

The father after patriarchy – Éric Laurent

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This evening, I have chosen to speak to you about the father after patriarchy from the perspective of the upcoming PIPOL 11 meeting[1].

The father after patriarchy is the father who is no longer universal. It is the father who is no longer a God. Jacques-Alain Miller highlights this point in his as yet unpublished course, « The One-all-alone » and I quote : « it is essential [that the father] is not God [...]. Freud had shown the root of the religious illusion in the father function and Lacan, on the contrary, marks the divine mirage that is properly mortifying or psychotising when it is supported by the father »[2].

When Lacan takes up the Freudian perspective that the father and God are linked, he separates the definition of the father as God from his existence. He separates the essence of the father and his existence. He states that if « every father is God », this statement must be complemented by the fact that in his existence, at the level of the existence of a father, no father is God. This tension between the two levels, of what is valid for every father, and what relates to the existence of a father, is part of Lacan's anti-Hegelian turn. He refuses to reduce particular existences to being part of a whole.

The father, one by one

He states it during the single lesson of the Seminar « On The Names-of-the-Father » : « Hegel's entire dialectic is designed to fill this gap and to show, through a prestigious transmutation, how the universal can manage to be particularized through the path of [...] *Aufhebung* [sublation]. »[3] This refusal of the universal continues when Lacan starts to define the Name-of-the-Father on the basis of a function. The great advantage of a

function is that it does not define a whole : a logical function defines a domain of application. The function is therefore only definable through the realisation of variables that constitute its development.

Therefore, Lacan speaks of the father on the basis of particular cases. He speaks of versions of the father. To be a father is to be one of the models of the realisation of the function. One of the values A, B, C or D of the function P(x). To address these versions of the father, one by one, Lacan takes a further step by binding the status of the father, no longer to a universal, but to the love of a woman. And he formulates this new perspective in a radical way in Seminar XXII « RSI », when he claims : « A father has the right to respect, if not to love [...] only if [the] love is [...] *père-versely* oriented, that is to say, made of a woman, object *a* which causes his desire. But what a woman thus *a*-ccomodates [*a-cueille*] has nothing to do with the question. What she deals with, is other [small] *a* that are [her] children »[4].

To be a father then, is to have the particular *père-version* of attaching oneself to the objects *a* of a woman.

Lacan thus says about this father and I quote : « It doesn't matter that he has symptoms if he adds to them that of the paternal *père-version*, that is to say that the cause is a woman, who is acquired for him to make children, and that of these, whether he wants it or not, he takes [a] paternal care. »[5]

Here, we see the difference between the paternal *père-version* and the general perversion of the man's desire. According to the structure of male desire, the man attaches himself to objects *a* that cause his own desire. For example, the fetishist has the particular perversion of attaching himself to the phallus that lacks in the mother by realising it in a particular object – such as the shoe, the shine on the nose, etc. Whereas here it is an object that a woman has produced. The child is not defined on the basis of the phallus, but from being a small object *a* of the mother. So, the father is situated at the level of the particularity of the symptom, of the particularity of *jouissance*.

The other side (*l'envers*) of the universal perspective, the paternal *père-version*, is that the father's desire is bound to one woman. This father does not guarantee access to the *jouissance* of all the women like the Freudian father. The father after patriarchy is situated from the real, that is to say from *jouissance*.

It is a particular place that remains after the end of patriarchy.

To be continued...

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[1] First part of the lecture given by Éric Laurent in the framework of « Les Conférences pour la psychanalyse », Russia-Moscow Initiative, on 16 December 2022, in person and by video-conference.

[2] Miller J.-A., « L'orientation lacanienne. L'Un-tout-seul », lecture delivered at the psychoanalysis department of the University of Paris 8, lesson of the 6th of April 2011, unpublished, translation by A. Mey.

[3] Lacan J, « Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father », « *On the Names-of-the-Father* », (trans. Fink B.), Cambridge and Malden, Polity, 2013, p. 61.

[4] Lacan J., Le Séminaire, livre XXII, « R.S.I. », lesson of the 21st of January 1975, *Ornicar ?*, n°3, May 1975, p. 107, unpublished, translation by A. Mey.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 108.