

Projection, Substitution and Exaltation: Freud's Case Study of Little Hans and the Creation of God in *Totem and Taboo*

Dr. Herman Westerink

Department of Practical Theology and Psychology of Religion

Protestant Theological Faculty

University of Vienna

Schenkenstraße 8-10

A-1010 Vienna

Austria

herman.westerink@univie.ac.at

Abstract

In this article a new reading of *Totem and Taboo* is presented: the emergence and further development of totemic and advanced religion is interpreted from the perspective of Freud's case study of Little Hans and his short essay on family romances, in which he elaborates the psychic dynamics involved in father substitution and father exaltation. Freud's view on God as exalted father cannot be interpreted in terms of projection – a mechanism that is primarily associated with animism, belief in demons and philosophies of life – but should be associated with a decrease of hostility, estrangement and distancing from the physically present father.

Key words: animism, religion, little Hans, projection, substitution, exaltation, creation of God

Introduction

It is a hundred years ago that Freud published one his major studies in applied psychoanalysis,

Totem and Taboo. In many ways the text is a landmark in Freud's writings. It is written in a period of dissensions and conflicts with some of his most important students (Adler, Jung), a period also of decisive choices and new directions in psychoanalytic theory. In the midst of one of Freud's most creative periods *Totem and Taboo* marks the transition from his first major theoretical studies on dreams, sexuality and cultural morality, and the main case studies on hysteria, paranoia and obsessional neurosis towards his essays in metapsychology that start with the formulations on the pleasure and reality principles, and on narcissism. It is also the first text where Freud clearly expresses that the Oedipus complex is the core complex of psychoanalysis. Freud realized the importance of this "daring enterprise" (Freud & Jones, letter 120) and ranked *Totem and Taboo* among his most important ones, proudly drawing upon it in later writings such as *Civilization and Its Discontents* and, most of all, *Moses and Monotheism*. And yet, the book was badly received. Ernest Jones writes: "Outside analytical circles it met with complete disbelief as one more personal phantasy of Freud's" (Jones 1955, p. 360). The reception of the text shows a preoccupation with what was considered most problematic: 1) Freud's reconstruction of prehistoric real events and his emphasis on the importance of the Deed, 2) his assertion of universality of the Oedipus complex and his demonstration thereof through a particular reading of anthropological material, 3) his apparent claim that the God-idea could be explained as projection, and 4) his study and interpretation of religion analogous to obsessional neurosis (see also, Kuiper 2007; Paul 2010; Smadja 2011). This preoccupation with these issues has obscured central aspects of the text. One such aspect is the importance of the sense of guilt, not only in the reconstruction of the origins of religion, but – more general – as the hidden core in all forms of religion that emerge and develop throughout history. The various religions can be seen as different theatres or "stages" (Freud 1905-1906) where the inner conflicts between drive and morality are expressed and socialized in a specific cultural-historic context (Westerink 2009a;

2009b; Will 2012). Another central issue in the text is Freud's claim that the complex phenomenon of religion cannot be explained or understood as the expression of conscious thought activity, intuitive ideas, mystic experiences, sense of the sacred or numinous, longing for participation in a cosmic unity, or a natural need of meaning, continuity and order in contingent and uncertain life circumstances. Freud not only rejects the idea of *homo religiosus* or the idea that cultural phenomena are the results of conscious psychic processes, but also discards the idea that the strength of religion lies in abstract symbolic systems or philosophies of life providing meaning and certainty or at least protect against a sense of meaninglessness or nothingness.

