

The Collective Psychological Dimension of Pre- and Perinatal Psychology

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The Psychic Dimension of Pregnancy and Birth

- Birth has been experienced by all of us on an sensory and affective level
- The uterus is the first world of life and experience of the child and shapes our basic feeling in life
- The synaptic connections in the brain mirror the conditions of the prenatal situation
- The pre- and perinatal experiences are stored in the preverbal and experiential memory

Consequences of the „Physiological Immaturity of Man“ I

- Pregnancy is shortened from 21 months (elephants) to nine months (homo sapiens)
- First year of life has the meaning of the „extra-uterine primal year“
- Human babies are extreme immature and therefore helpless and vitally dependent
- compensation through facial expression, looking nice, smiling, gestures, eye contact, social behaviour of the fathers, bonding by relation

The three basic forms of relatedness seen from outside

- Prenatal: symbiotic mode - the mother nourishes, provides with oxygen, detoxifies, gives a living environment
- Early first year of life: support mode - immature, incomplete hippocampus, incomplete body coordination, living only with the supporting help of mother and father
- Second year of life: mature, able to move, to orientate in space, to attach to the mother

The three basic forms of relatedness seen from inside

- Prenatal: magic sensing and feeling of living in communion with the whole world, which is experienced as a living being: animistic world view
- Early first year of life: mythological feelings of living in a world ruled by godlike beings, which is split to the spheres of heaven and earth: mythological world view
- Second and third year of life: exploring the reality and the social world of family and social groups: realistic world view

Consequences of the „physiological immaturity“ of homo sapiens II

- **Relation to the real world:** impulse to rebuild the world in such a form that it feels like a womb and fulfils foetal feelings and needs: being nourished (supermarket), being held (fatherland), being carried (cars, ships, aeroplanes), detoxified (garbage truck, sewerage), unlimited communication (prayers, telephone, mobile), unlimited power (slaves, fossil fuel, natural energy)

Consequences of „physiological immaturity“ of homo sapiens III

- **Relation to the social world:** living with in a higher protection (my god), my church (guarantee of eternal life), my kingdom (protected by the higher beings king or queen)
- living inside ones own primal world or cosmos (my homeland, my town, my country, my nation, my group)

Consequences of „physiological immaturity“ of homo sapiens III

- **Relation to oneself:**
- Magical mentality: master of the cosmos by magic power.
- Mythological mentality: master of the earth by power of the gods.
- Modern mentality: master of oneself by psychological insight and therefore the possibility of realistic responsibility and the ability to differentiate between inside and outside

Four existential levels of homo sapiens

- Level of Instincts: we are as primates determined by the instincts of primates: males by rivalry, female by mother instincts
- Level of magical foetal sensations and feelings: we live in the prenatal primal connectedness with the real and social world
- Level of the mythological feelings of the first early year: living in a projective regulation of our emotions and behaviours related to godlike higher persons
- Level of Mind: Reason orientated behaviour_

Integrated Modern Mentality I

- Mentality in Evolution: age dependent balancing of these existential levels:
- 3-5 years: exploring the real world and living in the reverberation of magical experience, fairy tale age
- 6-12 years: exploring the cultural and social world of the era in the reverberation of the mythological relation to a higher person with their higher knowledge

Integrated Modern Mentality II

- Adolescence
- 13-19 years: creating one owns identity with a time related balancing of these different developmental modes of relatedness with a clear differentiation between outside and inside; this is an inner transformative process as described in the fairy tales, the journey of the hero to the beyond and coming back, meaning coming in contact with the prenatal vital self and to get from this the power to create a new identity as an adult.

Positive prenatal experiences in the LSD-self-experience



Negative prenatal experiences in the LSD-self-experience



Prenatal experience reflected in magical art and rituals



Placenta as primal object



Experience of the placenta reflected in the art of the middle age



Abb. 1
Baum der Erkenntnis
Psalter für Benediktiner, Elsaß
Nach 1235, Blatt 40 r.
Karlsruhe, Bad. Landesbibliothek
sign. HS Lichtenthal 25
(Aus: Seibmann, Titelbild)

