

Chapter 7: The Fetal Origins of History

CHAPTER 7

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FOUNDATIONS OF
PSYCHOHISTORY

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THE FETAL ORIGINS OF HISTORY

"The history of man for the nine months preceding his birth would, probably, be far more interesting and contain events of greater moment than all the three score and ten years that follow it."

-- Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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I wish to present in this essay the evidence which has led me to the following three conclusions:

1. That mental life begins in the womb with a fetal drama which is remembered and elaborated upon by later childhood events,

2. That this fetal drama is the basis for the history and culture of each age, as modified by evolving childrearing styles, and

3. That the fetal drama is traumatic, so it must endlessly be repeated in cycles of dying and rebirth, as expressed in group-fantasies which even today continue to determine much of our national political life.

I will present my evidence for these three propositions in the following three major sections of this essay: the first by presenting obstetrical

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evidence for the existence of fetal mental life, the second by surveying evidence on the form of the fetal drama in past historical periods, and the third by examining evidence on the form of the fetal drama in contemporary politics.

Before I proceed to this evidence, however, I would first like to summarize my previous writing on historical group-fantasies.

In five previous essays,(1) I examined evidence from historical material that a rebirth fantasy was shared by nations prior to deciding to go to war, that this group-fantasy derived from a desire to end a severe collapse of confidence in the nation and its leader, and that the leader often deflected the group's rage from himself to an "enemy," in order to restore national confidence. Beyond discovering that images of birth were always shared prior to the events which led to wars, I also found that there were four stages in the full political cycle which paralleled stages of fetal life. These four fetal stages I designated as follows:

FS1-STRONG: During the leader's first year, media fantasy language and cartoon body-images are full of group-fantasies of the great strength of the nation, and of the leader as grandiose, ruthless in defense of the group, and vitally necessary to its national life-blood. The leader, according to my evidence, is not primarily seen as an idealized parent, loved object, or superego figure, as most political theory assumes. Rather, he is more a "container" into which the group can evacuate their changing feelings, which he is expected to confirm and then discharge through actions which are fantasy- rather than reality-oriented. In other words, it is less important that the leader leads, loves or disciplines the group than that he is emotionally available to them and willing to embody their evolving fantasy needs. The group in this "strong" stage is felt to be safe in a "strong" womb-surround, so any external disorders which might occur are not seen as threatening enough to require a violent response.

FS2-CRACKING: The deification of the leader begins to fail, with an increase in scapegoating to deflect hostility from the leader. The group's boundaries are felt to be "cracking," with images of leaking water and crumbling walls predominating. The leader is seen as weakening and unable to control events. Complaints of being crowded, hungry and breathless multiply, and worries are increasingly voiced that collapse is imminent and enemies becoming more dangerous. This second stage also lasts about a year.

FS3-COLLAPSE: The group during this stage experiences extreme anxieties about its collapse of self-image and growing rage toward the

leader, who now seems impotent in ending the group's feeling of pollution, sinfulness and starvation. Group-fantasies of choking, falling, abandonment, disintegration, death and explosiveness proliferate in the media, feelings which the leader and certain delegate-groups are expected first to voice and then to take action to relieve. Free-floating paranoid fantasies of unnamed poisonous enemies multiply, as the group attempts to project its own rage outward and to account somehow for its inner feelings of turmoil. The "collapse" stage ends only after a "search for a humiliating other"(3)-an enemy who, in a moment of "group-psychotic insight," is identified as the concrete source of the group's distress. Because this search for a cooperative enemy takes time, this third stage can last from a few months to as long as two years.

F54-UPHEAVAL: The "group-psychotic insight" which identifies the delusional poisoner of the group can take one of several forms:

(1) Regicidal Solution-If the leader is self-destructive or if he fails to find an external enemy, the leader himself can be designated as the enemy, and a ritual slaying of a divine king is enacted, led by a new hero who purifies the group's polluted atmosphere through his sacrificial death. This regicidal ritual can be accomplished by assassination, revolution, impeachment, or even by a "landslide defeat" of the incumbent in an election.

(2) Martial Solution-If an external enemy can be located who will co-operate by humiliating the group, it then enters into a trance-like state of sado-masochistic enthrallment towards the enemy, whose totally evil nature makes every rage seem justified and every sacrifice noble. Since the group's rage is now split off from the leader to the enemy, the leader's popularity is considerably enhanced. However, as this splitting is difficult to maintain, military action against the enemy by the now-heroic group leader appears imperative, in order to wipe out the hated "enemy," resolve the period of upheaval, clear up the pollution, and complete the rebirth which restores the group's strength and vitality.

(3) Suicidal Solution-Suicidal individuals often resolve internal ambivalences through a fantasy of a "Hidden Executioner" who helps them in their suicidal effort in killing the bad, polluted part of themselves so that the good purified part can be loved again.(4) Similarly, nations can provoke other nations to attack them, or can leave themselves defenseless and without allies, in suicidal group-fantasies designed to "burn out" the bad parts of the nation in order to "purify" it and give it a

"rebirth of national spirit." The "collapse" of France in the late 1930s is an example of such a suicidal solution. It is also true, of course, that all wars have their suicidal component in the death during combat of a portion of the nation's own population.

This psychogenic theory of recurring group-fantasy cycles was derived wholly from historical evidence, prior to my having examined obstetrical evidence for the possibility of a mental life prior to and during birth. In the next section, I will construct a fetal psychology based on contemporary obstetrical evidence and show its relation both to later childhood events and to adult individual and group psychology.

I. THE FETAL DRAMA

PREVIOUS THEORIES ON FETAL PSYCHOLOGY

Virtually all contemporary psychoanalytic theory denies the possibility of mental life before or during birth. The newborn is believed to be without memory, ego, objects or mental structure. As one psychoanalyst puts it, "psychoanalysis does not really ask, 'When did it begin?' Instead, it asks a rather different question, 'When after birth did it begin!'" (5) Even though Freud sometimes called birth "the primal anxiety," "the precursor to anxiety," and similar phrases, (6) he nevertheless firmly believed that mental life began only after birth, that "birth still has no psychic content," and that "birth is not experienced subjectively as a separation from the mother since the foetus, being a completely narcissistic creature, is totally unaware of her existence as an object." (7) His opinion has been echoed by almost every psychoanalyst since he pronounced it over fifty years ago. The only time he was said to have deviated from this view was once when he was heard to have wondered if an infant born by Caesarian section might have a different pattern of anxiety, (8) but he never admitted such a notion anywhere in print. Greenacre, in fact, concluded that Freud linked birth to anxiety only through a sort of collective unconscious, rather like a Jungian archetype. And since Freud angrily threw Rank out of the psychoanalytic movement for writing in 1923 that there was actual mental life during birth, (9) there have been powerful reasons for psychoanalysts to accept Freud's opinion uncritically. (10)

This is not to say that there are no articles on birth in the psychoanalytic literature. Indeed, since birth images are ubiquitous in clinical practice,

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there are scores of full articles and hundreds of clinical illustrations of fetal material in the literature. Yet almost always the therapists consider all birth material as pure fantasy, having no basis in early experience. As this is the only clinical evidence which is not treated as a combination of actual experience and fantasy, the anxiety produced in therapists by the patient's birth fantasies is obviously enormous. This anxiety is not as evident when the fetal material is positive – that is, when it can be interpreted as representing comforting fantasies of "regression to the womb." But when the patient produces frightening material with overt fetal content, it is either ignored or interpreted on later oral, anal or phallic levels.

