything with my language but not with my body. What I hide through my language my body says. I may modulate my message, but not my voice. (p. 45, translated for this edition)

The voice, its timbre, its melody or disharmony, is the least graspable aspect of analytic listening, but sometimes it also allows us to thread together an affect and its possible representation. The subject, as the affect gradually emerges, progresses from an impersonal, lifeless, or neutral voice to speaking in a living voice. It is as if the voice were speaking for itself . . . in representation of the subject, thus acquiring all its meaning. Meaning that, as Kristeva (1988) suggests, is found in the register of semiotics.

Words and silence are inseparable in the analytic process as in poetry, but this is perhaps inherent to the genesis of all aesthetics.

From this vantage point, I allow myself to suggest that psychoanalysis, at least in clinical work, is halfway between a conjectural science and a poesis in which the subject appears increasingly in the intonation, harmonious or dissonant, of the drive scansion of the voice, in its prosody, more than in the immobile meaning of an emotionally petrified enunciate. Words become full in so far as they are able to free the concomitant affect from its enclosure.

Only the appearance of a subject that may finally experience his or her suffering would make it possible, in the words of Valéry (1960),

for “the past to have a future” (p. 1526), avoiding deadly compulsion repetition or psychosomatic illness. In this sense, it is naturally not a question of modifying the facts of a traumatic past. Borges (1974a, p. 575), the great clinician of the human soul, explained in “The aleph” that, “to modify the past is not to modify just one fact, it is to cancel its consequences, which tend to be infinite” (translated for this edition).

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Discussion of “The same and the other: homosexuality in adolescence”, by Monique Cournut

Juan-Eduardo Tesone

I would first like to convey that it is an immense honour to discuss Monique Cournut’s chapter, as she was, throughout my training in the Société Psychanalytique de Paris, together with Jean Cournut, a constant referent and stimulus. It is, therefore, a huge responsibility, but also a welcome opportunity to share reflections on a theme that is complex, vast, and yet excessively precise.

It is difficult to discuss a chapter, since one attends not only to what the author writes, but also to what is not said: not words, but something glimpsed between the lines . . . a space where one may feel authorised to listen, but not exempt from the risk of deforming the author’s thoughts with one’s own vision or with perspectives opened by the reading. This is what the rich, condensed, and polysemic text by Monique Cournut produced in me.

It would first be worthwhile to underscore that the plural chosen for the theme of this book indicates the multiplicities of forms taken by homosexual object choices.

Monique Cournut, in writing about homosexuality in female adolescents, has chosen a suggestive title: “The same and the other”, that is to say, the pair identical/different. Her title, like a bright polyhedron, reflects multiple facets that illuminate our debate.

From the outset, her reflections consider difference as a basis constitutive of human beings: "The duality of the same and the other is worked out in the human psychic apparatus, externally by the sense organs, but also by internal messages which are transmitted by the drives". This means that, from the beginning, perceptive sensory reality is conditioned by the subject's internal world.

The anthropologist, Françoise Héritier (1994, p. 11), emphasises that in human societies "the way they construct their categories of the identical and the different" is fundamental.

If we accept that the *principal* function of the family group (regardless of its composition) is to produce alterity, this implies that both alterity and subjectivity require a construction that must be produced and is not given from the beginning.

Citing Winnicott (Rodman, 1987), Monique Cournut reminds us that in the beginning undifferentiation reigns in a time of original, fusional narcissism: before the emergence of desire, it is the time of need, of contact that is visual, tactile, and auditory, between the mouth and the nipple, enveloped in the same skin. It is the time of primary homosexuality as she reminds us, a time that precedes the difference between the sexes. This passage through infantile sexuality, and not only the child's sexuality, is shown to be necessary for the understanding of movements that emerge again forcefully in adolescence, perhaps not only re-editing infantile sexuality under genital primacy as Freud affirmed (1905d, p. 207): "A new sexual aim appears, and all the component instincts combine to attain it, while the erotogenic zones become subordinated to the primacy of the genital zone". The infantile of human psychosexuality remains in force throughout life as a substrate of adult sexual life. If there is primacy, I think it is achieved not so much because of the primacy of genitality, but because the anarchy of the drives is organised under the rule of the symbolic law of prohibition of incest and acceptance of lack.

