

The delivery-birth and the unconscious feeling of guilt as pure culture of death drive[#]

Franco Fornari^{†*}

If the Freudian theory of unconscious feeling of guilt as pure culture of death drive can be considered a delusion, it is incumbent upon us psychoanalysts to search for the historical truth, of which it is a dreamlike transformation.

This would require reading the Freudian text as if it were a dream. Such a project is actually practicable and in *La lezione Freudiana*,¹ I have tried to implement it by exploring the Freudian text that refers to the theory of “resistance” in relation to putting pressure on the head, in order to “bring to the surface memories”, and the Freudian text describing the therapeutic process, in relation to the fact that Freud set out to “liberate” the libido “bound” to the symptoms, by “pushing” it into the transference and then “liberating” it permanently.

*Franco Fornari (Rivergaro, 1921 – Milan, 1985) was one of the most insightful Italian Psychiatrists, Psychoanalysts, and Academics. He was a student of Cesare Musatti and influenced by Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion; he integrated psychoanalysis with philosophy, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and politics. Fornari was among the first in Italy to reflect on the unconscious meaning of war; he elaborated the concept of ‘primary paranoia’ as key to understanding collective conflicts. Starting with a new conception of the unconscious as inhabited by innate parental and erotic structures, he founded coinemic analysis and code analysis as tools for extending the application of psychoanalysis to contexts that are not only clinical. Among his best-known works are *The Psychoanalysis of War* (1966), recently reprinted by Feltrinelli; *The Foundations of a Psychoanalytic Theory of Language*, Boringhieri 1979; *Irma’s Dream and the Fate of Psychoanalysis*, published posthumously by Mimesis in 2024. Founder of Minotauro (an institute for the analysis of affective codes), Fornari died in 1985 from sudden illness at the university.

[#]Editor’s note: This translation is a faithful rendering of the original Italian version; no alterations have been made to any formal inaccuracies that a revision—made impossible by circumstances—might have entailed. The only changes made concern some bibliographical references that were not present in the original text, and which we have tried to integrate wherever possible.

¹ Fornari, F. *La lezione Freudiana. Per una nuova psicoanalisi*. Feltrinelli, Milano, 1983. (Ed. note).

Putting pressure on the head as a container, that Freud oddly compressed to let memories out, as well as the project of liberating symptom-bound libido by pushing it into the transference and then liberating it permanently, go back to a delivery-birth fantasy enacted by the father-analyst on the patient-uterus pregnant with memories and “bound” libido.

Treating a scientific theory as if it were a dream is certainly unusual and demands some justification.

This justification is based on the assumption that psychoanalysis, as the analysis of the unconscious, can explore the contents as natural truths, but cannot superimpose a scientific model on them without distorting them.

In fact, since Freud compares analytic “construction” to delusion, in the sense that the analyst’s task is to seek out and detect the historical truth that provides another scene behind the manifest scene, the analyst’s task is justified only in that, like the archaeologist, he goes in search of a buried truth. In this way, the analyst can unearth a buried truth, but he cannot substitute a theoretical model for that unearthed truth, for that would entail the risk of burying the truth once again. Once the gold adornments of Tutankhamun’s tomb are unearthed, they can only be appreciated in their phenomenal reality and they cannot be clothed in theories.

When Freud bequeathed us with his theory of unconscious guilt as pure culture of the death drive, he used the theory of the death drive, which he himself considered highly speculative, to dress up a natural truth (guilt), thus hiding the natural truth behind a cloak of theoretical ideas.

As an alternative to this operation, I propose a research project that starts with an exemplary myth, which speaks of guilt in its manifest scene, assumed as a delusion, in order to seek out and discover the historical truth within it. With this choice, as a psychoanalyst, I can employ the method taught by Freud to interpret dreams. In this way I am bound, in my construction, to the truth of the text that appears to me as a manifest scene. If, on the other hand, I want to construct a theory of guilt, I am exposed to the risk of smuggling in my own private myth unawares, given that the thoughts arising from the darkness within ourselves cannot be thought, as W.R. Bion stated, if they have not first been dreamed.

I therefore start with the account in *Genesis*, where the myth of original sin is communicated:

“The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, that he might cultivate and guard it.

The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for if you eat of it, you shall surely die.

And the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him a helper that is like unto him.”

Then out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof. So the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to

every beast of the field, but the man found no helper that was like unto him. Then the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. And the Lord God fashioned with the rib, which he had taken from the man a woman and brought her unto the man.

