

Speranța Farca

The Newborn and his Mother



Speranța Farca

The Newborn and His Mother

Primary anxiety

Cover: Vladstudio.com
English translation: Alina Maynard

Speranța Farca

- Psychoanalyst
- PhD in Education Sciences
- Researcher at the Education Science Institute
- Associated professor at the Bucharest Art University
- Author of the following books:
 - The Four Ages of the Self (How We Become Parents) Editura Trei - Bucharest, 2003
 - The Child's Experiences and the Mother's Feelings Editura Trei - Bucharest, 2009
 - Welcoming a Child for Parents, Grandparents, Doctors and Teachers - Editura Trei, Bucharest, 2010

Introduction

Mothers who try to understand their child often feel alone, helpless, uncertain, afraid, misunderstood - just like their babies.

What you will find in this book:

- why a newborn loses weight after birth;
- why babies cry so despairingly;
- how we can understand a baby's body language;
- how a newborn perceives the world and what he feels;
- what new mothers feel;
- what is the miracle of the emotional connection between a mother and her newborn baby;
- which is the father's role in supporting the mother-child relationship;
- the deep meanings hidden in myths, fairytales and rituals;
- the origins of the mythical meanings of numbers;
- what is the source of human creativity;
- when to encourage and when not to encourage a mother to breastfeed;
- the connection between the baby in the mother's eyes, cyclops, cherubim and the evil eye;
- how important is the "body" of the house for the baby and for all of us;
- the significance of journeys, departures, pilgrimage;
- why children spin around and adults dance in circles;

- how to interpret a child's play when he repeatedly throws his toys on the floor...

What you won't find in this book: good practice recommendations, advice, hints, standard development markers. I don't believe in considerations applicable to all, but I trust what the parents and their children feel as part of their life and growth together.

Children as fetuses and newborn babies

“Out of eternal yesterday
Into tomorrow’s grave,”

M. Eminescu

Inside the uterus, the child is carried by a mother whose movements and words he feels. The mother is the whole world and the world is him. The fetus is deeply involved in the mother’s life, as he feels her hormonal changes, her emotional state and her physical activity. The relationship is one-to-one, as the child “arranges” his mother as a space for his own living and dominates her mind, becoming the center of her existence and deep thoughts.



For the fetus, the intrauterine mother is the world he lives in, his space and rhythm.

After birth, the mother lacks a part of herself, a special way of being that she discovered during the past months. The child loses his vital world.

The birth like an explosion unraveled a union, shattered a whole, and violently threw its remains out in an unstable space. The mother remains empty and devastated, and the newborn feels shattered, scattered in a hostile and inconsistent world. Both find mutual consolation and solace in their need to mourn for their losses.

The newborn feels that his mother who now holds him in her arms is nothing but a surrogate, vaguely reminding him of the uterus-mother. The more the external mother resembles the intra-uterus mother, the greater the child’s hope to recover, to rebuild his lost world.

The birth, through the sudden change in environment and manner of living, puts the child's entire life in a constant search to recover himself. Life starts out with major losses and is configured as a mourning function for these losses, beginning with a state of deep despair: the primary anxiety.

A person's evolution towards maturity is a multitude of primary anxiety elaboration forms which become more and more profound and complete.



Primary anxiety will be expressed throughout the child's subsequent development even if it turns into forms specific to later development stages: separation anxiety, fear of the unknown, fear of death, fear of losing one's body integrity.

Primary anxiety contains the seed for all possible forms of expression. Each development stage contains its own past and future manifestations, forming a unitary path with memory and anticipation abilities. Primary anxiety, with each of its forms, discovers specific elaboration methods.

Emotional development revolves around the same theme: the birth which changed the living world.



Development fits into a spiral which keeps returning to earlier experiences at a different level, and involves the entire personality, with all its aspects: emotional, moral, intellectual, and physical.

According to this, the concept of developmental stages looks more like a rationalization of an emotional rhythm, a 2D sketch of a 3D reality. Thus, development stages nicely lining up one after the other offer the safety of well-known age groups. These describe an ideal existence, but without any actual importance for the growing child.

Emotional development has its own basic rhythms, and it is improper to make reference to chronological ages, related more to the need for certainty than reality.

The forms of primary anxiety, by their description, can provide explanations for many observable behaviors. However, they don't pertain to chronological ages but to each child's individuality (which can be

confirmed by mothers with several children who notice their development diversity and normalcy at the same time).

Chapter 2

Birth

For the child, the old intrauterine world, made of himself for himself, was all-encompassing. Life was his due, and the inner-mother provided consistent support so he could keep on living.

The birth, as a passage from the intrauterine to the extrauterine life, implies considerable real losses for:

- the body self - the child loses his umbilical cord, vitelline membrane, placenta and amniotic fluid, as well as all functions they accomplished;
- the mental self - the all-embracing inner-mother is lost, she who protected, fed, maintained the warm pressure of the amniotic fluid like a permanent embrace.

After all these losses, the newborn feels tossed in pieces into an unknown and threatening new world. He fights between life and death, since he already died in one of his aspects (fetus in the intrauterine world).

Birth makes life difficult, turns it into a personal fight for survival.



There is no one left to provide organic support for the child's life, and he will have to perform the functions of his lost inner mother.

The extrauterine world requires that the newborn make an effort to live, that he have a great adaptation capacity under the threat of death. This world is too hostile, and the child cannot face it alone. The outer mother, discovered by the child after birth, is a strange and different mother, but she can still remind him of the old one by voice, rhythm and emotional states. The child

clings to her in hopes to ever make it back to one single functional body unit.



Together, the mother and the baby can support each other in mourning their respective losses, can soothe each other and recreate one viable unit, able to survive.

The mother helps the child gather his vital center in his body, surrounded by the skin she caresses. She “gathers him up”, provides him with a containing mental environment, just like she provided him with an organic environment before birth.

The newborn supports his mother in her mourning for the child in her womb and for the little girl that she used to be. He helps her grow up, acquire a purpose and a perspective on life.

The mother and her child will find a way to survive together after birth, laying the foundation for a true emotional relationship.

Regression born out of regret

Through birth, the child suddenly finds himself lacking the organic support he needed for survival. His body is shattered and over-stressed, which explains the physiological weight drop. It will be recovered in one week, but it mirrors his mental regression from which he will take months to recover.



An 8-9-month old child, inside the womb, plays with the umbilical cord as he would with a toy, suckles on his fingers, moves to the rhythm when he hears a well-known and well-loved song. A newborn can do nothing of the sort: he is unable to find his own mouth so he can suckle on his finger, and cannot play with any toys or his own body.

The newborn’s regression is a defense against his passage from one form of existence to another. The child attempts to recover himself by reclaiming his lost uterine environment sought in his sleep, in his mother’s arms, rocking him, in his mother’s milk.

In this new world, the regressing child no longer has access to his previous intrauterine acquisitions and is content with just surviving. His previous development allows him memories of the environment now lost to him, of how it felt to be there. The loss of his old world and the intensive requirements of his new world generate primary anxiety, which is overwhelming for the baby. He abandons himself in this new world that he cannot react to and that he cannot survive in unless helped.



The mother dampens out the requirements of the outside, offering herself as a mental containment environment, just like she used to be his organic containment environment.

The birth itself doesn't have to be traumatic and, most often, it is desired both by the child and the mother.

The child starts to feel less comfortable in the uterus now become too cramped for him. His movements are limited and food is no longer sufficient.

For a mother in the last stages of her pregnancy, her life quality drops considerably. The child has grown so much that she finds herself unable to sleep, to stay in any position, to do anything without considerable efforts. Although the child is inside her, the mother feels him far apart, and she wishes she were able to hold him, see him, interact with him, soothe him and herself at the same time, in her often depressive state.

When labor starts, the mother feels at peace - she wants her baby to be born. The child too is prepared to leave a world that has become unsatisfactory and inadequate to his development.

After birth however, the child finds himself torn apart in a hostile, demanding and dangerous world.



It isn't until this moment that the child begins to retroactively invest the intrauterine world he just lost into a heaven he will seek, unconsciously, his entire life.

It is a "heaven" containing clear images of memories that can find no satisfactory description through words, since they date from a pre-verbal

period.



This image is recovered, in the collective subconscious, through myths and fairytales referring to the making of this world. Science and philosophy are also preoccupied with the birth of the universe, the appearance of life and mankind.

Science and fairytale are identical in their purpose to update the ancient knowledge of the relation between the beginning and the end, birth and death. The only difference lies in their manner of expression: one rationalizes while the other prefers metaphors and symbols.

Before birth, the child lives his life with mental involvement. The human fetus, unlike other mammals, boasts an accelerated brain development during the intrauterine period, which allows him to live a conscious life: he plays, he feels his environment, adapts to it and is sometimes disturbed by it.

Considering all this, birth deprives the fetus of the world he was perfectly adapted to, of parts of his own body. To avoid the mental disintegration which might result from the dismemberment of his physical environment, the child will live out his entire life searching for himself, trying to recover or recreate his lost world.

Everything lost at birth is recovered in that emotional space which will structure out the imaginative world as a dimension of the human mind.



It is a place of “completeness” modeled after the intrauterine world, a heaven where all wishes come true.

Directly related to this imaginative world is its opposite, the real world as a mental dimension modeled after this world full of loss, pain and disease.



Here we can find everything that Pandora carried in her box, everything mankind has had to face after being chased out of heaven.

Birth throws human mental existence into two distinct worlds: the real and the imaginative world. Individual balance is dependent on their successful combination.

When awake, the newborn discovers he physically exists in the real world, and when asleep, he withdraws into his imaginative world. These passages are necessary but cannot be achieved without an intermediate space to ease off the brutality of collisions and the despair of separation.



The environment acting as a mediator between two worlds and ensuring the child's integrity is the maternal environment.

The mother is the one who contains the baby's double experience. In time, this maternal support model will be internalized, becoming a third mental dimension pertaining to human balance: the symbolic world. Thus, we reach the Lacanian conclusion according to which the human psyche is structured in three dimensions: the real world, the imaginative world and the symbolic world.



The symbolic world, projected outwards in a superhuman, collective space, generates what we call culture. This understanding explains the emotional support and psychological balance functions that culture has for humans.

The birth "fates" man to live out his life seeking the old (intrauterine) world and adapting to the new (extrauterine) world. The separation of one's mental existence between two worlds generates a need for unity, and therefore a repeated return to the moment of scission (the birth). However, since man is never ready to elaborate this trauma, something starts off which we can qualify in Freudian terms as the fate neurosis: a repeated revival of birth (of the first separation moment) in various forms.



This specific human experience is what makes us different from any other living creature. It is a source of unhappiness, of mental disorders, but also of evolution.

Man motivates all his deeds and actions through his constant need to find and re-bind himself, to recreate the unity experienced in his uterine space.

Thus, any construction, any creation, any modification of the space, any relationship and communion is based on this unconscious and at the same time unique purpose. But, no matter how much he tries, no matter how much he struggles, imagines and creates, man will never be able to recover the lost world state - which is the cause for the fundamental and specific human discontent and our dreams of completion in a future life, in a world “beyond”.



Plato, in his Banquet, through Aristophanes' speech, seems to express this human search: along with the two genders, male and female, there used to be another gender, the androgynous. It had a round appearance, with four hands, four legs, two heads and two sexes (a rather detailed description of a pregnant woman). The androgynous people were “gifted with miraculous resistance and virtue, with endless temerity” and tried to climb into the skies and touch the gods. Zeus punished them by splitting them in two then gathering up the skins on their womb and leaving “only a small split we call the navel” (the navel is the most significant body sign pointing to the loss recorded at birth). “Eros is nothing but the name of this longing, of the search for unity”.

Organic and archaic time

Time is an organizer for each mental dimension (real, imaginary, symbolic). That is why we prefer to use the term ages of development in which a human individual lives concurrently at the same time.

Inside the uterus, the mother's body adapts to the fetus' needs, and he assumes her rhythm. It is an organic (real) time negotiated between the fetus and the mother.

Birth deprives the child of the marker which is his mother's body, sweeping it away into the archaic time spiral (imaginative world). This is a spiraling, unconscious and eternal time, whose purpose is to recover the lost world and to renew the old rhythms.



It is a time we find all throughout our culture, in traditions and feasts.

Time perception starts to change when the child can feel his mother as a distinct individual, organically separated. The child lives in a double time, resulting from intertwining the mother's presence with her absence. In the sequential time the mother becomes a source of certainty even in her absence.

By climbing down from his mother's arms, the child assumes his small size, his point of view from below, and accepts the paternal law which issues punishments for mistakes. It is then that the child enters historical time. This is a social (common to all), linear and vectorized time from birth to death. It is a finite time, with various ages and the impossibility of return.



Time metamorphosis follows the path of the child's emotional development. The newborn, however, lives in only two times: organic and archaic.

Organic time

Organic time appears as a negotiation between the development rhythms of the fetus on the one hand and of the mother on the other, from a mental and physiological point of view. After birth, the double determination remains and this time it is based both on the baby's physiological requirements and on the mother's capacity to satisfy them.



The markers of this time are binary as well: hunger-satiety, cold-warm, activity-rest.

This time form explains the personalized rhythm of growth, acquisitions, development and aging. In this manner we can make development estimates depending on the chronological age (which allowed psychologists to consider stadial development as the basis for development understanding). This time is also responsible for individual differences, which we call innate (such as character, the manifestation of one's vital force).



Due to the different flow of this time, some people seem younger or older in relation to their age; some make acquisitions faster and some slower; some return to full health sooner and some later; some need more rest and some need less; some are more active in the morning and some in the evening.

It is a time permeable to unconscious meanings, which explains the repetitions, cyclical occurrences, coincidences, programming:



A patient observed that all his marriages (he had already had three) lasted for 5 years.

A patient gave birth on her name day.

I know a woman who gave birth on her husband's birthday (her husband had insisted in having this second child).

Most women with several births end up unconsciously "scheduling" them around the same period of the day and sometimes of the year.

Examples are plentiful, because "coincidences" in this field are the rule.

Organic time acquires a rhythm depending on one's own body and the "body of the world" from which it gains its meaning.