As early as in pregnancy, as Braunschweig and Fain (1975) point out, the mother cathects the child in alternating positions: at times mother, at times lover, the Other is present from the outset. These authors state that the heterosexual other is, therefore, present from the beginning. Although I agree with them, I think that this idea could be expanded by not limiting the other to being necessarily heterosexual. I would consider the importance of the presence of an other which functions as a third party, independently of object choice, as a funda-

mental function in the construction of the child's alterity. In this regard, I think it is important to highlight a passage in Monique Cournut's chapter when she says that in the awakening of the eroto-genic zones, of pleasure with oneself and in the encounter with the other, once this alterity is recognised, there is also recognition of the presence of the other's other, not without rage and pain, but also with the first pleasures of the exploration of differences. I would add that it pertains to a third party.

I do not know whether Monique Cournut thinks about it this way, but she does not mention the sex of this other. In this regard, I feel free to suggest that perhaps it is because difference, which is to say otherness, depends not only on the anatomical difference between the sexes but on the other, in that this other is different from oneself, a symbolic construction of a different psyche. As Green (1983) would put it, the other not only as alter ego, but the other as an other in its radical difference. When I speak in these terms, it is perhaps because I consider it necessary for psychoanalysis to start to think about how the difference works beyond the subject's sexual identity. Although boys and girls identify with both parents, thus opening up to psychic bisexuality, as Monique Cournut points out, there is a primary homosexuality in both sexes that is feminine.

Monique Cournut reminds us that breast-feeding is not unerotic, and a functional splitting is necessary in the mother between the *jouissance* given to the infant during breast-feeding and the *jouissance* she gives her partner. In this regard, as I suggested above, I think that what is important to emphasise is tertiariness, the triangulation that opens the construction of alterity in the recognition of the other's other. On this basis, the strange mathematics of psychoanalysis: to become one, we have to be first three and then two.

In our culture, Monique Cournut states, and I consider it essential, the sexual Other is the Woman. If the other is the discovery of the not-I, as an unacceptable foreigner, this first other is the mother's body, even though the other is also the unconscious of this subject that is definitively divided and split. In any case, paradoxically, this first other is the mother.

The mother, that first seductress, in the words of Freud (in "Femininity", 1933a, pp. 112–135): "it was really the mother who by her activities over the child's bodily hygiene inevitably stimulated, and perhaps even roused for the first time, pleasurable sensations in

her genitals" (p. 120). Monique Cournut is not afraid of her reappearance in the course of analysis, to the point that she says in the case of Louise, the erotic breast was constructed or reconstructed only when "it was in the presence of an analyst who did not reject Louise's seductiveness". She adds that "the transition through a period of auto-erotism in puberty, underpinned by an unconscious homosexual fantasy, turned out retroactively to be integrating a homosexual identification in Louise". She proposes, not without audacity, that identification with a homosexual object is essential for acceptance of castration. Therefore, could homosexual object choice not be merely narcissistic object choice as proposed by Freud? Could homosexual object choice take place beyond or even deeper than narcissism?

For the adolescent girl, Monique Cournut considers the mother's feminising regard is important, but the regard of a father who recognises her as a future woman is essential. Adolescent girls must go through a complex process of deconstruction and unbinding before any reconstruction or rebinding is possible. Loving themselves in order to take the risk of loving, in spite of the narcissistic loss involved in falling in love. Idealisation of the other, both in life and in the psychoanalytic process, always represents a risk for subjectivisation.

In the prolongation of sexuality theorised by Freud and later by the anthropologist Godelier, (2012), as Monique Cournut reminds us, there is no "normal human sexuality", a proposal with infinite consequences and extremely contemporary with regard to modes of practising sexuality, with which I fully agree. We are far from the normativity of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), a long list of types of behaviour labelled pathological, which viewed the objective of sexual desire as procreation and that any type of desire without this aim was a perversion. Rape, for example, was an aberrant act but not a perversion, since pregnancy could derive from it.

Homosexuality, it is unnecessary to iterate, was considered a perversion until a short time ago, which assumed that the model of so-called normal sexuality that had to be attained was heterosexual and genitalised.

Perhaps we need to reserve the term "pathological sexuality" for cases in which a subject's sexuality, unconsented to by the other, harms that other. Paradigmatic examples would be the case of rapists and paedophiles. Any other type of sexuality pertains to the private domain of the subject and his or her partner. An clear example is

fetishism, the psychic dynamics of which induce the subject to be aroused by an inanimate object, the shoe being iconic, as so well described by Freud. This sexuality, after all, does harm to no one. From this stems the well-known joke that there is nothing worse for a fetishist than to have to confront a whole woman . . . which speaks of the contingency of the object in human psychosexuality.