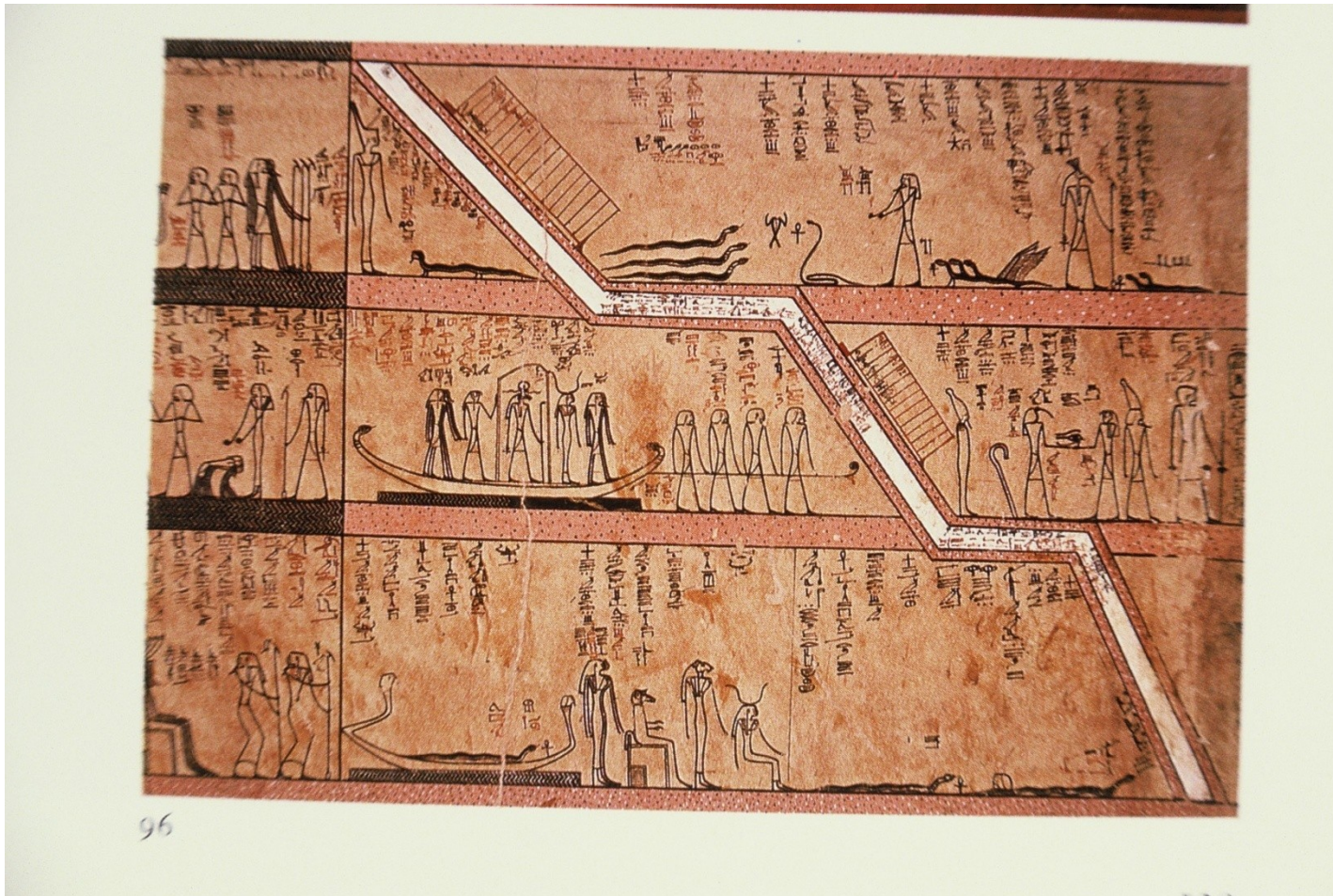
The tree of life in Indian cult



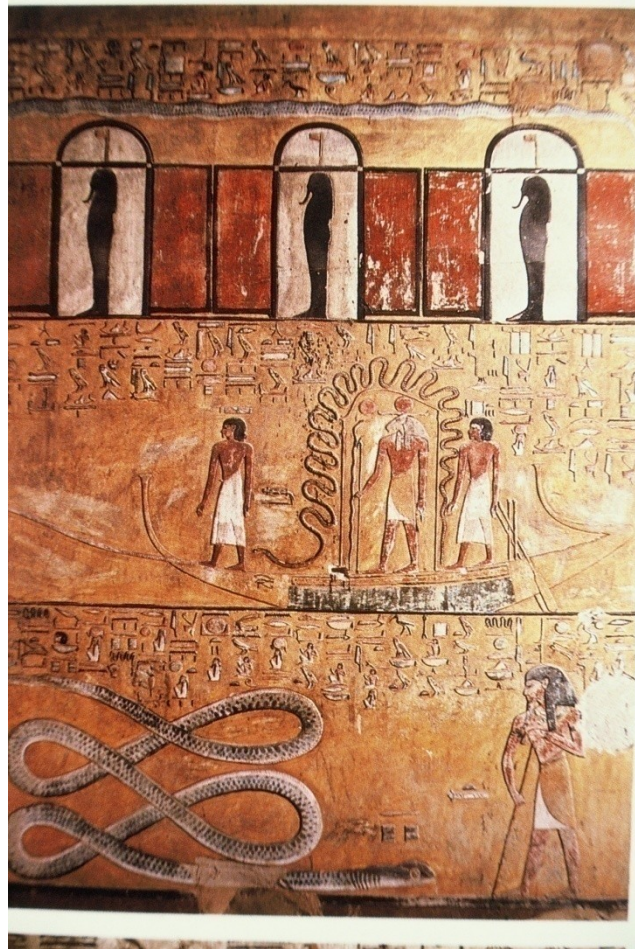
The flag as a magical symbol of the placenta