Thus, when Abraham reported a patient who had lifelong nightmares of a blood-sucking spider which came out of an egg to crush him, he interpreted the blood sucking as "a castration symbol." (11) Likewise, when Ralph Little's patient had nightmares of a horrifying spider which crushed him, along with images of being connected to his mother by an umbilical cord so that "blood would have to flow to her or to him with the result that only

one could live and the other die," he also called the spider a "castrating mother."(12) Rather than multiply examples, one can best judge just how much fetal content is overlooked all the time by therapists by reading a careful study by Calvin Hall of 590 unselected dreams, which showed that 370, or 60%, had overt images "from the fetal environment, of being born, and of returning to the womb."(13) Greenacre is surely on the right track when she wonders if "perhaps the struggle of birth is at once too terrifying and too inspiring for us to regard it readily with scientific dispassion."(14)

There are, however, a few pioneer psychoanalysts who have considered the possibility of a mental life at birth. Most, like Winnicott, were reluctantly convinced only after they had analyzed children who relived birth experiences in fantasy play in such concrete detail and with such emotional investment that the analyst felt they must have come from "memory traces of birth" rather than from later observation.(15) Yet even these few – including Greenacre, Winnicott, Melanie Klein, Karl Menninger, Roger Money-Kyrle, P.M. Ploye and others (16) – merely noted that birth material was present in dreams and fantasy life and asked whether others might not investigate whether mental life exists earlier than theory allows.

There are, however, a small group of psychologists, most of them psychoanalysts, who have seriously considered the possibility of the existence of mental life at birth: Otto Rank, Nandor Fodor, Francis Mott, Stanislav Grof, Elizabeth Fehr and other American rebirth therapists, Arnaldo Raskovsky and several other psychoanalysts in Argentina, and a group of psychotherapists who with Gustav Graber founded in Germany the International Society for the Study of Prenatal Psychology. All these therapists assume that mental life is present at birth, all emphasize the traumatic effects of the birth experience after what they consider as a com-

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fortable uterine life, and most use only adult dreams and fantasies as evidence for their theory. I will briefly summarize their contributions to fetal psychology to date.

Otto Rank began his investigations into birth experiences in 1904, long before he had heard of Freud. The conclusions of his books, beginning with *The Trauma of Birth* in 1923 (17) – which caused Freud to say he was "through with him"-seem quite unexceptional today, emphasizing that the female genital is often a source of anxiety which must be overcome in order to experience sexual pleasure, and that this fact is often reflected in dreams and myth. Rank analyzed dreams, fantasies and myths quite soundly for their connections with separation anxiety from the mother, fears of being left alone in the dark, games of crawling into holes, and so on. He even touches on connections between rebirth rituals and other cultural and mythological material and birth experience-again, all in a straight-forward way which could easily be accepted today for publication in any psychoanalytic journal. The degree of Freud's own problems with the portrayal of the mother as the initial source of anxiety-problems which he only reluctantly overcame under the pressure of mainly female analysts later on can be seen in his refusing to read more than the opening section of Rank's 1923 book, instead giving it to his patients to read and asking them to tell him their opinion of it. (18)

For the next quarter-century, Freud's anathema on birth material proved effective, and even so brilliant a psychoanalyst as Margaret Fries-whose forty-year "prenatal-to-parenthood" longitudinal studies showed basic per-

sonality patterns at birth that persisted and could accurately predict later development-nevertheless refrained from drawing any real conclusions from her results about prenatal mental life.(19)

Therefore, in 1949, a quarter century after Rank's work went out of print, when Nandor Fodor's book *The Search for the Beloved: A Clinical Investigation of the Trauma of Birth and Prenatal Condition*(20) was published in America, the therapeutic community was totally unprepared for what he said. That birth was traumatic and was remembered in dreams and fantasies, that birth was a source of the fear of death, that it lay at the base of nightmares of suffocation, claustrophobia and many other symptoms, all these conclusions were sensitively illustrated by Fodor with a wealth of clinical material-again, little of which would be considered startling today, although most therapists ignored his book at the time. Like Rank, Fodor assumed that "the physical environment within the womb is perfect" and that "after nine months of peaceful development, the human child is forced into a strange world by cataclysmic muscular convulsions which, like an earthquake, shake its abode to the very foundations."(21)

Like many of the later birth theorists, Fodor also believed in parapsychology, but his speculations on telepathy between the mother and fetus(22) could easily be separated from his clinical material on birth. Not so

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with his follower, Francis J. Mott, an English psychologist who spent his entire life working on a system of fetal psychology. Mott's enormous output,(23) fearless speculations and unceasing devotions to the task of constructing a fetal psychology make his writings (if you can locate them in any library) a rich source of material, particularly his voluminous use of dreams and mythological material. But Mott's mystical task of connecting uterine life with an astral universal design of creation plus his often-stated avoidance of considering any obstetrical facts (as when he posits the ability of the fetus to "feel" the blood going out to the placenta, despite the fact that the umbilicus is without nerves), makes his vast body of work thoroughly unreliable.(24)

Stanislav Grof is a psychiatrist who began using LSD for psycho-therapeutic regression in 1956, in Czechoslovakia, and has conducted over 3,000 LSD therapy sessions in the past quarter century in Europe and the United States.(25) As he regularly found that patients relived their birth experiences, he posited four "Basic Perinatal Matrices" which he felt his patients regularly relived under LSD:

BPM 1 (*Primal Union With Mother*): *In the womb, fantasies of Paradise, unity with God or Nature, sacredness, "oceanic" ecstasy, etc.*

BPM 2 (*Antagonism With Mother*): *Derived from the onset of labor, when the cervix is still closed, feelings of being trapped, of futility, of crushing head pressures and cardiac distress, of unbearable suffering and hellish horrors, of being sucked into a whirlpool or swallowed by a terrifying monster, dragon, octopus, python, etc.*

BPM 3 (*Synergism With Mother*): *When the cervix opens and propulsion through the birth canal occurs, fantasies of titanic fights, of sadomasochistic orgies, of explosive discharges of atom bombs and volcanoes and*

of brutal rapes and suicidal self-destruction, all part of an overwhelmingly violent death-rebirth struggle.

