

The Crypt and Incorporation

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1. The Operations of the Crypt

To understand the workings of the crypt, we must first understand a crucial difference between incorporation and introjection. The difference is first given a distinct status in the work of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.

Introjection, introduced by Ferenczi in 1909, is the “normal” process of love and mourning, and therefore all transference or object-love. To love you—or mourn for you—in what is constructed as an apparently healthy and socially acceptable way, I introject you. I assimilate the love object that is you, your desires and instincts: and so when I love or mourn the object-you, I love or mourn my “self,” the possibly limitless set of introjections. Ferenczi says that “Basically, a person's love can be directed only toward himself. Insofar as he loves an object, he adopts it as a part of his Self” (Derrida, *Fors* xvi). In order to mourn or love the other, I introject the other into my-self, and when I love or mourn you, I love or mourn my-self as you have now become synthesized with my-self. And so introjection is the extension of primary narcissism, of what Ferenczi called “autoerotic cathexes” (ibid.). Introjection is what Hegel would call *Erinnerung*, or an interiorizing memorization. “I kill it and remember it. But since it is an *Erinnerung*, I interiorize it totally and it is no longer other” (Derrida, *Ear* 58). In Giovaccini's text, it seems that what is often called “incorporation” in the text should, in fact, be called “introjection,” although the boundary at times is not at all clear.

Incorporation, on the other hand, is the psycho-analytic process of *introjection* gone wrong. Incorporation occurs at the limits of introjection when, for whatever reasons (usually trauma of some sort, a blockage of conflicting desires) introjection has failed. The slow, gradual process of introjection is superseded by “instantaneous” and “hallucinogenic” incorporation. Incorporation marks the *refusal* to mourn or love. This refusal of what is essentially the synthesis of the object inside of me constructs a *crypt*.

The *crypt* is the *live burial* of the love object and its subsequent desires—the desires that cannot be expressed as such—inside of “me” (Derrida, *Fors* xvi). In the intrapsychic topos of incorporation, a secret “crypt” is erected to commemorate the refusal of not only the loss of the object, but also the associated desires from the introjection process, while simultaneously maintaining those desires through a spectral, performative paradox that never achieves synthesis (xvii). This differs from introjection as the object is not synthesized, but rather entombed whole inside of a dead space within the Ego. Derrida says that the “dead object remains like a living dead abscessed in a specific spot in the ego” (*Ear* 57). This live burial splits both Ego and Id.

First, let us consider what happens to the Ego. The dead space of the Ego that houses the crypt is not an empty, vacant space for the incorporated object. It is not an absence. It is already Ego as the Ego cannot vacate its territory. It is perhaps more accurate to say that the Ego splits itself, but has no knowledge of this split. As the Ego is not conscious of the actual process of incorporation, the crypt can be said to be unconscious. But there is also a strange unconsciousness of the conscious Ego at this point. The Ego has no knowledge of the crypt, and the fragmented ego of the crypt has no knowledge of the Ego outside its walls. The crypt is conscious of itself, but not of its surrounding Ego, and vice-versa. Two egos, unknown to each other, are created through incorporation. Abraham and Torok explain that

The crypt works in the heart of the Ego as a special kind of Unconscious: Each fragment is conscious of itself and unconscious of the realm "outside the crypt." At once conscious and unconscious...

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The crypt is a special kind of unconscious in the Ego of which the Ego is unconscious. This is only possible because of two conditions.

1. The crypt is *already constructed*. "The Ego cannot quit the place where it had once been," say Abraham and Torok, for it is the Ego that has *already* erected the Crypt, and now, the Ego "can only withdraw into seclusion and construct a barrier separating it from the other half of the Ego" (81). The Ego refuses to acknowledge the refusal of mourning, and so bars itself the consciousness of the crypt it has erected to receive the dead object. This means that

2. The Ego *mimes* proper introjection. Incorporation cannot be observed as a failure to show outward signs of mourning or love, for this process is mimed, performed. The Ego necessarily mimes proper mourning as part of the unacknowledgement, or unconsciousness of the crypt.

How then can we claim the existence of the crypt if the Ego always-already mimes introjection, and we cannot tell incorporation from introjection through observation of mourning? Why would Abraham and Torok argue for the existence of the crypt? What problematic lies behind this complex elaboration of the refusal of mourning?