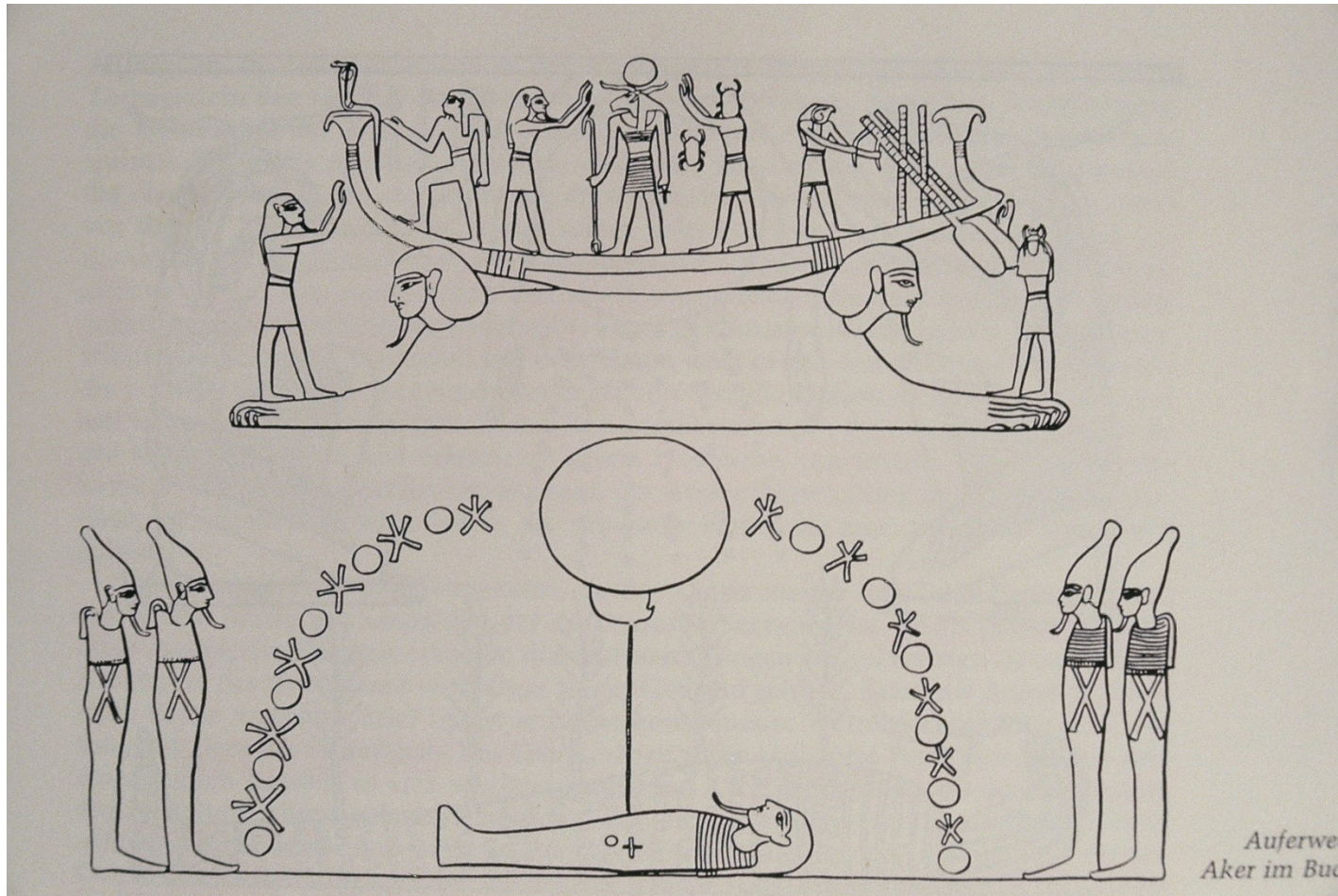
The mythological night journey of the Pharaoh



