

Beatriz Acevedo Seminar. Class 4

During the past classes we learned how the child, from birth is the site of excitations of a sexual character. We also learned that the mother with her care taking and her words eroticizes the body of the child. So, from touching to being touched, to eating, to listen, to defecating, to urinating, to breathing everything that enters into contact with the body through its orifices, finds some sexual use. As Freud states Nothing of some importance in the organism happens, without leaving some contribution to the sexual excitations. (Freud, 1905)

The child, as we noted, is sucked through that gap which is the feminine structure of desire, and that does not leave the child any other choice but to situate him/herself in the place of that object that her mother desires: the phallus. But since to satisfy the mother is impossible, that task is doomed to failure.

Thus, the first experiences of the child are experiences of a passive jouissance, in which the child is enjoyed by the Other. It is necessary that this experience takes place if not, the child could not have access to the dimension of the phallus. Later on, he/she will have to leave this jouissance to be able to exist, because in this first experience, the subject only exists at the price of his own disappearance, sucked by the insatiability of the maternal demand.

We concluded that the child is polymorphously perverse. Freud demonstrates that human sexuality is not natural, putting into question the idea that the goal of sexuality is genital procreation.

We also learned that castration re-signifies the other categories of the lack, as Lacan describes them in his seminar *The Object Relations*. Although what happens before the Oedipus Complex has its importance, its importance is given retroactively, *nachträglichkeit*, through the operation that castration effects over privation and frustration.

In order not to remain at the level of the object relation, at the imaginary level, working the categories of the lack in relationship with the gift (don) we ought to subsume them under the castration complex. There we are talking about the structure. There is a difference between the function of castration in relation to the lack of the object, and castration in relation to the structure of the subject of the unconscious: One is the lack within the object relation a lack in relationship to the gift of love, which is a lack that puts into play

an object that might make up for that lack–, the other is the lack constituted by language, by speech. This lack is a consequence of speech, of discourse. It is a logical lack that is constituted by the function of the word in the field of language, and it is not a lack that concerns the love relation.

In our last class we noted that the function of the Name–of–the–Father, as a symbolic function, as a metaphoric function, is the one that allows the substitution of the mothers desire:

Name of the Father Mothers Desire Name of the Father (A)

Mothers Desire signified to the Subject (Phallus)

Through the substitution of one signifier for another one, a metaphor is possible, the paternal metaphor. There a wager takes place for the subject: either to cease to be the maternal phallus, with all the consequences that this entails (being allowed to have access to his/her desire, with all the risk that this implies, including the lost of a deadly jouissance but jouissance nonetheless–) or not to make these wager, foreclosing the Name of the Father. In this latter case, referring to the psychotic position, no wager is going to take place: nothing to lose, nothing to gain. There are some that prefer this, excluding themselves from the Symbolic Order, in an attempt to avoid the pain of existence.

We see that the first dialectic of symbolization of the child with the mother is essentially made with that which is *signifiable*. What does this mean? Signifiable is that which appears as suffering the action of the signifier, it is the material over which the signifier operates, and because it suffers that action of the signifier that marks it, it become signified.

In other words, the relationship with the mother is not simply made of satisfactions and frustrations, but with the discovery that it is another thing that is her object of desire. At this point, the privileged function

of the phallus emerges. The phallus is put into play at the moment in which the subject approaches the enigma of maternal desire. It is the Name of the Father that has the function of signifying the set of the signifier system, to authorize its existence, to make of it the law, forbidding the incestuous jouissance both for the mother and the child. The father, in the place of the Other, is the one that makes possible the articulation of the Oedipus Complex with the Castration Complex.

"What is a Father?" This is a question that never ceases to interrogate Freud, and it remains as enigmatic as the other question that permeates his work: "What does a woman want?". These two questions do not cease to interrogate us as well in our function as analysts, and as Freud recognizes, these questions are present in every psychoanalytic cure. We know that the post-Freudians abandoned these questions believing that the Oedipus Complex resolved them. But Lacan in his return to Freud, emphasizes the importance that the paternal metaphor has within the Freudian doctrine. The discovery of the unconscious shows that it is through the paternal function that the symbolic function is structured, a necessity for the psychical structuration of the subject. Freud proposes Oedipus as a myth. A myth that we need to understand as a structure that contains a real, in which elements exist that determine a subject, but also elements through which the subject chooses. For Freud, Oedipus has a specific function: to introduce the subject to castration, a mandatory passage through which the subject has access to the dimension of sexual desire. The resolution of the complex via the operation of castration will result in the recognition of sexual difference, the choice of object, and the production of a signification that sanctions a satisfaction as sexual. This operation –which results in the phallic signification– is what Lacan calls paternal metaphor. Thus, the function of the father allows the subject to find a law that limits jouissance, and allows him/her access to desire, limiting also the angst that that jouissance elicits in the neurotic subject. Thus, the father has the function of grounding the desire of the subject.

