



When God Fell Out of Heaven and Reemerged as Consciousness

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Abstract

Today we face the consequences of 'God's death', or falling out of heaven, and with him the collapse of many ideologies and values. We witness the disintegration of the Other, the dissolution of prohibition, and the confusion and angst it creates. Also we witness a growing movement back to dogmatic religion and the emergence of persecuting fathers or small Gods: like the rise of totalitarianism of the laws of the market and rating, and the compulsion to enjoy.

Is there another alternative? Can psychoanalysis deal with these changes in new ways? This paper addresses these issues through clinical observations which show the tangent points of psychoanalysis, and spiritual and religious concepts.

Examples include two cases of orthodox Jews, a man and a woman who obeyed the ceremonial aspects of religion to the letter; but there was no presence of god or spiritual experience whatsoever in their discourse. Therefore, they were struggling with broken identity, suffering and cynicism, and lost their defined place in the world. Two others: secular, atheistic man and woman discovered god and its representatives and found a new "name of the father".

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, God, Religion, Death of God

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Zeitgeist

Psychoanalysis was created in an epoch of decline for the traditional religions and the cultivation of the cult of the individual and his "freedoms", or as Ulrich Beck termed it: "Individualization"¹.

Psychoanalysis, which discovered and elaborated the depth and complexity of the human psyche and the richness of self reflexivity, is responsible for a crucial chunk for these cultural transformations. But, as Freud showed us in different articles like in *Moses and Monotheism*², the religious beliefs which disappeared from our conscious discourse were actually repressed and are of course influencing our life by returning from the unconscious in diverse ways, sometimes pathological.

Freud was the one to position the symbolic father as the Other³, the one who brings law and prohibition of *jouissance*⁴ i.e. as the representative of God.

However, since Freud's times and even Lacan's times major changes are taking place, and today we are facing the consequences of God's death, or falling out of heaven and with him the collapse of many ideologies and values.

¹ Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences*. (2002)

² Freud S. *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays*. SE 23:3, 1939.

³ Lacan called the representative of God "the name of the father". The father, who comes between mother and child, represents culture and law. He enables the child to enter the oedipal complex and to detach him/herself from the mother as an object, in order to build his or her own separate subjectivity. The role of the "Name of the Father" is to represent the meaning of the phallus. This significance is imaginary because the phallus does, in fact, signify lack: the fact that both the male and the female are lacking. Since the significance of the phallus relates to castration, the phallus simultaneously changes the relation of the subject to the Other.

⁴ *Jouissance* is the Lacanian term for the satisfaction of the drive beyond the pleasure principle. This satisfaction can involve pain and is one of the ingredients of the symptom.

We witness these days the disintegration of the Other and the dissolution of prohibition and the confusion and angst it creates, alongside a growing movement back to dogmatic religion and the emergence of persecuting real and imaginary fathers or small Gods like the rise of the totalitarianism of the laws of the market and rating, and the compulsion to enjoy.

Is there another alternative? Can psychoanalysis deal with these changes in new ways?

In this paper I will address these issues through clinical observations which led me to construct an integral model which shows the tangent points of psychoanalysis and the spiritual and religious concepts.

I intend to use as examples two cases of orthodox Jews, a man and a woman who went through analysis, and while they obeyed the ceremonial aspects of religion to the letter, there was no presence of god or spiritual experience whatsoever in their discourse. Therefore, they were struggling with broken identity, suffering and cynicism, and lost their defined place in the world.

I will present two other cases of analysis, with secular and even atheistic man and woman, who as a result of their analysis, discovered god and its representatives and found a new "name of the father".

I will construct a framework which shows a possibility for psychoanalysis to address spiritual issues through both of these domains dealing with the vicissitudes of consciousness.

Non-duality

A well-known saying of Freud's is found in a letter to the prominent philosopher Binswanger⁵. Freud made the distinction between psychoanalysts and philosophers stating "You are dealing with the top levels of the building while we are dealing in the

⁵ Sigmund Freud—Ludwig Binswanger. Briefwechsel 1908-1938.: Ed. Gerhard Fichtner. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1992.

cellars and the sewage, but if I had another lifetime I would have shown you that you are also dealing with the sewage."

If Freud was still with us, I would want to tell him that life has taught me that the other way around is also true. Dealing with the sewage reveals its spiritual dimension, or more precisely the high/low division is another one of these apparent dichotomies that fall apart when examined closely. The human psyche has both its upper levels and its dungeons and our task is to choose the direction from which we will act. It is a question of ethical hierarchy, because the fundamental questions of each domain are of an ethical nature: **"Who am I and how shall I live?"**

Personal→Universal→Particular

Psychoanalytic treatment is like starting out on a journey and having to visit various places on the way - starting from the personal, passing through the universal and arriving at the particular.