In this article I will further elaborate on the continuity Freud suggests between the most primitive pre-religious stages of man's philosophies of life and ritualizations, and later advanced religions – a continuity that according Freud lies in moral aspects of religion (taboos, social regulations, sense of guilt). Instead, I want to focus on a theoretical problem Freud addresses and tries to explain, a problem seldom discussed in literature, namely 'how to think the transition from primitive religion to more advanced religion'. I will show that Freud in the course of *Totem and Taboo* changes his theory of religion: in the third essay he focuses on the emergence of religion from animism; in the fourth essay he drops animism and favors totemism as the earliest form of religion. Doing so, Freud moves away from one possible explanation of religion, namely religion as the product of natural and general psychic mechanisms, i.e., projection. It is my hypothesis that Freud's theory on the exaltation of the father and the creation of God in religion in the fourth essay of *Totem and Taboo* should not be interpreted in terms of projection, but can be read as the application of ideas on father substitution (*Ersatz*), father exaltation (*Erhöhung*) and estrangement (*Entfremdung*) as expressed in his case study of Little Hans (1909a) and the short essay on the neurotic's family romances (1909b). I will argue that the exaltation of the father should be understood as estrangement and distancing from the physical and immediate presence of the father.

A few notes on projection and animism

Already in Freud's earliest clinical and theoretical writings the projection mechanism is exclusively linked to paranoia and anxiety neurosis (Freud 1894; 1895; 1896). Freud describes it as a defence mechanism, an attempt to refuse the belief in self-reproaches through projection of the reproach on to another person in the outside world without alteration of the content of the reproach, but fails to define or explain the mechanism more profound. It is much later, in *Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia*, that Freud makes a comprehensive endeavour to elaborate upon the projection mechanism. Here, he argues that projection is merely the mechanism responsible for the symptom formation of the paranoia, namely the delusion of persecution (Freud 1911, p. 63, p. 71). It is no longer a defence mechanism against self-reproach, but a mechanism of symptom formation, i.e., an attempt to reconstruct the relation with reality after the breakdown of the actual structuring processes, namely the libidinal relation with reality (decathexis). In this case study Freud describes the mechanism of projection as follows: "An internal perception is suppressed, and, instead, its content, after undergoing a certain kind of distortion, enters consciousness in the form of an external perception". He immediately adds that this remarkable process not only makes its appearance in paranoia "but under other psychological conditions as well, and in fact it has a regular share assigned to it in our attitude towards the external world" (Freud 1911, p. 66). Projection describes the normal and general process in which the causes of certain sensory perceptions are not located in the subject, but instead (dislocated or displaced) in the outside world. Projection is a general human phenomenon, which always plays a role in the formation of subjectivity and in the relation between subject and reality. Freud announces an essay on projection, but this will never be published (Idem, p.

71), and the question how Schreber's persecution complex as the result of projection relates to his religious megalomania remains unanswered. It is clear that this general mechanism cannot explain much specific and in detail, including the religious aspects of Schreber's thought activities (Vandermeersch 1991, pp. 191-192; Vergote 1998, pp. 23-24).

Not only did Freud associate projection with paranoia, but also with mythology. In *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* he writes: "I believe that a large part of the mythological view of the world, which extends a long way into the most modern religions, *is nothing but psychology projected into the external world*" (Freud 1901, p. 258). Since the mechanism of projection is not defined here, the statement remains rather vague, and Freud restrains from further elaboration. In second essay of *Totem and Taboo* Freud further elaborates on this in the context of his discussion of Robert Kleinpaul's study of mythology and belief in demons (1898). In his book Kleinpaul had argued that the belief in malignant spirits or souls one finds in many forms of belief can generally be traced back to images of the deceased loved ones living on in memory, occupying fantasy and appearing to those left behind in dreams and imagination. Freud recognizes the importance of this construct in which the dead return as apparition or demon to kill and in which the living focus on creating distance between themselves and the dead. Kleinpaul's hypothesis "that after their death those most beloved were transformed into demons" is introduced in the context of Freud's discussion of the taboos upon the dead (Freud 1912-1913, p. 59). He argues that primitive people displace their own latent hostility towards their deceased loved ones on to the object of the hostility, that is to say, on the dead. "This defensive procedure, which is a common one both in normal and in pathological mental life, is known as a '*projection*'" (Idem, p. 61). In other words, according to Freud demons, evil spirits and apparitions can be explained "as projections of hostile feelings harboured by the survivors against the dead" (Idem, p. 62). And yet, having said this, Freud is quick to argue that the mechanism of projection, now defined as the ejection from internal perception into the external world (Idem), is still a problematic mechanism when it is