Monique Cornut cites Michel Fain (1982), who considers the existence of different homosexualities and their place in psychic equilibrium, whether neurotic or not. For Dorine, her twelve-year-old patient, her regressive, anal erotisation was close to "A child is being beaten", thus offering her erotogenic masochism. However, Ana alternated between bulimia and anorexia in what was interplay between introjection and expulsion, her pathologies not generating much concern. It was different for Véra, whose exploration of homosexuality included drugs that intervened to help her to avoid confronting the difference: "pierced by the syringe, the skin eliminates the specificity of the sexual organs as a place of exchange with the other". This means that the practice of sexuality that is not autoerotic concerns the way the link with the other is established, although there is always a large dose of narcissism in any object relation.

As emphasised by Ternynck (2001, p. 24), no systematic correlation exists between personality and choice of sexual object. The homosexuality of puberty runs through structure and nosography. Sexual indecision, a relatively conflictive oscillation between the two poles of sexuality, is inherent in adolescence. As Freud (1920a, p.168) points out, "Homosexual enthusiasms, exaggeratedly strong friendships tinged with sensuality, are common enough in both sexes during the first years after puberty".

I think that this is inherent to the interplay between narcissistic and object cathexis. In puberty, the acquisition of capacities for adult sexual life is potentially traumatic due to the destabilisation of narcissistic equilibrium attained up to that time. As Denis (2005) describes, this is a matter of "avoiding object cathexis in order to maintain a narcissistic cathexis perceived as indispensable for cohesion of the ego" (p. 126), the disorganisation of which would provoke a feeling of depersonalisation. He points out that the subject expects the other to exert a function reparative of his or her integrity, provide help and protection from the threat of ego disintegration in object cathexis, an unstable, oscillating balance between object cathexis and narcissistic

cathexis. Denis considers that, during the period of latency, infantile sexuality preceding puberty remains active in the form of games and group activities out of the parents' sight. This group sexual activity is marked, he thinks, by homogenerational group sexuality established against a background of sexual undifferentiation. This form of group sexuality is perpetuated in adolescence and even in adulthood. This lack of difference between the sexes results from fear and depreciation provoked by the differentiation implicit in the sexuality of the couple.

Citing the opposition between Eros and Anteros proposed by Braunschweig and Fain (1971), Denis recalls that Eros represents the oedipal sexuality of the couple, whereas Anteros includes all group sexuality. The real opposition is no longer between Eros and Thanatos but between Eros and Anteros, derived from the name of the twin brother of Eros, who represents the love and desire that enflame lovers, whereas Anteros corresponds to the part of sexuality concerning group sexuality. The latter form of sexuality, Denis considers, escapes the oedipal prohibition and is regulated by the pleasure that each individual allows for him or herself. For this author, groups of adolescents often develop under the sign of Anteros: partners are not cathected in any stable or private way and encounters take place within view of the group in an undifferentiated manner. Therefore, we are looking at homosexuality undifferentiated in terms of sex, undifferentiated in that it manifests no motive for preference between the sexes.

The sexuality of the differentiated couple threatens the group and the cement that holds it together. The loving couple, "for all those who feel excluded has a persecutory value linked to primal scene phantasms with their cortege of feelings of abandonment and inferiority" (Denis, 2005, p. 129). Adolescent sexuality, and also adult sexuality, oscillates between these two poles of couple sexuality and group sexuality; the latter is most frequently inhibited and develops in friendships and social relations.

The same and the other. The object, all our lives, accompanies us, in happiness and torment. Object relation and identification are two modes that alternate, even in diverse moments of our everyday life, states Monique Cournut, thereby highlighting the paradoxical value of the other, in turn constitutive of our subjectivity and effractive of our psyche because of its potentially traumatic value. The other, for Green (1983), as much as our drives, breaks open our psychic life and

acquires traumatic value. Each of us may resolve them in his or her own way, but we cannot escape the psychic work required for this working through in human beings.