We discover that certain reference-numbers have major significations, deeply rooted in the collective unconscious, but also in one's own body rhythm. These are 1, 2, 5, and 28:

1 - one child, one mother, one sun, one moon, one nose;

2 - two parents, two eyes, two hands, two feet;

5 - five fingers,

28 - 280 intrauterine days. This is a powerful number for a woman's body: the 280 days of intrauterine life end up expressed within the body when puberty comes along: the 28 days of the menstrual cycle. In his letters to Freud, Fliess considers this number to be feminine, and this is probably why.

The presence of the uterus in a woman allows her to identify with the mother who carried her, which provides a cyclical rhythm for her organic time. The woman is herself an environment for the child as fetus or toddler, in which case her uterine capacity becomes well valued. However, when the woman is neither pregnant nor breast feeding, her body symbolizes the real

absence: the pregnancy status. Thus, a 28-day cycle followed by menstruation is like a gestation period ending in a birth. The fertile woman can feel pregnant for 28 days then have 3 painful and depressive days, during which she mourns for the child who wasn't meant to be. Menstruation is felt as a loss, a death, an abortion.



In their natural state, women rarely had any menstruation, as they were pregnant or breast feeding most of the time. “Single girls” and widows were special, they were “God forbid” cases, often taboo for the community.

Currently this is the standard, and the women of our time (normally neurotic) mourn for their denied child every 28 days.

This is an understanding pattern which can help us explain menstruation disorders in relation with difficulties in identifying with their mothers: either the girl continues her symbiotic relation with her mother and fails to grow up (thereby giving up her genitalia to her mother), or she terminates the symbiotic relationship and risks to remain un-whole and un-procreative.



I was told about the case of a woman who lost her menstruation completely from the moment she found out she had been adopted. In turn, she adopted a child too.

Archaic time

Life in the archaic time is triggered by birth. The child is engaged in a whirlpool spiraling in larger and larger circles. It is a circular time, rendered eternal by repetition. The initial moment is identical to the final point, and the direction can be reversed at any time. Everything starts all over again, always in the same background, for different events.



Ion Chichere, in one of his poems, expresses the reversible sense of this circular time pattern and the lack of differentiation of life forms, all the way to heaven where man and tree become one: “Against the clock/ falls the age of man/ until it is no longer his/ in the garden of heaven/ flowers of whirlpool/ to the sound of the pan flute/ man is no longer man/ But a kind of tree instead”.

A young child, well ensured, with a mother’s constant loving, lives through eternity. The day starts off for himself, resumes with events and acquisitions again and again and again. Nothing appears to be able to break the cyclical pattern of the child’s time. Nothing appears to be able to breach eternity.

This time form is what builds memory structures: the past is the present and matrix for the future. It is what allows a man to remain the same even as he changes with age and experience.



Most fairytales present a return in time used by the hero when he prepares for a step forward. He reaches the end of the earth, on the other side, dies to be reborn, faces his deepest fears, is lost to be recovered. Unity of the self is expanding, is ensured by re-updating older stages.

Archaic time is a time of reversible unconscious. It is what allows people to be educated, analyzed, to recover, but also to experience trauma and neurosis.



The archaic time and its spiraling pattern explains why “In the present we have it all” and how “Past and future are but two sides of the same page” (M. Eminescu, Romanian poet).

Time flows by magically, providing an explanation basis for phenomena previous to one’s capacity for anticipation, such as prediction and premonition.

The purpose of the archaic time is to recover the intrauterine world around which it revolves. This spiral around an absence provides a mental location

for one's losses, marking them down with symbols (similar to how the absence of the umbilical cord is symbolized on a physical level by the navel). In time, these major, essential symbols provide the structure for a mental support environment: culture.



Culture, seen as a set of myths, beliefs, habits, traditions, fairytales, artistic manifestations, knowledge, is centered around the intrauterine life (reworked depending on the markers of this world).



The child lives in the womb for 9 months, 3 seasons, 40 weeks or 280 days. Besides number 280 which is expressed in the woman's body (through her 28-day menstrual cycle), all the others (3, 9, 40) become cultural symbols.

Numbers are significant as a unit useful for healing and therapeutic experiences. In this circular pattern it isn't duration that matters, just significance. Thus, 3 hours, 3 days, 3 months, 3 years mean the same thing in this archaic time which focuses on symbols (only the linear, historic time will make a difference depending on duration).

Not every number expressed in cultural symbols signify the loss of the intrauterine world.

There is however an important cultural number which is not listed above: number 7. This is a denial of absence, abandoning intrauterine life significations and representing one's possibilities of relating with this world through the main 7 senses: hearing, sight, touch, smell, taste, the proprioceptive and the kinesthetic sense.



These seven gates of the body towards the world end up as bridges towards people, which is the explanation for why human groups function at their best when they have 7 members.

The denial of absence however occurs on the basis of a deeper denial: that of one's separation from the mother. After letting go of maternal protection, man needs to learn to anticipate in order to survive: "Should we know what

lies ahead/ We would always watch our head”, says I. Creangă (Romanian author). It isn't until this step that the magical world is deserted, culture becomes mystical, and the future ceases revealing itself directly and requires decoding, speculating.

Patriarchal culture preserves the markers of the old time, readjusting them the way a new religion takes over ancient holy days and renames them, giving them a different meaning. These cultures, which already have their civilizing heroes, see numbers as an anticipative unit, as a look towards the future for protection. This is why they renounce numbers with uterine meaning and favor number 7, which represents the most frequent number of children in a Neolithic family. With the first stable human settlements, with agriculture and animal breeding, quality of life increases and so does the number of children.

Thus, number 7 can be found in the functional body (7 senses) and in the Neolithic family (with 7 siblings), which represents a community of constant cohabitation over the course of tens of thousands of years.



So we have: 7 dwarves for Snow White, 7 days of the week, 7 good and 7 bad years.



This pattern also appears in the Bible, in the Pharaoh's dream interpreted by Joseph: 7 cows, 7 heaves of wheat or 7 years, one and the same thing. The number is preserved and it is the only one that matters, the only one that can carry an understanding which allows anticipation. Joseph's interpretation allows for foresight, for taking protective measures regarding this event which hasn't happened yet.

Similar to Athens, man also severs his ties to his maternal origins and turns towards paternal law. This allows him to adapt to the environment, to reach out to his peers, to respect cohabitation rules for survival, to be vigilant and to anticipate danger in order to ensure his survival.

In this stage man is unable to keep on living in a cyclical and self-oriented time. He needs a vigilant look towards the outside, clear markers shared

with all his peers. Against this background, the time curve evens out: historic time is linear.

Historic time

Historic time flows irreversibly downstream, faster and faster, from the past towards the future, from birth to death. The speed increase is explained by the fact that the historic time unit depends on the living time duration.



Thus, for a 4 year old, 1 year is the equivalent of a quarter of his life and is similar to 20 years in the life of a 80 year old. So, as we grow older, we end up exclaiming: “Look how time flies by, I didn’t even notice when the week was over”.

But the time “rush” slows down in ages when maternal meanings re-occur. With our own children we can recover the archaic flow of time (which also shows why women-mothers take more time to grow older).

Return mechanisms to the archaic time

The cyclical flow of archaic time is specific for a young child. Once historic time starts off, access to archaic time is greatly limited but never interrupted.

Once historic time starts off, archaic time finds refuge in areas of the subconscious from where it surges therapeutically to maintain unity of the self.

The main reactivation mechanisms of old time are: space rotation, dream, fantasy and transfer.

Space rotation

Space rotation, through gyrations and circles, allows one to access archaic time when unity of the self is threatened with structural decomposition.



This is why children prefer dizzying games and teenagers dancing, falling in love, “having fun just for kicks”.

Adults with strong narcissist disorders also need this archaic healing time, which they can return to through the dizziness sensations achieved through drinking, drugs, or extreme states.

Dream

Dreams are the natural state for anybody, at any age, whatever psychological state they are in. In “normal” situations, when we aren’t being confronted with big problems, dreams are not a preoccupation. They ensure unity of the self without becoming apparent. In difficult situations and cases, however, dreams become significant and attract our attention.

The purpose of the dream is to maintain unity of the self: conscious-unconscious, past, present and future ages. This purpose can be achieved by accessing the unconscious, where time is archaic.

The dream logic is a logic of the unconscious and is structured around the archaic time, the sensory self.

The dream structure is a window allowing access to the unconscious (S. Freud) which becomes thus revealed, in a simple manner, to everyone.

1) Its form is given by the chain of sensory images, mostly visual, but also including movement, tactile, hearing and olfactory images.



The dreamer’s self is made up of sensory fragments, entirely similar to the newborn’s self.

2) The logic of image connections is an emotional logic, based on desire, fear and trauma.

3) Its characteristics are those of the unconscious:

a) concomitance



The dreamer has access to all past and future ages at the same time, all experiences, all spaces: in our dreams we can be old or young, here or anywhere, just one image away.

b) reversibility

Here we can turn back time and cancel any unpleasant events: grandmother can be young, the childhood house, now demolished, is untouched again.

c) over-determination

Dreams can have different levels of significance, as the same event or person can have multiple meanings at the same time.

4) The rhythm in which images pass by depends on the intensity and rapidity of organic time: several objective minutes can allow for the deployment of a full story.

S

Fantasies follow the same dream path, with similar effects, the only difference being that they occur while awake.

Transfer

Man feels the need to limit his relationships to the people he knows, who can be brought back through transfer.



Therefore, any man we meet seems to remind us of somebody, to not be completely unknown.

Transfer brings back old relationships which can be mended, found again or restarted.

In psychoanalytical therapy, transfer is the mechanism which helps access the old time, where repairs are possible: here and now we rebuild situations that we experienced a long time ago. It is only at this level that we can

perform real repairs and understandings of the self, reruns and unblocking actions meant to free the course of our development.

Birth and death: two facets of the same feeling

The grown child and the adult live in a linear time. But for them, as well, archaic time is automatically reactivated in certain circumstances such as:

- relaxation - when resting, during holidays, in weekends;
- critical situations - panic, stress, fear;
- the proximity of birth or death;
- major changes in life - emigration, marriage, divorce.

In all these situations one relives the experience stages felt when coming into this world, more or less intensely according to the force of the event. Thus, we cannot understand and feel death in any other way than according to the markers by which we experienced our birth.

Birth

Birth is anticipated by wedding as the action of founding a “lasting home” - the intrauterine home of the child.



The wedding lasts “3 manic days and nights”, followed by 30 sweet and regressing days (the honeymoon) and by 40 weeks of alert development (the pregnancy).

The coming around

Pregnancy ends in the birth of the child into this world. Birth is followed by 3 manic days, which are necessary for the mother to come around, to learn to accept the changes in herself and in her life. The child is almost catatonic, frozen, unable to react.

Most often the mother is agitated and the baby bewildered.

The fates (similar to the Greek Moirai)

The 3 days after birth end when the mother comes around and starts producing milk: the child exists and must be fed.

The child now begins to feel panic, his movements are chaotic, his feelings overwhelming. Now, the child decides to survive, if it has enough internal resources and someone to live for (if the mother puts him together and makes him whole).

After the confused feelings from the last couple of days, the mother is exhausted and prepares to mourn all the losses in her life: the baby in her womb, the imaginary child, the little girl that she herself used to be, the child she ceases to be.

Now it is the child who is agitated and the mother bewildered.



This is when postpartum depression appears, the fates (moirai) appear in myths, like mothers from another world, sent to confirm the existence of the child, setting up the course and quality of his life: how he should be, how his life and death should be.

Death is very much like the birth that just took place.

Life, as a destiny, mirrors life as a fetus and acts as a projection in the mother's mind.

The child's personality depends on the newly formed relationship with the mother, to which new elements will be added in time.

40 forbidden days

The mother and the child have been complementary opposites as pieces of a puzzle, completing each other's losses. For this mutual healing, perfectly symbiotic, one needs to abandon the communion that cannot accept such regressed stages. Thus, the taboo of the 40 forbidden days begin, until the

mother's uterus withdraws showing that she no longer needs to carry the child - that she has decided, mentally too, to "give birth" to it.

The mother needs 40 days of withdrawal from society in order to become one with her baby and rebuild the old lost intrauterine bond. This couple becomes untouchable by the community due to the strong regression event which doesn't allow anybody else to partake in it.

The interactions, limited by strict rituals, act as a "placenta" to defend the mother-baby relationship against external invasions, but also their communion against regressions that may be overly deep.

This is a time of postpartum depression for the mother and of primary anxiety for the baby. Mental communion follows the physical communion existent during pregnancy. The strong unity between the mother and her child pushes both of them to the edges of two superimposing worlds: this one and the next.



This is the brink of insanity, also accessible in the proximity of death or of extreme difficulties. It is, undoubtedly, a difficult state to be in!

The loss felt by the child at birth is similarly experienced by the mother. The child experiences the despair of being thrown out of his containing uterus by an evil mother. The mother feels deserted by the good child who used to move in her womb. She has lost the child within and got an "alien" child who looks and is felt differently.



The mother's imperative need to feel the child move in her uterus turns into painful uterine cramps.

The mother now begins a normal mourning period for the fetus and an accommodation period to the newborn's numerous demands, while the newborn 'accuses' her for pushing him out and for no longer being able to promptly and organically answer his needs.

These 40 days are dominated by archaic time, with all its characteristics. The birth triggered this cyclical time of the newborn in which the mother is caught too. For a while, she is forced to abandon historic time. The mother

herself fights survival anxiety and the death threat towards her child. 'One day feels one year long', and is dominated by fears and states hard to explain.



The cyclical time pulsates: it expands and shrinks according to the child's wakefulness/sleep, according to the presence of people who support the mother. The mother's thoughts slow down, and her feelings speed up (this paints a picture of the disorder and irrationality encountered in panic states).

Each mother finds her own way to contain these feelings: words, disease or pain, anxiety, running away, various other actions. These are individual forms of manifestation that differ from mother to mother, but they confirm the presence of the archaic time specific to symbiosis.