Then the man said, "This is now flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man."

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The serpent was the most cunning of all the beasts of the field that the Lord God had made. He said unto the woman, "You shall not eat of every tree in the garden?"

And the woman said unto the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat of it, and neither shall you touch it, or you will die."

And the serpent said unto the woman, "You shall not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil". And when the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and ate it, and gave also unto her husband, who was with her, and he too ate of it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked; they braided fig leaves together and made belts out of them.

Then they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called the man and said unto him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard your footsteps in the garden and I was afraid, because I am naked and I hid myself."

And He answered, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree whereof I commanded that you should not eat?"

And the man said, "The woman whom you placed beside me gave me of the tree, and I ate of it." The Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?" The woman answered, "The serpent deceived me and I did eat."

Then the Lord said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you shall be cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field, upon your belly you shall go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers: she will crush your head and you will strike her heel."

Unto the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception, in sorrow you shall bring forth children. And your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you."

And to the man he said, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and you did eat of the tree of which I commanded you: you shall not eat of it, cursed is the ground for your sake! In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of

your life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you and you shall eat the herbs of the field. In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it were you taken, for dust you are and unto dust shall you return!”

And the man called his wife’s name Eve because she was the mother of all the living.

Unto the man and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them. And the Lord God said, “Behold! The man has become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now he shall not put forth his hand, or take also of the tree of life, or eat of it, and live for ever.” Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”

This is the myth of the Garden of Eden. One might think that it is such a well-known myth that it is not worth transcribing. In reality, the analysis of the myth proceeds like that of a dream. We must start from its faithful account.

Since we consider it to be a delusion, but at the same time we aim to “construct” the historical truth it contains, we can start by separating the part of the myth that has a real reference from the part that has an imaginary reference.

The common knowledge every man has is that women give birth in pain and men earn their living by working. What is presented in the myth as a curse from the Lord God, as punishment for the sin of eating the fruit of the tree of life or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, is therefore a fact known to all. The uniqueness of the myth therefore lies in having delivery-birth and man’s work derive from the original sin. The myth speaks of the original condition that determined the trauma of birth and the working lives of men. Since our analysis aims to identify a historical truth from which the myth derives, and since we are dealing with a myth of the origins, before moving on to the cinematic analysis of the myth, we should deal with the origins of man in a paleoanthropological sense.

As far as human work is concerned, modern paleoanthropology traces it back to the discovery of tools, which is thought to have occurred about half a million years ago and is believed to coincide with the origins of language. The surprising fact is that the same period to which the discovery of the first tools, and language as the tool par excellence is traced, also corresponds to the period in which the obstetric dilemma arose. This occurred as a result of the fact that the same mutation that led to the acquisition of an upright posture, which made it possible to use the hands (necessary for the maintenance of tools), also caused a narrowing of the pelvis. However, the real obstetric dilemma arose from another specifically human modification: the enlargement of the brain, which in turn was determined both by the newest species-specific extension of the cortical area of language, and by the enlargement of the species-specific area of the hand, which enabled the use of tools. This situation is reflected in the

current human brain in the figure of the *homunculus*, which clearly shows how the enlargement of the brain is mainly attributable to the expansion of the cortical area of the mouth (language) and the cortical area of the hand (tools).

The solution to the obstetric dilemma provided by natural selection seems to have been to give birth to the fetus in a state of severe immaturity compared to all other mammals. This condition, also called *neoteny*, appears to be linked to the enormous importance that the world of affection has assumed in the human species, which is genetically linked to the relationship between the newborn and its parents, particularly the mother. The expansion of the world of affections, alongside the upright posture, the use of tools, and language, is also a species-specific characteristic.

A sign of this species-specific mutation can be found in the loss of the large canine teeth that characterize pre-human apes. Among these, male baboons, unlike females, have large canines, which make these apes particularly formidable in combat. In fact, it has been observed that a baboon with large canines can fight so effectively with other animals that it can even scare off a leopard.

Not only that, but while the male baboon engages in combat, the female baboon, without large canines, flees and devotes herself to protecting the young. Another species-specific modification occurring in animals, and now considered to be the initiator of human mutation, is the loss of the large canine teeth. We are therefore led to believe that human mutation, made possible by the discovery of tools, and therefore weapons, made it possible to fight using cunning rather than the oral predatory nature provided by large canine teeth.