BPM 4 (*Separation From Mother*): *Upon the termination of the birth struggle, after the first breath, feelings of liberation, salvation, love and forgiveness, along with fantasies of having been cleansed, unburdened and purged.*

Although Grof, too, soon moved off into the paranormal sphere (an occupational hazard connected with fetal psychology), his original clinical work on the ability of adults to re-experience (or fantasize-he made no attempt to confirm his evidence as memory) birth feelings is detailed and valuable. Grof's work is paralleled in many ways by the similar experience of various "rebirthers," who feel that re-experiencing one's birth was

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therapeutic. Beginning with the "natal therapy" of Elizabeth Fehr, and including the "birth primaling" of Arthur Janov and others,(26) many techniques of regression in place of LSD have been used to experience the same birth feelings felt by Grof's patients. Without commenting one way or the other on the therapeutic efficiency of re-birthing techniques, and leaving open for the moment the relationship between fantasy and memory, it must be acknowledged that a vast body of psychological material on birth feelings has accumulated in the past two decades-material, however, which remains wholly unintegrated into the mainstream of psychological thought, psychoanalytic or otherwise.

What characterizes all this work are two main assumptions: [1] It is all birth-centered, with life in the womb presented as comfortable, birth as traumatic, and re-birthing as the overcoming of separation anxiety, and [2] It is constructed from adult clinical material, and rarely examines the obstetrical literature, despite the fact that most of the researchers are medical doctors. These two assumptions are generally continued in the recent published work of those South American psychoanalysts who center their work around Arnaldo Rascovsky,(27) as well as those who contribute to the regular conferences in Germany of the International Society for the Study of Prenatal Psychology-although because Rascovsky and some of the German group began as pediatricians, some obstetrical observations of prenatal life are occasionally used.

The results, therefore, of sixty years of work on fetal psychology have been to reinforce Freud's initial feeling that birth is the prototype for all later anxiety, under the assumption that before birth there is no ego, no objects and no mental structure, only symbiotic oneness with the mother, and that birth is the rude shock from which later separation anxiety derives. It will be my purpose to demonstrate (a) that this theory equating birth with separation anxiety is wrong, (b) that the theory has been constructed as a defense against evidence that the experience of the fetus in the womb is actually individual and often traumatic rather than symbiotic and only peaceful, and (c) that birth is in fact a liberation from traumatic experiences in the womb rather than only a "separation trauma." in order to present the evidence which led me to these conclusions, I now turn to the obstetrical evidence for the conditions of mental life in the womb and during birth.

OBSTETRICAL EVIDENCE ON THE CONDITIONS FOR FETAL MENTAL LIFE

It is only in recent decades that medical science has begun to be interested in the study of the fetus. One doctor who wondered why the early interest was so negative said maybe it was because the fetus was so “inconveniently

tucked away in a most inaccessible situation. This area of medicine offered little opportunity for discovery, and did not attract much talent. Why study a creature which was so passive, so dull, so small, and technically so difficult? . . . Perhaps the fact that it was to some degree replaceable also entered into consideration.”(29) Since medical study of other “inaccessible” organs dates back for centuries, it is likely the last sentence, perhaps reflecting infanticidal thought, has been most important. Whatever the reason, in any case, recent advances in fetal knowledge have been so rapid that “a student could compare the literature of today with that of twenty years ago and conclude that two different species were under study.”(30)

The results of recent studies have been all in one direction: to push earlier and earlier the onset of all developmental stages and sensory abilities of the fetus.(31) This is particularly so in the development of the brain, nervous system and sensory apparatus, which all begin in the very first month of life after conception. By the end of the second month after conception, the one-inch-long fetus is astonishingly well equipped with a beating heart, a circulatory system, a digestive tract, graceful arms and legs, facial features, ears, fingers and toes, and the crucial center of all fetal nutrition and breathing—a pulsing umbilicus, literally a fifth limb, containing two arteries and one vein through which blood is pumped to and from its placenta, which lies next to the mother’s circulatory system. It is the placenta which provides oxygen and nutrients and removes carbon dioxide and waste products from the blood of the fetus. By the end of the first trimester (the first three months), the nervous system and sensory apparatus is so well developed that the fetus responds to the stroking of its palm by a light hair by grasping, of its lips by sucking and of its eyelids by squinting.(32) Doctors who perform amniocentesis at this time to sample the amniotic fluid can sometimes see the fetus jump and show an increased heart rate if the needle should touch it. Sight is so well developed that the heart rate increases when a bright light is shown on the mother’s abdomen, and when the doctor introduces a brightly lit fetoscope, the fetus often turns its head away from the light.(33) Taste is developed by the 14th week, and the fetus is from this time on sensitive to the condition of its amniotic fluid.(34)

Hearing is even better developed during the first trimester: fetal activity goes up and the fetal heart rate increases when a loud sound is made near the mother’s abdomen, and many experiments have been made which produce true fetal learning from sound stimuli. These include one experiment in which Debussy was played to four fetuses in utero during times when the mother and fetus were tranquil, with the result that after birth these four infants (and not others) responded to Debussy played in the nursery as a tranquilizer or pacifier—only one of many experiments in the literature which clearly demonstrate prenatal memory and in utero learning.(35)

Despite the amount of evidence that has accumulated on the ability of the fetus by the second trimester to feel, see, smell, taste, hear and remember

fetal events, the bulk of medical and psychological writings continue to repeat the older view of a blind, deaf, pain-insensitive fetus.(36) Often those who take this negative view prove it by reference to a 1933 study by Langworthy(37) that suggested that "incomplete myelination of sensory tracts" prevents the fetus from receiving messages from its sensory organs-although it has long been known that full myelination is not necessary for functioning (it only increases the rapidity of conduction), and that well-organized activity in the brain is possible long before nerve fibers become completely myelinated.(38) This "incomplete myelination" argument continues to be used to deny the ability of the fetus and newborn to feel pain in many areas of medicine, from the use of aborted fetuses as subjects in painful medical experiments to the denial of anaesthesia during circumcision and surgery of the newborn.(39)

During the second trimester, then, the fetus is seeing, hearing, testing, feeling and learning from its environment, and true mental life has begun-a concession easily granted babies born several months prematurely but denied those of the same age still in the womb, as though visibility somehow conferred sensibility. What kind of environment is it, then, that provides the sensory input for the beginning of psychic life? From all that happens to it during the last two trimesters, what lesson does the fetus learn about its first world?