The old markers (night-day, weekdays, seasons, cold-warm, hunger-satiety, noise-silence, sleep-wakefulness) are reconfigured. The daytime-nighttime sequence is replaced by the activity-sleep state of the baby (thus one of our days is equal to 10 days for a newborn's mother).



The mother is almost never aware what day of the week it is. She feels like summer when sleeping with the baby in her arms and she feels like winter when waking up alone and wet with milk, feverish from her swollen breasts. The mother is hungry before she breastfeeds, thirsty while breastfeeding and sleepy afterwards.

Her life beats to the baby's rhythm of hunger-satiety and her internal (organic needs) or external (social) markers are blurred off.



Noises irrelevant until now become unbearable for the mother, who needs a quiet atmosphere. Her hearing diminishes, she sees hazily, she moves in slow-motion - the veil of depression surrounds her like a vitelline membrane all around, protecting her and the child.

Any adult other than the mother can only have a theoretical understanding of her state. Even the mothers of older children preserve only vague,

dissipating memories, which seem transferred into a no-word zone. The mother, alone with the child in their own manufactured world, is often scatterbrained, crowded with pieces of advice and brutal attempts of the expert (medical) circle and family to bring her back into everyday life. External time markers don't help her reorganize herself.



Therefore, if we did not feel like crying about it, the idea of breastfeeding every 3 hours would be laughable.

The mother is so because she and her baby need to be so, and we, the others, could accept that which we don't understand - by bringing back the old tradition of the 40 forbidden days for the mother-baby couple.



The lack of respect for the taboo forces the mother to take expiating protection measures: disinfecting the strangers' traces with alcohol, putting a red ribbon on the baby in order to ward off the "evil eye" and so on. She protects the child so that he can still have a psychological uterus-like environment, still inaccessible to others (by touch or sight).

The Christening

(Orthodox ritual for welcoming the baby into the religious community - similar to the Catholic confirmation, but taking place 6 weeks from birth)

After 40 days we have the christening of the baby, regarded as an entry into the community at large where he is given new parents: the godfather and the godmother. Thus, the mother is relieved, ends the mourning kicked off at the fates' visit, and her body can no longer hold the child (the uterus, still enlarged after birth, has returned to normal).

Psychologically, the mother abandons her existence in two worlds (two months necessary to leave two worlds). She can function as an adult and, from that position, care for her baby. The mother-baby relationship, in its most profound symbiosis, that is now overcome, has proved to be a viable relationship, and everybody can settle back down into their own world.



The child enters the community the same way the mother gets the approval of a priest to enter church: she and her child cease to be taboo.

The archaic time of the mother is reset in its place (in sleep) and no longer consumes her whole existence.



The mother recovers her capacity to dream, to express her suffering and her wishes in her sleep, and nightmares cease to be wakeful experiences.

Death

The archaic time kicking off at birth builds the axis of the individual and collective human imaginary world, in a time of fairytales and myths. It is focused on the object of search and desire, of trauma and recovery, of loss and mourning.

Due to archaic time, the birth experience is felt again with each strong change, trauma, pain or loss.



Thus, there is no great novelty in experiencing the proximity of death.

The coming around

The 3 days until the funeral are necessary in order to accept the reality of the dead body.

The religious or organizational rituals, the concern for ‘what has to be done’ organize and order the behavior of the grieving ones. These are a good counterweight for the panic and emotional chaos.



During these days, the dead body is cared for, washed, watched, cried over, and the living body is neglected: unshaven, dressed in black, avoiding the mirrors which must be covered.

The funeral

It requires the performance of a ritual meant to separate the living from the dead body, which gets a place of its own, and the living become a community where the first ritual meal will take place. Then mourning officially begins.

40 forbidden days

The people close to the dead man, who have identified themselves with the deceased, experience a deep depression for 40 days. They become taboo for the community. The black clothes mark the loss and impossibility to face the requirements of a relationship. The relatives focus on finding the key to solving their emotional connections with the dead man.



Only now can the grievors afford to dream of the deceased, to give him back a place in their emotional life.

Memorial meal

(Orthodox ritual, a ritual meal for the relatives of the deceased, which takes place 6 weeks after the funeral)

It is a gathering of the community for lifting the taboo on the close relatives. They can return to the world since they have dealt with the loss and can go on with their life.

The mourning

The period of mourning is that period of time when the loved ones discover personal solutions of survival.



The 40-week period: the 9 months after death, like the 9 months in the uterus, show that only a new birth will be able to end the mourning. The rebirth allows the narcissist reconsolidation and the lifting of all prohibitions.

The purpose of mourning is to stop the identification with the dead body and to gradually withdraw the emotional investment.

These durations: 3 manic days, 40 depressive days, 40 weeks for the final elaboration of the mourning are repeated for every major change, for every mourning or trauma, and they can be seen in situations like: the birth of a brother, changing the house, the parents' divorce, getting acquainted with kindergarten or school, or with the new job.

The “mom” relationship - vital environment

The mother offers herself to her child as a transition environment from one world to another. If birth physically separates the bodies of the mother and child, the mental connection is heightened in compensation.

The mother helps keep things together, contains the anxiety, smoothes out the outer wrinkles - thus she helps the child to live, and in time the child will prefer this life to the one inside the uterus.

In this effort to give herself to the child as an intermediary, the mother will learn to think of him as a real person with his own demands, needs and requirements that make him unique. The mother introduces herself to the child and meets him. His numerous requests and her tiredness help her make the difference between the real and imaginary baby.

If the mother acts the way she feels, she cannot go wrong. Only when she decides to act after thinking her emotions through does she move away from the reality of the baby.

Although the mother directly feels the baby’s feelings, she cannot express them (the baby’s emotions belong to the preverbal stage, and a verbal ‘translation’ would lead to a loss of meaning).

The mother-child relationship is complicated and difficult, but this is because it is forming for both.



Simply caring for a child is not very problematic, and babysitters never seem overwhelmed, overtired or depressed.

Babysitters will get involved emotionally, but they can select what they need from their relationship with the child without having to experience

radical changes in their world. They can be experts in care-taking, they can even calm the baby well, but they don't follow the child into his world, leaving off their own real world as only the mother that gave birth to him can do.

The situation is somewhat similar for the grandparents, although this is a forming relationship (the grandchild turns the woman that used to be a mother into a grandmother); this situation doesn't involve changes in order to accommodate the child (as is the case with the mother), but only changes meant to accommodate one's self (the process of aging, having to take second place). Grandparents are supported by the child in their personal elaboration work, in which they discover organizational, perspective and life-meaning markers.



The grandparents can love their grandchildren more than their own children, because they are relaxed and don't feel the stress of their own lack of balance and the responsibilities of destiny-forming decisions.

Environment mother

The environment mother replaces the inner mother, who died at birth.

This is a depressed, slow mother, therefore viscous - able to ease the baby's sudden transition from one state to another. She mentally contains the baby's states, she is a mourning mother who allows her baby to mourn the former environment.

It is only after this containing environment becomes fully available for the baby that he will be able to start his rebellion, to blame his mother for all his losses, to accuse her, to reject her by crying too much and beyond consolation.



Just as an intrauterine baby cannot live trauma-free outside the mother's uterus, a newborn and an infant cannot live outside the presence of his mother.

For the newborn, mother is not just a caregiver, she is something no one else can be, the mental container opposing dissipation. She “gathers” the child in her arms allowing him to preserve his vital energy.

By helping her child recover the mother helps herself.



A mother without her baby is a sick, operated woman, whose episiotomy or C-section is physically painful. Without the baby, the mental pain of separation turns into physical pain in the body.

The mother that has to handle the newborn's intense demands is tired, but healthy. She springs to the baby's crib, takes him into her arms and is healed.

A child deprived of the mother's physical presence after birth can prolong his confusion regarding this world. He will be less demanding, not because he has no needs, but because until he is confident again he no longer expects comfort.

A quiet baby who doesn't cry, although more convenient, is not necessarily better. But, if he has his mother, he will recover in a few days, becoming as demanding as he is supposed to be.

Of course there are huge individual differences between babies (even more significant than in socially leveled adults). If a newborn is calm and quiet, it doesn't mean he is all right. There are undemanding children who enjoy a good emotional and rhythm tuning with the mother. They have a mother who has found a way to express her aggression and who has an emotionally supportive partner.

The calmness with which the newborn expresses his lack of hope is the same he uses to express wellness. Only the child's mother can distinguish between the two opposing emotions expressed in the same way.

Coming home from the hospital poses problems for the child who managed to get somewhat used to the environment. His entire life so far was spent in a certain environment and rhythm, even if only for 3 days. These are important for establishing the child's vital energy.



Changing the environment makes the child feel more anxious than usual and he may cry or sleep more.

The newborn's stress generated by change is highly diminished if he was able to spend time with his mother at the maternity ward. In this situation only the external conditions change, the baby's environment being his mother. The child who was in the mother's presence all along has had time to win her over, and now he can seek her out whenever he really needs it, probably much more often than once every three hours. Thus, the child can get used to a schedule he was trained to respond to, and the change of the caregivers can negatively affect his "mother attachment".



During the first hours of one of my girls' life, I realized I could calm her down by simply talking to her. When she was crying, the time it took me to get to her crib could be filled by my voice. I was surprised to notice that I would wake up only when my baby girl was crying (although there were two other babies in the room). All this for me was living proof of the love and emotional agreement that gave me strength for the following months.

Another one of my baby girls was fussing without crying, but she would calm down as soon as I put her at my breast (without suckling). So I committed the "illegal act" of keeping her in bed with me "fooling" the vigilant nurses. It relaxed and cheered me up to see that wondering expression on her face and her eyes rolling over to watch me. She would search for me and her eyes would cling to mine, making me feel loved so deeply.

These are common experiences, but necessary for the start of a relationship. When the mother opens up emotionally, after birth, it facilitates the child's empathic understanding. In the absence of the child, this availability can be turned towards her own body or into anxiety.

During the first few days after birth, by sleeping, the child retreats to the intrauterine state that ensures him the necessary comfort. Every time he

wakes up he relives the birth, discovers the loss and finds himself dispersed in a demanding environment. That is the reason why, through empathy, mothers feel the need to keep the child in a containing, uterine environment, binding him, holding him in their arms, rocking him in a cradle.



Uterus-arms compensate for the intrauterine environment, and the navel-breast replaces the amniotic liquid with the soothing milk.

The mother sees her baby, who can wake up every hour, calm down and fall back to sleep at her breast - it is an environment extremely necessary for the child helping him deal with primary anxiety. Other times, the newborn can sleep for several hours, and the mother knows not to wake him up (contrary to the pediatricians' indications who express their fear caused by associating the baby's sleep with death).



The newborn finds himself calmed down by the specific rocking movements which remind him of being carried in the womb when his mother moved and walked. Common sounds such as a faucet running, spring water, mother's singing, shades made by the sun on the wall - may remind him of calming images.

This world is so "noisy" that any additional stress mentally exhausts the newborn, making him defend himself through maternal demands of containment, by crying or retreating into sleep.

Emotional ambivalence

In her symbiosis with the newborn, the mother deals with an unprecedented regression for which she was prepared by pregnancy and birth. She no longer exists as an individual, but only in fusion with her child. This special type of relationship fundamentally changes her relation with the world, with space and time, life and human values.



The biblical dictum that Christianity is based on - “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” - seems illogical from the point of view of daily experiences, but becomes realistic through the experience of the newborn’s mother (this can turn Christianity into a maternally substantiated religion).

The mother struggles for survival together with the child, she puts up with his annihilation anxiety and therefore she feels and relates to life in a different manner. Life itself is precious, every move, every sound the child makes seems miraculous and priceless. Thus, life becomes the fundamental value. People deserve to be loved because they exist and not because of their characteristics. All the human attributes for beauty, kindness, morals, lose their importance and seem superficial hierarchies in comparison to the overwhelming importance of life itself.

Love and hate are “but two sides of the same coin” (paraphrasing the Romanian poet M. Eminescu who says: “Future and past are but two sides of the same coin”) - they mean life and death. And, without accepting death (as birth and loss of self needing mourning), there is no life.



The mother is overwhelmed by the intensity of a strong ambivalence: she channels her love towards the child and her hate (seen as helplessness, anxiety, depreciation) towards herself, justifying the depression, the tension, the emotional outbreaks.

Crying and depression ensure the union between mother and child. The mother discovers her own ways to calm herself down that the child can benefit from. That is how rhythmic cry, sublimated in lullabies, signifies wishes and fears related to loss, fall, abandonment.

Mother’s reference to herself and to her child is complicated by the reappearance of old fantasies, fears and desires (as in any period of regression).



“You know, they say that the child resembles the person the mother resents”, says Dan Lungu in his book *I’m an old communist hag* (Polirom Publishing House, 2011).

The mother rediscovers old memories about her childhood dolls, about her brothers and sisters, about herself. Thus, the child has satisfying and desired attributes, but is also a source of anxiety and frustration.

On the other hand, the child also feels his mother as an object within himself which satisfies his needs, a source of anxiety and an object of love.

The mother deals with a new type of stress and it is natural to sometimes feel insecure, and sometimes incompetent. But, in time, the tension decreases and she accepts her status. Each of the child’s growing steps prepares her for the following ones. She learns to relax together with the baby, to live alongside him.



As the mother succeeds in managing her emotions, the child becomes less and less demanding.

The woman who becomes a mother discovers another dimension of existence, which supposes renunciations, reevaluations and modifications of the self. She soon abandons the male markers previously adopted for want of anything else. Now competition, power, success, all seem alien to her. The old values have nothing to do with her child, her new life. She will learn to rediscover them gradually while the child grows, but the actual change will be permanent and fundamental.

The need for support

The mental challenge combined with the mother’s regressed state makes her need external emotional support, someone to play the role of the mother figure for her relationship with the child. The mother together with her supporter offer the child a two-headed image (M. Klein). This explains the

two-headed visions appearing in the child's dreams, drawings, fantasies, but also in fairytales and myths.



In one of Leonardo da Vinci's paintings (analyzed over and over again by Freud), the mother of Jesus appears to be in her own mother's arms (Saint Anne is not corporal separated from Virgin Mary). But the two-headed mother is not enough to support the child. The child's self representation appears in the painting as the lamb, acting as significant for an old age where human-animal differentiation was not operational.