At the initial session with new patients my first question is "What brings you here?" or "Why are you here?"

During the last session following nine years of treatment a psychotic and suicidal patient asked me with tears in her eyes "What have you brought me up for?"

Her question came as a surprise for me, like a retrospective interpretation, shedding light on the entire nine-year process. It had a hair raising effect, akin to her asking "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Was that what I had been doing in her analysis? Bringing her up?

I believe that the route along which analysis flows runs between the three questions - What? For what? and Why? These questions are similar to the perennial spiritual questions about the significance of life: Who am I, Why am I here and What for? How should I live?

Patients respond to the first question in personal terms - their personal complaint, the story of their life, their own personal pain and anxiety. Analysis draws circles around repetitive elements of their tale. From repetitiveness arise the symptoms, and from

reducing the personal material to a few central signifiers the structure is deduced.

The personal dimension is heavily influenced by the formation of the separate narcissistic ego. The ego is seen in Psychoanalysis as an object formed out of the building blocks of "identifications," which function as a shield or screen intended to protect the subject from unmediated encounters with the bodily, the spiritually or worldly Real.

The ego is an organizing agent which serves as a defense in the face of the dynamic uncertainty of the subject of the unconscious, its inherent Otherness and the sense of the uncanny that accompanies such encounters. But because of the imaginary fixation on the ego as our identity (fixation which is referred to by eastern wisdom as "attachment"), it resists movement or radical transformations.

In analytic practice, the ego is considered to be a source of resistance and fixation. While functional to a certain extent in our dealings with reality, in our times it got inflated by narcissism to a pathological extent. Reinforcing it merely serves to increase its resistance. The attachment of the ego is the personal, imaginary perspective, which can put a stop to motion and development.

The universal and impersonal nature of his suffering comes as an unpleasant surprise for the subject. The structural character is as in neurotic, perverse, psychotic. The chaos of the signifiers is reduced to a kind of formula. The personal has to be taken through the universal prism, which changes the position of the subject and their narcissistic investment in "being special". That is the first step of the analysis. The next movement is to recognize the *jouissance* that is part of the subject's suffering, his identification with his symptoms and the pathological repetition compulsion. In the end of the analysis the subject is supposed to assume responsibility for their position regarding *jouissance*. They choose the particular aspects of their subjectivity.

Psychoanalysis and the Evolution of Consciousness

Only through adopting the position of "I don't know and I want to know" can the patient "pass through" and expand from the

personal to the particular. The reference to the imaginary phantasy around "me and my story" should evolve to regarding it as a text, as a symbolic third which is structured in the inter-subjective field between the analyst and the analysand.

From there new potentials might rise

In fact, we can look at psychoanalytic practice, as a form of dealing with evolution at the level of consciousness, through widening the perspective from which we look at the world and at ourselves and from which we act - from the personal, to the universal and the particular autonomy. This occurs through praxis rather than theory.

In my opinion, after many years of clinical praxis, psychoanalysis cannot be discussed without discussing evolution at the level of consciousness - recognition of repetition, the fall of the ideal, giving up *jouissance* etc.

There is also a dialectic faculty in Hegelian terms - generating a new paternal metaphor when the subject engages (*tuche*) with the Real. The main transformation that should happen in the psychoanalytic encounter is the movement from "personal" egoic interaction to the appearance of the subject as text and the creation of an inter-subjective field.

By undermining the attachment to the ego, psychoanalysis tries to restore the movement of desire, of its dialectic, to open up a free space in which the subject can dwell and move more freely through life's contingencies.

I claim that there is no real sense in psychoanalysis without referring to evolution as its aim: recognition of repetition compulsion, falling of the ideal self image, renunciation of pathogenic narcissism, recognizing the partiality of various desires and their limitations and detaching the identification with them, which means liberation, assuming responsibility for one's *jouissance*, invention of new knowledge, new love and new ways to deal with desire.

Freedom could be defined as detachment from the identifications with the various passions and fears of the ego and liberation from their "clutches". In the position towards one's *jouissance* there should be a transition from the phallic to the feminine *jouissance*⁶.