Liley captures the difference between the old and the new views of the environment of the womb when he says: "Perhaps nowhere' does the notion of foetal life as a time of quiescence, of patient and blind development of structures in anticipation of a life and function to begin at birth, die harder than in the concept of the pregnant uterus as a dark and silent world... A pregnant abdomen is not silent, and the uterus and amniotic cavity... may be readily transilluminated with a torch in a darkened room."(40) The womb is in fact a very noisy, very changing, very active place in which to live, full of events and emotions both pleasant and painful.

The fetus during the second trimester, while the amniotic sac is still rather roomy, now floats peacefully, now kicks vigorously, turns somersaults, hiccoughs, sighs, urinates, swallows and breathes amniotic fluid and urine, sucks its thumb, fingers and toes, grabs its umbilicus, gets excited at sudden noises, calms down when the mother talks quietly, and gets rocked back to sleep as she walks about. Fetal activity patterns are now well studied, particularly since the development of ultrasound techniques. The normal fetus rarely goes 10 minutes without some gross activity, either with fetal breathing spurts during REM-sleep periods or with other movements.(41) It moves in regular exercise patterns, and one observer said it could be seen in ultrasound pictures "rolling from side to side [with] extension and then flexion of the back and neck, turning of the head and neck [and] waving of the arms and kicking of the legs. 'the feet were seen to flex and extend as the fetus kicked the side wall of the gestation sac. In one fetus the jaw was seen

to move up and down."(42) The fetus in fact has quite regular activity cycles averaging about 45 minutes, cycles which later in the third trimester can be felt quite accurately by the mother.(43) These fetal patterns become coordinated to some extent with the activity cycles of the mother-evidence that the fetus is quite sensitive to a wide range of the mother's activities and emotions .(44)

When the mother smokes a cigarette, the fetus smokes it too, and after the first few puffs its heart begins to beat faster, it feels a drop in oxygen (hypoxia) and an increase in carbon dioxide, and it stops moving and increases its fetal breathing rate to try to make up for the hypoxia—all responses which have a severe enough cumulative effect for heavy smokers to contribute to stillbirth, growth retardation, prematurity and later hyperactivity and behavioral problems.(46) When the mother takes a drink, the alcohol goes straight to the fetus, whose blood alcohol level quickly approaches that of the mother. Fetuses who drink alcohol daily end up growing slower, aborting more, are more often premature and have more physical abnormalities, mental retardation and hyperactivity – not to mention the extremely painful withdrawal symptoms associated with the fetal alcoholic syndrome.(46) The same principle holds, of course, for thousands of other drugs, including aspirin and caffeine, all of which go directly to the fetus across what used to be called “the placental barrier,” and produce all kinds of harmful and painful effects, including hypoxia (low oxygen).(47) Equally important are various nutritional factors, with malnutrition among the poor (or among the well-to-do with poor eating habits) causing a wide range of harmful physical and behavioral defects.(48) So widespread, in fact, are all these uterine environmental hazards that few fetuses entirely escape harm from them. Even the medical director of Dow Chemical Corporation had to concede that of the “30 to 40 percent of all conceptions [which] usually end in spontaneous abortion, stillbirth, or live birth with congenital malformation, an undetermined number of these are probably the result of some environmental factors.”(49) Far from being a safe, cozy haven to which we all want to return, the womb is in fact a dangerous and often painful abode, where even today “more lives are lost during the nine gestational months than in the ensuing 50 years of postnatal life.”(50)

But the fetus is not only in distress when the mother smokes, drinks or takes drugs. It is also affected both biologically and psychologically by the mother’s fear, anger and depression. A large literature has been accumulating during the past three decades showing in considerable detail the many ways that the pregnant mother’s emotions affect the physical and emotional development of the fetus.

It has long been known that laboratory animals fondled ten minutes a day during their pregnancy produce physically healthier and less neurotic offspring than those who did not get the fondling, and that mentally ill and depressed mothers give birth to many more undersized and behaviorally

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disturbed babies than others.(51) Much more direct statistical evidence has recently shown that mothers who do not want to be pregnant, who feel hostility toward their fetuses, who are exceptionally anxious during pregnancy, or who are emotionally very immature all have lower weight babies with more mental retardation, more obstetrical problems and more behavioral nursery difficulties right after birth (as rated by independent observers) than those of control groups.(52) It is now often recognized that “maternal frights, fears, tensions, temper tantrums, frustrations, ‘shocks,’ ‘stresses,’ depressions and other mental states may harm the developing fetus.”(53) The often lethal effects of maternal hostility toward the fetus are now so well accepted that habitual aborters are regularly and successfully treated by psychotherapy alone.(54)

The biological mechanisms for transmitting these maternal emotions to the fetus are many. When the mother feels anxiety, her tachycardia is followed within seconds by the fetus’s tachycardia, and when she feels fear,

within 50 seconds the fetus can be made hypoxic through altered uterine blood conditions. Alterations in adrenalin, plasma epinephrine and norepinephrine levels, higher levels of hydroxycortico-steroids, hyperventilation and many other products of maternal anxiety are also known to directly affect the fetus. That these effects are painful to the fetus is no longer in doubt-ultrasound and other modern techniques often show the fetus in terrible distress, writhing and kicking in pain during hypoxia. One mother whose husband had just threatened her verbally with violence came into the prenatal study center with her fetus thrashing about and kicking so violently as to be painful to her, and with an elevated fetal heart rate which continued for many hours after. (57) The same wild thrashing and kicking of the fetus has also been seen in several mothers whose spouses have died suddenly.(58)

Marital discord, in fact, is one of the best documented emotional causes of fetal distress, being associated in several careful statistical studies with later child morbidity, physical illness, physical defects, severe behavioral disturbances, hyperactivity, aggressivity, and early school failure.(59) Indeed, maternal fright alone can be so severe that it can actually cause the death of the fetus immediately afterwards.(60) In fact, severe emotional distress within the family during the mother's pregnancy has been found by Dennis Stott to have been associated with damage to the fetus "with almost 100 percent certainty" in large samples in both Scotland and Canada.(61)

Although most of these studies have been generally ignored by medicine and psychology alike, some obstetricians have recently begun to draw the same conclusions as I have drawn regarding the womb as a place full of pain as well as tranquility. Albert Liley, while filming with x-rays what he termed "frantic" movements of the fetus during uterine contractions, concluded that they "were characteristic of a human being in severe pain, as the fetus threw its arms and legs about and appeared to actively resist each contrac-