Homosexuality, the concrete quality of this term, refers to an object choice. For Freud (1920a)

The literature of homosexuality usually fails to distinguish clearly enough between the questions of the choice of object on the one hand, and of the sexual characteristics and sexual attitude of the subject on the other, as though the answer to the former necessarily involved the answers to the latter. (p. 170)

This is to say that a man with predominantly virile qualities may love only men, whereas men in whose character feminine qualities predominate and "behave in love like a woman", may be heterosexual.

Freud adds, "It is instead a question of three sets of characteristics, namely: physical sexual characters (physical hermaphroditism), mental sexual characters (masculine or feminine attitude) and kind of object choice". All these characters "vary independently of one another, and are met with in different individuals in manifold permutations". Freud also remarks that the character of the object choice tends to be emphasised to the detriment of other characters, no less important, thereby closing the road to a perspective deeper than what is called homosexuality.

However, André (2005) suggests that "an analysis, in the strong sense of the term, with its implication of psychic change, may take place without the patient's sexual (genital) life being concerned" (p. 14). In analysis, it is a question of treating the patient's infantile psychosexuality, not his or her actual sexuality, independently of whether they may correlate.

For Freud (1920a), it is possible to understand the psychic interweave that leads a person to make a homosexual object choice *a posteriori*, in an exhaustive way without lacunae, but if we endeavour to go in the opposite direction, it is impossible to foresee the course of development in terms of what the object choice will be:

If we proceed the reverse way, if we start from the premises inferred from the analysis and try to follow these up to the final result, then we no longer get the impression of an inevitable sequence of events which could not have been otherwise determined. (p. 167)

In other words, biological sexuality, the determination of sex assigned by the parents and early fortuity determine the deep experience of belonging to a certain sexual identity from an early age.

Homosexuality is the term coined. However, why not refer also to homoaffectivity? A term that opens, I think, to a more inclusive choice of object of sentiments that may be involved in a link, and not only object choice from the simply sexual point of view of each subject.

In the case of homosexual behaviour in adolescent girls, affectionate relationships with their girlfriends may at times, or in a more stable way, acquire an erotic connotation that activates libidinal and affective capital through "shared auto-erotic activity" in such a way that is possible for a member of this type of couple "to experience the vitality of her feminine body by exploring the other's body, experiencing it as if it were her own/not her own, simultaneously similar and different" (Ternynck, 2001, p. 25). This type of encounter might, in some circumstances, acquire structuring value. Ternynck (2001) maintains that, confronted by unsettling strangeness in puberty, the homosexual encounter in its mirror dimension correctly reinforces the narcissistic weave that might be defective. The mirror function proposed by a girlfriend, replacing possible maternal caresses, soothes the strangeness that may be confusing and stabilises a vacillating identification. However, this mirror experience is not without certain risks, since it could also generate the desire to regress to a fusional experience and awaken a desire for original symbiosis. This author proposes that in enquiries into the eventual transience of female homosexuality in adolescence, its value as a space to integrate experimentation with separation is recognised implicitly.

However, according to Ternynck (2001), it is important to differentiate the function of shoring up the adolescent girl's own value in a neurotic frame from demands of reassurance of the feeling of existing in response to borderline or psychotic feelings of emptiness or non-existence.

Social customs certainly change, but "the feminine is still on the side of demand and the offer of love in both sexes", Monique Cournut stresses, a somewhat enigmatic formula that I cannot unravel. The question is: what feminine is this? It is a vast question that Monique Cournut, **imprudently**, does not venture to close. For a very long time, women and men were separated by the difference between the sexes;

then the notion of gender arrived, concomitantly with the notion of masculine–feminine already advanced by Freud. There seems to be some confusion in our times regarding differences between the sexes; although the notion of gender contributed a new view, we now see a certain indetermination that questions sexual binarism. Although the unconscious is atemporal, psychoanalytic theory is not, if it is to integrate the questions posed by our era into its theorising. We are seeing a mutative change the consequences of which are difficult to estimate. We have witnessed all the controversy unleashed in France with respect to homosexual marriages, which have already been approved in many other countries. However, beyond these sociological polemics, I think it would be interesting to be alert to changes operating in language. They will probably have an impact on the way we consider symbolic parental functions including the paternal principle, a term coined by Delourmel (2013, p. 107) in his report at the recent congress of French-speaking psychoanalysts.

The bill now proposed in France concerns the authorisation of marriage of persons of the same sex and adoption by homoparental families. The question that emerges is what these parents will be called, a change that will be registered in the Civil Code. In Argentina today, it is legally possible to be registered in the civil registry as belonging to the sex experienced by the person, independent of his or her anatomical sex. The notion of belonging to a sexual denomination moves increasingly further from anatomy. How, then, do we think about the Oedipus complex in these configurations?