to be used for the explanation of something so specific as the creation of demons. For, according to Freud, the projection mechanism is not a plain defence mechanism, nor can it be limited to situations of psychic conflict. The projection of evil impulses “is only one portion of a system which constituted the *Weltanschauung* of primitive peoples, and which we shall come to know as ‘animism’” (Idem, pp. 64-65). In other words, projection is a primitive common mechanism employed for the formation and structuring of the external world – the creation of demons and evil spirits is part of this formation of the external world. Its origins and conditions are as yet obscure, says Freud. Most importantly, this mechanism is exclusively linked to animism as a primitive thought system or philosophy of life.

So, can religion representations simply be seen as created through or derived from the mechanism of projection? According to Freud, the creation of demons and spirits through projection and the emergence of a thought system and a theory of the universe in which objects are controllable and manipulable, does not imply that animism should be defined as if it were religion, even though both (animism and religion) originate from the same source of ambivalent feelings towards an object (the father). “Animism itself is not yet a religion but contains the foundations on which religions are later built” (Idem, p. 77). However, Freud stresses that more than religions, philosophies built on animism. The first theory of the universe will develop – through the capacity of abstract thinking and the use of language – into more complex thought systems, i.e., metaphysics. Because of the predominance of the mechanism of projection in animism and paranoia (psychosis), we should therefore not be surprised that Freud names paranoid delusion “the caricature of a philosophical system” (Idem, p. 73). The true heir of animism is philosophy, not religion. The question of course remains how to explain religious God representations when these are not produced through projection or abstract thought.

Little Hans, displacement and exaltation

In Freud's case study of Little Hans, two issues are central. First, Max Graf's analysis of his own son Hans, provides the material for the confirmation of that what Freud had already theoretically formulated and defended, namely infantile sexuality. Second, Freud wants to show how this infantile sexuality is related to and processed in the relation between the child and its parents, notably the father figure – the mother only plays in minor role here. Freud shows that Little Hans' phobia of horses can be traced back to an ambivalence of feelings regarding the father. Hans loves and admires his father, and his strong curiosity for the size of his father's penis is interpreted in terms of an inclination towards homosexuality. But Hans' father is also a rival in the desire for the mother. It is because of this rivalry that the father becomes an object of hostile feelings and death wishes as well as a source of anxiety because of the prohibited desire of the mother and the related punishments when trespassing this prohibition. This complex of ambivalent feelings towards the father is displaced (*transponiert*) to Hans' horse complex. Hans identifies with horses, wants to be a horse or even considers himself to be a horse ("I'm a young horse" (idem, p. 58)). Yet, he also fantasizes about horses that collapse and die; he is afraid that horses will bite him (resulting a fear of crossing the street because of the many horses in the streets). In *Totem and Taboo* Freud concludes:

“Thus he was situated in the typical attitude of a male child towards his parents to which we have given the name of the ‘Oedipus complex’ and which we regard in general as the nuclear complex of the neuroses. The new fact that we have learnt from the analysis of ‘little Hans’ – a fact with an important bearing upon totemism – is that in such circumstances children displace some of their feelings from their father on to an animal” (Freud 1912-1913, p. 129).