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tion with various contortions of its body."(62) If the uterus were not filled with fluid, says obstetrician Robert Goodlin, and if there were air in the womb, the fetus would be heard "crying in utero" much of the time. In fact, he says, for "obstetricians using air amniograms, it is often necessary to caution the mother to assume the sitting or upright position (post air amniogram) for several hours after the amniogram so that the air will be kept away from the fetal larynx; otherwise, the annoyance for the [mother] of hearing her unborn fetus cry. It therefore seems not unreasonable to assume that fetuses are often as uncomfortable (enough to cry) in utero as extra utero [for] it is the intrapartum, not the newborn period, which is filled with pain and stress for the infant."(63)

The distress of the fetus is increasingly felt during its third trimester in the womb. As the fetus during this period increases its length from 13 to 20 inches and nearly triples its weight, it is more crowded, more affected by stress including hypoxia, moves less and dreams more,(64) and begins to exhibit a definite "personality" which the mother can now recognize as its own, as it gets upset and vigorously kicks her in response to certain of her actions or positions-for instance, if she is sleeping in a position uncomfortable to the fetus. The crucial problems for the fetus in this new cramped womb lies in its outgrowing the ability of its placenta to feed it, provide it with oxygen, and clean its blood of carbon dioxide and wastes. The placenta not only stops growing during this

period, it regresses in its efficiency, becoming tough and fibrous rather than spongy, as its cells and blood vessels degenerate and it becomes full of blood clots and calcified areas. As this happens, the effect on the fetus is to make it even more susceptible to hypoxia than previously.

Ever since the early research in the 1930s by Anselmino, Haselhorst, Bartels and others,(65) medical research has been puzzled by the low oxygen pressure of fetal blood, which continuously has such low oxygen levels that adults would black out in comparable conditions. This normal condition of low oxygen pressure was termed "Mt. Everest in utero, "with the suggestion that fetal development during the last trimester is analogous to a mountaineer climbing Mt. Everest and experiencing slowly decreasing oxygen levels as the fetus grew bigger and the placenta became less efficient. Although the discovery that this very low oxygen level is somewhat offset by an oxygen affinity of fetal red blood cells that is somewhat higher than adults, even so, it is now recognized by many researchers that this one factor is not enough to completely offset the growing insufficiency of oxygen supply to the brain cells. In fact, the late-term fetus is often "extremely hypoxic by adult standards." As one obstetrical researcher puts it, "the foetus in utero may be subject to great O₂ and CO₂ pressure changes" which produce frequent hypoxia, "the most frequent cause of brain damage in the perinatal period."(66)

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Recent medical literature is full of admissions of ignorance and calls for more research as to what is termed the "puzzling" ability of the fetus to live with such low oxygen levels and with such an "inefficient" placenta-the oxygen transfer efficiency of which Bartels calls the "worst" of all mammals.(67) Since "the asphyxiated fetus has no cerebral regulatory mechanism giving priority to the blood flow of the brain,"(68) and since the human fetal brain is many times the comparable size of other mammals of equal body weight, "the margin of safety of the fetal brain against hypoxia is probably smaller in man" than in other animals, so any reduction at all of the already very low oxygen level late in fetal life is felt as extremely stressful.(69)

Therefore, as the third trimester proceeds and birth approaches, as the placenta becomes less efficient and fetal needs much greater for oxygen, nutrition and the cleansing of its blood of carbon dioxide and wastes, the blood becomes more polluted, and every stress becomes magnified and is more painful to the fetus. At this low level of oxygen, even normal contractures" ("ractice contractions), which produce an increase in uterine pressure and a decrease in oxygen levels of up to 25%,(70) are painful to the fetus - as though the womb were giving it an hourly "squeeze" to get it used to the more violent contractions to come. fly two weeks prior to birth, the fetal oxygen level drops much further,(71) and the fetus's need for oxygen becomes so critical that when Barcroft postponed artificially the birth of a rabbit fetus, it quickly killed the mother by robbing her of oxygen.

During labor itself, oxygenation is decreased even further below critical levels, and carbon dioxide in the blood rises. Saling found a level of oxygen in fetal scalp blood at the onset of labor of 23% and just before delivery of 12% (in adults, the central nervous system fails below 63%,(72) findings which have led even the most cautious of obstetricians to conclude that "hypoxia of a certain degree and duration is a normal phenomenon in every delivery."(73) The effects on the fetus of this severe hypoxia are dramatic: normal fetal breathing stops, fetal heart rate accelerates, then decelerates, the fetus often thrashes about frantically in reaction to the pain of the

contractions and the hypoxia, and soon the fetus enters into its life-and-death struggle to liberate itself from its terrifying condition.(74)

The many obstacles often thrown in the path of both mother and child in this liberation struggle are well known: the medication that induces one labor in five today makes contractions stronger and longer and causes more hypoxia; pain-relieving drugs likewise have the effect of prolonging hypoxia; and so on. These effects are now so well studied that even mild hypoxia far short of any brain damage has been proved to have measurable negative personality consequences later in childhood.(75) Whether these modern dangers to the fetus are any worse than the practices of the past-the violent tossing and shaking of the mother, the hanging upside down, the belly pummeling, the vulva punching and the mutilating rusty forcep -- is doubtful.(76) But, past or present, it cannot be doubted any

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longer that the facts of biology plus the policies of man combine to make the struggle for liberation from the painful womb a dangerous battle indeed.

Yet it is a liberation struggle for all of that, and not at all a "separation anxiety" from a comfortable womb. Those thousands of patients of Grof, Janov and others reliving their births might remember it as a cataclysmic, titanic struggle-but that it was a struggle for freedom from a hellish womb none doubted. Nor can these images any longer be considered "just fantasies," induced by transference suggestions of the therapist For even though neither Grof nor Janov were careful about verification from their patients' actual birth records, there are in fact other researchers, including obstetricians, who have hypnotized people whose birth they had attended years before, and then compared the hypnotized person's recall of remembered birth details with actual hospital records and with their own and mother's reports, and found significant details under hypnosis which could only be explained as actual memories.(77) Indeed, every piece of evidence, both obstetrical and clinical, which is added to the growing literature of fetal life confirms the concrete reality of these memories of feelings of pain, fear and rage as the fetus struggles for liberation from the asphyxiating womb. What the psychological effects are of these obstetrical facts, what it means to begin one's mental life with a fetal drama full of both pleasure and pain, I shall consider in the next section of the paper.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FETAL LIFE: THE FETAL DRAMA