It can also be noted that the disappearance of the large canine tooth, which was a prerogative of male baboons, seems to imply that its loss in early apemen pointed to the acquisition of a characteristic that, in baboons, was the prerogative of females. This is like saying that humans were born from a relative feminization of males, parallel to the acquisition of language (a tool of knowledge) and the discovery of other tools.

It is a well-known fact that Freud was interested in the paleoanthropological data of his time. He studied the acquisition of the upright posture and linked it to biological repression in reference to the repression of anal impulses. However, he was particularly interested in Darwin's fantasy of the primitive horde because, by implying the killing of the father, it lent itself to providing a paleoanthropological basis for the Oedipus complex.

However, we believe that the paleoanthropological data available today allow us to overcome the strongly moralistic-counter-moralistic approach with which Freud addressed both the acquisition of the upright posture through the repression of anal drives, and the guilt for the murder of the father in the primitive horde.²

² Freud, S. *Il Disagio della civiltà* and *Totem e Tabù* in Freud Opere. For documentation on currently credited anthropological data, see Washburn in *Scientific American*.

In particular, the loss of the large canine tooth in early ape-men allows us to reflect anew on the comparison between anthropological data and mythical expressions of guilt. One of the most surprising facts that psychoanalysis has discovered in relation to guilt is its oral symbolization.

Common linguistic usage tells us that feelings of guilt are represented by verbal metaphors. Linguistic usage refers to “remorse” and “being consumed by remorse” when expressing intense feelings of guilt. When Dante, in the deepest part of Hell, wishes to represent the most serious guilt, the betrayal of Judas, Brutus, and Cassius, he creates the terrifying image of Lucifer devouring the traitors with his own three mouths. The shadow of the large canine tooth thus seems to live on in metaphors that represent the universe of guilt in its most radical aspects.³

After these paleoanthropological clarifications on the origin of the species, let us return to the myth of the Garden of Eden.

I have already pointed out that the part of the myth that has an immediate counterpart in reality is the part referring to the final curse of the Lord God, which directly concerns the beginning of pain in delivery-birth (the curse on woman) and the beginning of a life of work (the discovery of tools). By linking the myth of origins in *Genesis* to currently accepted scientific data on the origin of species, the conditions have been created for discovering, beyond the obvious scene of the myth, the hidden scene which, if we accept the myth as delusion, contains a historical truth.

It is worth noting at this point that since the myth of *Genesis* constitutes a set of revealed truths, the concept of revelation can be compared here to the *theia techné* with which, according to Plato, the Demiurge created the world, in a fundamental homologation of the work of the Demiurge with the work of nature.

The possibility of discovering the historical truth contained in the myth of *Genesis*, therefore, starts with the assumption that it is possible to trace so-called “revealed” truths back to natural events. In this way, the religious theory of revelation becomes the guardian of the myth as an expression of the sacredness of the natural truths contained in the myth. Our task, however, is to discover these natural truths.

Having clarified the events attributable to the origin of the species, in relation to the obstetric dilemma, the discovery of tools, and the meaning of the curse on man and woman with which the myth concludes, I would now like to draw attention to the fact that the myth speaks of the origin of language, which anthropologists consider to be linked to the emergence of the two original events already described. In fact, we read in the myth that the Lord, after shaping from the earth all kinds of wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, accompanied man

³ For the importance that oral representation has in Kleinian theory in relation to genuine feelings of guilt, see M. Klein, *La psicoanalisi nei bambini*, G. Martinelli Editore. See also Hesnard, *L'univers morbide de la faute*, Press Universitaires de France Bibliothèque de psychanalyse et de psychologie Clinique, 1949.

to see how he would name them. *Genesis* therefore depicts the birth of language, and the Lord God seems curious and interested in witnessing it.

The Lord God has the function of confirming, with his great authority, the language of man, because whatever name man gave to living beings, God established that that should be their name. Reading the myth, one thinks of the arbitrariness of linguistic signs (“whatever name man gave to the living creatures”), but at the same time, the myth also speaks of a necessary meaning of man’s words, which refers to their natural origin. However, Adam seems disappointed with his discovery. The reason for his disappointment lies in the fact that he wanted “a helper similar to himself.”

Evidently, he wanted to be helped by something in which he could see himself reflected, and this something, which was “a helper similar to himself,” was Eve: similar because the Lord God formed her from the man’s rib. The Lord God therefore brought Eve into being from Adam, thus showing that not only did Adam take on the role of the generating mother and Eve the role of the generated child, but that the Lord God himself, in this paradoxical birth, had the function of obstetrician.