Psychoanalysis does not deal with the higher realms of the psyche but it could facilitate the appearance of the new authentic dimension by all the above. And maybe psychoanalysis by going against the laws of the market and by redefining the names of the father has no alternative but to address the issue of new god representations and the potential for evolution. Maybe this is the only possible future for this field to remain alive and kicking and not become past philosophy.

The Examples

A. The Dealer, is an orthodox Jew obsessed about his wife. His complaint was that she doesn't love him enough, she avoids having sex with him, she is not religious enough - dressing up provocatively, she wants independence etc. He feels a lot of anxiety and pain around their relationship and he cannot think of anything else. After about a year in analysis it all changed completely. The obsession, jealousy and passion vanished. Now he cannot stand her, he is not attracted to her and he would be happy if she divorced him. He doesn't dare separating from her because of public opinion. He has relationships with other women, mostly prostitutes, when he goes abroad (which he does very often). He had this kind of relationships even in the first phase but then he

⁶ In his XXth seminar, *Encore* (1975), Lacan developed his radical claim concerning two kinds of *jouissance*. He claimed that there is phallic *jouissance* but that not all *jouissance* is phallic. While the law that is linked in our culture to desire is the "Law of the Father", and *jouissance* in our culture is essentially phallic, Lacan claimed that since the woman is not wholly subject to the phallic law, feminine sexuality has a possibility of experiencing a kind of *jouissance* that is not phallic—a *jouissance* that cannot be expressed in words that are essentially subject to the paternal law. Lacan called this other *jouissance* feminine *jouissance*. This kind of *jouissance*, usually experienced by women, can also be experienced by artists and male mystics.

had justified it by his wife's avoidance. Now his wife is pursuing him while he tries to avoid her as much as he can. There is a total split between his religious ideals and beliefs and the way he conducts his life. But the obsession is still there – it has just changed its direction. He feels much better now but he would not renounce his *jouissance*. He makes deals with God: He promises himself that there will come a time when he will become righteous. He also finds Halachic conclusions legitimating his sleeping around with non Jewish women in another country. In the transference he expressed a lot of love and appreciation of me as a therapist and as a human being but also a split. He used to say: "you cannot help me with my religious conflicts – I don't need you for that". A.'s parents divorced and A. felt a lot of contempt towards both his parents, but mostly towards his lying and cheating father.

I found myself trying to bring in God and the religious ideals as a means to work against the split but with no success. Many times we talked about his lying and living a double life as what prevents him from transformation. In the end he chose to continue as he is.

Even though A. feels much better, with no obsessive symptoms and no anxiety, he chose to stop his treatment rather than confront his more fundamental fear from intimacy. He chose consciously to stay in the imaginary realm of his phantasies, not wanting to know anymore. He chose to save the status quo and the deadening of his soul. The hope now lies with his wife who decided to begin therapy and maybe she would force him to move.

C. The heretic. She looks like a fragile ivory doll. She is all dressed up and wearing a wig, but you can see she is a very attractive woman. She belongs to one of the most orthodox sects of Hassidic Jews, anti-Zionist, speaking Yiddish, not taking money from the state and not paying taxes, women not allowed to drive etc. She was one of the most atheist people I ever met. For years she is hiding her hatred of religion and her disbelief in God. She has children who will be taken from her if she leaves; also she is not attracted by secular life.

She came to analysis feeling depressed and thinking of committing suicide. She lives a secret life of internet movies and prohibited books. When her husband finds out he refuses to have

sex with her, calling her "rebellious woman". She never found a place in her father's estimation. Her nickname in her fathers' house was "sign", because she was a first daughter, a sign for a boy. Her phantasy is that she has a penis. Her dreams are full of Eros.

When she was a small girl her grandfather, before going away, kissed her a French kiss which she understood only after years. Both her grandparents were killed after this incident in a car accident - *a sign from God who doesn't exist?* The analysis helped her take responsibility for this split and her choice to stay in her current situation, and she found sublimation for her drive in her studies and profession. She found her particularity in her helping others in their mental distresses. Thus she found a more inclusive and flexible name of the father.

D. The Bohemian. He is a true member of the X generation. No high values, no deep roots, a drug-addict father, Bohemian parents divorced and father moving to another country, completely clueless. When he was in high-school he went through sexual abuse by his adored male teacher. There were other boys who got the same treatment but the school hushed up the incident and only fired the teacher. D. became depressed and left school. He didn't go to the army and became a rock musician. In the first phase of the analysis there was a lot of work done around D.'s unconscious motivations and his relationship with his parents, his anger at their abandonment and neglect. By degrees he began taking responsibility for his life, finishing school and serving in the army. One of the major analytic acts happened when he brought the teacher to trial and testified in the trial his truth as a subject. He influenced the other boys to give testimony. He put law in place of chaos and he reconstructed the symbolic dimension where before was persecuting real.