Contrary to the theory of "symbiotic oneness,"(78) the fetus in fact begins its mental life in active relationship with one vital object: its own placenta. Its dependence on the placenta for nutrition and constant cleansing of the blood is crucial to its existence, and, as we have seen, it responds to every decrease in placental functioning with visible anger, as shown by its thrashing movements and elevated heart rate. Over and over again during its early life in the womb, the fetus can be seen to experience cycles of peaceful activity, painful hypoxia, periods of thrashing about and then restored quiet periods as the placenta begins to pump newly-oxygenated bright red blood again. The placenta-umbilicus gestalt is the fetus's first object -- as early as the second trimester the fetus has actually been filmed in endoscopic motion-pictures grabbing and holding its own umbilicus in a seeming effort to comfort itself when it is startled by the bright lights of the intrauterine camera.(79)

The pumping of polluted blood to the placenta, its processing by that organ, and the return of fresh new blood are such vital processes for fetal life that they become the physical prototypes for the later infantile mental mechanism of projection and introjection, whereby the baby fantasizes the

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mother as a "toilet" for its uncomfortable feelings—a placental "cleanser" who can process the baby's emotions and "return" them in less dangerous form.(80) The nurturant placenta therefore slowly becomes the earliest object of fetal mental life, and the regular interruptions in this vital relationship produce the earliest feelings of anxiety in the fetus.

Slowly during the second and third trimesters the first structuring of fetal mental life takes place. When the blood coming from the placenta is bright red and full of nutrients and oxygen, it is felt to be coming from what I shall term a Nurturant Placenta and the fetus feels good, but when the blood becomes dark and polluted with carbon dioxide and wastes, it is imagined to be coming from a Poisonous Placenta, and the fetus feels bad and can be seen to kick out at the source of its pain. In the final months before birth, as the fetus outgrows the placenta, the womb gets more crowded and the blood more polluted, and the fetal drama steps up in intensity. I propose that just as the satisfying and grateful emotions associated with the Nurturant Placenta form a prototype for all later love relationships, so, too, the polluting-asphyxiating experiences produce an attitude of fear and rage toward the Poisonous Placenta, which is therefore the prototype for all later hate relationships—whether with the murderous mother, the castrating father, or ultimately, the punitive superego itself.

What I am proposing, then, is a basic model of fetal psychology wherein the fetal drama is the precursor for the oedipus complex, both having a cast of three, and both involving a relationship of the individual to a loved and to a feared object. That the fetus, like Oedipus, comes to feel it must actually battle with the Poisonous Placenta (Sphinx means "strangler" in Greek) to win back the Nurturant Placenta, I consider possible: repeated fetal experience, after all, teaches it that the outcome of its kicking the Poisonous Placenta is the restoration of the Nurturant Placenta. In any case, what is certain is that the fetal drama is set up long before birth, and the fetus learns that its good feelings are often interrupted by painful feelings which it is helpless to avert, and its once-peaceful womb slowly grows more crowded, less nurturant and more polluted, until it is finally liberated only by the battle which is the upheaval of birth itself.

It is one of the most basic principles of psychoanalysis that massive quantities of stimulation, particularly intensely painful experiences, result in a severe "trauma" for the individual, particularly when the ego is too immature to prevent itself from being overwhelmed by the affects. That fetal distress is traumatic can hardly be doubted, as the fetus has as yet none of the psychological defense mechanisms to handle massive anxiety and rage. Therefore, as psychoanalysts long ago found true of all traumatizations—from early enema-giving to war-time shocks or concentration camp experiences—the psyche then needs to endlessly re-experience the trauma in a specific "repetition compulsion" which, as Greenacre first pointed out, is similar to "imprinting" in lower animals.(81) As no psychic apparatus is as

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open to trauma as that of the helpless fetus, no repetition compulsion is as strong as that which results from the “imprinting” of the fetal drama of repeated feelings of asphyxiation, blood pollution, and cleansing, climaxed by a cataclysmic battle and a liberation through a painful birth process. Although the form that this endlessly repeated death-and-rebirth fetal drama takes in later life is determined by the kind of childrearing which is experienced, the basic “imprinted” fetal drama can nevertheless always be discovered behind all the other overlays, pre-oedipal or oedipal.

The “imprinted” fetal drama, then, is the matrix into which is poured all later childhood experiences, as the child works over the basic questions posed by his experiences in the womb: Is the world hopelessly divided between nurturant and poisonous objects? Am I to be eternally helpless and dependent on the life-giving blood of others? Must all good feelings be interrupted by painful ones? Do I always have to battle for every pleasure? Will I have the support and room I need to grow? Can one ever really rely on another? Is entropy the law of my world, with everything doomed to get more crowded and polluted? Must I spend my life endlessly killing enemies?

The more loving and empathic the childrearing, the more the answers to these questions are positive and the more the stark elements of the fetal drama are modified. Every act of good childrearing contributes to the containing of the child’s fears and mitigates the severity of the split between the idealized and poisonous primary object. On the contrary, every failure of parenting abandons the infant to the archaic fears and rages of the fetal drama and confirms its lesson that the world is full of dangerous objects, producing infantile fears which have seemed to psychoanalysts so exaggerated and unrealistic that they have posited inborn “death instincts” or “basic faults” to account for them.(82) The “death wish” and “basic fault” are real enough, and exist at birth—not because of genetic instinctual inheritance, but rather because of the very real frightening experiences of fetal life.

Thus the fetal psychology I propose has the same structure as that which Freud posited for psychoanalytic theory: that our lifelong search for love, pleasure and independence is opposed by an internal punitive agency, the superego. The superego, however, begins neither with the internal representation of the oedipal castrating father nor of the pre-oedipal devouring mother but with the image of the fetal Poisonous Placenta. All therapy—historical as well as individual—consists of reducing the severity of this frustrating internal agency, so that adult life can be based on the love and pleasure intrinsic to it rather than on the fear, hatred and dependencies of fetal and childhood life.(83) The better the childrearing, the less life will be dominated by the blood-sucking poisonous monsters imprinted during the fetal drama, and the less that processes of idealization, splitting, rage and passivity will impede one’s search for love and happiness.

THE FETAL DRAMA AS THE BASIS FOR HISTORICAL GROUP-FANTASIES

The addition of the fetal dimension to psychology will, I believe, have an important effect on psychotherapy. In the example earlier cited, psychoanalyst Lester Little only approximately understands his patient’s repeated dreams of being a baby connected by a umbilicus to a blood-sucking spider when he thinks in terms of a “cas-

trating mother.”(84) My task in this essay, however, is to discuss the foundations for history and culture, not therapy. For the psychohistorian and psychoanalytic anthropologist, understanding the fetal dimensions of group life is a critical task, for their empirical material is permeated with overt imagery of the fetal drama. The ubiquity of fetal imagery of pollution fears, blood ties, nurturant and monstrous beings, rebirth rituals and cataclysmic upheavals in the group life of mankind from primitive religions to modern politics is simply too massive to ignore.