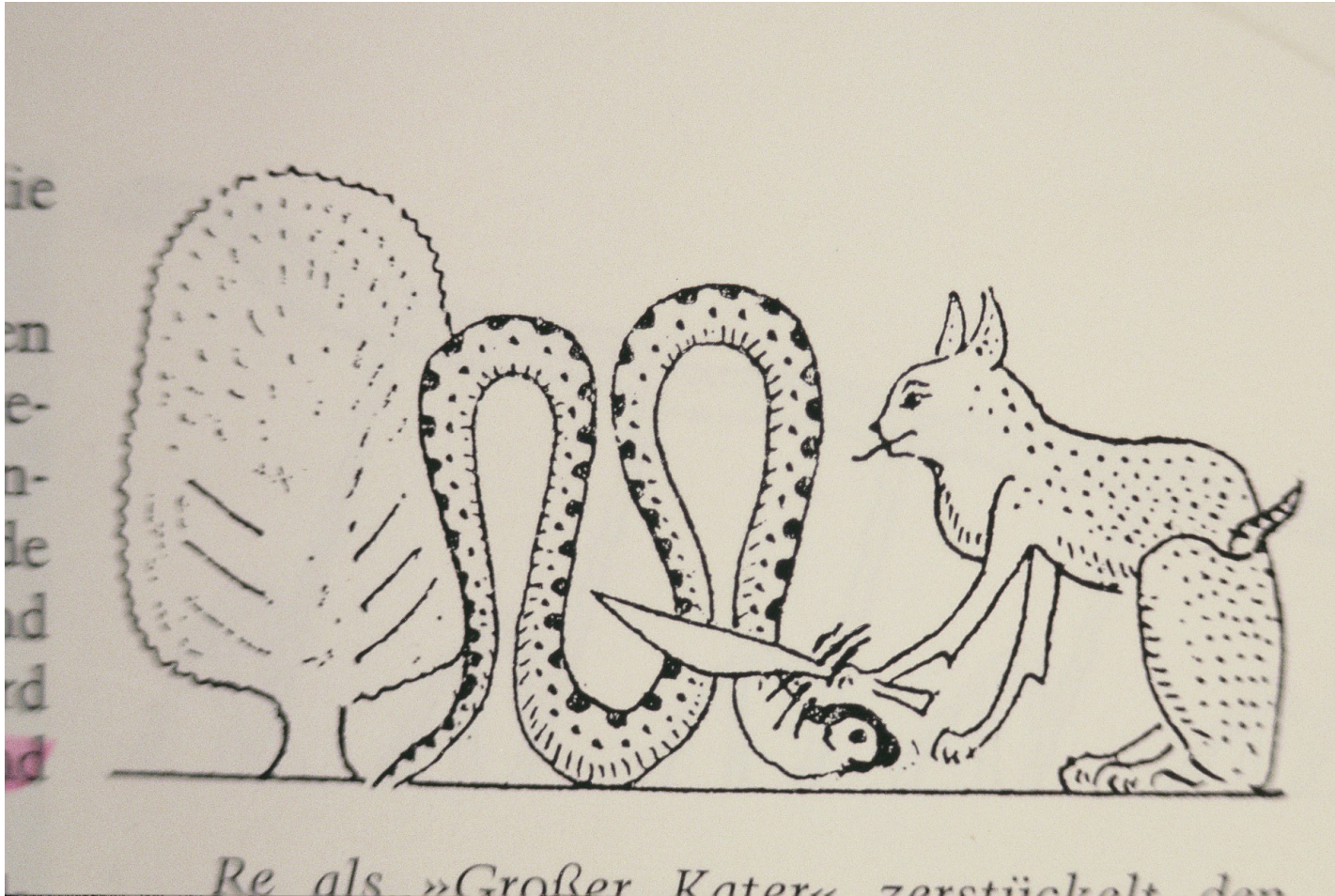
Meeting the good navel cord



Reuniting of the Pharaoh with his placenta

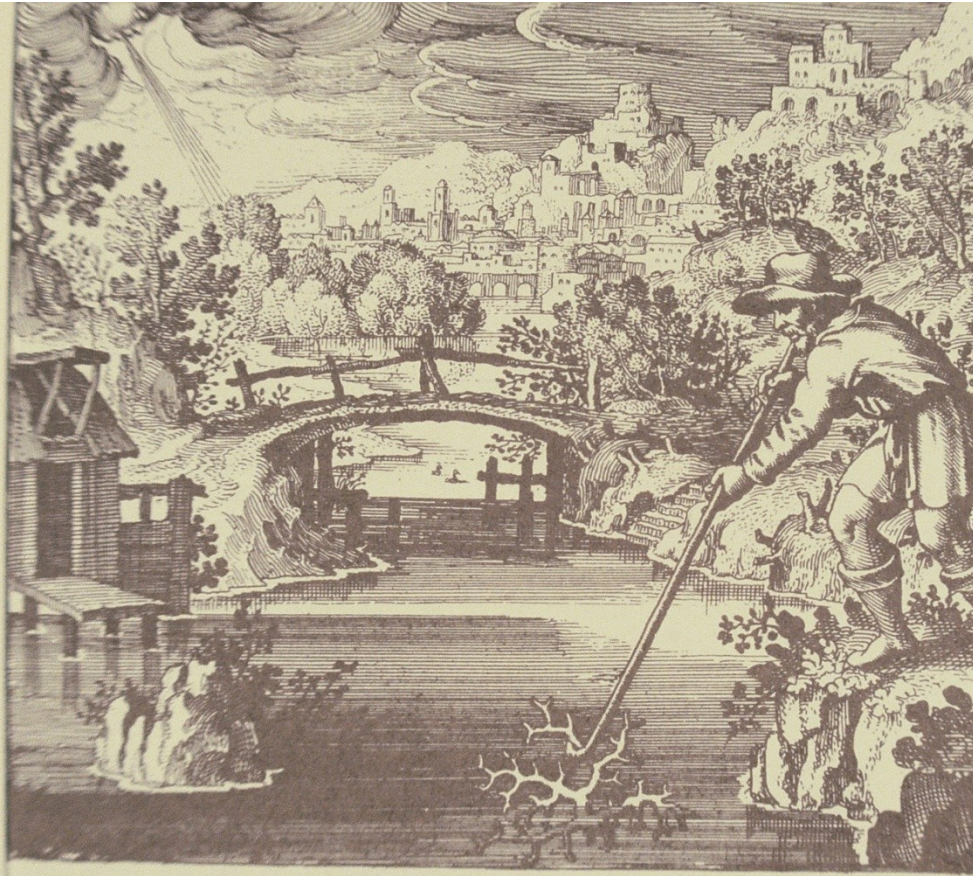


Cutting the snake to be born in the morning



Re als »Großer Kater« zerstückelt den

The search for the tree of life in the uterine water



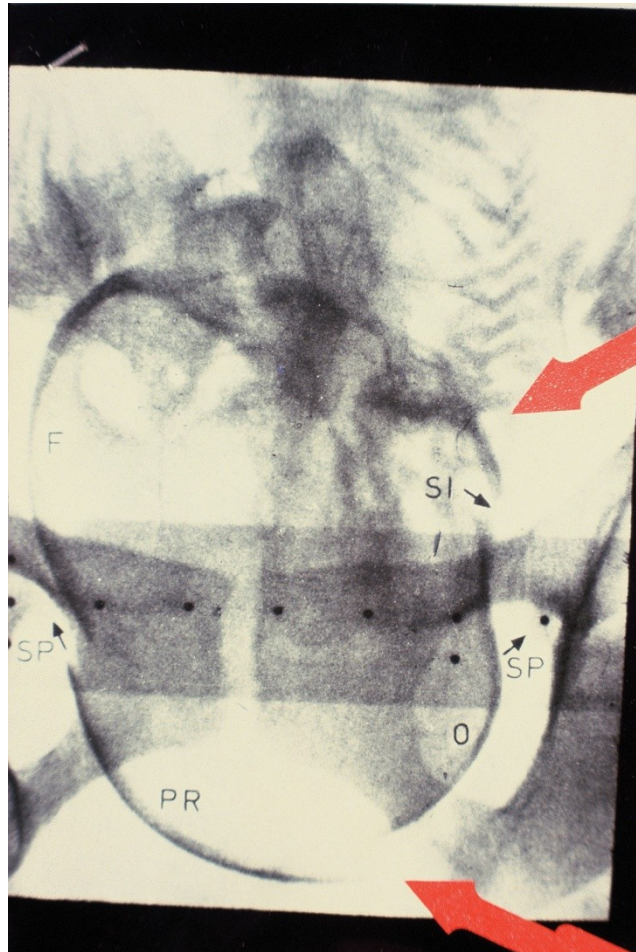
144. *Discovering a coral tree filled with blood and providing the red elixir of rebirth.*