To the question "What is a father?" we know that there is not a conclusive answer, because beyond the structure, the father keeps certain opacity.

The Oedipus Complex is a structure, and within it the father is defined as a signifier, a signifier as any other but that has the defining function concerning castration.

Originally, it is the mother that brings invokes the father for the child, the father as a name, the symbolic

father, in so far as the lack functions in her as a symbolic lack, an empty place through which desire can be established. Thus, the father can occupy this place, but only in so far as this place is already there. The Name of the Father is thus an inscription in the mother of the signifier of her lack. The mother brings this third position between her and the child, a place of inscription of this function that allows the child his/her entry into the symbolic order, and the law of the signifier. Through the signifier of the Name of the Father, a signification is given to the subject concerning what the mother lacks that permits a certain substitution over the signifier of her enigmatic desire. From then on, the signification of the phallus is opened up. Thus, it is thanks to the place that the Name of the Father has for the mother, that this symbolic function is constituted for the child. As Lacan says in *On the Possible Treatment of Psychosis* the point that we want to insist is that it is not only the way the mother relates to the person of the father that interest us, but rather the importance that she gives to his word lets state it clearly, to his authority- in other words, the place that she gives to the Name of the Father in the promotion of the law" (Lacan, 1955: 579)

The imaginary father is a construction of the child that comes about through a doubling of the real father, whom the subject covers with an imaginary father. It is love o that elevates the father to an ideal, an omnipotent father, who possess the phallic attribute that the mother desires and that can represent what supports maternal desire. The father is loved as the one who possess the traits of power, and knows how to use them. It is for that reason that religion recognizes the father as the one who deserves love, bringing about the belief that the existence of this omnipotent father is possible in the figure of God, whom is at the same time the one who imposes the law, and the one who is the guarantee of the subject.

Thus, the neurotic loves the father due to the horror of incest. But we know that the love, being the ground of this belief, is also what constitutes the alienation of the subject. For in this place of the ideal, the subject will put any paternal figure, be it his own father, God, a teacher, a leader, an authority, someone from whom he will appropriate the insignias, imagining that in such a way he/she will be secure.

It is necessary that this father fall during the course of an analysis, followed by the mourning that this falling implies. A recognition that that omnipotent father does not exist, that there is no guarantee for existence, and that it is only a discourse that allows someone to support him/herself and find his/her

orientations and places.

There is always discordance between what is expected out of a father and the father of the reality. Thus, next to the idealized father we find in the speech of neurotics a father that is discordant in its function, a lacking father, a humiliated father as Claudel says.

We have then different versions of the father, that vary according to the discourse of each subject: from a torturing father, to benign father, from a severe father to an indulgent one, from an omnipotent father to a weak one, from a homebody to a man-about-town, to an idiot, a womanizer, a submissive father, etc.

But as Lacan says that the father is absent, that there is paternal deficiency, for instance if the father is stupid, is not essential. What is essential is that the subject, for whichever paths, had acquired the dimension of the Name of the Father (1957:159). The Name of the Father is the inscription for the mother of the signifier of her lack. Name thus without attributes, an empty place that a man may come to occupy.

Therefore, when we say Name of the Father we are naming the signifier that the subject upholds when she/he is confronted with castration, because the function of the father consists of incarnating the authority that commands the renunciation of the drives. The father that promulgates the law is a dead father, a symbolic father. That is the necessity of the Oedipus myth, because for the law to be grounded in the father it is necessary to have him murdered. This myth is reinforced by the myth in Totem and Taboo, because contrary to what the Karamazov father thought (if God is dead, everything is possible) what we find in the Freudian myth is exactly the opposite: if God is dead, nothing is permitted. Thus, if in the Oedipus myth the father is killed so one can have intercourse with the mother, in the myth of the primitive horde the murder of the father is precisely what prevents this.

The father not only transmits the law, he imposes it, guaranteeing the submission of the son who then becomes a debtor. Later, the paternal metaphor has as its consequence to re-absorb the Oedipus myth within the structure, through a series of signifying operations that transform castration into a pure effect of language.

When we talk about the real father, we are not talking about the progenitor, the father in reality, a father that can sustain or not the function of the father. The real father is only articulated to what concerns the

imaginary father, that is the interdiction of jouissance. The real father is always covered up with the imaginary father. That is the reason why we encounter incessantly the imaginary father during the cure of a patient. He (the imaginary father) is a structural occurrence of the real father.