For the mother to be adequate for the child, she herself needs support. Ideally, the person offering support to the mother should lead towards gradual separation from the symbiosis: to tolerate the regression without supporting it, to offer support without doubling the maternal capacity. The best "mother-figure" for the mother is her husband, the father of the child.



The child's father begins his role by offering maternal support.

The man won the woman over, conceived a child with her, and now must arrange a living environment for a couple that he is not part of. This is an important apprenticeship, needing an ample self elaboration.



As early as the falling-in-love stages the man deals with the difficult image of the father role. In his *Amores* Ovid tells the dream of a man in love: the day was hot and there was a heifer grazing peacefully alongside a bull, happily laying down besides her. Their calmness is disturbed by a crow that strikes her chest three times and rips open her flesh. The heifer leaves and makes towards a grazing ground with many bulls.



It is obvious that the scene of the mother holding an infant at her breast brings back ancient devouring anxieties and narcissistic wounds related to exclusion. These are conditions that need to be elaborated in order to assume the father role.

The newborn's mother cannot find support and understanding in the social environment. She is forced to participate directly (even if subconsciously) to her baby's pain and find forms of containment. That is why a mother with a newborn baby is under so much pressure, misunderstood by those close to her.



The mother often deals with the lack of sensitivity of people close to her, who don't understand her constant state of alert. They keep wondering: Why doesn't she go to the market, or clean up or do chores while the child sleeps like an angel?

When the child cries, the mother is blamed: The milk is too diluted, too fat, not enough, she won't let the child get enough rest, she doesn't stimulate him enough or she's spoiling him, she got him used to being held.

Other mothers having older children might tell her: "Small children, small worries! Big children, big worries".

The mother cannot find understanding because her state of tension and mental stress is so intense that the people close to her avoid feeling it, rationalize it the best way they can, offering logical explanations that have nothing to do with the actual situation.

But the mother will find her own healthy way to contain hers and her child's anxiety. If she succeeds the child will be able to demand more. This is not helpful for short term situations: despite the mother's constant efforts, instead of calming down, the child seems even more difficult to please.



It is important that the baby live out his mourning as completely as possible during this period, so that he can develop better, more freely and with less tension.

Main Connections In Primary Symbiosis

The symbiotic union with the child highlights four types of connections: embracement, feeding, looking and speaking. The path of independence entails “weanings” in all these coordinates.

Embracement

The mother’s arms support, ensure and bear the child above herself, above any danger. The caress allows the child to feel his own contour, to define himself in order to form his own skin-self (F. Dolto).

This is a good place, a heaven from which the child will descend in order to be “on his own”.



The small child is the hero in every fairytale, and the mother alone isn’t strong enough to bear him. She herself needs the support of an adult, someone to “hold her”. It isn’t by chance that lovers kick off by holding hands (in a symbolical replay of the umbilical connection) and embracing (corporal support paving the way for supporting a newborn).

The baby cannot be pictured outside his mother’s arms. But the image of the mother holding the child (the iconic figure) is too complete, too sphere-like, to be stable without external support.

The image of the mother who bears the child from one world to another, who doesn’t let him remain whole (as he used to be in the uterus), but who gathers and feeds him with herself, is frequently seen in myths and fairytales.

Here we have rendered both the state of symbiosis and the ambivalence which dominates it. There are states which are far too regressed to be bearable without a supporting third party.



In mythology, Prometheus is not alone with the mountain he is tied to - the devouring eagle visits him regularly.

In the Christian faith, the Virgin-Infant couple appears supported either by the Holy Father, or by Saint Anne.



Although the symbiosis is dual, its essence is always triadic, due to the need for support.

The Milk-Union

The mother's breast belongs to the child for whom it produces milk. The mother feeds the child with herself (with substance and affection) in a mouth-to-breast corporal relationship.

Food and Affection

The baby doesn't perceive his food apart from the emotional context. When breastfeeding, the mother doesn't offer the child an impersonal breast but herself, with her full interiority.



When the baby suckles hungrily and stares gratefully into her eyes, she feels fundamentally good and loved. With the milk he suckles his mother's love for him. They are both in a state of fulfillment and tranquility very difficult to reach in another context.

Breastfeeding a child is not a simple feeding action, which is why the newborn will refuse a mother who is too depressed, frustrated, anxious or preoccupied with anything else.



The newborn prefers to starve if he feels his mother doesn't give herself completely. He will cry in hunger next to this mother whom he will continue to refuse because he feels refused in his turn. If the mother insists he will choke time and again, will turn his head the other way or will have stomach aches. Although in major need, the child won't let himself be comforted unless he regains his position as the center of his mother's interest. It is only if the mother allows herself to be preoccupied with the child - look at him, listen to him, speak to him - that he will want (know, be able) to suckle.

This won't happen with an older infant, who already shares a containing history with his mother. He will suckle regardless of the mother's state, accepting her just the way she is and thanking her for accepting him. The mother feels her efforts are understood and rewarded by the child, and their relationship is consolidated into a true partnership.

The Fusion-Milk

Maternal milk is an objective, physical expression of the symbiotic connection, the continuance of the organic connection inside the uterus. This is why it becomes the preferred symbol for the mother-fusion desire and anxiety.



In mythology the representation of the feeding breast is the cornucopia, adapted to multiple needs and desires: it tranquilizes, soothes hunger and thirst, rests, reassures. In a manner similar to the breast, which produces more milk as the child's demand increases, the cornucopia adapts its offer to the existing demand.

In personal "mythologies", maternal milk is also responsible for the child's anxious cry, for his "colics". When a child cries, most often than not the "scapegoat" is the milk - too fat, too thin, too little, too much - and in any case, inadequate for the baby.

Because of their organic relationship, breastfeeding can sometimes become hard to bear for the mother, psychologically speaking. If there is no efficient emotional support for her, it is only natural that she feels inadequate for her baby, that she wants to break apart and run away, interrupting the material expression of symbiosis - lactation.

The mother's unconscious desire to run away expresses her spirit of preservation and maintains the child's vital force. This desire is natural and positive, but its advantages turn into disadvantages once it becomes real (through the premature interruption of the symbiotic relationship).



The mother's milk is only the physical expression of her connection with the child, but it doesn't generate or interrupt it.

The mother-baby fusion is not only non-pathological, but also absolutely necessary for the child's existence. If he doesn't have a fusional support for his anxiety, the baby will be at risk to lose himself, to dissipate in a world ready to engulf him. He may die or become autistic (such as Narcissus in Greek mythology). But sudden death and autism are rare, which means that most mothers manage to find the strength to satisfy their babies' needs, regardless of whether or not they breastfeed.

The child needs this unity with the mother in order to live, to form himself - this is a mental relationship which cannot end when breastfeeding is over.

The Delimitation-Milk

Breastfeeding satisfies the need for union if the mother's corporal limits are kept and the child's skin-self is formed. Through breastfeeding, the mother feels fundamentally good when her child has a hearty appetite, and the breastfed child learns to shape himself apart specifically due to this permanent organic contact with the mother.

The breastfeeding mother cannot be inadequate for the child, because their physiological connection offers her exactly the optimum rhythm and closeness (she can be neither mentally overwhelming nor too distant).

The non-breastfeeding mother feels the need to offer herself in a compensatory manner to the child or to run away - and it is only now that she can be inadequate.

Breastfeeding or Bottle-Feeding?

Breastfeeding offers the background and rhythm for the primary relationship, but its obvious importance mustn't turn it into an ordeal for the mother. If she doesn't find the psychological support necessary to carry on within herself, it is better to stop - she will surely find her own ways of understanding the child and being close to him.



During the child's feeding, as in birth, even if the natural version is better in general, each mother will choose the solution which best suits her - the only one who can make the right decision is herself.

"She doesn't have milk" or "her milk isn't good" are only umbrella-arguments for the scared mother, faced with too big a regression. Breasts are part of her body, but after birth they belong to the baby for whom they produce adequate milk, as far as quantity and quality are concerned.



Many mothers say that after having given their children formula, they calm down and sleep better. The outside milk brings a soothing separation for the mother, which in its turn reassures the child. Sometimes this is a solution when there is no actual external support for the mother.

There are several reasons why a mother doesn't want to or feels that she cannot breastfeed her child.

When the mother directs nothing but her love towards the child and is unable to find a way to manifest her aggressive tensions, it is most likely that they will turn towards herself in full force, making her feel belittled, incapable and unworthy. This self belittlement can project either on the milk (which can be considered inadequate for the child), or on the child himself (who seems to be hurting her, who cannot suckle, who refuses her). Such phrases hint that the mother needs more support from those close to her, that she needs proofs of love and narcissistic contributions. Here, the pediatrician can also provide encouragement by showing her, and for good reason, that her good care is visible on the child.



In such case, breastfeeding is beneficial only if the mother finds enough external support for herself.

However, there are cases when breastfeeding mustn't be continued. Such a case is when the mother cannot deal with the symbiosis status because she herself is still in such a relationship:

- with her own mother, because of a traumatic weaning, of an abandonment or of an intrusive behavior;
- with her life partner, because of the primary relationship transfer;
- with another child, if she is pregnant, or if she tends to a sick person.

In such cases, mothers will find a way to be adequate for their infants even if they bottle-feed them. The children won't insist on suckling anyway, understanding their mothers better than anyone. The breast can be replaced with: the bottle, the pacifier and the mother's arms.



For a child, the breast has several functions: soothing hunger and thirst, calming primary anxiety, ensuring sleep regression, constructing self-constancy.

The Shelter-Milk

At the beginning of his life, when facing primary anxiety, the child feels complete only if recomposed in his mother's arms, he feels undivided inside only when he suckles. The old, intrauterine world is updated, and the child can sleep.



This "shelter" function of the mother is also preserved for later, when the child, though older, will still resort to her arms for comfort from fears and grief.

The adult, too, sometimes feels the need to withdraw in a reassuring space, even if it resorts only to maternal substitutes: the supporting shoulder of a friend; crying with salty tears which mimic the composition of the amniotic fluid.

The Navel-Breast

The sensations of hunger, thirst, tiredness are specific to this world only - they don't exist inside the womb. When facing them, the newborn becomes scared and in danger of being destroyed by his own reactions.



There are only a few seconds between the moment the sensation occurs and the state of panic, from whimpering to full-out crying. Milk offered without delay helps the child face his own sensations.

The breast full of milk is a good substitute for the lost navel: it creates a corporal union allowing the feeding of the child with substance from the mother. It adapts (both in quantity and in quality) to the child's needs and offers itself promptly to the child as soon as he demands it.



The breast doesn't offer large quantities of milk and, apart from hunger, it satisfies the need to suckle. When a bottle is used for feeding, it is often doubled by a pacifier for suckling.

The Sleep-Milk

The breast also has the benefit of providing, from within the symbiosis, a basis for separation. Through breastfeeding, the mother offers herself entirely to the child, and he can mirror himself in her as being constant.

The mother's breast offers the milk as a "sleeping potion". If for the newborn sleep allows regaining the old, intrauterine world, for the child beginning his separation from the mother's body, sleep is filled with the fear of losing this world and the mother at the same time. The child feels absorbed in the intrauterine space, which doesn't feel like his own anymore, and where he has jammed all the inexpressible anxiety of birth. For the child afraid to sleep, the mother's milk is a guarantee of return, a reassuring element which makes regression possible.



The mother lets herself be absorbed by the child (through the milk he suckles), without being devastated or anxious – and thus becomes reassuring.

The mother is contaminated by the child's regression, to which she feels attracted like in a vortex - she is sleepy and yawning, offering and receiving tranquility.



In the fairytales of Romanian writer I. Creanga, the old hag mixes a soporific plant in the husband's milk so that he can't hear the groans of his pregnant wife (A Pig's Tale). The same does Saint Sunday with the milk she offers the bear, in order to make the animal less attentive and steal his salads (Harap Alb).

The milk with soporific plants is the maternal milk suckled by the child from the mother's breast. The child "suckles" sleep and peace and then, "enchanted", sleeps "like a log" - he cannot be awoken by this world while dissolved in dreams.



And so the milk becomes a remedy for insomnia both in fairytales and in popular advice or the physicians' recommendations: "a glass of warm milk, drank before going to bed".

Through breastfeeding, the mother creates not only a corporal, but also a mental union with the child: the mouth-to-breast relationship moves at eye (eye-image) and ear (ear-voice) level. The child stares into his mother's eyes where he gloats in his own calm image against which he measures his existence.

Union in the eyes

Newborn human babies are unable to use their body to attach themselves to their mothers, but they cling to them with their eyes. This "eye catching" is especially obvious when the child suckles (even when suckling on the bottle, the child follows the mother with his eyes).

The clinging force of the look is also preserved in adults, which is why sight is the most important human sense. In time, however, sight loses its narcissistic investment role.

The Icon-Image

A mother breastfeeding her child offers such an archaic and regressive image that the scene turns into an icon which, irrelevant of whether the watcher is religious or not, brings along a state of peace and containment necessary for balance.

The icon of Virgin Mary with the Baby Jesus offers itself to any human being who was once a baby, and who, now an adult, looking at one's self from the outside, can still gloat in the peace of the maternal breast, a preverbal quietness too archaic for us to be able to recreate with words.



In times of sorrow which lessen the force of our self, we feel the need for a recovering regression. We search for that supporting look that we sometimes find, sometimes don't, and other times we discover it lacks the strength to heal our narcissistic wounds. Then the complete image of the icon, the mother holding her baby in her arms and in her eyes, becomes necessary for support. Going down on our knees, we, now at a child's height, look at a maternal face who bears us as her babies and can soothe any pain. Through crying, we recreate the salty fluid inside the womb.

Falling to one's knees and bursting into tears brings the adult back to his childhood, where he can find relief. We do it to recover ourselves, to heal narcissistic wounds, to get well: it is only by becoming young again that we can be adults!

The icon-image has a recovering quality because it can recreate the perfect symbiosis:

- the child suckles the milk the mother's breast makes for him;
- the mother absorbs the child's anxiety by looking at him;
- the child, looking at his mother, internalizes the image of a loved self.