The answer arrives from clinical practice and a long study Abraham and Torok conducted on the language of the "Wolf-Man." The Wolf-Man is one of the most significant patients of Freud as well as his critics. In 1918, Freud uses the Wolf-Man to defend his theories of psycho-analysis against the rising tide of Jung as well as object-theorists. Freud references the case of the Wolf-Man in many of

his major works, including *Mourning and Melancholia*. The case history, *From the History of An Infantile Neurosis*, is available in Volume 17 of the Standard Edition. It is in this text that Freud identifies the process of incorporation. For Freud, "the process of incorporation into the Self provides an economic answer to the loss of the object" (Derrida, *Fors* xvi). However, it is not until Maria Torok that a rigorous demarcation is drawn between incorporation and introjection that attempts to follow the consequences of its elaboration. For Freud seems to miss something in the Wolf-Man in his haste to justify psycho-analysis, and part of this seems to be the implications of the process of incorporation which he touches upon.

In order to understand the importance as well as the justification of Abraham and Torok's elaboration, we must consider the analogous split of the Unconscious, and the *cryptonymic* reading of language. First, let us consider what happens to the Unconscious in the process of incorporation.

The Unconscious Crypt. A crypt is erected in the Unconscious in the same matter as the Ego. However, the splitting is different as the Unconscious possesses no consciousness of itself. Therefore, the split Unconscious is always-already unconscious of its splitting. The unconscious is divided as the Ego: "to a torn Ego corresponds a partitioned Id" (Abraham and Torok 81). Not only is the Ego divided, but so is the Unconscious, and riveting Unconscious and Ego are the faulted ravines that span an en-crypted repression known as the *Thing*.

In order to understand what occurs in the Unconscious, we must turn to the linguistic basis of this analysis. The general theory of psycho-analysis states that every symbol in the Ego has its co-symbol in the Unconscious. In the analysis of dreams, for example, Freud takes the symbol of the snake as symbolizing its cosymbol, the phallus, which is a repressed sexual object that references the penis. With the operation of incorporation, the symbol itself is fragmented. When we say that the symbol is fragmented, we are simply saying what we have already noticed in the building of the crypt. The Ego is fractured because of a trauma that upsets the digestion and assimilation, what is essentially the synthesis of an object as introjection, and in the resulting incorporation, the object is fragmented across the Ego in a process that fragments the Ego itself. The symbol is fractured across the ego; likewise, its cosymbol is fractured across the Unconscious, and in the process, the Unconscious is likewise fractured. To keep the object from returning as it normally would as a repressed object, such as usually happens in dreams, and which amounts to maintaining the walls of the crypt and the lines of fracture, Abraham and Torok claim that

the line of fracture fragmenting the symbol must extend beyond the symbol to its corresponding and unconscious cosymbol. This complementary formation within the Unconscious we call the Thing. (81)

Let me stress two points before we explain the operations of the *Thing*.

1. The fragmented dead object cannot return, as it normally does, as a symbol in a dream or through another manifestation. If it returned as itself, this would imply a conscious recognition of a symbol of the fractured elements, i.e., this would imply that the Ego recognises the crypt. Moreover, this implies that the symbol is whole or capable of producing a unifying symbol that can re-synthesize its fractured elements. This does not mean, however, that the effects of the crypt and the *Thing* are purely absent; they just operate differently than what is usually determined as a symbolic relationship that corresponds to the logic of the sign.

2. The type of symbol created by incorporation is radically different from the binary symbol-cosymbol proposed by synthetic introjection. The symbol undergoes a fracturing or splitting through incorporation at the level of the Ego and at the level of the Unconscious. We shall examine the exact ways this occurs in a moment. In fact, the Unconscious and the Ego themselves are simultaneously split, and in the case of the Ego, the Ego itself now contains a special Unconscious. The psychic topology of Freud has been fragmented. As well shall see, this has consequences for a theory of the subject. However, the symbol / cosymbol pair is disrupted. The Ego is divided in two, creating a special unconscious *within* the Ego called the *crypt*. And within the crypt,

...each fragment is conscious of itself and unconscious of the realm "outside the crypt." At once conscious and unconscious: This provides the explanation for the peculiarity of the *intrasymbolic* and not *cosymbolic* relationships of the *word*. (Abraham and Torok 80)

The nature of the symbol is no longer dualistic. Its relations are no longer of a binary, complementary sort, but rather operate through an intra-relationship. The symbol then no longer operates as such, but rather as what Abraham and Torok call a *word*. A *word* operates intrasymbolically, along its fracture lines, and through cryptic processes that transform the fragments of the symbol as they cross various boundaries in the Ego and the Unconscious. The word operates as both alloeme and synonym, the way words relate to each other in the dictionary.