A closer reading of the fourth essay reveals that Freud does more than present the case of little Hans as a confirmation of displacement of feelings towards the father on to animals. The case study also provides insights now applied on totemism and religion that enable Freud to interpret the creation of the God as a decisive step from displacement on to animals towards the belief in an exalted father God. The analysis of the case ends with an interpretation of Hans' overcoming his fear of horses. According to Freud, this positive solution to the phobia becomes possible when Hans is able to redefine his relation with his father. This is expressed in a play invented by Hans, in which he is "daddy" of his mother's children and in which his father is now his "grandfather". This play in which Hans articulates that he desires to marry his mother and have kids together, is not only an expression of the content of his (oedipal) complex including the feelings of hostility and death wishes towards the father, but

"it also corrected that portion of those thoughts which was entirely unacceptable; for, instead of killing the father, it made him innocuous by promoting him to a marriage with Hans's grandmother. With this phantasy both the illness and the analysis came to an appropriate end." (Freud 1909a, pp. 131-132)

This promotion (*Erhöhung* – exaltation) of the father marks the end of his phobia characterized by the displacement of the father complex on to an animal complex.¹ This promotion or exaltation of the father is satisfying for little Hans in a twofold manner. The exaltation to grandfather and the new place the father takes in the family constellation imply a

¹ The case study of the Wolf Man (published in 1918, but dating back to the period Freud's working on *Totem and Taboo*) can be seen as a variant of little Hans: the Wolf Man's phobia of animals is succeeded by a phase of an obsessional neurosis with strong religious traits. The Wolf Man is not able to invent a play and exalt his father. On the contrary, God takes over the place and role of the father forcing his presence in such a severe manner that the Wolf Man cannot escape his neurotic, anal-sadistic organization (Freud 1918; Vergote 1989, p. 58).

breakthrough in the direct rivalry between son and father. The father is no longer a fearsome figure threatening with punishment. Because of his new role he is no longer a direct threat. But not only in this way is the father made innocuous. He is also no longer the immediate object of hostile feelings and death wishes; he is no longer the rival in the flesh who needs to die or be neutralized, and therefore his presence as rival is no longer a source of severe sense of guilt or conscience anxiety. At first sight, one might think this whole process could be interpreted in terms of a conscious altruistic decision of Hans to grant his father the same happiness that he desired for himself (Idem, p. 97), but a more closer reading of the text reveals that Hans' solution is much more the end of result of a process in which he gains more certainty about the actual role of his father in the family (Idem, p. 92) accompanied by a decrease of hostile feelings.

That Freud is interested in this phenomenon of exaltation of the father is evidenced by his essay on family romances, published as the introduction to Rank's study on the myths of the birth of the hero, written in exactly the same period as the case study of little Hans. In that text he writes that the child's exaltation of the father is related to a stage of "estrangement from his parents" (Freud 1909b, p. 238), that is to say, a phase in which the male child intensely desires to get free from the parents (most of all the father) of whom the child has an increasingly low opinion. The child distances himself from the parents, in which important and impressive other persons replace the parents as most significant others. This exaltation through replacement is accompanied by the child's understanding that paternal origin is always uncertain whereas the maternal origin is never doubted. This uncertainty about the father as biological father, about his actual role and place in the family results in a distancing from the father and a stronger desire to bring his mother into secret infidelity. According to Freud, in this phase the father is exalted meaning that the child is now able to strengthen tender feelings dominating the hostile ones, i.e. the child is able to continue his overvaluation

of his parents and his longing for the father (as “the noblest and strongest of men”) without the intense feelings of hostility, rivalry and revenge (Freud 1909b, pp. 239-241).

It is this process exaltation, estrangement and distancing that is applied in the fourth essay of *Totem and Taboo* on to the development from totemism marked by the worship of the totem animal towards religions with a god representation.

