

Author's note

This work was first conceived as a journal article, intended to offer a concise synthesis of my theory on original sin and primal repression. In the course of writing, however, it grew in scope—its arguments deepened, its illustrations multiplied—until it far exceeded the bounds of an article. I therefore resolved to publish it in book form, while retaining the formal subdivision characteristic of scholarly papers.

The iconographic analysis, together with the preparation of figures and credits, proved far more time-consuming than anticipated; and though I have worked several hours each day for many months, the task remains unfinished and has left me greatly fatigued. For this reason, I chose to publish the completed portion as a first part, allowing myself a short respite and the time needed to complete the second part at my own pace, before uniting both in a definitive edition. Moreover, this first part—bearing far-reaching and hitherto

unseen ideas—deserves publication in its own right, before the appearance of the second part, which chiefly develops and elaborates upon it.

Abstract

Although the biblical narrative of the Fall of Man imbued the imagination of countless societies more profoundly than the Greek myth of Oedipus — etching a decisive mark upon Greece itself, evident in its conversion from paganism to Christianity — Sigmund Freud posited the Oedipal complex as the root of humanity’s “knowledge of good and evil”, without ever directly engaging the Fall narrative. To unearth deeper insights on the nature of sin, I brought Adam upon the couch of Freudian psychoanalysis. This inquiry uncovered a pre-Oedipal sense of guilt at least as grave as that of Oedipus: guilt towards the mother, arising from birth itself, intimately bound to the fear of death, and nourishing the Oedipal guilt. The “Fall of Man” is the fall of an “apple” from the womb. This finding is of import for psychoanalysis, education, theology and obstetrics.

Keywords

Book of Genesis, Adam, Eve, original sin, death, birth, matricide, umbilicus, breathing, primal repression, natural theology, air

Introduction

The narrative of The Fall of Man (Moses, uncertain date, pp. 15–16) has long been viewed as a foundational story of human guilt. Despite its profound cultural impact and ubiquity (Johnson, 2008, p. 9), this narrative has been largely overlooked in psychoanalytic theory. Freud, in particular, focused on the Oedipus complex, modelled on the Greek myth of the Theban parricide (Homer, circa 700 BCE, p. 233; Sophocles, ca. 430 BCE), to explain the primal guilt (Freud, 1913, pp. 153–154) and moral development in humans. This emphasis on Oedipus had occluded the possibility of a more fundamental source of the sense of guilt, most strikingly evidenced by children who, notwithstanding the absence or minimal presence of a father, exhibit pronounced compunction — a phenomenon that has long lain neglected within psychoanalytic theory. In this paper, I aim to address

this gap by applying Freudian psychoanalysis to the Fall of Adam and Eve.

To be exact, my original aim in analysing the narrative of the Fall was not to explore potential pre-Oedipal origins of guilt. In truth, my reflections began when, while reading page 4 of *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (Freud, 1938), I asked myself what the very first stimulant of our erogenous zones was. Far from thinking, as Freud did, of breastfeeding, it occurred to me that the very first “sexual” stimulant was not maternal milk, but rather amniotic fluid, and I associated this intuition with the Fall, which likewise touches upon the origin of sexual stimulation. I thus formed the idea that this narrative is related to intrauterine life.

Curiously, Freud never thought to invoke the narrative of the Fall in order to persuade those who, while agreeing with Augustine of Hippo’s claim (ca. 411 CE, p. 272) that “lust is natural, since every man is born with it”, nonetheless denied that “a child comes into the world with its sexual instincts and

activities” (Freud, 1909, p. 42, slightly modified for conciseness). My idea that infantile “sexuality” begins in the womb aligns perfectly with the Augustinian doctrine of the congenital nature of sin. However, it was still not to uncover pre-Oedipal connections between sexual desire and guilt that I decided to delve further into the analysis of the narrative of the Fall. In fact, what motivated me was the desire to discover what Freud called the “primal repression” (Freud, 1915, pp. 148 and 180–181), a repression that I naturally associated with the amniotic origin of desire that I had just perceived.

What was the point of going further in the analysis of the biblical narrative to find the content of the primal repressed? Would it not have sufficed to declare that our first repressed is the desire to immerse our lips in the amniotic fluid? Either because I needed to find more arguments in the narrative of the Fall to support this hypothesis; or because, unconsciously, I knew that the first repressed could not be reduced to the desire to drink a warm liquid barely different from ordinary

water; or perhaps because I could not see how it would be “guilty” to drink this liquid, I launched into the analysis of the sacred story, at once impelled by the etymological kinship between the French words *originnaire* and *originel* — as in *refoulement originnaire* (“primal repression”) and *péché originel* (“original sin”) — which promised to unveil, in a single stroke, both the genesis of desire and that of guilt.

Through this analysis, I uncovered a pre-Oedipal sense of guilt intricately bound to the mother and to the fear of death — a foundational stratum that both precedes and informs the more familiar Oedipal complex.

In this essay, I trace the maternal source of bad conscience, drawing upon insights from literature and philosophy to substantiate my findings. This discovery may profoundly impact theology, psychoanalysis, education and obstetric practices that could prevent an excessive sense of culpability.

Materials and Methods

The primary material for this study is the biblical account of the Fall of Adam and Eve as narrated in the third chapter of Genesis. The method employed is a psychoanalytic interpretation of the symbolic elements of the narrative. Approached as a psychological product that reflects deep-seated unconscious processes shared across individuals, the sacred text is examined within the framework of Freudian psychoanalysis, with a focus on the dynamics of guilt. No clinical case material or other form of empirical data was employed; the analysis remains theoretical, grounded in psychoanalytic literature and religious scripture.

In the discussion section, I extend my analysis by aligning the narrative of the Fall with the myth of the Androgyne (Plato, ca. 360 BCE, pp. 559–563), drawing on other literary and philosophical works — Friedrich Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) in particular — to reinforce my conclusions.

This methodology exemplifies the integration of psychoanalytic theory with religious and cultural texts, allowing to reveal new layers of meaning and contribute to a deeper understanding of the origins of the sense of guilt.

Results

Does not the Greek term *genesis* (γένεσις) mean “origin” or “birth”?... During nearly three weeks of analysis — sustained preconsciously and resurfacing at times into awareness — I shifted away from a prenatal interpretation of the narrative of the original transgression. Likely due to a resistance to reflecting on *birth* — the natural outcome of one’s time in the womb — the round, firm “apple” came to symbolise, at times, the testicles and, at others, the mother’s breast and the infant’s emerging teeth, required to bite into the apple — suggesting that the infant’s “sin” might be nibbling on the mother while nursing, punished by weaning. But then, noticing that the apple bears far less resemblance to the mother’s breast than the pear does, and reflecting on what other meaning the apple

might hold, I realised that this symbol transcends the merely feminine or maternal to primarily signify the