This is not just because individuals regress to fetal levels more easily in groups, but rather because individuals form groups in order to repeat and overcome the fetal drama. First one joins a group in order to be able to reestablish contact with this deepest part of one’s self, and then one plays roles in the group in order to act out the various stages of the fetal drama. These group-fantasy tasks take precedence, and are the essence of all historical group formations. Only a small portion of group energy is therefore available for reality tasks rather than fantasy needs – a proportion which can be quickly estimated by comparing the total amount of fantasy-oriented religious and military activities of any group with its communal productive activities. Thus, Bion has defined a group accurately as “an aggregation of individuals all in the same state of regression,”(85) and I would only add that this state is a regression to the earliest memories of all: those of the fetal drama.

As previously mentioned, the elements of the fetal drama are modified by the events of childhood, with each uncaring act reinforcing the split between the Nurturant and the Poisonous Placenta and each loving act tending to heal that split and allow the child to mitigate the severity of its internal objects. Since mature, loving childrearing is a late historical achievement, the least modified version of the fetal drama can be found among early primitive and archaic groups who are still in the infanticidal mode of childrearing. In the next major section of this paper, I will examine in detail the evidence that early primitive and archaic groups acted out the fetal drama in such direct form that every minute of their waking and sleeping lives was dominated by concrete fetal imagery of hellish wombs, Poisonous Placentas, polluted blood and rebirth battles. But before I begin this de-

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tailed empirical examination, an overview of the major fetal elements in group life of every historical period will prove useful.

Being emotionally part of a group may be defined as sharing a fantasy of being in a womb, connected to others by umbilicuses, that is, literally by “blood ties,” organizing one’s group role around fetal symbols, and acting out cycles of the fetal drama of growing pollution and purifying rebirth through a battle with a poisonous monster. Successive cycles of this group-fantasy of rebirth are then said to be the group’s “history.” Initiation into group life is always by means of a rebirth ordeal which establishes the shared fantasy and determines one’s role within the fetal drama. Once one “becomes part of the group” by drinking the symbolic placental blood, every element of group-fantasy life acquires the halo of feral symbolism, spoken of as “the sacred,” “the numinous,” or “the charismatic.” As Rudolf Otto first discovered and Mircea Eliade has since thoroughly documented,(86) one knows one is in the presence of the sacred by the feeling of awe and terror before an object which has the presence of mystery and overwhelming power, something “wholly other” (ganz andere) which is not really hu-

man but is intimately connected to one's essential self-a perfect description of the placenta. You can perhaps recapture this fetal feeling of awe before the original sacred object by trying to identify with the feelings of the fetus clinging to the placenta in Illustration 1. The umbilicus-placenta was once yours, a vital, pulsing "fifth limb" which you had even before you had arms or legs, and which you still feel exists-a "phantom placenta," rather like the "phantom limb" feeling that is often experienced by people who have had a limb cut off. If your empathy can carry you this far, you will perhaps then be able to recapture the aura of the placental prototype of every God "from whom all blessings flow" and every Leader "from whom all power flows." That Gods and Kings should be placentas seems, of course, even more bizarre than it once seemed that they should be parents. Yet if you examine the traits of sacredness and charisma dispassionately, you will see that divinity carries far more placental than parental qualities: self-sufficient, arbitrary, hidden, mysterious, omnipotent, unapproachable, unknowable, asexual-all these are not qualities of any living parent but rather of a living all-powerful "thing" on which one wholly depends but whose arbitrary actions one cannot affect and with which one has constant silent exchanges.

Because all groups share this fantasy that their gods and leaders are placentas needed to pump life-giving blood into and to cleanse their own bad blood of pollution, all group space becomes "sacred" space, and the first act of every group is to establish this womb-surround by "founding" it, by designating a specific womb-hole or navel-stone (omphalos) or central umbilical-post (axis mundi) that is the center of the womb, the place where sacrifices and other elements of the fetal drama are performed.(87)



Illustration 1 -The Poisonous Placenta in Antiquity

Clockwise from upper left corner: Back view of female statuette from Lespugue; Painted bull and placental sign from Lascaux; Bas relief of female with horn from Laussel; Earthmother votive with pubic triangle and swastika from Hissarlik; Leopard Goddess in childbirth from Catal Huyuk; Vulture Goddess with headless men from Catal Huyuk; Cylinder Seal with placental symbol from Ur; King's Placenta on Standard, Narmer's Palette, Egypt; Hum-baba/Huwawa mask, guardian of the cedar felled by Gilgamesh; Hecate and Scylla, Engraved gems, Rome; Italian dragon in its Labyrinth; Perseus slaying the Gorgon, with Hermes; Jason speared up by the dragon; Danish Midgard serpent.

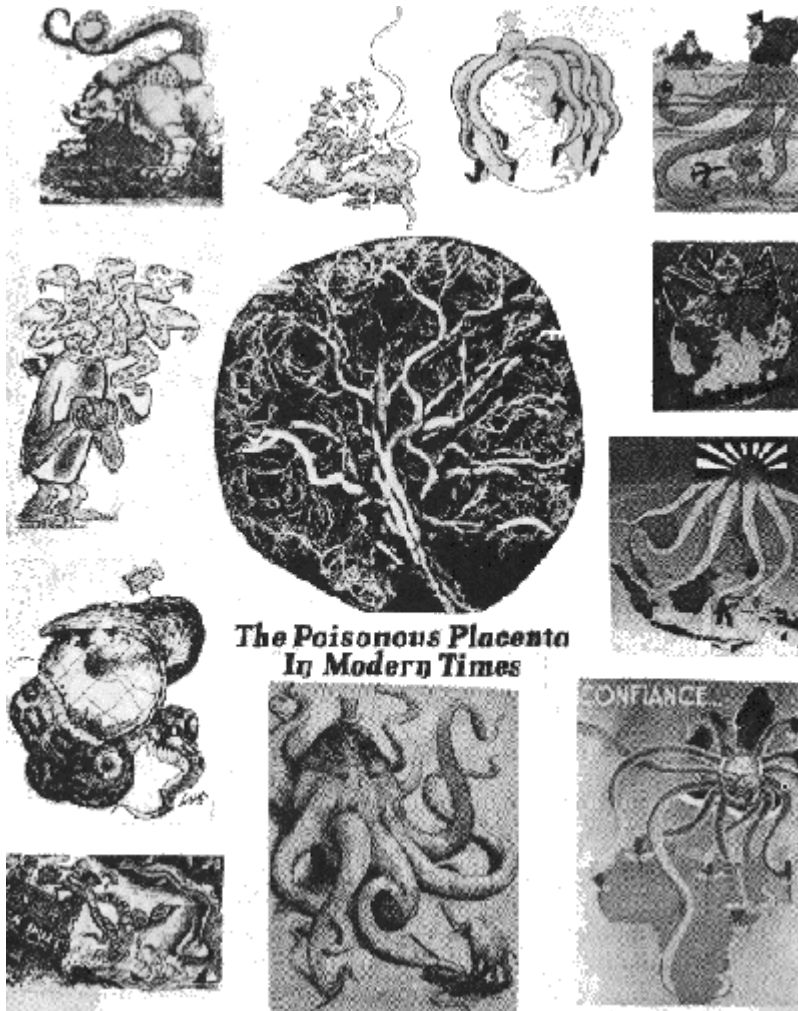
Every sacred tent, every temple, every church, every throne is believed to be at the very center of the universe and to be connected by an umbilical cosmic pillar leading upwards to the center of Heaven (Nurturant Placenta) and downwards to the Great Serpent of the Underworld (Poisonous Placenta).