Let us now turn to the *Thing*. "To a torn Ego corresponds a partitioned Id;" the crypt of the Unconscious is the *Thing*. There is a further reason for this analogous relation, and it has to do with the libido and pleasure. When the crypt is erected in the Ego, it is a "*maneuver whose sole purpose is to preserve this nonplace [that of the crypt] for sexual gratification inside a place where sexual gratification should no longer take place*" (81). First, the Ego is usually seen as that which represses the libido, while the Unconscious is the site of uninhibited pleasure. The Unconscious has now become Ego as the crypt. Second, the crypt itself is the death of pleasure as it "shuns symbolization," i.e., it refuses the normal processes of manifesting pleasure through symbolic processes of expressing repressed content. Third, the fragmented symbols in question are the product of a conflicted set of desires, of a trauma that initiated incorporation in

the first place. Their pleasure is a taboo pleasure; it is more than a simply repressed pleasure, as this pleasure was never acknowledged, never even repressed. Its occurrence was traumatic enough and yet, on the other hand, *desirous enough* that it split the Ego and the Unconscious, as if one half said *yes yes* and the other *no no*. Their respective positions being irreconcilable, in order for the Self to maintain somewhat of a singularity of the Subject, of the Self itself, it had to split itself without either side knowing of the split.

The crypt knows the *repressed pleasure-words*, which are the taboo fragments of the dead-object. There may be any number of "taboo-words" (Abraham and Torok 19). In the crypt lie the broken symbols of these words. Their wholeness has been fractured across the Ego. The pleasure-word is that which, under any circumstances, cannot be said. To say it would be to acknowledge the crypt. However, that the taboo-word *must express itself* is necessary, for the crypt desires its expression, its pleasure. When we say this, we keep in mind that the crypt is a special Unconscious in the Ego, yet a conscious Unconscious, and therefore invested not only with libido but with a conflicting relation to its desires. It cannot be said, this word; it is unspeakable, unsayable, it is taboo.

[Turn to the diagram to explain the rest at this point].

The pleasure-word does not simply exist only in the Ego as if the duality of the Ego/Id topography had simply been displaced onto a more generalised Ego-terrain. Its lines of fracture extend also into the Unconscious. The pleasure-words undergo a more severe and genuine repression *through the crypt*. These pleasure-words are entombed within the cryptic Unconscious, which is known as the *Thing*. The Ego's crypt *knows the pleasure-word*, but the pleasure-word itself remains in the Unconscious crypt as the *Thing*. It has been genuinely repressed *through the crypt*. The word is fractured into a quadrant: that of the split Ego, which consists of the Ego and the crypt, where the symbol is fractured, and that of the split Unconscious, which consists of the Unconscious and the *Thing*, where the cosymbol is fractured. This means that not only is the signifier fractured, but so is the signified.

In the Unconscious, the *Thing* regains its "*active vital and dynamic function*" (Abraham and Torok 81). Invested with libido, it attempts expression. The pleasure-word, say Abraham and Torok

can cross the partition created within the Unconscious only if it appears on the other side of the fracture as the *Thing* of the cryptic Unconscious, and only if it has already been turned into its variant meanings (allosemes) on the side of consciousness. For it is only the alloseme that can cross the partition located with the Unconscious and be turned into a visual image on the other side of the gratified Ego.

An alloseme means *allo*: other, different, indicating difference or variation, and *seme*, to sow or scatter. An allosemic term is one that is found through a parallel relation between words that is constituted at the level of grammatical association, of roots and graphic association, such as the plural meanings of a word in the dictionary. For a *word-thing* to be expressed in image-consciousness, for example, as in dreams and the imaginary, it needs to be translated into an alloseme, and then transformed into an image. We then interpret this image in what is a synomic relation to the alloseme. Abraham and Torok say that the taboo-word "operates only from the Unconscious, that is, as a *word-thing*. In conscious life it can be recouped only as a visual image in a dream once it has been transformed into a synonym of a variant meaning (alloseme)" (46).