It is quite odd to note that in this myth of origins we witness a birth, but there is no trace of a child. The child is replaced by Eve. Adam is now happy because he greets Eve as “flesh of his own flesh.” On closer inspection, however, such a radical assimilation between man and woman, while it has a certain justification in terms of the physical union that takes place in sexual intercourse, finds its full counterpart only in the real natural assimilation that exists between the child and the mother. Let us say, then, that Adam, with God’s help as midwife, appropriated the woman’s childbearing function. We are thus led to see in this appropriation something that refers to the original *feminization of man*, which we have clarified in relation to the loss of the large canine tooth, which the myth describes in the form of man’s appropriation of the maternal-feminine function. Thus, after seeing childbirth appear in the curse, directed at the woman, to give birth in pain, we see the same event reappear, albeit acted out in a paradoxical way by Adam, rather than Eve.

We note, however, that the text of the myth places Eve’s birth from Adam in opposition to language, in that giving names to all living beings did not actually constitute help to Adam from a like-minded being, while the birth of Eve from his rib was help from a like-minded being. We are thus led to discover in this “like-minded help”, the help that man obtains from what constitutes a species-specific characteristic: affection.

This is not only because affections are linked to the relationship between the child and the mother, and to the relationship between man and woman, condensed in the birth from the rib; but also because the most specific characteristic of affections is that they homogenize men through processes of mutual identification, so that in a loving relationship the good of one is the good of the other, and the evil of one is the evil of the other.

However, we still need to clarify the meaning of the most enigmatic character in the entire myth: the serpent.

Volumes could no doubt be written on the various symbolisms that the serpent has been given in myths.

Its phallic symbolism is well known, and we have already mentioned its symbolic polysemy. However, if we remain within the text of the myth's explicit scene, and in particular within the context of the curse given simultaneously to the woman and the serpent, we are struck by the fact that the serpent has its head crushed by the woman: this image, combined with giving birth in pain, refers to the natural fact that, due to the obstetric dilemma, the passage through the birth canal means that the unborn child's head is crushed. In other words, the historical truth, or the natural truth that seems to lie behind the symbol of the serpent, appears to be that of the child. The original sin, which is brought about by the serpent's seduction of Eve, thus appears to us as the child's seduction of the mother.

This meaning of seduction seems to be confirmed by the specific object of seduction, represented by the "fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden."

Having already clarified that in Greek "paradeisos" (paradise) means garden and that, inside the womb, the child is rooted in the placenta just as the tree is rooted in the earth, the tree in the center of the garden is the child. This therefore has a double symbolic representation in the myth: the serpent and the tree of life. This dual representation, replicated by the symbol of the garden as a whole, nevertheless appears in two versions that allow us to identify the tree of life in the middle of the garden as the fetus rooted in the mother, while the serpent, whose head is crushed by the woman, seems to represent the trauma of childbirth as uprooting.

The tree of prohibition is also represented in two ways in the myth: as the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and as the tree of life. But eating the fruit of the tree of life or of the knowledge of good and evil leads to death. The obvious meaning of this fatal consequence seems to lie in the fact that knowing (becoming conscious) of living also means becoming conscious of dying.

In reality, the immediate result of eating the fruit of the tree, both for Adam and Eve, was that their eyes were opened and they found themselves naked. Thus, reading it in terms of historical truth, or natural truth, this result refers to the fact that being born involves "coming to light" or opening one's eyes to the light of this world, and finding oneself naked.

In the myth, however, Adam and Eve's nakedness is closely linked to shame, and therefore to sexual modesty. This reveals a very close fusion between sexual signifiers and perinatal signifiers, especially if we bear in mind that, in dreams, as Angel Garma has shown, clothes are symbols of the fetal membranes, which the fetus loses at birth, remaining "naked."⁴

The most singular symbolic transformations of the myth therefore concern the symbolization of delivery-birth as the appropriation of the female-maternal

⁴ Garma, A. *Psicoanálisis de los sueños*, Buenos Aires, El Ateneo, 1940.

function by men, the exclusion of the child from the human symbol through its symbolization in the serpent, the tree placed in the middle of the garden, and the confusion between sexual signifiers and signifiers of delivery-birth.

The sexual interpretation of the myth of the Garden of Eden is one of the most successful in Christian tradition, due to the phallic symbolism of the serpent, which has also been confirmed in psychoanalysis.