The second phase of analysis happened after about a few years of his ending of the first phase. He was working for minimum wages, couldn't build a stable relationship with a woman, and still lacking direction and meaning in life. During this time the analyst went on a spiritual path of evolution of consciousness. She was much more aware of the cultural context and the perspective of D.'s life and she responded from the universal perspective. She said something to the effect of the whole generation suffering from the same

symptoms and lack of meaning in life. For D. something new happened after this interpretation. He discovered God – not a religious extraneous God, but the God as a part of himself – as the impulse to evolve at the level of consciousness. After a short while he finished his analysis and continued on a spiritual path, which includes also becoming an active contributing member in the educational field, helping others to evolve and trying to create a better culture. This is his particular way to make a difference.

B. The Discoverer. After many long years of psychoanalysis she has reached the point of certainty – she circumnavigates and surrounds the rock of the Real, that which cannot be described, which cannot be healed. She shall have to bear that wound all her life – all that is left to do is "identify with the symptom", adjust oneself more comfortably to the symptom and accept it.

She considers the *passee*⁷ as an option, instead of which she opts for a spiritual workshop in India. After a week of meditation, contemplation, silence and detachment from all that is known, the teacher speaks of the Real – in his own terms. "Get real!" he says, using "American" terminology, but what comes to her mind is "Coca Cola – the real thing", and she chuckles derisively.

Then, seemingly from nowhere, the barrier – the Real, pops up from the very depths of her being. Doubt assails her – could this really be the Real? At that very moment of the question arising – the Real melts away and it is as if it had never been present. The world turns upside down. There is a sense of wonder and blissful dizziness, and an almost unbearable ease. That same dark god that had controlled her, to whom she had sacrificed so much, around which her whole life had revolved – has crumbled away in front of her like a cheap illusion. For her it was a leap in consciousness that made the Real imaginary. So where is the "real" Real hiding? If we see the evolution of consciousness in spiral form – the only Real there is, is the absolute, or full perspective – unlimited all-

⁷ The *Passe* is a way Lacan invented to passé from being an analysand to becoming an analyst. By a procedure of giving testimony about a particular discovery or formulation of an insight in one's own analysis, and in that way contributing new knowledge to the body of psychoanalytic theory.

encompassing vision. Every other Real can only be relative. This Real we can name: God.

Years later, the effects of the experience have taken root, stabilized and her perspective continues to broaden.

A model describing the possible integration of the psyche and the spiritual⁸

The neurotic-normal psyche can be schematized as a triangle whose head points down. With the unconscious motivation at the bottom - and symptoms, phantasies and sublimation as the possible appearances in the outside world. Libido or Eros is the drive that moves the whole system and repression is the mechanism of defense from too much satisfaction or *jouissance*. The unconscious is sending desires which are looking for objects to fulfill them. The highest attainment of the human in this structure is when the libido sublimates into the creative drive.

But sometime a new potential and a new motive to life can emerge, as a result of broadening the perspective and liberation from the symptoms, freeing the desire of the analysand. We can call this new emergence the evolutionary impulse or the God principle.

Then, a wider perspective and a new position towards life can evolve. A new triangle can be created on top of the old one, and it points upward.

The evolved psyche

Consciousness

Consciousness is that energetic infinity which is actually immortal Life. Without consciousness what exists is only matter. Even concerning matter modern science is claiming that there is more or less hidden energy embodied in it.

⁸ The theory of the evolution of consciousness is based on Andrew Cohen's teachings of Evolutionary Enlightenment. See www.enlightennext.org

In his article: "Narcissism, an Introduction", Freud writes: "He [the human] is the mortal vehicle of a (possibly) immortal substance – like the inheritor of an entailed property, who is only the temporary holder of an estate which survives him."⁹

Position

This new position is situated at the base of this triangle, combined of **attention and intention**. This position emanates from recognizing the existence of an absolute factor in the cosmos, a factor which we are a part of.

Attention is directed simultaneously inwards and outwards, it is actually a kind of detachment from the chatter of thoughts, emotions, images etc. To be able to listen thus freely we need to agree not to already know what we are listening for.