A *word-thing* can also be expressed without going through the Unconscious, such as in the example of *speech*.

When conscious, the word can break through the symbol's line of fracture, without passing through the Unconscious, provided it is disguised in the synonym of an alloseme, that is, as a *cryptonym*.

(ibid.)

It is, in fact, through the analysis of the *speech* of the Wolf-Man that Abraham and Torok are able to notice specific absences of certain words, the pleasure-words. These absent words are expressed through their *cryptonyms* and dream images that correspond to similar allosemes.

It was, we thought, because a given word was unutterable that the obligation arose to introduce synonyms even for its lateral meanings [allosemes], and that the synonyms acquired the status of substitutes. Thus they became *cryptonyms*, apparently not having any phonetic or semantic relationship to the prohibited word.

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Obviously, one pleasure-word can have many potential disseminations. The taboo-word is polysemic, "expressing multiple meanings through a single phonetic structure" (18). The structure of the pleasure-word operates not as representation or as symbol-cosymbol, but "arises from the lexical contiguity of the various meanings of the same words, that is, from the *allosemes*, as they are catalogued in a dictionary" (19). What is at stake is not a "*metonymy of things* but a *metonymy of words*."

2. The Consequences of the Crypt

For Abraham and Torok, the crypt is a pathology that inhibits mourning (Castricano 58) and needs to be cured through a radical analysis "without expecting any form of transference" (Abraham and Torok 76). Introjection is to be

returned to its proper place as the status quo of subjectivity. However, as Jacques Derrida performs in his introduction to Abraham and Torok's *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*, the subject is destabilized through the crypt. It is the limit of this destabilization that has interest for Derrida, for its consequences are not only that of upsetting the assumed topology and very subjectivity of the psychoanalytic Self, but of the unified subject of Western metaphysics and its necessary distinctions between fantasy and reality, miming and truth. On the one hand, it is the *always-already structuration* of the crypt in the Ego, according to Abraham and Torok, that opens the door for Derrida to play with the possibility of the preconditions of the crypt as a "no-place" within place, as that which "*should not have taken place, or should have not taken place*" (Fors xxi). It is this indeterminacy of the crypt and its always-already possibility that of non-place *within* place that disrupts the topoi. On the other hand, this always-already crypt marks the interminable aspect of incorporation, which raises the possibility that, as Castricano makes clear, "the fantasy of incorporation is understood by Derrida as an inhibition *necessary* for the *very possibility* of the "subject"" (my italics, 58).

Derrida understands the paradoxical topos of incorporation not as pathology, but as an integral inhibition necessary for the very possibility of the subject—a subject that is nonetheless plural, polyvocal, and polysemic. Incorporation mimes an impossible origin that sets in motion the economy of consciousness, circling through the other, a mythic origin that speaks to the "myth of consciousness" (*Of Grammatology* 166). The question over the actual, sensible difference between incorporation and introjection for Derrida is never resolved, much like how the intractable conflict of desire "within" incorporation is never synthesized. It is this refusal of synthesis which marks Derrida's dedication to a certain Heideggerian necessity to maintain the other as other, as foreign; and yet, as Derrida reinscribes incessantly, the other is never (w)hol(l)y other. Thus Derrida says that the crypt,

By resisting introjection, it prevents the loving, appropriating assimilation of the other, and thus seems to preserve the other *as other* (foreign), but it also does the opposite. It is not the *other* that the process of incorporation preserves, but a certain topography it keeps safe, intact, untouched by the very relationship with the other to which, paradoxically enough, introjection is more open.

(xxi-xxii)

It is this paradox—that incorporation, on the one hand, preserves a certain *possible topoi of the other* and on the other hand, *always already translate the other*, in a certain paradox itself to an introjection that seems to be more open to the other as other through a synthesis that Derrida insists is always an "undecidable irresolution that forever prevents the two elements [of an *Aufhebung*] from closing over their *rightful, ideal, proper* coherence, in other words and at any rate, over *their death* ("their" corpse)" (Fors xxii)—it is this double-bind of paradoxes that plays the undecidability of the other against the

undecidability of the strict difference between incorporation and introjection as separate processes themselves. This undecidability leaves us with *the precondition of incorporation for the process of introjection*, which has radical effects to the psycho-analytic theory of the Self. It calls into question the possibility of the Self's assumed originary unity before it splits into two—for now the split is not only at least four, with at least one cryptic Ego, but also seems to have always-already occurred at the point of origin; it calls into question that the Self can ever be self-knowable in the sense of a discovery of 1:1 corresponding relations between symbol and cosymbol, lack and knowledge; it calls into question the borderline between introjection and incorporation, which amounts to an indeterminacy between reality and fantasy, *miming and truth*; and it calls into question the voice of the Self, for it is no longer even a question of fantasy and reality, but of the potential for a polyvocality, which would mean we need to ask *whose reality, whose fantasy?*