The reference to sexual interpretation is also present in the explicit scene of the myth when, after the expression “flesh of my flesh,” with which Adam refers to Eve, it is said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh,” a quote that is repeated in the Catholic wedding ceremony.

But it is above all in the expulsion from the Garden of Eden that delivery-birth appears as a fundamental hidden scene in the myth, precisely because birth is the expulsion from paradise, understood as a vegetative fetal condition.

However, the absence of the child from the manifest scene of the myth is striking, and the child can only be inferred from the symbolic representations of the serpent and the tree in the middle of the garden.

In reality, the child is found in some of the artistic representations of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. One of the most well-known is a panel by Amadeo in the Cappella Colleoni in Bergamo, in which Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden together with a child.⁵

Taken in its global meaning, therefore, the myth of Eden as the myth of original sin leads us to remark that the true or actual sin refers to an oral transgression (eating of the forbidden fruit) punished with death. Death, which is closely linked to the original sin, in the hidden scene would therefore be referable to the risk of death, present in childbirth, and which, in turn, is linked to the obstetric dilemma, implying a choice between enlargement of the brain and narrowing of the pelvis, both induced by the acquisition of the upright position. In this sense, the myth of *Genesis* as a myth of the origins would be linked, at the level of historical truth, to the origin of species, especially if we bear in mind, as we have remarked, that it contains clear allusions to the discovery of tools (the curse of man) and the birth of emotions, concomitant with the species-specific mutation of the obstetric dilemma generated by the upright posture.

In this sense, therefore, the myth of the Garden of Eden implies a nostalgia for the fetal condition, represented by the rooting of the tree of life in the center of the garden and contrasted with the uprooting of birth.

In short, it is the original historical reality behind the myth, interpreted as a dream-delusion, which speaks in this way, condensing both a phylogenetic

⁵ Recently, a composition was identified in Amadeo's panel painting that would explain the mythical reference in Giorgione's painting *Tempesta*, which depicts a naked woman in an almost obstetric position holding a naked child in her arms. Separated by a stream is the figure of the “soldier,” who would therefore represent Adam. The configuration of the scene in Giorgione's *Tempesta* would therefore confirm the interpretation of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden as childbirth-birth.

historical reality (the origin of species) and an ontogenetic historical reality (the birth of the child).

At the level of imaginary transformation, however, what strikes us most in the analysis of this myth is an interweaving of paternal and maternal functions, and a condensation of sexual intercourse, delivery-birth, and weaning.

The interpretation of the role of weaning was proposed by Erik Erikson, who saw the expulsion from the earthly paradise as the expression of the wrath of the Mother Goddess, due to the fact that weaning usually takes place when the child's teeth appear, causing pain to the mother when breastfeeding.

In this sense, the myth of Eden is exemplary in its approximation to all the mythical and clinical evidence that leads to the observation of oral content in the symbolization of guilt.

Since this oral content is undeniably present in the myth, we should acknowledge in it a super-determination, leading to the condensation of separation from the breast with the primary separation established by delivery-birth. The discomfort with nudity also postulates a condensation with birth and weaning, a feeling of sexual guilt.

If we analyze the myth in terms of decision-making power, and therefore in terms of conflict between emotional codes, we need to acknowledge that the apex of decision-making power is held by the Lord God, a father figure. We can therefore say that we are dealing with a typically patriarchal myth, whose most bizarre expression is the father's appropriation of the function of giving birth to children, which in the myth is represented first by Eve, when she is born from Adam, and then by Adam and Eve, when they are both expelled from the Edenic container, understood as a maternal container.

The serpent's seduction of Eve and Eve's seduction of Adam thus represent the attempt by the woman-mother to reclaim the feminine-maternal power alienated by the father. The story, however, ends with the father's victory.

Such a conflict of codes is confirmed by the evolution that the myth of the Garden of Eden has undergone in the Catholic tradition in relation to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, in which, in the most typical iconography, the serpent is crushed underneath her foot.

Combined with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the fact that Mary's fertilization took place without Joseph's involvement, the evolution of the myth of the Garden of Eden in Catholicism points to a resounding triumph of the maternal code. In a certain sense, the figure of the Immaculate Conception crushing the serpent with her foot, leaving aside the phallic interpretation of the serpent, involves the reversal of Eve's birth from Adam's rib.

If, in fact, we interpret the mutual violence between Eve's heel and the serpent as a symbolization of childbirth, it is clear that the dogma of the Immaculate Conception contains the re-appropriation by the woman-mother of the universe of generation, which, in the myth of Eden, is totally alienated from the father.