This circle: mouth - breast - mother's look - child's look recreates to a certain extent the intrauterine unity.

The passage from milk substance to the image in someone's eyes favors the leap from physical incorporation to mental internalization.

This is an evolutionary circle which allows the child's narcissism to be consolidated.



Errors can also creep in, as we can see in the legend of Narcissus. Here, the child looks not at the mother but at himself, and the mother doesn't absorb the child's anxiety but the child himself, his own substance. Narcissus' mother is not at peace with the birth of her baby (who is the result of a rape). In her death anxiety, she asks the prophet Tyresias if the child will live.

This is a question asked, consciously or not, by every mother in her ambivalence. The relationship defect appears, however, in the manner in which loving is expressed.



The nymph Echo (maternal representation) adores Narcissus, but can only speak to him by repeating his last words. The mother offers herself to the child as an echo, the shadow of a personal image, and with her the child can only feel alone - his only chance is to cling to his own self - which cannot be viable.

The waterhole in which Narcissus stares at himself is the very eye of his mother (who is a nymph of the lake). It is an absorbing eye, in which the image appears replicated like an echo.

A third instance is needed for detachment, namely the father who supports the mother and pulls the child away from this duality.



In icons, this instance exists and appears to be very strong, yet Narcissus didn't enjoy it. He is the unaccepted son of a father his mother doesn't want to know anything about. The danger is that "the water of life" (the intrauterine fluid and later the maternal milk) transforms into a "water of death", the black water - opposed to the white milk, the water of the Styx which separates the living from the dead, the man from his ancestors and all his past losses.

The father is the third party who pulls the child out of the narcissistic dyad and protects him like a Cerberus from the fulfillment of old yearnings: the mother's uterus, left by birth, becomes taboo to the son, just like her breast after weaning. However, the union in the eye still preserves the lost unity and can still offer itself as recovering when needed.

The Little Baby in the Mother's Eyes

The child is born when it is physically able to survive, but mentally he still needs his mother as a marker in order to define himself.

When he suckles, the child stares into his mother's eyes. With his little mouth he suckles warm milk, and with his eyes he absorbs his self image. The mental self is structured on the basis of this self image which the child discovers as a homunculus in the mother's eye.



Grigore Vieru, a Romanian poet, writes: "Oh, right there in momma's eyes,/ There's a tiny baby boy!/ Him and I are so alike/ Dainty little thing he is!/ Without him, I know so well,/ My life couldn't be so swell..." (Baby in the Mother's Eyes).

This is a first image in which the child finds himself together with his bearer: the mother.



The born child continues to be carried, not in the uterus, but in his mother's eyes.

The corporal self (F. Dolto) is structured dependant on the mother's touch, who caresses, carries and cares for him. She also caresses with her eyes and

voice, arousing the child's senses.

In the mirror of his mother's eyes, the child discovers a first self image, built at the interference point between him and the mother.



Who is that child in the mother's eyes? Maybe it is the mother, maybe it is him, maybe it is the fantasy-child in the mother's mind... maybe it is a little bit of each!

The image of the child in his mother's eyes is accepted along with everything the mother feels for him, with the history of his existence revealing itself without words. It is an image the child needs in order to form his narcissistic self, a cornerstone of self structuring.



In the mother's eyes there are two children: the real baby and the fantasy baby. The real child is higher, better loved, and must cancel the other's image, his rival.

For the baby, the mother's look serves as a foundation, but it is necessary for self confirmation at other ages as well.



The older child learns to attract and maintain the interest in his mother's eyes through tricks: "Mum, look what I can do!" If the mother isn't available, the child will secure her through mischief anytime his mother's eyes aren't "on him".

The child experiences a great narcissistic lesion when his mother tells him angrily: "Get out of my sight, I don't want to see you anymore!"

The child whose mother looks at and speaks to someone else feels void for the moment: how is it possible that his mother has eyes for anyone else?

There are moments of "having eyes for someone else" the child in fact needs, but if they are prolonged and the mother is too depressed to be able

to invest the child, if her eyes “pass through him” in thought, the child’s “training” self suffers.

The Look as Fate, as Writing One’s Destiny

In the mother’s eyes, the child is surrounded by her feelings for him, expressed in the way she looks at him. This is where his past and future history lies.



Through her eyes, the mother fates the child’s life: he will be loved and adored; sometimes he will be overlooked by unseeing eyes; and other times he will be a heavy burden for sore eyes.

Without mirroring himself in his mother’s eyes, the child doesn’t know what he is like, what he looks like, what emotions he can awaken, what his purpose is in this world.

The Mother’s Face - a Picasso Painting

The child’s closeness to his mother’s face offers him an image which can be revealed only at this level.



The chin and mouth become very large, the nostrils prominent, the forehead smaller and the eyes go up and down - a real Picasso painting!

This face barely seems human, but it shows the deforming force of archaic love.

Through half-closed eyes sight becomes hazy, preserving the essence without minding the contours. Squinting, the child manages to obtain a new deformation.



He displaces the mother’s eyes: he crosses them, he superimposes them until, in the center of the forehead, under the eyebrow line which becomes continuous, there is only one big, pulsating eye.

This is the eye of the heart, a watchful eye, bearer of an only child, himself. After this victory, the child is finally able to fall asleep!

The Child's Focusing Difficulties

The infant moves both his eyes differently, not due to a lack of control but in order to compose the needed image of his mother's face.

Besides, newborns have bifocal attention: one eye looks towards the outer world, where the mother's look attracts it, and the other towards his inner world, of sensations offered by senses.



This is why the child's eyes cross when his belly makes a noise, when his skin is caressed, when he wants to go to sleep or when the mother has another preoccupation.

The infant who doesn't enjoy enough corporal closeness with the mother will diminish distances by squinting and crossing his eyes. Unless the mother looks at him in order to attract the look of both his eyes towards this world, he will remain bifocal, centered both on the inner and the outer world.



The "lazy" eye is "sacrificed" to turn the look towards the inside, while the other eye will look vigilantly towards the outside.

The emotional distance and the lack of maternal look lead to what we call strabismus. A mechanical remedy is to cover the "watchful" eye with a patch in order to force the "lazy" eye to look outside, but the child needs the mother's body to emotionally cover him.

By breastfeeding or holding the baby until he sleeps, the mother's body covers his eyes one by one. Thus, she hinders his ability to deform images by moving the eyes around differently, so he is forced to find another way.



The child will look out hazily through his eyelashes, lowering his eyelids as much as he can: same effect!

The Evil Eye in the Forehead

The child's ability to recompose the mother's face, to superimpose the eyes and move them to the center of the forehead is a great victory. He sees himself unique in the mother's only eye, in the watchful eye-heart: this is the evil eye which allows for regression to the intrauterine world where he can exist without an image.



The “vampire” myth presents this nostalgia of the intrauterine world, where the fetus exists without being mirrored in the eyes of other people (he exists unseen); where there is no light; where he can feed through the blood flow; where feeding means love, transformation, possession. The single moon, full, watchful and round, is another eye meant to awake hungry desires.

The eye in the forehead signifies the symbiotic, archaic connection. But the memory of that image is, retroactively, organized logically and therefore lacking ambivalence or mixtures of desire and fear. However, at the collective level we find expressions which allow for archaic, preverbal recoveries.



In myths, fairytales and beliefs we stumble one more time across the image of the forehead eye. If it belongs to the mother, she appears as a frightful, sexless giant (the Cyclops) or as a funny-looking but helpful creature (Harap Alb's One-eye has a single eye, which allows him to see things in the dark of night, or when shut, things no one else can see). The watchful mother can also become multiple, dangerous, maddening (Fays are fairies in the Romanian mythology who steal the minds of people looking at them) or maybe she becomes phallic, turning everyone into stone (the Hydra).

When the eye between the eyebrows belongs to the child, he has “a star on his forehead”, a marker of destiny: “Your destiny’s written down/ in the lines on your forehead”. It is meant to be confronted with dreams and oracles, just like Orestes and Oedipus.

The cyclops eye can be also projected in an impersonal zone: the guiding star of the Magi toward the birth place of the Holy Child; the sun as the only eye in the daytime sky becomes Ra - worshipped god; the star map gains significance for the fate of humans, explaining beliefs in zodiac signs.

The eye in the mother’s forehead is good and soothes the breastfed child. But after weaning the same eye becomes dangerous because it triggers too strong a regression, too absorbing a union.

The eyes, as the two worlds (intrauterine and extrauterine) should stay separated, since any superimposition brings back the primary anxiety of the baby, of the dying, of the lover and of the psychotic. By superimposing the eyes, the look acquires deadly intensity and becomes an evil eye.



The evil eye is a Romanian popular belief about the force of certain people’s look. It is believed that they, after having been weaned, were offered the mother’s breast again, thus becoming able to make people around sick only by looking at them.

The evil eye caster is “brought back to the breast” - the weaning was reversed. The mother has already caused the break-up pain, and then she comes back to the weaned child and breastfeeds him again, keeping him in a place between separation and fusion. He doesn’t have a paternal third party to protect him from the symbiosis, to render the relationship with the mother triangular.

The evil eye caster refuses to accept the mother’s breast, but his look remains un-weaned and transmits an intense desire to devour. He becomes

dangerous by requesting a symbiotic union which cannot remain without effect - either sickening, or falling in love.

In order to establish a mental protection against the evil eye caster, who awakens old yearnings, expiatory rituals have been invented:

1) Treatment rituals

When the evil has already been caused and the evil look has affected a person, the only solution is “de-charming” as an inversion of the lullaby with unbinding effects.



The evil eye is urged to go back to the world it came from: “chase thee to the desert, where roosters don’t sing, maidens don’t braid their hair, dogs don’t bark and children don’t cry” (lyrics of a Romanian invocation against the evil eye)

Only those close to a symbiotic relationship are in danger: maidens and infants.

The defender invoked is a paternal third person, appearing either as a rooster singing in the dawn (announcing diurnal sight, opposed to the devouring looks of darkness), or as a dog chasing away evil spirits (censoring any temptation of going back to archaic realms).

2) Prevention rituals

Protection can be ensured with objects which signal separation or lack of availability or which attract the evil looks.



The red ribbon defends the baby because it signifies the cut navel chord, a successful birth (according to Romanian popular belief, the red ribbon can defend against the evil eye);

The engagement ring shows the lack of availability: the symbiotic union has been already entered into with someone else;

The shining jewelry is a false eye-catching attention in order to avoid too direct a look.

Profound regression allows for the recovery of the intrauterine state, which is what makes it beneficial for the infant. For an older child or an adult, this regression carries the significance of death and is therefore to be avoided. Adults learn to sleep with one eye open and not allow “the evil eye” other than in dreams and love.

Love offers adults, too, the chance of integrating their profound self with all their ambivalences. Lovers and the baby’s mother feel they can afford a close-up look which displaces the two eyes and unites them into one, a heart-eye which promises a union able to fill any absence. Love allows us to look beyond, and outshine, the eye of the sun – which pales in comparison:



“She shone brighter than the sun!” (describing the extraordinary beauty of the heroine in many Romanian fairytales).

The look back to repressed areas causes strong fears to arise:

- of losing one’s “head”, one’s balance. The evil eye gives us headaches, makes us lose out reasoning capabilities when in love, ending up “head over heels” in our attempts to grow up;
- of going crazy as an effect of the Fays’ look;
- of losing one’s mobility as an effect of the Hydra’s petrifying look.

With the elaboration of separation, the eyes return to their organic place. The look, however, remains an important method of narcissistic investment taking after the model of the maternal look.

Cherubim and the Thousand Eyes

The weaned child coming out of symbiosis can no longer afford to go back.



The desire for union turns into the fear of losing one’s self, the devouring hunger becomes the fear to be devoured.

The weaned child, eager to find himself in his mother's eyes when suckling, relocates his interest from the breast to the eyes. He defends himself from the regressive eye at the mother's breast by multiplying it.



Thus, the Cyclops is opposed by cherubim, and the surrounding world acquires watchful eyes which instigate the child to search. Bright eyes look out from the darkness of repression and haunt the child on the verge of separation.

The reassuring person here is still the mother, who, by weaning, has become a being full of eyes for the child, a protective cherub. Mother's breasts are eyes now, and her womb seems to be an old cyclops' face, with the navel as its single central eye.

The map of the sky, just like the mother's body, allows for discerning cherubim-constellations, zodiac signs announcing fate.

Humans - Visual Beings

The baby suckles the mother's milk with his little mouth. Everything he wants to explore and know, he takes to his mouth. The first model of knowledge is incorporation, initially with a curious mouth, then with an absorbing look.



Weaning leads the mouth of the child towards a taboo: it can no longer feed with a human body, "you can't eat everything you see", he can no longer get to know the world by tasting and swallowing it.

The child's devouring force turns towards a "mouth" which is not taboo: the eye which can incorporate things through seeing, which can avidly absorb the world by getting to know it. The explored object is no longer tasted - now it is enough for it to enter the child's sight, to be looked at.



The transition from breast to eye, from feeding to looking allows for the passage from incorporation to introjection.

Thus, craving hunger turns into the curious need:

- to know - to see in the past;
- to explore - to see in the present;
- to foresee - to see in the future.



After weaning all other senses are neglected and vision becomes defining and essential: “the eyes in one’s head” are the most cherished possession of a person (Romanian saying).

Darkness scares because the eyes are blind and can no longer master this world. The mother’s eyes can no longer look at the child, and he feels he is wiped out without a reflection of his image. Darkness can also hide absorbing eyes which frighten the child.



This is how human beings choose to become diurnal, mainly visual beings, who test their reality through sight: “I won’t believe it until I see it “ (Romanian proverb).

Sight acquires another important function, that of relationship. In the mother’s eyes, the child keeps and recovers the self image without which he couldn’t exist. Then whose eyes are those? Of the watcher or of the watched? Of both, of course!



One of my daughters, when she was 2, kept sticking her fingers in my eye: “Give me your eye to play with it?” - she asked me.

The eyes seem to be detachable objects constituted by their function. Just like the milk-full breast is located on the mother’s body but belongs to the child, the watchful eye also belongs to the one it watches, whose image it contains.