In psychoanalysis as well, one of the main tools is "free floating attention". Freud recommends to the analysts not to know beforehand, not to understand the patients too much, so they can listen attentively. To listen in as free a way possible from conditioning and from dealing with their own narcissism. This is necessary in order to facilitate a space in which the unconscious of the patient can appear before his consciousness. In this way he can face the truth about himself, about the dead ends of his identifications, his compulsive patterns, his illusions and his *jouissances*, to assume responsibility for his life and to change. The patient can learn this same attention towards his inner and outer world. An attention such as this leads to the insight that the human experience is an impersonal one. That is to say, it is a universal expression of life and of consciousness itself which strives to evolve and know itself through all sentient beings.

Intention is conscious motivation. It is the part in our position that decided to choose freedom at any price. It is that determined will to be free in order to be available to participate in the immense responsibility that is put on our shoulders as human beings to take the lead in the evolutionary process of consciousness.

⁹ Freud Sigmund, Narcissism, an Introduction, SE 14:69, 1914.

One of the means enabling this freedom is renouncing the victim position, or in psychoanalytic language – renouncing *jouissance* from suffering. This is a radical step in which we are ready, for the sake of liberating ourselves from the fears and desires of the limited separate ego, to assume responsibility for the consequences of actions that hurt us and made us suffer, and of course assume responsibility also for our reactions. That is to say, to understand that we have free choice.

Extension

The tip of the authentic triangle represents the form in which the position of attention and intention is realized through action and communication in the world that is external to the psyche. Contrary to the normal-neurotic triangle that is characterized by repetitive defensive actions, here the action is vertical transformative, which aspires for the new and is not limited by fear or desire. Thus the action emanates from the self who is free from fundamental contradictions and selfish motives, enabling the human being to assume full responsibility for his actions.

Confidence, Evolutionary Tension

Evolved action and communication in the external world feeds the authentic psychic position of attention and intention, empowers it and the evolutionary impulse that aspires always to evolve and move beyond the known to new realms of creation and knowledge. This confidence is necessary to build a different momentum than the influence of narcissism and inertia, and is important to strengthen and stabilize the spiritual enlightened dimension.

The evolutionary tension is a different dimension of the same drive that psychoanalysis refers to as the erotic drive. It can be called the Life drive – the drive to evolve, to fulfill the potential that is inherent in life which aspires to manifest itself – the drive that expressed itself at the beginning of creation with the big bang. It continues to express itself in the aspiration for higher and more complex forms of harmony and integration.

Eros, Creative, creator

Both dimensions of the human are nourished from the same fire that is also responsible for all the creation in the world. This fire or energy is one with different levels of development. It is Eros or Libido nourishing the sexual drive. It is the drive behind all the creativity in the universe, it is the creative principle or one can say it is life itself which are not concentrated in the individual but in the life process itself of which the individual is a vehicle. It is also the source of the evolutionary impulse and its derivatives, i.e. the drives.

The Authentic Human – back to the examples

The Authentic Human is a combination of the two dimensions-triangles. When the authentic dimension has evolved, the less developed dimension – the dimension of the separate self – doesn't disappear. It loses its power and like in the schematic drawing it is subjugated to the authentic dimension. It is useful as what represents the human uniqueness and individuality but only with the condition of it being harnessed in the service of the evolutionary process. One can say that it puts the feminine position on top of the phallic one.

In the examples I had given A. is the only one who literally refused to deal with his higher self. The results of his analysis were the alleviating of his obsessive symptoms and his feeling better. He recoiled before the deep implications of his realization. Even though intellectually he knows everything and emotionally cherishes the faith and the dogma, he chose to ignore the implications and he remained religious in ceremony but without God. I think that the problem lies in the transference which was mostly imaginary. God is a phallicentric entity in his religion and feminine *Jouissance* is unbearable for him, and since his analyst is a woman he cannot put her in the place of God (representing the Subject supposed to know). During the whole duration of the analysis he tried to seduce the analyst to meet him outside the clinic, to meet him abroad, that is to say – to be another woman to conquer.

C. was in touch with a more authentic and autonomous way to live and discovered a way to do so without breaking the existing

structures. She found an alternative to the penis she desired – with knowledge and truth. It was a new paternal metaphor which allowed her to become a subject and not a sign.

She went through the same process as the culture in the 20th century – putting the psyche and its dynamic in the place of God.

D. and B. are struggling to express in their lives more of the authentic triangle and less the neurotic one. It is a noble struggle and gives higher meaning to life. The recognition of the analyst of the absolute perspective and her own evolution facilitated the emergence of these new potentials.