Sex is an anatomical category and gender is an individual category that consists in the belief of belonging to one of the two genders, a belief that appears very early in life. There is a whole road travelled from assigned gender to assumed gender.

For Butler (2000), both gender and sex are performative categories realised in a language act. She also questions sexual binarism, queer sexuality, proposing indetermination as another possibility.

In the opinion of Dejours (2005), "there is nothing natural about sexual identity; sexual identity is rigorously phantasmatic as is infantile sexuality, and as suggested by transsexualism" (p. 63, translated for this edition).

However, "undifferentiation is suspicious", states Perrot (2005, p. 19, translated for this edition). "It has a primitive, invertebrate aspect. An amoeba floating in the swamps precedes all evolution."

How may we think about contemporary sexual variants independently of historical invariants?

“All difference organises”, writes André (2005, p. 18), since it orders the polymorphism of infantile sexuality. He adds, “The Romans fixed the limit between activity and passivity. The English Victorians invented the pair homosexuality–heterosexuality and now . . . it’s a bit confusing” (translated for this edition).

Recently, Faure-Pragier (2013, p. 5) stated that up to now, “procreating coitus, also called the primal scene, was one of the organising phantasms of the psyche” (translated for this edition). However, she wonders whether other representations might have the same function. She emphasises that symbolisation is a capacity of our psyche and not a consequence of actual family organisation. In her opinion, there could be a suggestion of a new primal phantasy that results in “a child made out of desire for a child”, independently of whether the child was adopted or procreated with medical assistance.

Freud (1920a) considered that psychoanalysis is situated on a common ground with biology to the extent that it adopts as a premise the primal bisexuality of the human individual, but he continues,

psycho-analysis cannot elucidate the intrinsic nature of what in conventional or in biological phraseology is termed “masculine” and “feminine”: it simply takes over the two concepts and makes them the foundation of its work. When we attempt to reduce them further, we find masculinity vanishing into activity and femininity into passivity, and that does not tell us enough. (p. 171)

Citing Jean Cournut (1987), Monique Cournut reminds us that the analyst must resist the temptation to educate, a resistance that screens another temptation, to be the double, become an adolescent, charmed and charming. For Monique Cournut, as for Freud, psychoanalysis, in particular with adolescents, is an impossible profession, and I agree. Yet, at the same time, and I am sure Monique Cournut will concur, it is a stimulating challenge.

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Relations d'objet
et modèle de
la pulsion

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La divine jouissance. Le narcissisme féminin et les mystiques

Juan Eduardo TESONE

Que veut la femme ? se demande Freud, l'assimilant au continent noir inexploré, énigme qu'il s'est bien gardé de nous révéler, à supposer qu'il l'ait sue.

Résoudre les énigmes ne porte pas chance aux malheureux qui s'y sont engouffrés, que ce soit Œdipe face à la sphinge, où Tirésias face à Héra.

Tirésias, avant d'être devin, a été femme. Tout au moins pendant un certain temps, pour avoir frappé, blessé ou tué (en tout cas, séparé) deux serpents qui copulaient, il a vécu dans un corps de femme. Puis, s'attaquant à nouveau à un couple de serpents, il est redevenu homme. De ce passage par la féminité, il a gardé l'expérience des deux sexes.

Or, un jour que Zeus discutait avec Héra et affirmait que, au cours de l'acte sexuel, la femme avait davantage de plaisir, alors qu'Héra soutenait le contraire, ils ont décidé de consulter Tirésias, compte tenu qu'il avait connu les deux conditions. À la question soumise, il a répondu que, s'il y avait dix parts de plaisir, l'homme jouissait d'une seule alors que la femme en jouissait neuf fois. À partir de là, Héra, furieuse, a rendu Tirésias aveugle, et Zeus, satisfait par la réponse, l'a fait devin.

Nicole Loraux¹ souligne que, décidément, les secrets féminins doivent rester bien gardés. Les yeux aveuglés du Thébain montrent qu'il n'a plus nécessité de voir... parce qu'il sait. Mais il a dû payer un lourd prix pour avoir mis en valeur la jouissance féminine.