The eyes show the quality of the watcher: “eyes are mirrors of the soul”, as well as his experiences through a look which can be: good, cheerful, tired, self-sufficient, annoyed, terrified, curious, lost, sure, alive.

Watching entails communication with the others, accompanies it, doubles it, shows its emotional mood: direct-avoiding, cold-warm, distant-close,

absent-present. The withdrawal of the look also shows the refusal of a relationship which scares, impresses too much, upsets or saddens.



In depressions the eye withdraws its relation-establishing function, the look passes through what it sees, returning to the dispossessed self.

In fights, sight is very helpful. The danger can be avoided by averting the look, can be eliminated by a submissive look “downwards” or can be faced “by staring hard”.

In love, eyes can be adoring, absorbing, clinging (of the infant to his mother, of the lover to his girl, of the “un-weaned” to the maternal substitute).

Humans, at any age, are impressed with the look but also with its absence, so eyes differ depending on their look:

- living eyes which look out with a meaning - the eyes of mammals, weaned or not;
- living eyes with a look whose meaning cannot be understood by humans - the eyes of birds, reptiles;
- non-living eyes mimicking the look - the eyes of dolls and cartoon characters, of painted or photographed portraits;
- non-living eyes, lacking the look - the eyes of sculptures, bas-reliefs;
- eyes which can no longer look out - dead eyes, allowing for the disinvestment of the entire body, leaving it nameless in an impersonal phrase: the dead man, the dead woman.

The Preverbal Communication

In order to survive, the child needs all symbiotic connections (embracement, suckling, sight, speaking) which are combined and complete each other. Any defects in one of them result in the pathological

amplification of the others. The disharmony of those relationships speeds the break-off, hardly paving the way for a separation without ruptures and traumas.

Speaking also assumes a symbiotic union starting from the intrauterine stage, preserved until the child interiorizes the voice-mother and is able to stand the one-word distance.



The mother tongue will always preserve something of the symbiotic union through the emotions behind words.

The ear-sound relationship (with the “spoken word” version) is very old, dating back to the intrauterine period. The fact that it occurred prior to birth gives it importance in establishing the constancy and self-unity between:

- the intrauterine mother - the extrauterine mother;
- the fetus - the newborn.



Thus, the biblical saying “in the beginning, there was the word” is justified.

The intrauterine fetus decodes situations and states of a language made up of the sounds:

- he makes himself;
- coming from the mother;
- of the environment in which the mother lives.

Noises show the mother’s activity and emotional participation. She can have relaxing activities putting her in a good mood, she is tender, calm and progesterone-full, and the fetus enjoys the fine comfort. In the same way, the mother can be involved in stressful situations, heard and felt through hormones by the fetus. The intrauterine child correlates the sounds he hears with the mother’s heart and hormonal rhythm, in order to understand what upsets or calms her.



One of my patients was pregnant and going through a divorce. The encounters with her husband were filled with tension, and the child struggled in her womb. Later on, the two got back together and started to get along greatly. However, after birth, the baby, hearing his father's voice, twisted and screamed with all his might.

After birth, the child is no longer a direct part of the mother's hormonal flow, he feels it only through the taste of maternal milk and his own olfactory sensations. The tone of voice however remains associated with emotional states.



This is why the newborn can be soothed by the mother's familiar voice, to which he knows how to react. This gives lullabies their regressive function, helping him reconstruct the intrauterine world and retire in his sleep.

The first communication with the world is done by voice: the child cries. The newborn will also use crying to express his primary anxiety.



The child's ability to use his voice to cry is a sign of good development.

It is hard to understand how crying can be an indicator for mental and relationship health. But this expression, negative and chaotic as it is, is preferable to the emotional perplexity of the newborn facing this world. Overwhelmed by the uproar of changes, he cannot act or manifest himself - a severe condition requiring the containing presence of the mother.



In order for us to understand anything of what newborns feel, we can think of our own dreams where danger creates a state of paralysis. Paroxysmal fear is overcome only at the time of flight or of the liberating scream. Expression, whatever it can be, diminishes the intensity of the fear.

The child assails his mother with requests, forcing her to rise to the level of the intrauterine world. However, despite her constant efforts, this is a

demand she cannot fulfill. Her powerlessness renders the child desperate, but her benevolent consistency helps him not to refuse her anymore, to settle for less.



Supported by his mother's stability, the child begins to try and adapt.

Anxiety Crying

This cry communicates the child's desperate state, overwhelmed by this world. It is a good sign, showing that he has overcome the perplexity of his hopelessness.

Through crying, the child makes his mother feel useless and futile, rejected and unable to help.

Only a baby sufficiently well secured by his current mother can afford to cry for the loss of the intrauterine mother.



The anxiety cry of the newborn is never fully repressed. It can also be found in adults, in their cry of panic or extreme pain.

When older children try to hold back their cry, they will have that "lump in the throat" sensation which can be responsible for respiratory failure (in case of asthma), for vomiting or nodules on the trachea.

This is why crying with sadness is a manifestation preferable to what can appear if holding back the cry.

As gestures and mimic are important in verbal communication, during anxiety communication, the child's posture becomes significant. Two rather frequent manifestations can be observed, expressing the baby's refusal of his mother, of the relationship with her.

Arching one's back and strong cries

This is a corporal expression through which the child repeats his movements at birth, to show that he feels trapped in between worlds (the

intra and extrauterine one), in the tension of birth. The child is too scared to let himself be soothed by the mother's arms, as a substitute for the uterus from which he was unexpectedly and too suddenly chased away.



The child almost throws himself out of his mother's arms, vehemently refusing corporal closeness. The mother feels rejected and useless, desperate that the baby's self wouldn't let her comfort him.

This manifestation is more frequent in children born through Cesarean section because, in their case, the expulsion was more sudden and did not involve their participation.

Rolling over in fetal position accompanied by painful moans

The child's mental pain is most often understood as physical pain located in the abdomen. This is how the myth of "colics" was born – there are no medical evidence, but we assume they are stomach aches and we soothe them with caresses around the navel!



This is a posture which is also adopted by adults in regressive states: during sleep or when in pain.

In some cultures, the fetal position was practiced in burial rituals. The human being thus came back to the womb of the world it had come from.

The localization of pain is correct: the navel is the breaking point of the intrauterine connection, and the fetal position opposes the reality of birth, calming the tension. Cultural repressions relocate the mental meaning of pain in the physical area.

The mother finds it easier to cope with the child's physical pain, for which there is specialized help: the pediatrician. If she had to face her child's mental pain, the mother would need to rely on her own interiority and on the emotional support of someone else. It is difficult to resort to psychotherapy because it opposes cultural reconstruction, which is not the usual or easy way.



In those conditions, the transfer of pain towards the body seems preferable.

The important thing is that the mother, regardless of how she understands the child's suffering, stands by his side, feels one with his despair and by soothing him soothes herself. When she finally manages to calm down and put her baby to sleep, the mother is exhausted.

The baby's mental pain, although so hard to contain, is often easier dealt with by the mother, who in a few months will be able to forget what she has been through and give a fantasy feeling to this period:



"My child didn't cry, didn't wake up at the night, and I was able to sleep on and mind my own business. Now he's giving me trouble, he's become very naughty." (N.F. a 38-year old mother).

Lullabies

To the child's cry, the mother opposes her song: "And to cries she answers with a song" (M. Eminescu, Musat and the fates).

Lullabies take over the child's sorrow, and their rhythm and melody metamorphose it into something which can be contained. The lyrics of these songs remind of falling, devouring fish in the abyss, moles and other maternal haunting imagery, divisions, exits and losses which the child and mother survive.



Hush-a-by baby/ On the tree top,/ When the wind blows/ The cradle will rock./ When the bough breaks,/ The cradle will fall,/ And down will fall baby/ Cradle and all.

Lullabies are spells creating a uterine veil to contain the mother and her baby, opposed by the dispelling rhymes in incantations.

The rhythm of the song carries the mother-child couple in a regressive vortex, and its words express archaic emotions. The role of such a song is to ensure the passage from the noise of the maternal body inside the womb to

words with a meaning and its effect is that of falling into the profound tranquility of the intrauterine unity.

The newborn's mother has to regress herself in order to discover her own inner mammal balance, and for a short while becomes reacquainted with "the animal language".

The Mother Tongue - A Living Space

Maternal words provide an environment of emotional union with the child and divert mental pressure towards the area of expression.

The maternal words and phrases and the baby's thoughts create an emotional communication flow enabling the expression, listening and establishment of the child's mental self.



As the skin-self is created under the mother's caress, the mental self is structured through her word.

The way we talk to babies differs from any other type of communication: the tone of voice is high, the onomatopoeias abound and the facial gestures are expressive. It is an elementary emotional communication (similar to crying, or to the kissing of two lovers) using untranslatable tones, rhythms and sounds - a language common to all new mothers around the world. This addressing style infantilizes an older child who isn't in a regression state. For the small child however, it is a constitutive communication that must be present.



The child whose mother speaks to him has a relaxed body and abandons himself in her arms, his own eyes focusing on her eyes and lips. The child's mouth is roundly closed and getting ready for suckling.

Verbalization also helps the mother by alleviating her anxiety. Without words, she would be forced to find expression through symptoms. But by becoming corporal, the mother's anxiety expresses itself and allows alleviation, preserving union with the child.



The baby's cries echo in the mother's mind or body.



When crying, the baby creates anxiety, disquietude and distress in his mother's mind and soul, justifying her hypochondria and frequent calls to the pediatrician.

The same baby crying can be located in the mother's body as an acute or dull pain of an organ that needs to be treated. At this point, the mother must ask medical help for herself.

The pediatrician and the mother's physician treat effects of a cause they seldom understand, which are in fact caused by the strong relationship between the mother and her baby. However, in this case only the word is able to treat and the success of the "recipes" depends on the doctor's psychotherapeutic ability to provide support.

The mother's identification with the newborn is necessary for a deep emotional understanding of the child, who cannot otherwise communicate with anyone. Words make the identification process easier and allow union in separation (a function similar to that of maternal milk). In this the word, congregated as maternal language, is more than just a tool and actually becomes a whole living environment.



The maternal language becomes a self structuring environment and the word, a method of liberation and therapy.

Speech appears in the communication relationship with the mother. The child looks into his mother's eyes, hangs upon her words and babbles in his turn.

For the newborn, crying is a release mechanism for anxiety, but in time it becomes deeply meaningful - he calls for his mother and expresses himself: acute and intense cries show that the baby has hit himself or feels pain, wake up cries call the mother, whimpering stops when his attention is drawn somewhere else. There is also a cry for showing hunger, one for showing full diaper discomfort, one for sleepiness... the mother learns to recognize them, even when she is not aware of it.

The mother names the child's cries, and naming is the first step towards quieting.



The mother knows what is happening with the child, she has the “cure” for his distress. The sensation the infant feels in his belly is called “hunger” and it disappears as soon as he eats something. Once known, named and remedied, unpleasant sensations no longer have destructive effects.

By naming, the mother allows the child to gain control of himself, to locate himself in his body: here are the eyes, here the hands, and here's the tummy... The world becomes friendlier when everything gets a name: earth, sky, trees, people...

Besides emotions and sensations, the mother names actions passively experienced by the child, helping him locate himself in his own body. He is unable to take care of himself, yet the mother, who assumes this role for a while, separates herself from the child's body by naming these actions and playing.

Without games and naming, the child's body is handled possessively, as a personal extension of the mother's body. The child has no choice; he is forced to abandon himself to the person handling him. The absence of words brings along the risk of expression through illness - his body or mind will be “possessed” by unnameable and uncontrollable emotions and states.

When taking care of herself the mother doesn't verbalize her actions, but her inner self can no longer contain the child's body after birth as well. Her words show the child, before he can understand their meaning, that they are no longer one being, that he can resist, rebel, and later on proclaim his own independence by taking care of himself with the same love he was cared for.

The mother is also the one who expresses relations and emotional states through words, thus allowing the child to position himself in a psychological context and understand his own feelings.

The mother's words will also express distances, departures and returns, preparing for the separation.



A child who's told his mother is going to leave will cry longer and harder than a child whose mother slips away unknown. However, he will know what happens and will have the opportunity to express his dissatisfaction, frustration and denial and to release his anger on the mother who has left him. Despite all his noisy and negative manifestations, the informed child will be better able to tolerate his mother's absence and will have more confidence in her and her return.

The child who isn't told anything may not cry, but will always fear that his mother can disappear at any moment, even when she is there. In such case, the mother's presence cannot be secured, and her departures will be considered dangerous (since the mother cannot assume them verbally). It is very likely that the child will protect himself against the mother's disappearance through the fear of being left alone, turning into his mother's watchful shadow. Separation is off to a difficult start. There is also the risk of internalizing this pattern of avoiding verbalization and responsibility for his own actions, the pattern of "sneaking" and lies.

The "Mommy" Relationship

The mother tongue is a language of love between the mother and the child, where both are "mommy". The child calls his mother, not as a person (she can be called by the name she answers to others), but as a relationship with himself. It is not the person, but the relationship with the child that is named mother. Romanian mothers ask their child: "What are you doing, mommy?", but "mom" isn't the child's name - it is the relationship between them.



An adult woman can call any child: “Come to momma” - thus naming her maternal relationship with the child in her mind. I even overheard adult men addressing small children by “mommy”. Sometimes, the “mommy” relationship gets out of the mother-child connection and comes to express any symbiotic relationship: between spouses or between the master and the pet dog.

The love-need in the symbiotic relationship between the baby and his mother creates this “mommy” type relationship everywhere, stimulating maternal behavior, attention, care and tenderness.

The child is formed in the protective and structuring environment of maternal words. It is an environment of non-fusional symbiosis, allowing the union but anticipating the separation. The mother explains the world to the child, and the world acquires its meanings. The primal meaning of any thing, of cause and effect is only one: “mama” (mother) - the first word children say (even when the child says something else, this is his intended meaning).