The ghost or phantom. In Abraham and Torok's *The Shell and the Kernel*, a further element is considered in cryptonymy: the ghost. The ghost is the effect of another's crypt in my unconscious (Derrida, *Ear* 59). It is the structure of the crypt that opens its tomb doors to the polyvocality of the ghost. Texts such as Derrida's *Glas* explore this potential of polyvocal polysemy. Castricano notes a few things about the effects of the phantom:

According to Torok, the phantom calls into question the notion of the integrity of the "I," since it "is alien to the subject who harbours it" ("Story of Fear" 181). The so-called subject, therefore, is *haunted* by the "living-dead knowledge of *someone else's secret*" (Abraham "The Intermission of 'Truth'" 189).

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In analysis, this "often means analyzing, via the mediating presence of the patient, someone who is long since deceased" (Abraham, "Notes on the Phantom" 174; quoted in Castricano 42).

"I" am always succumbing to the dance of the other, a phantom, perhaps, at least to the haunting of an-other, yet is that which I claim is myself—how can I tell, when "I" believe the I is me?

If we return, for a moment, to Heidegger, we realise one the consequences of this paradox of voicing, for it determines an undecidability in language and the possibility for the self to not be speaking while voicing or writing, for the self to be ghost-written, phantom-spoken. Castricano gives the name of "cryptomimesis" to the performative writing that attempts to mime (*mimesis*) the speech of the Wolfman, the speech of incorporation, to write cryptonymy, a speech that, according to Castricano, Derrida wishes to learn how to write (58). Castricano says that "The term cryptomimesis draws attention to a writing predicated upon encryption; the play of revelation and concealment lodged within *parts* of individual

words" (Castricano 8). But cryptomimesis is more than a process of unlocking the encrypted desire of incorporation. According to Castricano, cryptomimesis is "a writing practice that...generates its uncanny effects through the production of what Nicholas Rand [the translator of *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*] might call a "contradictory 'topography of inside outside' ("Translator's Introduction," *The Wolf Man's Magic Word* lxviii)" (8). What is at stake in cryptomimesis, which we might substitute as another word for deconstruction, and at least insofar as we can claim to identify a writing from the pen of a "Derrida," is a return to Heidegger's foreign other as what is appropriate to one's own, this foreign being the temple of Being—language (*Hölderlin's* 21). This is one possible reading, for this return to Heidegger is not a direct return as Heidegger envisioned, but rather a polyvocal returning to an "unhomeliness," ie, an uncanniness, *unheimlichkeit*, an uncanniness of the human as the most uncanny being but also an uncanny return of a ghost through an uncanny return. Cryptomimesis affords the possibility of engaging the polyvocal, and as a result, polysexual nature of the "Self" and returning it to its home in its various (non)places, a return which is never finished. The various possibilities at play here—a ghost in being, the poly-*sein* of da-sein, a haunting of metaphysics, a crowd on the couch, an always-already *schizophrenia*, a body without organs—are enough to disrupt not only Freud's dualism, which is constantly at war with his tendencies towards a pan-perspective, a pan-sexuality and a symbolic abstraction from the biological that nevertheless still maintains a 1:1 correspondance even at the limit of an anasemic preconditioning of terms, but Heidegger's play of presence and absence at the exteriority of metaphysics. That Heidegger and Freud both encounter this ghosting and undecidability is evident; it is only now, however, that we can perhaps turn to an account that begins to account for *all of us* in the name of a responsibility.

I believe that I act normally: but sometimes "I" am not myself/ves; I may ask, am I not introjecting? Yet "I" am miming the process, faking "my" self, and only the cryptic ego knows of its own existence, it keeps the truth of the matter hidden as a secret. This secret might not even be "my" secret; it could even be an inherited secret, an-other's secret, and to present it here as a gift (to you).

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