If we say that the real father is the agent of castration it is because he establishes for the child a veil, a cover up, a half-said in relation to what is the jouissance of this man for that woman, the mother. The essence of the real that father is marked by a fierce ignorance. He is the father that interdicts that jouissance for both the mother and the child. Freud articulates the position of the real father as that which is impossible, and that is why he is always imagined as a someone who deprives.

The real father, therefore, is the one that introduces the impossible. The impossibility that to every truth corresponds a knowledge. Impossibility that the truth be all said in a symbolic articulation. It would be impossible to know the truth concerning paternity. The real of the father is that which is impossible to know about the truth of the paternal jouissance (Philippe Julien, *Le manteau de Noe*, p 44).

At the beginning what Freud attempts through the deciphering of symptoms, dreams, and other formations of the unconscious is to reach to the point of restitution of the repressed trauma. But the more he deciphers the unconscious the more he realizes that there is a phantasmatic dimension in the subject that occupies the place of the trauma. Thus, he notices that if an event belongs more to the register of the fantasm than to the register of reality, the deciphering that is obtained is of the order of a supposition, and it becomes a construction. It is no longer about actuality, but truth. Thus, from trauma as cause, Freud shifts to the truth as an effect. It is no longer about remembering but about remembrance. It is for this reason that Lacan situates truth as a fiction-- a fiction invested with affect.

Lacan shows us how Freud will take into account the relationship of the subject to the signifier. It is in Freud's text *Constructions in analysis* that he shows clearly how the mechanism of remembrance is related to the signifying chain.

Freud abandons the theory of seduction but he maintains the father in the same phantasmatic place. When he writes the text *A child is being beaten* he shows us that the presence of the father is related to the fantasm.

This is a work that Freud undertook with 6 cases of his: four women and two men. Freud is concerned about the signification of that fantasy. He says that it seems that there in the fantasy lies an important fragment of the libidinal satisfaction of the subject. Lacan says that the fantasy appears as an impossibility of a formulation of a phrase.

We know that the field of the fantasm is a field that is only possible to access through the transference, through the construction of an analysis. As it is something to be constructed during the analytical work, it is never given at the beginning.

The emergence of the fantasm is always referred to a traumatic moment which is constituted by an encounter with the Other, that is, with an impossibility to formulate a knowledge regarding an object that could satisfy the Other. It shows, then a primordial articulation of the barred subject in relation to the desire of the Other, and the jouissance this brings about. We know that the neurotic sustains and enunciates his/her own desire through the Other, to whom she/he attributes the enunciation of that desire. In front of what it is impossible to be answered, the fantasm always appears as a demonstration, as a fantasmatic scene that shows the subject in a state of inertia fixated by ignorance with respect to what the Other is demanding, and through the impossibility of responding to that enigmatic demand.

Freud formulates the entrance into this fantasy in three phases, three moments of scansion:

- 1- My father beats a child that I hate
- 2- My father beats me
- 3- A child is being beaten.

According to Freud, this fantasy is not necessarily linked to individuals that have actually suffered physical punishment, but it is something that is discovered in all psychic structures. It is linked to the perverse character of human sexuality, a primary trait of perversion, something that remains as a nucleus that is both irreducible and indispensable for sexuality. Freud says that an infantile perversion does not necessarily persists for all an individual's life, but if it persists it is linked to

something that has been fixated during childhood. He says that a work can only be recognized as psychoanalytic when it removes the infantile amnesia that hides the subject the recognition of infantile life from the subject.

We have then a scene.

The first formulation is related to the introduction of a rival. In this first scansion there is an intersubjectivity that is triple (three characters)

- A agent that beats
- A child that suffers the beatings
 - A subject that looks

It is the subject that makes the conclusions regarding this scene.

From that conclusion, a phrase is structured: "My father beats my sister or my brother because he is afraid that I may think he does not prefer me". With this scansion the subject gets reassured about the love of the father that could otherwise be threatened by the presence of a rival. In that first moment, the fantasy is of a sadistic character, and the subject is an observer.

Another conclusion of this first phase is that the father punishes the one who has realized the incest. And if the father beats that other child it is because he loves only me.

In the second moment, "my father beats me" we already found a reduction, in which the 3rd element disappears. Reciprocity is established in which the fantasm has a masochistic character, and it gets accompanied by a high degree of pleasure. In this second phase the subject appears as suffering the beatings of the father, in a masochistic position that corresponds with the constitution of the subject. The subject gets a spanking because he/she recognizes the incestuous desire in himself/herself. According to Freud, the

transformation of sadism into masochism is due to the sense of guilt that accompanies the recognition realization of the act. The father who beats in the fantasm loves and punishes at the same time, thus knotting together eroticism and guilt. The fathers beating have the function of the inscribing an interdiction. We can say that the beat of the father situates apres-coup and ratifies the incestuous act.