Gradually, other phrase-words will spring from this “mama”, containing in themselves the meaning of an action. For instance, the child will say “yum-yum” when he is hungry, “cootchie-coo” when he wants to touch, caress, taste - the words themselves are nothing more than variations of the same “momma”.



The mother appears every time the child cries and says “come to mommy”, “shush with mommy”. The repeated word is “mommy”, hence “mommy” means relief, the feeling of being complete, and anxiety release. Each age will add more meaning to these first ones, and the other words will be understood the same way.

One of my girls, when she was 8 months old, used to say “mama” and point at any woman holding a baby, in reality, in pictures or in the mirror - I understood that “mama” for her meant the mother-child couple.

Another one of my girls, when she was almost 2 years old, was very upset when we took the Christmas tree out; she held it with both hands, cuddling it and saying “daddy, daddy”. The tree bringer had become for her the tree itself.

In order to form himself, the infant “sucks” his mother in several ways:

- The milk is absorbed with his little mouth.
- The protective image, with his eyes.
- The soothing voice, with his hearing.

The mother’s milk, holding arms and look are refined in words shaping the maternal language. It is a language that the infant understands by translating his mother’s and his own emotions into words.

Through these words that he comes to understand, the infant passes from assimilation to internalization in order to become a speaking being himself.

The Child's Space and The Mother's Body

At birth, the child experiences an inner contradiction: physiologically speaking he is premature, but psychologically he is overdeveloped. It is an imbalance that will render his existence difficult, and the child has to fight to survive, together with his mother.

This world is unexpectedly demanding and the entire experience of his previous life doesn't seem to be of any use. The child needs support and his mother has to find a solution to provide it.



Most often, the mother's solution is to extend the intrauterine state after birth.

This support is only temporary, but it becomes extended to a person's entire life: it will always be easier to adjust the environment to one's needs than to change one's self according to the environment. The adaptation to the world will never be achieved without the support of a mental space which is adapted to the self.



The father will try to cut the Gordian knot and will impose birth as a reality. He will help the child to adapt, but not to the natural environment - to the social one.

The long childhood of human beings and our slow development make us dependent on our mothers, who alter the space for us, and on the social environment which provides protection. This characteristic separates man from other mammals which are naturally able to change themselves according to the living environment (after the infancy period).



The man's difficulty to adapt to his natural environment is only partially supported by his physical and physiological inabilities. That this is true is demonstrated by the development of pets raised like human children. They become unable to cope and survive in a natural environment. Like children, they depend on their human "mother" and consider themselves to belong to the same species as hers. Therefore, they remain childish and often unable to procreate, deeply affected in terms of their instincts.

Man dedicates his entire life to birth denial. As the fetus sets his mother up as a propitious space for living until birth, so does the born man. He refuses to adapt to this world, to embrace it as it is, and instead strives to change it, alter it to resemble the intrauterine space as much as possible. Any human construction has the containing uterus as its unique model.

Man tirelessly builds magical (uterine) concentric circles around the self for protection: the mother's body-house, the coat-yard, and village-maternal body for the community. There are three concentric circles, with boundaries and thresholds allowing intrauterine life to continue into this world.



The carrying mother with a hidden face, accessible only through birth-death is needed to provide meaning to any construction. This is the justification for the need of transcendence, faith and gods.

Leaving the ensuring circles and entering the world beyond is the equivalent of death-birth for which the return, rediscovery and relocation of self are recommended.

The House

The house as cave, blockhouse, igloo, cottage, shack, tent, mansion, villa, apartment, palace – irrelevant of how it is built - has the same function: a containing uterus allowing regression.

The House as a Pregnant Mother

The child starts to perceive himself in relation to his mother's body, through sensory contact with it. The maternal body is a house for the fetus and the infant. Separation causes the symbolism of this relationship to reverse: the child's house becomes a reassuring maternal body. As the mother's body changes for the fetus and the infant, so too the house's body will reflect the image of the child's acquisitions - it will bear the signs of his actions. The house where a child lives is like a reassuring skin, a protective shell which gives form and identity. It is an environment-space of emotional investment, which is thoroughly explored, studied and known.

The need to create space, to "mark the territory", occurs at the time of the first separations.



Even the preparation of birth implies a readjustment of space. The baby's house has rules imposed by his existence and is full of specific objects, smells and states.

The older child, separated from his mother's arms, scribbles, paints and stains the walls.

The teenager tends to assimilate large spaces by creating graffiti on the city walls. This is a counterbalance to the fast changes in his own body which becomes difficult to "live" in and therefore is often marked by tattoos, piercings, haircuts, extravagant clothes and behaviors.

Adults also feel unsafe when the space of their body and mental territories undergo changes due to various causes: disease, age transformations, changes in relationships, interests and social status.

Collectively, the maternal body is symbolized by the cultural and national territory. This way we can understand the powerful territoriality of men who need an outer maternal space for survival (a space that women bear within themselves through their identification with their own mother).

The Fetus-Family

The family, who populates the uterus-house, has members with uterine functions. They recreate the world lost at birth from bits and pieces, rendering the family a viable unit:

- The woman, the nourishing mother, is like the placenta transforming the exterior into substance, emotion, communication in order to make it appropriate for the fetus.
- The man, reassuring father, has an umbilical function. He represents the border like a tree, ascending stairs of communication with the world beyond, in conditions of separation and safety.
- The children, seen as one, represent the fetus who gives meaning to the construction and justifies any effort.
- The house itself, containing and protective, the “stone house” bid at weddings in Romania, is the actual vitelline membrane.

The Uterus-House

The construction elements of the house, its spaces with their functions and the necessary and significant objects turn our house into a consistent uterus.

| Construction elements

The construction elements of the house borrow the model of the human body, imitating its organs and functions.

- The oven, bakestone, more recently the TV set, is the warm and flickering heart allowing the gathering of family members.

- The windows, like eyes with lashes of flowers and curtains, allow visibility from the outside but most importantly from the inside.
- The chimney is the “stairs” of communication with the transcendent, the world beyond and the gods satisfied with the burnt offerings.
- The door is like a mouth allowing to communicate information and substance, closing and opening to the outside world. This is the place where people come in and go out, through which news and food products circulate.



The analogy between a house and a human body occurs frequently in mythology, tales and poetry. Manole's Anna, the one pregnant with child, becomes herself incorporated in the monastery's wall. This is a Romanian ballad called “The Arges Monastery”, where Manole, the builder, finds himself unable to erect the monastery until he builds the walls with Ana, his pregnant wife, inside of them. When he completes the construction, the prince who commissioned the work takes away the stairs, leaving Manole on the roof. He makes a pair of wings from shingles, like Icarus, and just like Icarus he falls and transforms into a spring of salty water (like the amniotic fluid).

| Interior spaces

The spaces inside the house also have major significance:

- Places allowing for intrauterine regression, such as the bed we sleep in, the bathtub filled with amniotic fluid.
- Spaces ensuring return to the maternal breast - spaces for feeding and relaxation.
- Areas for activity and creation – the living room, the study, the library.
- Places for meeting, communication with others, for receiving strangers - the hallway, the dining room; the elements of passage from one space

to another have borders, ensuring thresholds, preparing the acceptance of entrances and exits, abandonment and returns

| House objects

The house objects are elements necessary to daily living, but also important to maintaining the magical-umbilical connection with the outside world (the divine).



The incrustations, paintings, sculptures, laces and all other house decorations function as a language enabling communication between the protected and the protective, between the inhabitants of the house and the transcendent, between the fetus inside the uterus and the carrying mother.

All objects inside the house simultaneously have:

- Practical utility according to the body function pattern;
- Significance according to the pattern of communication with the supporting exterior.

In some objects, utility is primary (pots, spoons, towels), in others it is the significance (incrustations, paintings, lacings).

The fusion of these two functions is ensured by tradition, which prevents the object from becoming kitsch and hence losing both usefulness and significance.

For adults, there are objects excluded from this fusion of functions, resorting primarily to only one such function. Objects with exaggerated significance are useless art and cult objects, but having high symbolic functions. And those where utility prevails are disposable objects, necessary but with no symbolic function.



However, the child cannot look at objects in this schizoid manner; for him any object has both functions. Therefore he will want to play with the icon hanging on the wall, with the old crystal vase inherited from great grandmother and will collect old packages, caps and boxes as valuable objects.

The Child and the House

The child explores the spaces and functions of his own body, of his mother's body and of the house's. He studies each corner, each object and all of them will bear a guiding significance in his mind.

The child not only studies, but also identifies himself fictionally with all house functions, bringing them inside himself. It is a basic exchange where the child allows himself to be impregnated with the body of the house, while at the same time marking it with his own self: he scratches at, peels off and scribbles on the walls.



Sabin Bălașa, a Romanian painter, made his first wall painting on his wall under the bed, when he was young.

It is a house's body language where the walls tainted with food render the child's euphoria during meals, the scribbles and scratches show his height and favorite spaces, the floor full of clothes and toys reveal his play routes.



The house cannot be changed or left for another one, just like our own body doesn't change without trauma.

Supporters of the Mother-House

The house full of people and the pregnant mother need supporters, supporting individuals and helpful objects.

| Supporting individuals

The individuals taking care of the house's "body", as well as the animated beings serving as the house's "soul", have a functional-symbolic meaning.

They satisfy the multiple support needs of the house-mother: boundaries, containment, communication, therapy, creation and construction.

- The man fixing the house's fence is the boundary surveyor.
- The potter is the supporting father for the food-mother (breast feeding).
- The chimney sweep is the therapist enabling spiritual communication with the transcendent, without which life itself would be in danger.
- The house constructor, the maker of the "soul-full bodies" cannot be any other but divinity itself - The Builder. Anyone reaching this action level becomes sacred, the finder of the path to the other world (like Master Manole).

This explains also the god-like attitude of the architects' association: the Freemasonry.

| Helpful beings-objects

Beside the individuals who provide support, the house-mother also finds help in equally important self-objects:

- The dog which guards the house space, keeps safe and protects its boundaries, becomes a symbol for censorship (Anubis, Cerberus). It is that censorship which opposes the passage from a world to another (the newborn's world from the fetus' world, the world of living from the world of dead) and protects the separation of mental instances (the unconscious from the conscious).
- The cow, the sheep and the goat are milk feeding animals, representative of the milk-producing breasts for the baby (the sacred cow, the cornucopia of Amalthea).

Coming Out of the House, the Birth-Death

The fetus' exiting of his mother's body is called birth. We grant the same significance to the exiting of people from their houses, yards, villages.

Weddings also entail a passage to another living space, the equivalent of a birth, with the coming of the fetus into the world, in order for it to make his

own house resemble the image of the one just left behind after a model already interiorized.

The leaving of the house-body by the soul symbolizes death. In this case then, death cannot be anything other than the departure from a house in order to move in a new, uterine one, as a return to primordial realms. Death seems a just compensation for the ravages brought on by birth.



The Dacians had a very obvious similar manner of seeing things—they identified with that person and were sad at birth and cheerful at the funeral. This proves an identification with the person in question and not with his relatives.

The significances acquired by death as the leaving of a house explains the locations chosen for funerals:

- In the early Neolithic, when the house itself carried the significance of the maternal body, the dead were buried underneath it. Thus, the house had a terrestrial representation, and also a mirror, underground representation, an identical body containing things beyond the existence in this world.
- Later on, the house also included the yard, had a greater space with a “front” and a “back”. Relatives were buried at the “back of the yard”, opposite to the place where the house of the living was located.
- As the house and the yard expanded into a village, the burial place changed and was relocated to the outskirts: thus formed villages of the living doubled by cemeteries, villages of the dead (same villages reversed, dug in the ground).
- Nowadays, cities no longer offer spaces for the living mirrored in reverse in spaces for the dead. Cemeteries - dead organs - are included in the living city like cancerous tumors in a still functional body. Each city dweller carries on, night and day in the noise of the living, with looming figure of the specter of death above him.

The Importance of Children

A dwelling cannot be devoid of its people, its soul, its Prince Charming who needs to be protected and raised “because a house without children is nothing” (says I. Creanga in A Pig’s Tale).

Without children, buildings cave in and turn to ruins, perfect settings for haunting phantoms.

The village and any human community function after the same house structuring model. Here, the fetus is more detailed and each uterine function has a representative. There is a need for complementarities, for ensuring that all functions are covered and especially for a safe physical space (possibly to transform and appropriate). Families and communities who don’t cover all these functions fall apart.



The mother cannot cover the father’s role as well, and if she tries too hard she will endanger her maternal function. Children of one family cannot occupy the same position, so most of the time they are regarded as a single unit.

This is the secret which helped Romanian village communities resist almost unchanged from the Neolithic until now, and also why they weren’t able to cope with the dislocations of the industrialized period.

The newborn isn't able to live outside of the mother who offers herself as environment. This living environment is initially the mother’s body, lately expanding on to the house, the community, the nation, the human race.

The yard

The yard acts like a magic circle around the body of the house, which it surrounds, limits, protects, allows the transition from “the mother’s womb” to the “other world”, opens the door for wandering.



The yard is like the coat necessary for a body, it changes depending on seasons and shows the projection of one’s self.

It is a personal and intimate space, which is however open to social interactions, able to give off a certain personality, a financial state, a status, aspirations. The yard ensures the vitally important space for social insertion.

A house without a yard is like a man without his clothes, it doesn't have the space necessary for social interactions.



That is why in crowded areas, in cities with block of apartments, where there is hardly any vital space, human interactions are as limited as they can get: "Hello" is often the only interaction between neighbors.

The child steps over the threshold into the world of the yard - a fascinating universe just ripe for discoveries and expeditions. His journeys from one end of the yard to the other are initiation journeys in their truest sense.



The child uses trees as markers, because they allow space to also be traveled on the vertical axis.

The yard is an active space for play and work which allows and creates change, all the while preserving its own consistency. Weather changes the face of the yard and human activity without changing their stability.

When a person enters the world backed up by the safety and stability of his home, yard, village, the transition is smooth and easy, sufficient to give a meaning to life and unity to experience.



Questions such as: "what is my purpose in this world", "what is the meaning of life" show the absence of an ensuring background. These are questions asked by the city dweller, by the man who cannot fall back on his "shell" and his strong connections through activity (the social dimension), tradition (old ages), art and religion (the divinity, the transcendent).