Cave mother and breast mother



133. Monstrous companion of a milk-spurting mermaid in the mercurial sea.

Birth as borderline experience



Out of the diary of William Blake

- The following pictures I consider to be:
 - the first personal imagination
 - of birth as great effort



Earth



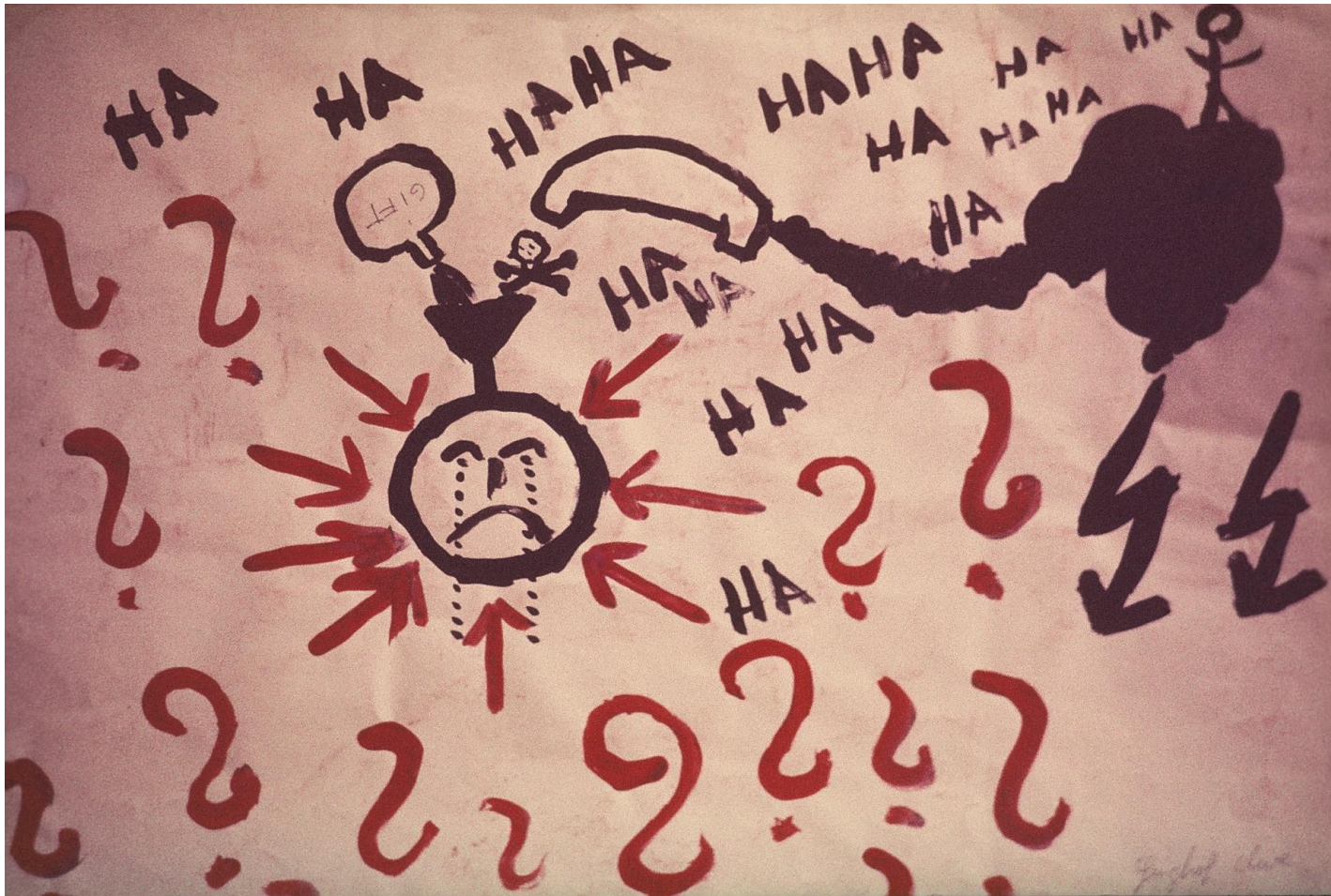


At length for hatching ripe
he breaks the shell

Feeling of being threatened before birth, painted by a phobic patient



Negative poisoned experiences before birth in the paintings of a phobic patient



Being threatened in the uterus



Threatened in the uterus



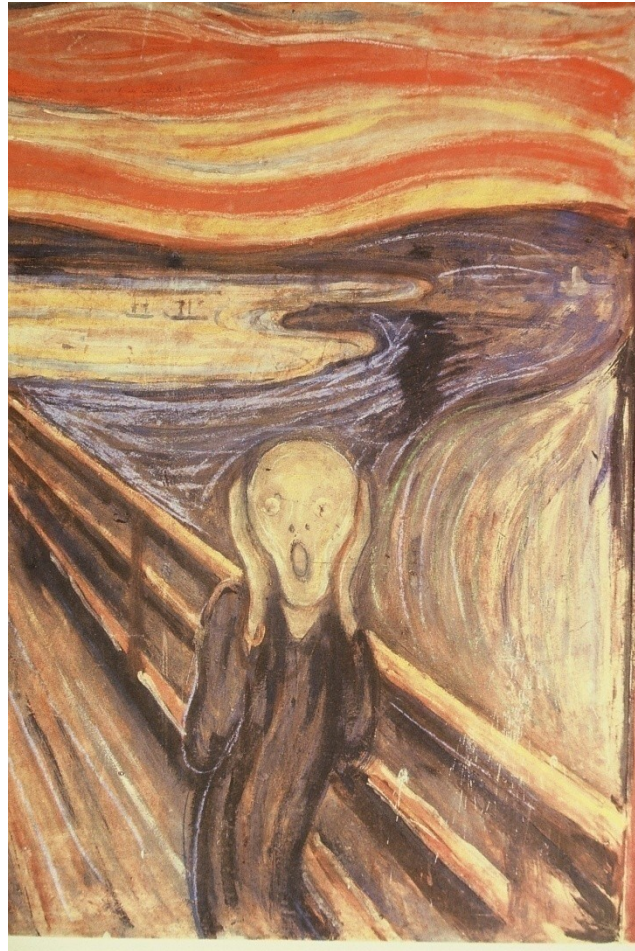
Negative prenatal experience of Munch



Birth experience of Munch



Horror after birth of Munch



The danger of birth of Dali



The danger of birth of HR Giger



The danger of birth of Giger



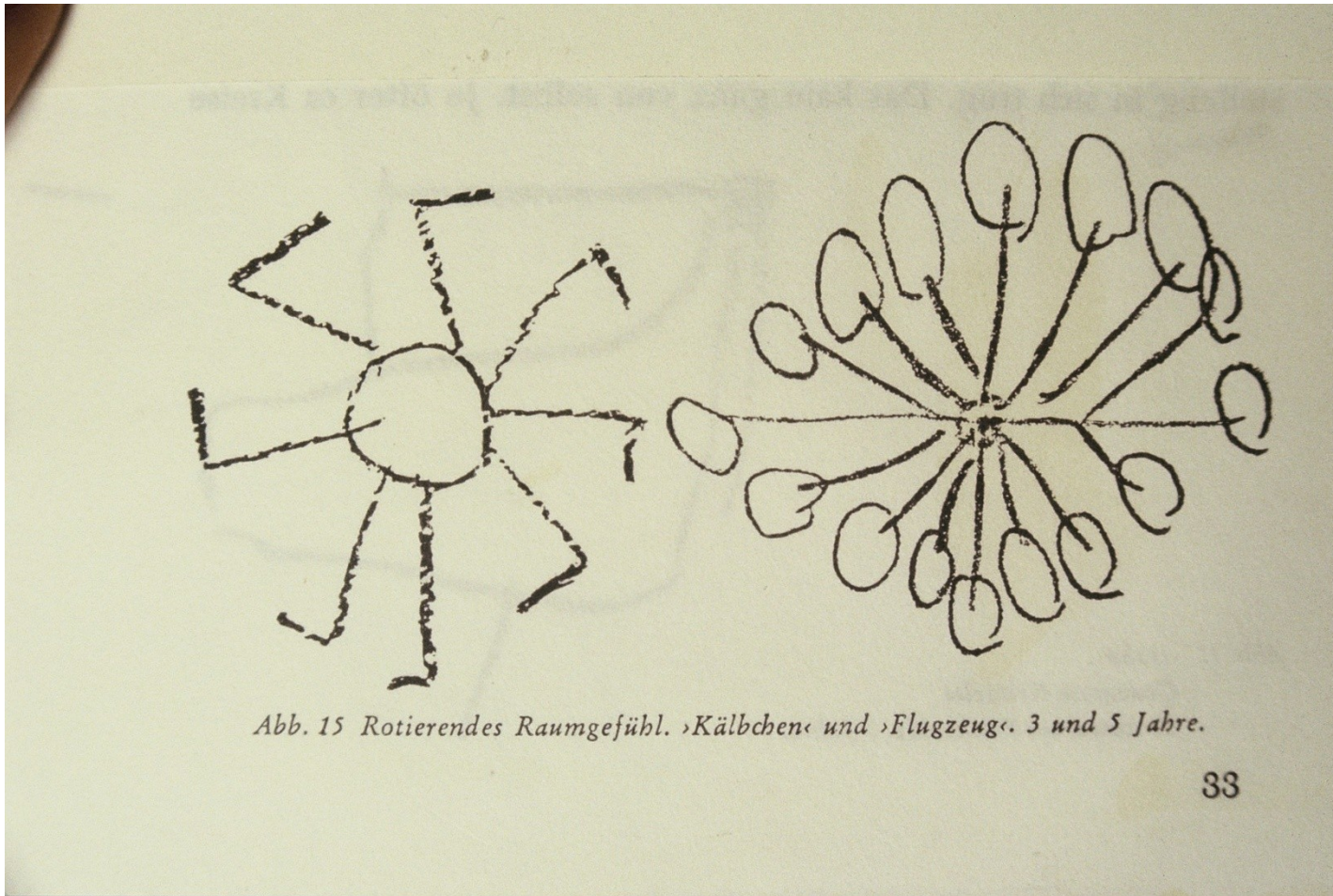