Freud says that this formulation is the most important and the most significant of the three because in a certain sense, it never had a real existence, it would never be remembered and it would never be conscious. It is something to be constructed in an analysis. Through the beatings of the father, the subject enters into phallic jouissance. To suffer the beating of the father is therefore a sign of a realized (accomplished) incest, and this is the reason why Freud notes that at this point the fantasy is always accompanied masturbation.

The entrance into the phallic jouissance is always accompanied by a certain violence, because it implies a passage, the eroticization of the clitoris or the penis, and that it is why is accompanied by a masturbatory enjoyment. This marks a passage from the jouissance of the whole body to phallic jouissance, the jouissance of the signifier. This implies a loss of jouissance, because he/she will no longer sustain the jouissance of the Other [that does not exist] as total, instead entering a partial, a cutting that negativizes the phallus [-]. It is through the fathers beatings that the subject enters the scene. He/she starts to exist once she/he renounces the jouissance of the Other, therefore gaining access to a possible jouissance. As a consequence of this loss of jouissance (that the drives will attempt to recuperate) the phantasm will be established.

It is a moment that is impossible to formulate, thus an evanescent moment, that must be constructed in analysis, because that which is of the Other in the subject must emerge, as well as how the subject situates himself as an object for the jouissance of the Other. The phantasm may undergo transformations, appear in different guises. It can be any situation in which the subject is beaten, aggrieved or placed in a situation of submission relative to any person that comes to occupy a paternal series or a position of authority.

During the 3rd phase, that gives the statement to the fantasm, there is another reduction: The subject is reduced to an eye, a pure spectator, totally desubjectivized. The subject disappears from the scene, putting into play a pure objectivization: here is a pure object, the subject vanishes.

If at this moment the fantasm is sadistic, the jouissance that is at stake is masochistic. A symbolic reduction takes place whereby what is expressed is manifested in an impersonal manner. At this moment, the figure of the father is overcome: in its place there is a despotic figure that beats, and the child is anyone. As Lacan says: " This enduring form of the fantasm, in which a certain thing is maintained, fixated, memorized, we would say that it remains for the subject invested with the value of constituting a privileged image through which whatever he/she can experiment regarding genital satisfaction will find its support (1957:247).

Thus, what the fantasy of A child is being beaten reveals is that it is the function of the father that supports the symbolic function that is necessary for the psychic constitution of the subject, because it is the function of the Name-of the Father that constitutes structures the desire of the subject. Thus, the father's beatings liberates the subject from being at the service of the jouissance of the mother, undoing the equation body=phallus. According to Freud, this fantasy corresponds to a narcissistic wound, as it is a residue of the Oedipus Complex.

But according to Freud, being beaten also signifies being loved [in a genital sense]. There is a transformation of the signification through a regression whereby to be beaten comes to signify to be loved. Freud confirms this transformation in his article The economic problem of masochism (1924) when he says to be beaten by the father stands very closely to the other wish, to have a passive (feminine) sexual relation to him and is only a regressive distortion of it (p.169). We can see then that the love of the father produces a feminization of both men and women. According to Freud, men masochistic attitude corresponds to a feminine attitude, and he adds that the fantasy of being beaten by the father persists in the unconscious after repression has taken place. Sexuality is then only possible from the

moment in which one is being beaten by the father, a moment in which the subject in a masochistic position— submits himself/herself to the law of the father, which is the condition of his/her existence.

If the subject refuses to pay that debt (which in certain sense he did not contract), this debt will only be perpetuated, repeating this refusal through a symptomatic formation, as Freud clearly shows us.

The signifier of the Name of the Father produces a signification that allows the subject to establish a compromise between a signification that comes from his/her unconscious desire, and the law that sanctions that desire, because the law does not enunciate desire as such.

The ideal father that embodies phallic potency is the one that we find at the beginning of an analysis, along with the supposition that it is possible to know the signification of everything. On the contrary, The Name of the Father as a symbolic instance illustrates the fact that its function is rather to indicate the point in the structure at which the signification falters. The function of the Name of the Father is to designate the impossibility of the sexual relation.

As Lacan says, it is necessary that we know how to use this signifier of the Name of the Father, because one's own destiny and history will depend upon the manner in which one uses it.

Beatriz Acevedo

New York, April 2001

Translated by Lillian Ferrari

Edited by Ona Nierenberg

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