The father substitute and the exalted father

It is widely recognized that the analogy between the (neurotic) child and primitive man is a crucial element of Freud’s argumentation in the final essay of *Totem and Taboo* (Freud 1912/1913, pp. 128-131). He writes that “the boy’s complete identification with his totem animal and his ambivalent emotional attitude to it” can also be recognized and found in the primitive’s identification with the totem as his primal father (Idem, p. 131). Freud uses this analogy and its subsequent conclusion that “the totem animal is the father” to argue that the two core taboo prohibitions coincide with the two primal wishes of the (male) child constituting the nuclear complex of the psychoneuroses. From this point onwards he focuses on his fantastic hypothesis on the origin of totemism (culture, social institutions, religion, moral restrictions). For, not only the taboos can now be interpreted in oedipal terms, also Freud is able to understand the totem meal from the perspective of the father substitution – the killing, devouring and mourning of the totem animal can be regarded an expression of both the ambivalent feelings of love and hate towards the father and of the son’s sense of guilt. Hence, at first sight the analogy between the child and primitive only results Freud’s further elaborations on his hypothesis of primal parricide and its psychic dynamics and immediate after-effects involved – identification, ambivalence of feelings, sense of guilt, conscience formation and the ritualization of the nuclear complex of the neuroses. It is exactly these psychic dynamics and after-effects that not only characterize the totemic system, but are also

“preserved unaltered in religion” (Idem, p. 145). From this one might conclude that the transition from the totemism to later religions involves only minor or secondary issues, hence, that religions simply continue the main traits of totemism. And yet, as Freud already points out in the preface, totemism is actually “something alien to our contemporary feelings – a religio-social institution which has been long abandoned as an actuality and replaced by newer forms” (Idem, p. xiv). The traces totemism has left in religion are only minor. In other words, Freud suggests not only a continuation but also a clear distinction between the totemic system and later religion.

The development of religions from their origin in totemism depends on a changed relation with the father – from the totem animal as father substitute continuing the relation with the father in the flesh toward the creation of God as exalted father, i.e. from the totem animal toward anthropomorphic deities. Freud writes the following on this:

While the totem may be the *first* form of father-surrogate, the god will be a later one, in which the father has regained his human shape. A new creation such as this, derived from what constitutes the root of every form of religion – a longing for the father – might occur if in the process of time *some fundamental change had taken place in man’s relation with the father, and perhaps, too, in his relation with animals* (Idem, p. 148 – my italics, H.W.).

In his analysis of this fundamental change in relation with the father and animals, Freud draws upon his ideas from his case study of little Hans and his essay on family romances – that is my thesis here. It is clear that the creation and emergence of the exalted gods in the course of history can neither be explained in terms of man’s spontaneous thought processes and ability to create abstract ideas nor as the result of a natural inclination towards religiosity. According to Freud, the first factor in this fundamental change is “the beginning of a mental

estrangement from animals” in and through domestication of animals and the introduction of cattle breeding (Idem, p. 148, pp. 136-137). By functionalizing and utilizing the animal, by being able to control and manipulate the animal’s presence and purpose, the animal loses its sacred aura. It can no longer be understood as a peer or as clan member of the same flesh and blood – the biological bond becomes uncertain. Parallel to this estrangement from the animal as father substitute, there appears an intensified longing for the father and a readiness to submit to him in a period of time in which the “bitterness against their father (...) grew less” (Idem, p. 148). This change of attitude to the father is based on the social structures of the totem clan: each member of the clan wanted to become like the father (incorporating parts of the father’s substitute in the totem meal), but in view of the democratic equality of the fraternal clan this wish could never be fulfilled. This is the decisive factor in the revived paternal ideal. It is the longing for the father as paternal ideal that results the creation of God (gods) as exalted father. Freud continues suggesting that the change of attitude to the father and his subsequent exaltation resulted an important social change: “With the introduction of father-deities a fatherless society gradually changed into one organized on a patriarchal basis” (Idem, p. 149). This restoration of the former primal horde was possible through the fact that the achievements of the fraternal clan were not abandoned, that is to say, the moral restrictions were internalized and therefore the emergence of a new primal tyrant was unthinkable. Also, the distance (“gulf”) between the new patriarchs and the former primal father was wide enough to “guarantee the continuance of the religious craving”, i.e. the longing for the father as deity (Idem). In other words, the religious longing for the father is only guaranteed by the distancing from the primal father and its animal substitute. This process of estrangement, distancing and exaltation implies a relief of the sense of guilt even though the ambivalence of feelings and the son’s hostility toward paternal authority will still play a role, however not as immediate and intense as before.