Psychotic feelings of being unborn



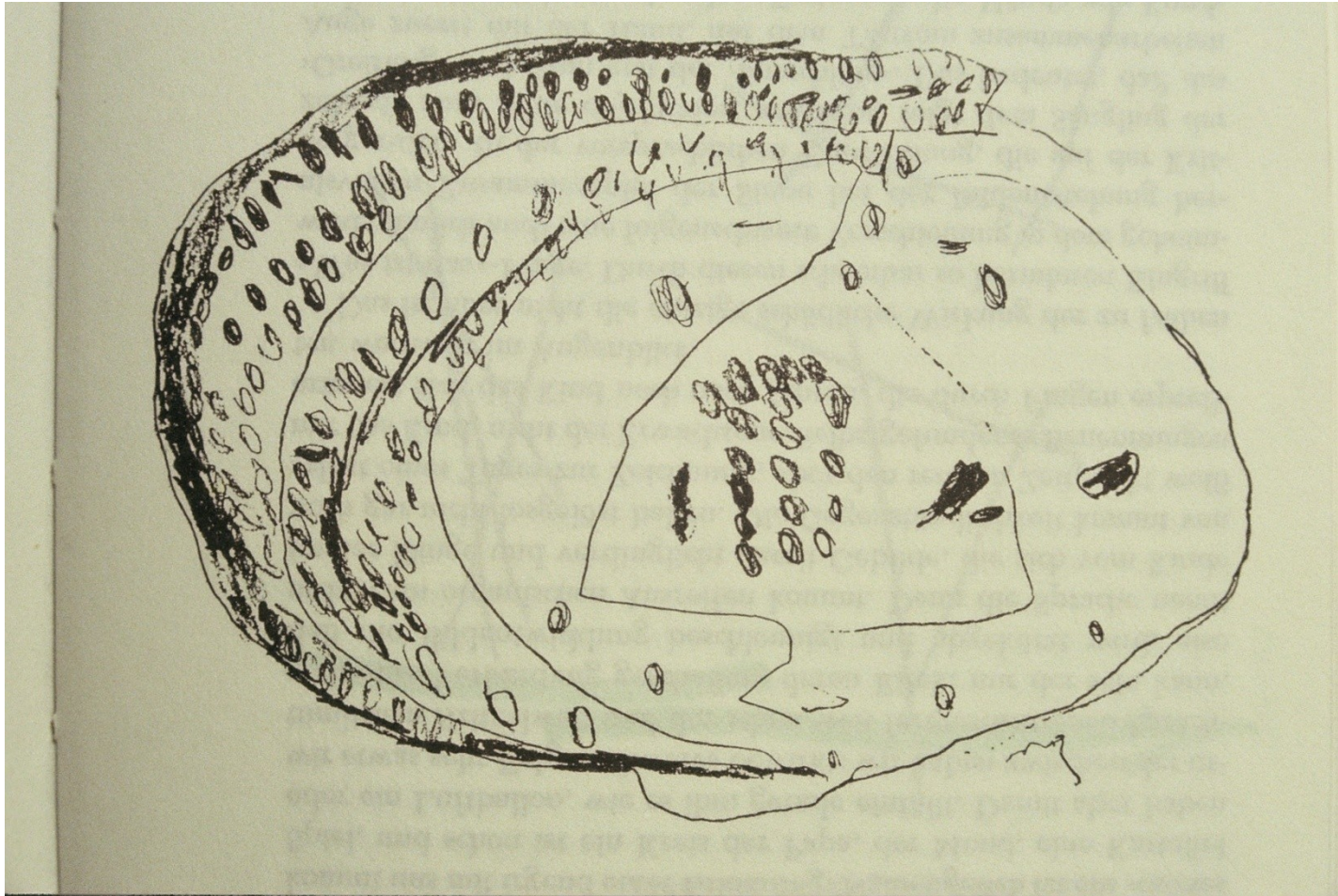
Consequences of being unwanted

- Dissatisfied with life
- Negative attitude to relations
- Higher rate of criminality
- 90% of the murderers are unwanted children with experience of violence before, during and after birth
- Josef Fritzl : „I was an unwanted child“
- That was the case for Saddam Hussein

Feeling of prenatal floating in the paintings of children

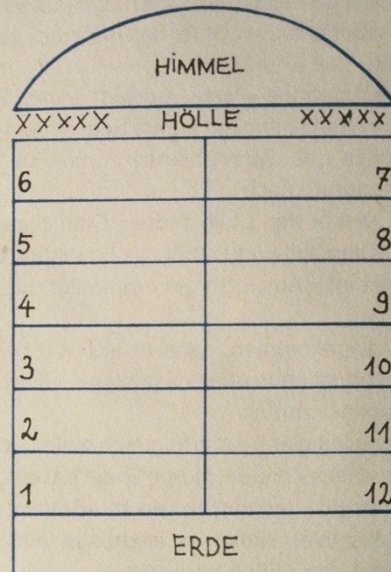


Feelings of prenatal rhythm in a painting of a child



Play of children

berührt ein Spieler mit seinem Fuß oder dem Stein eine Linie, ist es »Haus« eines Mitspielers oder die »Hölle«, muß er beiseite gehen, und der nächste Spieler kommt zum Zuge. Ist er dann wieder an der Reihe, muß er mit dem Feld beginnen, bei dem er ausgeschieden ist.



Prenatal and perinatal experience as a

- background film in our postnatal experience
- root of myths
- of fairy tales
- of rites
- of the symbols of society
- the magic feelings in groups
- of music
- of dancing

Example of a society symbol – the kings

- Kings are floating as magic power packages between heaven and earth
- are often not allowed to touch the earth
- are nourished totally
- are representing the magic prenatal power
- are connected with the gods

Example of rites - rites of intiation

- In the puberty for the separation from childhood
- Regression in a symbolic world of motherhood as cave or forest
- Vision of the myths of the tribe
- Being reborn as a member of the tribe with a new name

Example of a myth – myth of Oedipus

- Prenatal unwanted
- Murderous threats at birth
- Being given away after birth
- Later re-enactments of experienced violence by the the murder of the father and longing for the mother in murraying his mother