Classiquement, le féminin est culturellement davantage lié à la souffrance ou à la belle indifférence, qu'à la jouissance. Que ce soit les douleurs de l'accouchement, les règles, la frigidity des hystériques ou le masochisme, dit féminin.

1. N. Loraux, *Les expériences de Tirésias. Le féminin et l'homme grec*, Paris, Gallimard, 1989.
Rev. franç. Psychanal., 5/2006

Lacan, que l'on soit d'accord ou pas, a eu le mérite de subvertir ce lieu commun, allant jusqu'à affirmer que la femme, par rapport à ce qu'elle désigne de jouissance dans la fonction phallique, a une « jouissance supplémentaire », rejoignant peut-être Tirésias. Il affirme : « Je crois à la jouissance de la femme en tant qu'elle est en plus. » Et cette jouissance, il la remarque de manière plus évidente dans l'excès des mystiques. Jouissance dont le visage en extase de sainte Thérèse, dans la statue du Bernin, dans l'église Sainte-Marie-de-la-Victoire à Rome, est un exemple paradigmatique. Mais, là encore, il faut que cette jouissance reste voilée, même pour la sainte : « Il est clair que le témoignage essentiel des mystiques, c'est justement de dire qu'ils l'éprouvent, mais qu'ils n'en savent rien. »¹

Comme le rappelle Marie-Christine Laznik² : pour Lacan, la sexualité dépend de la relation que les sujets humains entretiennent avec la question phallique et ce qu'ils visent dans leur désir. Pour Lacan, le sexe réel n'est pas déterminant pour un sujet quant au côté qu'il viendra à occuper dans la formule. Cette affirmation de Lacan, bien qu'elle soit loin d'être évidente, voire contestable, a tout au moins l'intérêt de souligner que le féminin peut être avant tout une position, pas nécessairement liée au sexe anatomique. Et il affirme que saint Jean de la Croix, lui, se situait du côté féminin. Après tout, n'écrivait-il « au genre féminin » dans la mesure où la symbolique nuptiale féminise le discours ? Cette féminité dont Freud a fait le « roc d'origine » dans les deux sexes. Bien que, et comme le remarque Christian David³, la bisexualité de l'homme n'est pas symétrique de celle de la femme.

Les discours des mystiques se déploient en plein paradoxe. Depuis leur toute-puissance narcissique, ils cherchent à faire Un avec plus grand que soit, Dieu au demeurant, tantôt dans le repli, tantôt dans un élan fusionnel. Dans un rapport spéculaire, ils cherchent la complétude narcissique, étant simultanément dans un dessaisissement de soi qui les « excentre » d'eux-mêmes. Sainte Thérèse d'Avila commence ainsi l'un de ces poèmes : « Je vis, mais sans vivre en moi-même » :

« Vuestra soy, pues me criaste,
vuestra, pues me redimiste,
vuestra, pues que me sufristes,
vuestra pues que llamaste,
vuestra porque me esperastes,
vuestra, pues no me perdi :
¿que mandais de mi ? »⁴

1. J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire*, livre XX, *Encore*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1975.
2. M.-C. Laznik, La mise en place du concept de jouissance chez Lacan, *RFP*, t. LIV, 1990.
3. C. David, *La bisexualité psychique*, Paris, Payot, 1992.
4. Sainte-Teresa de Avila *El libro de la Vida*, *Obras completas*, Burgos, Ed. Monte Carmelo, 1997.
« Votre je le suis puisque Tu m'a élevé, votre, puisque Tu m'a racheté, votre puisque Tu m'a souffert, votre puisque Tu m'a appelé, votre puisque Tu m'a attendu, votre puisque je ne me suis pas perdu : qu'est-ce que Tu exiges de moi ? » (traduction personnelle).

Comme le remarque Didier Anzieu¹, le noyau de l'être ne se trouve pas au centre du Soi mais à sa périphérie, là où Dieu l'enveloppe.

Dieu peut-il être un choix d'objet ? Si, comme le souligne Bernard Brusset dans son rapport, suivant Winnicott, toute élection d'objet est un objet créé-trouvé, Dieu ne peut pas être un objet, fût-il grandiose, car il n'y a pas de marge pour le créer. Il Est, à ce point, qu'il ne peut même pas être nommé par les humains. Il est celui qui Est.