Freud's account of the transformation from totemic father substitution to religious father exaltation circles around the same psychic mechanisms and dynamics as described in little Hans' solution of his father complex and the essay on family romance. These are 1) the change from father substitution by an animal to father exaltation, 2) the distancing from the father (as immediately present), 3) the estrangement from the father/father substitute, 4) the continuation of longing for the father and the decrease of hostile feelings, 5) the new family constellation and restructuring of family roles, 6) the innocuousness of the father and the relief of neurotic symptoms.

Exaltation of the father: Brief discussion

The fourth essay of *Totem and Taboo* starts with an interesting remark: "Anything so complicated as religion" cannot be traced back "to a single source". In the course of the essay Freud does identify one particular source – primal parricide – that occupies a dominant place among other "contributory factors" (Idem, p. 100). A most important factor concerns the above-depicted dynamics involved in the transition from totemism to later more advanced religion. In the shadow of his focus on the origin of religion in its entanglement with social institutions, symbolic practices and cultural morality, Freud also engages into what he in 1911 already addressed as the "psychology of religious faith" (Freud & Jones, letter 64). For, the distinction between father substitution and father exaltation, the process of estrangement, decrease of hostility, increase of longing, and distancing, is all about the nature of faith, that is in this case, about the various ways in which the desire for and attachment to the father God is structured and organized.

The central issue here is that the first important transformation in religion concerns the father, i.e. the transformation from the attachment to the totem animal as father substitute, hence from the continuation of the real, physical presence of the father in its substitute,

toward the desire for the exalted and innocuous father God. Starting point for this transition is thus the intensity of the ambivalence of feelings towards the (dead) father that is preserved in the fact that the totem animal *is* the father, just like Hans' father *is* the horse. It is this continued corporeal presence of the father that constitutes a threat for the psychic economy. Freud mentions in this respect that the totem animal is often a predator and that the presence of this animal in the clan's neighborhood is often regarded a bad omen. Also, the intense feelings of hostility cause and cultivate equally severe feelings of guilt. The killing of the animal and the totem meal play a crucial role in this cultivation of the hostility and sense of guilt. At the same time, this dynamics guarantees the social institution of the fraternal clan, the son horde that yearly repeat the primal murder by killing, devouring mourning and celebrating the substitute. This changes in the course of time through the process of estrangement from the totem animal and decrease of hostility/bitterness against the father. This process implies a distancing from the in the totem animal represented real father. The exaltation of the father and the creation of a creator God is satisfying – analogous to the little Hans case – since it is now tenable to maintain the attachment to and desire for the father, without suffering the negative effects of his continuing presence: the repetition of the crime; comprised expressions of sense of guilt. Indeed, Freud mentions that this transformation of religion resulting in certain religious representations and stage of development in which the sons will be able to unburden themselves of their sense of guilt and express “satisfaction at the earlier father-surrogate having been abandoned in favour of the superior concept of God” (Idem, 150). According to Freud, this unburdening of sense of guilt and this satisfaction can be witnessed when God has become so far exalted above mankind that he can only be approached through an intermediary – a priest, a divine king. In this stage myths appear about God killing the animal (i.e. man is not guilty of killing the father).

This satisfaction through distancing cannot completely undo the sense of guilt: “In the course of the later development of religions the two driving factors, the son's sense of

guilt and the son's rebelliousness, never became instinct" (Idem, p. 152). According to Freud, this results further transformations in religion. It is in this context that he mentions Christianity a religion that not only cultivates and works through this sense of guilt and rebelliousness, but also realizes the desire to take the father's place. The acknowledgement of a newly strengthened sense of guilt, the search for atonement, and the theanthropic human sacrifice (elimination of the God-father having been replaced by the son) indicate a return of totemic religion including its pathological features. In short, the process of distancing is here at least partly annulled.