Affective codes, or ego ideals, can be taken to represent phylogenetic

structures. The myth of Genesis represents the relationship between guilt and birth, condensed with guilt for weaning and guilt for sexuality; it also strikingly represents the conflict between the paternal code and the maternal code. Although it appears to be a power struggle, this conflict is actually inhabited by a quota that, on a phylogenetic level, is linked to the loss of the large canine tooth, which in turn we have traced back to the crisis of oral predatory behavior.

This crisis speaks of the phylogenetic origin of guilt, which is still active in human dreams, in which the loss of teeth has the same emotional power as castration. The crisis of human predatory behavior, in turn, is linked, through the loss of the large canine tooth, to the feminization-maternalization of the male, as a species-specific mutation that seems to have presided over the creation of the affections that underlie the father's affectionate attitude towards his offspring.

Seen from this perspective, the father's appropriation of maternal functions, clearly evident in the myth of the Garden of Eden, forms the basis of a fundamental emotional structure that I have called "primary paranoia." This structure involves a very unusual imaginary transformation, according to which pregnant mothers represent the violence of childbirth as produced not by uterine contractions, but by a paternal signifier, for example, a bull.⁶ This figure finds its expression in the myth of the labyrinth, in which in the labyrinth (maternal container), the hero, Theseus, clashes with the Minotaur (paternal symbol).

The fact that the myth depicts delivery-birth is emphasized by the fact that, while the persecutory aspect of childbirth is represented by Theseus's clash with the Minotaur (the clash between the child and the father), the salvific aspect of childbirth itself is represented by Ariadne (maternal symbol) and her thread (the umbilical cord).

Underlying the conflict between the paternal code and the maternal code, as revealed by an analysis of the Genesis myth, is the redemptive function of the father, who, by taking upon himself the death that inhabits delivery-birth, cleanses the original space in which the symbiosis between mother and child is established.

It is clear, therefore, that from this perspective, the fetal condition is not only the other world, the nostalgia for which triggers the onset of psychic activity as a recovery of paradise lost, which constitutes the deepest foundation of the life of the soul. But, together with the perinatal world, the prenatal world brings with it the pre-constitution of pure affective states, both positive and negative (trauma of delivery-birth). Starting with the presence of the father in the birth canal, they pre-establish the emotional models that form the basis of the original fantasy life in which the prenatal recovery of the postnatal is

⁶ Fornari, F. *Il codice vivente*, Boringhieri Milano 1982 (recently republished by Mimesis; Milano 2025. Ed. note).

expressed, including what will later develop into the Oedipus complex, and the entire development of human emotional and sexual life.

However, we are surprised to find, at the end of our analysis of the myth of the Garden of Eden, that the appropriation of the maternal-feminine function by the paternal figure, represented by the Lord God, presents a striking analogy with the myth which lies beneath the Freudian theory of resistance, obtained by crushing the heads of patients to bring out their memories, and in the Freudian theory of the therapeutic process, conceived as “pushing” the libido “bound” to symptoms, in transference, to free it (delivery in English means childbirth) definitively.

Analysis of the myth itself has also allowed us to identify a specific relationship between the original sin and the death sentence imposed on our ancestors. This mythical relationship leads us to Freud’s concept of unconscious guilt as culture of pure death instinct, as expounded in *The Ego and the Id*.⁷ The delusion expressed in the myth, that death comes from eating the fruit of the tree of life, can be traced back to historical truth in relation to the fact that the obstetric dilemma posed a real danger of death during the birth of the son of man. We can thus note the gap that exists between psychoanalytic “construction” and psychoanalytic theory.

Psychoanalytic construction necessarily leads to a historical truth pertaining to the competency common to every human being. Psychoanalytic theory (in this case, the theory of the death drive) instead refers to a symptom (delusion?) within the theory.⁸

⁷ v. S. Freud *L’Io e l’Es* in Opere, Boringhieri.

⁸ v. F. Fornari *Teoria del Sintomo e sintomo nella teoria* (The correct reference is likely to be “Teoria del sintomo e lettura sintomale della teoria” published posthumously in issue XXXII of *Rivista di psicoanalisi* in 1986. Ed.’s note.

Received: 15 July 2025.

Accepted: 15 July 2025.

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Ricerca Psicoanalitica 2025; XXXVI:1079

doi:10.4081/rp.2025.1079

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