

## THE REAL OF ORIGIN

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The question of who I am and by extension of where I come from, a question of origin and existence, together with the sexual real and the real of death are three areas where the subject encounters the real.<sup>1</sup>

In psychoanalysis we speak about identifications rather than identity, insofar as identity is what the subject believes itself to be, that is the ego, essentially a mirage. The case of “mistaken identity” starts very early.<sup>2</sup> The child’s existence “is already pleaded” before its entry into the world. It is born into the language of the Other, and thus acquires the ‘already written’ of the unconscious insofar as the unconscious is the Other’s discourse. It carries the legacy of previous generations.

Twenty years later, Lacan will write the unconscious as the result of the misunderstanding that lies at the origin of each *parlêtre*: “There is no other trauma: Man is born misunderstood.”<sup>3</sup> The onus is on the subject to construct its response in the face of this misunderstanding. Indeed, everyone can create fictions even scientific fictions to circumscribe and clarify it. Lacan himself declared he was traumatised by it, tired of trying to dissolve it, yet he kept feeding it: it will never be possible to account for the real of origin, to dissolve the mystery of origin. After all, he says, misunderstanding is the reason we have an unconscious, and what psychoanalysis exploits.

“There is no other trauma of birth than to be born as desired.”<sup>4</sup> While previously Lacan asserted that there are those who bear the mark—who live under the threat—of not having been desired before a certain date<sup>5</sup>, in this late text, he declares that “desired or not, it is more or less the same.”<sup>6</sup> This is due to the fact that the human being is a product of

two people who don’t speak the same language. The real of origin for each is precisely this “malformation of the failed encounter between the desires that propelled them into the world.”<sup>7</sup> The symptom that each one makes is the response to what brought life as misunderstanding. Desired or not, each one will make a symptom. What counts is the discourse that welcomes the child—marked by fantasy, history and a lineage of misunderstandings—and the way the child, in turn, will respond to it, will interpret it, by means of an *unfathomable decision of being*.



A subject emerges in the field of the Other, it is defined by its place in the Other, it is represented by a signifier for another signifier, and as such its own identity as subject is in question, it is a stranger to itself. This leads it to seek its identity “in groups, peoples and nations.”<sup>8</sup> Nowadays we observe a proliferation of identities and identity claims aiming at responding to this impossible of ‘what it is’ of the subject. The pursuit of identities leads to an erasure of the possibility of subjective division, of history, of an elaboration through which the unconscious emerges. Instead of an orientation towards the singular, we have identity that

comes to plug the impossibility of the response to the question of origin.

In contrast, an analysis allows a separation from the family drama and its weight as destiny, in order to make a subject emerge by encountering the misunderstanding and the extimacy within oneself, the gap in what one is. Separating from the ‘already written’ in the unconscious opens up the horizon of invention and of choice for the speaking being. Exploiting the enigma that surrounds the subjective origin of each *parlêtre* allows each one “to make

themselves the interpreter of his desire to exist, beyond their origin, beyond the contingency that presided over their coming into the world.”<sup>9</sup>

1. See Ansermet, F. “The Contemporary Body, Between Sense of Unease and Misunderstanding”, *The Lacanian Review*, no. 7, New Lacanian School, Paris, 2019.
2. Lacan, J. “Remarks on Daniel Lagache’s Presentation” (1960), *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink, Norton & Co., New York/ London 2002, p. 547.
3. Lacan, J. (1980), « Le malentendu », *Aux confins du séminaire* (2021), texte établi par J.-A. Miller, La Divina, Navarin, p. 74.
4. *Ibidem*.
5. See Lacan, J. (1975), “Geneva Lecture on the Symptom,” *Analysis*, Issue 1 (1989).
6. Lacan, J. (1980), « Le malentendu », *op. cit.*
7. Laurent, É., (2010), “Protecting the Child from the Family Delusion”, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, 28, London, 2014, p. 29.
8. Miller, J.-A., (1985), “Extimate Enemies”, *The Lacanian Review*, 3, New Lacanian School, Paris, 2017, p. 31.
9. Ansermet, F., “From the Desire for a Child to the Misunderstanding of the Origin” (« Du désir d’enfant aux malentendus de l’origine»), available on Ombilic, the PIPOL 10 website: <https://www.pipol10.eu/en/2021/02/18/from-the-desire-for-a-child-to-the-misunderstandings-of-the-origin-francois-ansermet/>