From the previous it is clear that neither totemic nor advanced religions as symbolic (socialcultural) systems result from the projection mechanism. Freud regards the representations of and beliefs in demons and evil spirits to be the outcome of the externalization of inner psychic hostile affects. This specific (defensive) projection is part of the general, primitive process of projection, which can be regarded an imaginary continuation of inner and outer world employed for the formation of an external world and therefore for the possibility of narcissistically controlling and manipulating this world (omnipotence of thoughts). Religion does not correspond to these dynamics, but is primarily concerned with object choice, the attachment to parents, and the mental and cultural processing of these choices and attachments. Freud's rough sketch of the developments and transformations in religions does not only indicate how, as James Di Cenzo formulated, symbolic systems "are superimposed on and supersede literal, familial relations", i.e. symbolic systems create distance to the immediate physical presence of the blood relatives (Di Cenzo 1999, p. 52; Moyaert 2007, pp. 164-171). It does not simply and only indicate that human cultural life is symbolically mediated or that distancing from the physical-literal is a decisive, constructive cultural step that one might associate with sublimation (Di Cenzo 1999, pp. 57-58). Freud's depiction of the transformation from totemic religion to more advanced religion (and back

again), i.e. from substitution to exaltation, also indicates that he has some profound intuitions on a further differentiation between religions. Such differentiation is then not so much dependent on the weight/strength of the moral motives in religion – sense of guilt, ambivalence of feelings of hostility and admiration, rebelliousness – but much more organized according the abovedescribed processes of substitution, estrangement, desire, exaltation and distanciation. Hence, the overarching nucleus of religion is the son's affectionate disposition (sense of guilt) resulting from primal parricide. A differentiation between religions is possible according to another nucleus of religion, namely the horizontal (near, distant/far) and vertical (in the world/in the flesh, transcendent) categories that define the relation – the organization of attachment – between men and their father gods/God. Freud's preference of exaltation over substitution, that is to say, distanciation over physical proximity and contact, and, related to this, less intense and immediate feelings of guilt and hostility, seems to point to a basic intuition about monotheistic religions, notably Judaism: the idea of an invisible God – the God without statue or image, but only with a cryptic name (I am who I am) – is not the product of an abstract (philosophical) thought process, that is, the end result of man's capacity to create abstract ideas, but it is a "solution" to the intolerable nearness of an oedipal object (compare Moyaert 2007, ch. 2). Exaltation prevents from direct contact, therefore, also from killing or being killed, devouring or being devoured, and at the same time it conserves desire.

Conclusion

The creation of God in the fourth essay of *Totem and Taboo* cannot be described in terms of projection. For Freud this mechanism is not only too general to explain anything specific, too closely associated with psychosis (paranoia) to understand the neurotic nuclear complexes of religion, and too much characterized by an innate individual procedure of resolving inner

conflicts by ejecting them in the outside world. We have seen that Freud in the course of *Totem and Taboo* decides on another model to analyze the creation of God: the analogy with his findings from the analysis of little Hans. This analogy not only concerns the idea of the animal as father substitute, but also implies the notion of father exaltation. In our exegesis of Freud's texts on this matter we found that exaltation is related to transition from totemic to advanced religion, estrangement from the father substitute, distanciation from the father, continuation of desire and the decrease of hostile feelings for the father, new social and family structures, and relief of neurotic symptoms. Through the analogy with the case of little Hans Freud implicitly highlights a nuclear aspect of religion and offers the outlines of a theoretical framework for the study of this, namely: the various religions are more than variants of the cultivation and ritualization of the son's sense of guilt and rebelliousness; they are also about the symbolical mediation of the desire for the father relative to the problem of his immediate physical presence and nearness.

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