Example of a fairy tale - Sleeping Beauty

- Death wishes at birth
- Reactivated during puberty as shock and danger
- Salvation by the power of love of the prince
- In the fairy tale the heroine or the hero becomes his status by overcoming the destroying and engulfing mother and father

Magic of motherhood in Miró



Modern Art – exploring the prenatal dimension - Magic of the Uterine in Miró



Psychohistoric Aspects of Prenatal Psychology I

- Time related managing of the balancing of the different levels of developmental stages
- Magic level: by magic rituals with dancing, music, dreamlike staging, especially initiation rites, balancing by magic tools outside
- Mythological level: prayers to the gods, sacrifices, admiration festivals, wars, scapegoat rituals, balancing by rituals in the social frame

Psychohistoric Aspects of Prenatal Psychology II

- Modern level: differentiation between outside and inside, awareness of the interior emotional world, possibility of reflexion of the own mental state and the mental state of the other, possibility of inner balancing
- Beginning with Socrates` tolerating “not knowing” as an inner process of transformation, then in modern modern literature in Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller and in modern philosophy by the existential experiences of Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche

Psychohistoric Aspects of Prenatal Psychology III

- Modern psychological mentality:
balancing of the existential levels by
introspection, reflexion of inner stages,
reflexion in relational discussions

Psychohistory of using reason I

On the animal level: at the end of the instinctive action reason is used for clear adapting of the acting to the reality

On the level of magic cultures: reason is used to elaborate the magic rituals connected with practical aim for example in using magic imagination in hunting

On the level of mythological cultures: reason is used for the negotiation with the gods and to understand their will and plans

Psychohistory of using reason II

- On the modern level of mentality: because of the relative clear differentiation between the inside and outside, it is possible to use reason beyond instinctual limitation for observation of the outer reality. That enables modern man to invent and construct steam engines and women to fight for emancipation and equal rights.

Psychohistory of using Emotion I

- Because of the invention of agriculture and cattle breeding during the neolithic revolution homo sapiens had to live in anonymous mega groups and lost his biological ground for his social life in small groups. The solution was to use the early mother feelings to hold the groups together in the religions round the Great Goddess and later the early father related feelings round the Great Father God.

Psychohistory of using Emotion II

- Matrifocal cultures: from 11000 to 3500 b. Chr. egalitarian, cult of the great mother, magic mentality, social regulation by sacrifices, thousand of members
- Patriarchal cultures: since 3500 b. Chr., ten thousand of members, developed agricultures, social regulation by violence and wars, mythological mentality, cult round male high gods, hierarchic structures, projective emotional regulation

Psychohistory of using Emotion III

- Modern democratic cultures: since the enlightenment, millions of members, differentiation between inside and outside, science and technique, internal and related emotional regulation, balancing the four levels of relatedness – instinctive, magical, mythological, reasoning

The Psychohistory of female Identity I

- On the level of a primate becoming a motherhood and giving birth were natural instinctive processes
- On the level of tribal cultures motherhood and giving birth were also processes of experience and magic transformations managed by magic processes
- On the level of matrifocal cultures motherhood and giving birth were the central events in the society, because the world was understood as a big mother cosmos

The Psychohistory of female Identity II

- On the level of patriarchal cultures the power of the men through dominance by violence was the central element in the society, because the world was understood as ruled by a male god. Therefore motherhood and birth were devalued as biological processes and women were devalued as underlings.

The Psychohistory of female Identity III

- On the level of modern psychological cultures the society is hold together by our ability internal regulation of our emotion, empathy and responsibility in relation. Therefore motherhood and birth are events of transformation. Mothers are experts of transformation as dying and becoming: from prenatal mother to postnatal mother, from baby mother to kindergarten mother, and so on.

The Psychohistory of male Identity

I

- On the level of primates the male identity was determined by instincts, especially rivalry
- On the level of tribal cultures determined by the cultural and economic conditions for example hunting and fishing and complex rules for marrying round the incest tabu in the frame of magic experience
- On the level of the matrifocal cultures men were marginalised.

The Psychohistory of male Identity

II

- On the level of patriarchal cultures men were the dominating sex organised in hierarchy, violence orientated, oppressing women as possess.
- On the modern level men self determined individual living in emancipated relationships

The Psychohistory of Transformation I

- Transformation and creativity as the nucleus of the identity of human being
- The background is, that for humans birth is not only a biological process but also an inner experience of transformation.
- That has the consequence, that the way back to the prenatal world remains open and can be used in difficulties for example an illness to make a shamanic journey back to the water of life and the tree of life

The Psychohistory of Transformation II

- On the tribal level this was managed by the rites of passage (rite des passages) as initiation rites in puberty, as rituals round marriage and childbirth.
- Managed on the level of the matrifocal cultures by sacrifices
- Managed of the level of patriarchal cultures by wars

The Psychohistory of Transformation III

- Managed on the level of modern world as inner stage as an internal transformation or individuation process
- Human life as a continuity of dying and becoming and creative renewal – Goethe: *entselbsten und verselbsten*

Concluding remarks

- The important result of my observations and reflexions is, that foetal and perinatal feelings coming from the first layers of our experience are the unknown background of our social life and our worldviews. To reach real responsibility it is necessary to develop an awareness for the reality of these connections.

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- Ludwig Janus: Come nasce l'anima. 1997.
- Athanassios Kafkalides: The Knowledge of the Womb (to order via verlag@mattes.de)

Literature II

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- Elaine Morgan: The descent of the woman.
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- Johannes Fabricius: Alchemia.
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- David Chamberlain: Windows to the Womb.
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Literature III

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- Publikationen: www.mattes.de, www.isppm.de
- APPPAH: www.birthpsychology.com