Tout au plus, on pourrait remarquer la qualité d'objet subjectif, voire narcissique qu'implique un tel choix. Dans l'amour mystique, on est en plein sentiment océanique, dont parlait Freud dans *Malaise dans la civilisation*, ce besoin de revenir à un état antérieur à celui de sa distinction d'avec un Moi - non-Moi, ce qui caractérise le narcissisme primaire. Pourtant, pour Freud, plutôt que de faire appel à un maternel primaire, comme le remarque M.-C. Laznik, c'est à la nostalgie du père que renvoie le sentiment de ne faire qu'Un avec le grand Tout.

Dans cette approche de Dieu, le mystique paie le prix d'un dessaisissement de soi, d'une désobjectivation qui l'abolit comme sujet. Il ne vit que par le rayonnement de l'objet, fulgurance qui l'illumine... tout en voilant (à peine) le plaisir charnel de l'extase. Cette jouissance, il faut qu'elle reste si ce n'est pas méconnue d'elle-même, tout au moins voilée vis-à-vis des autres. Et, si ce voile venait à tomber, la jouissance se trouve légitimée dans l'oblativité religieuse. Donc le mystique jouit... sans péché et sans reproche, à l'abri de tout regard, dans l'enclos monastique.

Le Moi narcissique, lié au narcissisme de mort, dit Green², doit lutter à la fois contre ses pulsions et contre l'objet – qui sont toujours traumatiques. Face à ce combat que le narcissique n'entend pas mener, il choisit le repli narcissique, superbe isolement leurrant. Il cherche l'anéantissement du désir, le neutre et la mise à distance de l'objet. Le mystique, en pleine paradoxalité, refoule les pulsions par une perversité affective qui évite, et encore, la satisfaction directe des pulsions, mais il ne renonce pas pour autant. Quant à l'objet, il ne le rejette pas, ne le met pas à distance, il rentre dans une relation spéculaire dans laquelle le regard attribué à Dieu le divinise et le confirme dans sa toute-puissance narcissique. Uni à Dieu, remarque Anzieu, le mystique participe à la création divine et la continue. Dans l'union mystique, l'âme entière devient l'autre, « l'aimée transformée en l'aimé » (saint Jean de la Croix).

1. D. Anzieu, Du code et du corps mystiques et de leurs paradoxes, *Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse*, n° 22, 1980.

2. A. Green, *Narcissisme de vie, narcissisme de mort*, Paris, Éd. de Minuit, 1983.

La charge libidinale est fortement génitalisée : Jésus-Christ est l'époux divin ; l'Église, son Épouse. Cette recharge libidinale dote le mystique d'« une énergie exceptionnelle qui lui permet de faire face à la solitude, aux intempéries, au désert, aux persécutions ou de se consacrer à la fondation des multiples confréries ou monastères. Mais un vécu de plénitude requiert la conjonction de deux éléments : la surabondance libidinale et l'accès à un sentiment de Soi primaire et sans limites » (Anzieu). Paradoxe de rencontrer le plein dans le vide extrême.

Georges Bataille¹ nous rappelle que les êtres humains sont des êtres discontinus ; que, entre un être et un autre, il y a un abîme, une discontinuité. Cet auteur définit l'érotisme comme la tentative d'annuler cette discontinuité, « ce qui est en jeu dans l'érotisme est toujours la dissolution des formes constituées ». Et il pose trois formes d'érotisme : celui des corps, celui des cœurs et celui sacré qui en fait contient les deux premiers. Cet érotisme, divin ou sacré, c'est la quête de l'être plein, illimité, que ne limite plus la discontinuité personnelle. Et G. Bataille de souligner que ce qui caractérise l'expérience mystique est une absence d'objet. Et ce choix n'est pas dépourvu de mise à mort de la subjectivité... mouvement qui fait remarquer la mort en jeu dans toute quête érotique, ce dont les mystiques cherchent jusqu'au paroxysme de l'extase :

« Vivo sin vivir en mi
y de tal manera espero
que muero porque no muero. »²

Le domaine de l'érotisme, nous dit Bataille, est celui de la transgression des interdits, le désir qui triomphe de l'interdit. Il lie l'expérience érotique à la sainteté, sans pour autant faire l'équivalence. Leur point de convergence est leur intensité. Or, chez les mystiques, il y a transgression, notamment des limites, et une charge libidinale perceptible dans la jouissance de l'extase. Mais la condition sacrée exige qu'elle demeure voilée, au nom de plus grand que soi.