A man who keeps changing his house, who doesn't know his neighbors and whose activities don't depend on seasons, who lacks a spiritual-cultural insertion and a connection with tradition, a man crowded on traffic roads between so many other unknown men, can only be suffocated, scared,

confused (asthmatic, allergic, mentally unwell), a fetus forced to live outside his mother's womb.

The road

Any exit or departure from the “uterus-like” space is equivalent with birth or its reverse: death. Exits from one's personal space are only justified by the need to search for lost parts of one's self. This purpose turns such exits into initiation journeys, which can be:

- 1) Symbolic, like marriage or death;
- 2) Enacted like emigration as defense against death, felt like a suicide.

For the child, the road has a strong internal significance. The expressed purpose of the journey is merely a justification to leave, an impulse meant to make things move. Thus, a child is not interested in why he/she left home but in the road itself, in his own development.



This is what the mother of Little Red Riding Hood, being an adult, cannot understand, while the Wolf does understand and takes advantage of. The child, like Little Red Riding Hood, stops at every flower or tree to think and imagine.

The same things happen to fairytale heroes who leave their home for a long developmental road, with losses and findings, with returns and disappointments, with fears and hopes.

Traveling in the mother's arms or at a slow pace keeps the child interested, giving him material to process.

Fast paced roads - in a car for instance - lose their initiation sense. Beyond a certain limit, speed no longer matters, the child doesn't move and the journey cancels itself out. Here the need is centered around comfort and on the possibility of regression - the passenger compartment is, in fact, the image of an uterus-like space.

The road is a process of development, of getting to know in order to diminish the unknown. One end is personal and known (the home), and the

other is merely guessable (where man wants to go).



Any road tells the itinerary of a desire.

The road is always foreign, it belongs to the unknown in the guise of landscape, events and meetings. But it can propose a very different excursion into the self of the traveler:

1) The often traveled road, the commuting, predisposes the traveler to center on the adventure himself. Here what is important are the desired dreams and thoughts centered on aspirations.



On the train, in the cart or car, a man's head moves like in a state of sleep but dreams are wakeful ones.

2) The way unknown to the individual, but known to humanity and pertaining to their own journeys, is an “established road” which doesn't offer too many surprises. Here the traveler is more careful, but often he is content just to see and meet only what he already knew from others.



Emotion is only connected to personal experience, to practicing what is anticipated.

3) “The unknown road, on which no man has walked” (saying from Romanian tales) is savage or savaged and requires maximum attention. It is a road of the subconscious where many ghostly fears can appear. These ghosts show the very excursion into an unknown that can be at the same time too well known, repressed. Here the emotion of the meeting, of the discovery is at its peak and is self-structuring for the traveler.



It is a search for something known, but forgotten, a search for abandoned personal spaces.

4) The resting trips cannot be conceived outside the home. A foreign space is uncertain, therefore it maintains an alert incompatible with the resting regression. The run for regression only occurs in the big cities, it is not a run “away from home”, but “towards a home” closer to a livable body, “clothed” and ensuring.



For the child, holidays with the parents are like escapes, explorations of unknown worlds, births that require adaptation. It is an experience for which the child needs an insurance.

A mother dreads to think that she must dislocate her child in order to go on holiday. As a compensation, she takes “the house” with her, many unnecessary but important things in order to recreate, to some extent, the smell of the personal space.

S

The change of home presupposes a self readjustment, but for the child it can only be non-traumatic if the environment of the home remains the same: family members, habits, activities, objects.



The roads a man takes through life represent his life in himself. That is why the “pilgrim”, the “wanderer”, the “traveler” are “well traveled people”, going on their “last journey” - a journey of death. Death is a reversal of life, his opposite, a journey to a known but forgotten space. Thus, inns become symbolical spaces for ghosts, for meetings with the repressed. The innkeepers resemble Caron the supervisor of the last journey.

By migrating, peoples have experimented this “journeying”, this visit to the next world needed in order to obtain a good position according to the uterine model.

Covering the archaic space

The space surrounding the child begins by being a part of his body, continues by being a motherly body, then on to a covering garment, while

later on it only becomes a place of losing and finding, a space for recovery.

Besides the experience of the movement within the space around it, the child discovers marker-objects (necessary for orientation) and symbol-objects (significant for the losses that must be retrieved).

The Movement

By moving, the child fights his current state and wishes to change it: his body covers the space around it searching, finding, losing.

The space axes: horizontal - vertical, forwards - backwards, right - left, round and around are coordinated for any possible moves and define the sense of the search.

The horizontal-vertical axis

Here the search is directed between the upper and the lower worlds.



The “to and fro” on the vertical is similar to breaking in from one world into another, modeled after the birth movement.

It is a movement with a great regressive force which can only be possible in symbiotic relationships which also have the reassurance and protection of a third person (like the father image for the mother-baby couple and the child image for the loving couple).



The baby hops around vertically when he is happy.

The older child's hopping is motivated by his desire to reach as high as possible, as close as possible to the adult world (here the expert is Tigger from Winnie the Pooh).

There are archaic cultures that practice a ritual dance that includes vertical jumping. The purpose is to seduce the partner by proving to have vital force.

The forward-backward axis

The balance on this axis is found in swaying back and forth, which allows regression to the mother's breast (the head of the baby, when suckling, moves forwards and backwards).



It is a reassuring and comforting movement, but also an unbalanced and falling movement when the mother doesn't support it.

By learning to walk onward and backward, the child will learn to control distances.



The over-protected child, when left unsupervised, will “fall flat on his face”.

The impressed adult will emotionally “fall back”. He can also “back up” in unwanted situations and he can “throw himself head first” into something that he wants.

The baby, left traumatically without the maternal support necessary to build himself, stereotypically sways back and forth on this axis (a movement well known in autism and psychosis).

Brain commotions usually trigger rigid falls on one's back or face.

The right-left axis

The lateral movement appears only at the first separations, with the first rejection of the newborn who, full with milk, no longer looks for the breast.



It is a movement characterized by negation, rejection and also by the pain of solitude.



The lateral movement of the head shows there is an alternative (or - or). The turned face is a rejection. The head between the hands screams with the despair of a loss. The swaying of the body from one leg to the other shows uneasiness, uncertainty, lack of support.

The spiral

All these binary movements can be combined into one gyrating-swirling movement, and the effect is a strong regression, a momentarily disappearance from this world.



The Cycling opens a new gate to space, that “worm-hole” that leads to another world.

The contours of this world unite in an absorbing continuum. The corporal self, by gyration, enters in a sensory world where there are other laws of physics and where the environment is one with the self.

The swirling affects not only space, but also time, which is made to run backwards: “against the clock / Flowers of whirlpool” (I. Chichere, Romanian poet). Time is set back in order to reach the origin point where everything can be rerun for strengthening, for correction. It is a therapeutic method involving spatial-temporal regression that saves us from pathological returns.



Children play swirling games and become dizzy. Swaying, they let themselves fall with eyes closed. This gives them entry to a new dimension where access is restricted. Here objects don't exist in separation, contours fade out and everything clusters together, space falls out of shape and curbs into a containing uterus.

Adults also practice regressive swirling in ritual dances like the hora, in dizziness caused by ingested substances (drugs, alcohol) or strong feelings (love, hatred).

Speed also allows the space to lose its discontinuities and become a containing environment. This makes us think that “in the speed century” we can well possibly need more containment, settlement and continuity.

Marker-objects

In his world, the child discovers his personality according to the objects he finds around himself. These objects become markers necessary for his mental balance.

At first the mother’s body is the only marker for self-discovery. For the small baby “near, on, under” mean nothing. Mother is either everywhere or nowhere.

Within the space of the mother’s body the most important marker is the breast, which the child learns to find and which becomes his marker.



This orientation ability based on the breast, if the weaning is not traumatic, will remain for later for reporting to the world. A flaw in the breastfeeding-weaning relation can confuse the baby , who can become uncouth or even dyslexic.

The marker-objects include the entire existence for the grown child and the adult. Thus, we meet marker-persons (for the family, the professional and the social environment), marker-concepts (according to which man builds himself and evaluates the people around him), marker-believes (meant to insure spiritual unity).

For the child lying on his back, mother appears and disappears from above.

A child sitting up is no longer limited to watchful just upwards (towards the sky and the ceiling), but also has a perspective of the room he is in; the marker-objects are more numerous, and so are the relations he can establish.

Walking gives the child more autonomy but also makes it need more reassurance. For the child who can walk markers are essential, otherwise he

feels “lost”, unbalanced.

The need for balancing markers remains in the adult, too, and it extends to any level of space: physical, emotional and intellectual.

Significant-objects

The marker-objects used for balancing have organizational purposes for one’s existence, but they are not the only ones. Space has many discontinuities structured into a mass of objects which only become discernable as they acquire meaning.



The corner of the pillow doesn’t exist for the child until he discovers that he can suckle on it as if it were a nipple.

Gravity, as a phenomenon, has not been the concern of anybody until Newton observed it.

The symbolic space where the child lives grows in complexity while his involvement in the real world diminishes. The small child, even if he has not yet acquired the general meanings of the culture he is a part of, lives in the maternal environment, saturated of generally-human and individual meanings.

Significant-objects are objects which can bear multiple simultaneous significances for a child. They can be: toys, fantasies, dreams.



Thus, the pacifier is at the same time the mother’s breast, the absence of the breast and a relationship with it.

Toys are significant-objects initially representing parts of the maternal body, of the relationship with her. Therefore, they must be:

- Safe, because the mother-toy cannot provoke hurt;
- Constant, which should not break because a broken mother-toy would only cause anxiety;
- Fixable, because an older child needs to be able to break things and he needs to be reassured in knowing that objects can be fixed.

- simple, meaning that they can be acquire as many projections as possible.

S

The importance of the significant-object is given specifically by his multiple functions. Say the child throws the toy down onto the floor, this action has many meanings, of which each element is significant:

1) The action in itself is a game meant to teach the mother to function as part of the child's body, which can respond to his will.



He assumes control of the mother, which he needs until he can assume control of himself.

2) By throwing it away, the child “chases away” the object, to allow the mother to recover it and give it back to it.



This is an opportunity for the mother to symbolically repair the suffering caused by her departures.

3) The toy acts as a “grappling navel” with which the child gets his mother to commit to a relationship.



It is a connection cord between mother and child.

4) The floor, as the place where things are thrown, shows where the child would like to be.



It is a way to take charge of a space not yet accessible.



One of my girls threw her watering can into a basement from where we used to take water for the garden. With this she respected my interdiction, because she did not go down there herself, but she also fulfilled her own desire (she got access through the thrown object).

Fans of artists throw flowers on the scene, where they themselves would like to be.

Scientists send satellites into the space they are still unable to explore in person.

We all tentatively look at or occasionally think about forbidden or unattainable things.

The significant-object facilitates the child's expression and repair abilities in safety: the loss is experienced only through play, not in reality, which makes it bearable. In his relationship with this object, the child mentally acknowledges the possibility to begin his separation from mother: to notice her absences, her misbehaviors and to put up with them.

During this preparation-for-separation process the child will discover, not without sacrifice, an elaborate, human and civilized movement : walking.



To get down from the arms of the mother is to let go of one's omnipotence and eternity.

Bibliography

- Aubry , J. et coll - La carence de soins maternels, P.U.F., Paris, 1955.
- Bion, Wilfred, R. - Seminarii braziliene, Editura S.Freud, Binghamton, Cluj, 1994
- Bydlowski, Monique - Psihanaliza maternității, Editura Trei, Bucharest, 1998
- Blaga, Lucian - Hronicul și cântecul vârstelor, Editura Hyperion, Chișinău, 1993
- Creangă, Ion - Povești. Amintiri. Povestiri, Editura Minerva, Bucharest, 1983
- Diatkine, Rene - Psihanaliza la vârstă mică, Editura Fundației Generația, Bucharest, 2006
- Dolto, Francoise - Psihanaliza și copilul, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 1993
- Dorondel, Ștefan - Moartea și apa, Editura Paideia, Bucharest, 2004
- Eliade, Mircea - Nostalgia originilor, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 1994
- Eminescu, Mihai - Poezii, Editura Eminescu, Bucharest, 1984
- Farca, Speranța - Psihanaliza și cele patru vârste ale eului, Editura Trei, Bucharest, 2003
- Farca, Speranța - Ce trăiește copilul și ce simte mama lui, Editura Trei, Bucharest, 2009
- Farca, Speranța - Cum întâmpinăm copilul ca părinți, bunici, medici și educatori, Editura Trei, Bucharest, 2010

Freud, Sigmund - Opere, Editura Trei, Bucharest, 2002

Ghinoiu, Ion - Panteonul românesc. Dicționar, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 2001

Gorovei, Artur - Datinile noastre la naștere și la nuntă, Editura Paideia, Bucharest, 2002

Homer - Immuri, Editura Teora, Bucharest, 1998

Jung, Carl, Gustav - Personalitate și transfer, Editura Teora, Bucharest, 1997.

Klein, Melanie - Iubire, vinovăție, reparație și alte lucrări: 1921-1945, Editura S. Freud, Cluj, 1994

Kohut, H. - The analysis of the self, International University Press, New York, 1971

Lacan, Jacques - Le transfert. Livre VIII 1960-1961, Editura Seuil, Paris, 1991

Pamfile, Tudor - Mitologie Românească, Editura All, Bucharest, 1997

Pavelescu, Gheorghe - Magia la români, Editura Minerva, Bucharest, 1998

Platon - Opere, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1989

Plutarh - Vieți paralele, vol. I - IV, Editura Științifică, Bucharest, 1960-1969

Spitz, R.A. - De la naissance a la parole, la premiere annee de la vie de l'enfant, P.U.F., Paris, 1968.

Stein, C. - L'enfant imaginaire, Denoel, Paris, 1971

Tragicii Greci - Antologie, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă

Voronca-Niculiță, Elena - Datinile și credințele poporului român, vol I, II, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1998

Winnicott, Donald, W. - Jeu et realite, Edition Gallimard, Paris, 1971.