Sainte Thérèse disait que « même si l'enfer devait l'engloutir elle ne pouvait que persévérer ». Persévérer en quoi ? Si ce n'était la jouissance justement, fût-elle divine, pouvant la mener en enfer. Jouissance dans la souffrance, souvent associée, par identification, à la douleur du Christ crucifié. Il s'agit en tout cas de faire reculer toujours la limite qui permet d'obtenir la jouissance, ce dont la prière et l'escalade des demeures de l'âme de sainte Thérèse sont un bel

1. G. Bataille, *L'érotisme*, Paris, Éd. de Minuit, 1957.

2. San Juan de la Cruz, *Obra Completa*, tomo I, Llama de Amor Viva, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1994 :

« Je suis vivant sans vivre en moi
et si puissant est mon désir
que je meurs de ne pas mourir. »

exemple. C'est seulement lors de la septième et dernière demeure qu'elle accède à la communion-union.

Guy Rosolato¹ propose que l'extase est une transposition sublimée de la jouissance orgasmique sexuelle, qu'exalte toute vision hiérogamique, comme le *Cantique des Cantiques*, dans un dédoublement narcissique de nature symétrique. Et il cite El Halladj pour mieux souligner ce rapport en miroir : « L'œil par lequel tu me vois est l'œil par lequel je te vois. »

Or quel rapprochement pourrions-nous tenter d'établir entre Tirésias, la jouissance féminine, les mystiques et le choix d'objet ?

J.-C. Lavie² remarque que le mystique a le droit de manquer de cette pudeur commune qui fait cacher aux autres ce qui leur est source de jouissance. Il est admis que Dieu « sanctifie » tout, ou tout au moins on peut faire en Son nom ce qu'on ne pourrait faire sans cela impunément. Dieu serait un objet-non-objet relié avec un sujet qui n'en serait pas un, mais Un dans cette communion-union dont parlait sainte Thérèse.

Par ce détour, le mystique éprouve un affranchissement subjectif de ce qu'il vit, comme si la charge libidinale le lui arrivait en toute innocence :

« Entreme donde no supe
y quedeme no sabiendo
toda ciencia trascendiendo »
« Yo no supe donde estaba
pero cuando alli me vi
sin saber donde me estaba
grandes cosas entendi
no diré lo que senti
que me quedé no sabiendo
toda ciencia trascendiendo. »³

Comme le remarque Marie-Christine Hamon⁴, un lexique s'est imposé : « dilatation » opposée aux « sécheresses », suavité, faveurs, plaies délicieuses, plaisirs terrestres, « rapt », « transports », le « vol de l'esprit », « blessures d'amour », entre l'« extase » et la « suspension » et les « tourments savoureux ». La jouissance est explicitement référée au corps : « (...) le corps a effectivement sa part de ce bonheur et de ces délices, très notoirement... », avoue Thérèse d'Avila. Elle particularise à l'extrême, remarque Hamon, les sensa-

1. G. Rosolato, *Présente mystique*, NRP, n° 22, Paris, Gallimard, 1980.

2. J.-C. Lavie, *Servir*, in NRP, n° 22, Paris, Gallimard, 1980.

3. Jean de la Croix, *Faits sur une extase de très haute contemplation, Nuit obscure. Cantique spirituel*, op. cit. : « Je suis entré où ne savais et je suis resté ne sachant toute science dépassant. »
« Moi je n'ai pas su où j'entrais mais lorsqu'en cet endroit me vis sans savoir où je me trouvais de grandes choses j'ai compris point ne dirai ce qu'ai senti car je suis resté ne sachant toute science dépassant. »

4. M.-C. Hamon, *Le sexe des mystiques, Ornicar ?*, n° 20-21, « Champ freudien », Paris, 1980.

tions : saisissement, raideur des membres ou désarticulation de tout le corps, affaiblissement du pouls, perte de respiration, évanouissements, lévitations, sans compter les images de liquéfaction ou de pénétration (le transpercement ou la transverbération).

Au cours des siècles de domination masculine, la jouissance féminine n'a pas été admise, ce dont les hystériques, principales victimes de cette intolérance, ont dû payer un lourd prix sous le feu de l'Inquisition.

Et si les discours des mystiques montraient de façon extrême, quoique voilée par la légitimation religieuse, la jouissance supplémentaire de la femme, inénarrable autrement au risque de subir le sort de Tirésias ?

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