The placenta has many guises, most either emphasizing its tree-like branching, with the umbilicus as the trunk, or else its snake-like qualities, often symbolized as a many-headed snake or octopus (see Illustrations 1 and 2). Sometimes the umbilicus is represented separately (see Illustration 3), taking the form of a flagpole, connecting rope, or snake. These symbols repeat themselves with few variations in every primitive and ar-

chaic religion, in historical religions, and in past and contemporary political symbols, and unless one understands these basic fetal symbols there is simply no way to explain much of what happens in the world.

The placenta as Cosmic Tree,(88) connecting the group to Heaven by its branches and to Hell by its roots, is found in most religious and political systems, whether taking the form of a sacred tree (Nordic Yggdrasil), a sacred pole (Hebrew Asherah), a sacred cross (Christian Holy Cross) or a sacred flagpole (Roman vexilloid or Celtic sacred wood). The Cosmic Tree is of course the Tree of Life which stands "at the golden Navel of the Earth" where "before birth, the souls of little children perch like little birds on the branches."⁸⁹ Often the blood of the placental prototype leaves clear traces on the Cosmic Tree or pole, whether actually – as in the ritual of anointing the sacred pole with actual human blood as primitive tribes often do – or mythically – as in the many myths of bleeding sacred trees – or symbolically – as in the blood of Christ on the Holy Cross. But whatever the form, the placental tree or pole is so crucial to group life that when it is lost the entire group becomes disoriented, as in the case where one primitive tribe broke their sacred pole they simply laid down and waited for death,⁽⁹⁰⁾ or as in the stories of Christian crusaders who were lost without their cross or troops who quit battle when they lost their flag.

Sometimes the uterine site of this central tree or pole is termed a Sacred Mountain, as in the Mount of Lands of Mesopotamian beliefs, the Paradise that contains the Tree of Life, Mount Tabor (tabbur = navel) at the center of Palestine, or Golgotha where Christ's Cross was located.⁽⁹¹⁾ In fact, every ancient city also shared this fetal symbolism, since it was usually believed to have been situated exactly in the center of the earth, surrounded by water, and since it contained a temple, ziggurat or pyramid which was the navel of the universe and the place of birth or rebirth of every fetal savior of the group, be he shaman, pharaoh, Adam, Zarathustra or Christ. As Hebrew tradition puts it: "The Most Holy One created the world like an embryo. As the embryo grows from the navel, so God began to create the world by the navel . . . the rock of Jerusalem . . . is called the Foundation Stone of the



**The Poisonous Placenta
In Modern Times**

Illustration 2-The Poisonous Placenta in Modern Times

Clockwise from upper left corner: God of war; 17th century; Great Beast of the Apocalypse; Two of Churchill as octopus; Bolshevism as spider; Japan as octopus; Churchill as octopus; American government as octopus; Carter grabbed by octopus; German serpent swallowing world; MIR V atomic bomb as many-headed serpent.

Earth, that is, the navel of the Earth, because it is from there that the whole Earth unfolded. "(92)

The drama of the suffering fetus, then, is the deepest level of meaning of all ritual, religious or political, in all primitive, archaic or historical groups, no matter how many elements are present from later life. Once one begins to recognize the limited cast, the standard stage settings, and the ritual script of the fetal drama, what once seemed like endless cultural invention in history and ethnology quickly reduces itself to a few ritual group-fantasies endlessly repeated at different evolutionary levels, according to the childrearing modes reached by the group. The five basic elements of this fetal drama are (1) The Poisonous Placenta, (2) The Suffering Fetus, (3) The Growing Pollution, (4) The Nurturant Umbilicus, and (5) The Cosmic Battle.

(1) The Poisonous Placenta: Ultimately every god and every leader is a Poisonous Placenta, for even those which appear in beneficent guise betray their awful aspects in the fear and awe with which they are regarded. This is easier to see in primitive and archaic groups, for there either monstrous gods are directly worshipped or else the good gods turn into monsters with what to the modern mind appears to be perplexing ease. (Sudden shifts from nurturant to asphyxiating conditions are, of course, repetitions of the actual experience of the fetus of alternating good and bad conditions.) The basic form of the Poisonous Placenta in group-fantasy is the serpent or dragon, a poisonous marine monster (water symbolizing the amniotic fluid) with many snake-like heads (representing the umbilicus and the placental network-see Illustration 2). In this form you can instantly recognize Tiamat, Rahab, Behemoth, Humbaba, Apophis, Hydra, Gorgon, Typhon and the thousands of other divine monsters in antiquity, including all those serpents openly worshiped by primitive and archaic man. Since the serpent "plays a larger part in religious myth" than any other animal, and can "occur even in the myths of lands where there are no snakes,"(93) its fetal origins are evident. The serpentine monsters in Illustrations 1 and 2 are just a few I have selected from a bewildering variety of thousands represented in past art and present cartoons, from the poisonous dragons of antiquity and the biblical seven-headed beast of the Apocalypse to the octopus-like choking enemies" of modern times. The serpent betrays its origin as Poisonous Placenta in its every aspect: in its birth from an egg, in its home in holes or in water, in its role as guardian of the Tree of Life, in its life-giving blood out of which mankind is produced, in its poisonous sting and its ferocious opposition to the mythic hero.(94) Once this basic pattern becomes familiar, it is then not too difficult to see the elements of the Poisonous Placenta behind every malevolent group-fantasy figure in history, behind every poisoning sorcerer, every dangerous menstruating woman, every blood-sucking witch or blood-poisoning Jew, every Red Commie who ever threatened our "national life-blood."

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(2) The Suffering Fetus: The hero of all group-fantasy, all myth, all ritual is, of course, ourselves, as the suffering fetus. We deify and identify with all those who are fated to face suffering and death, from Marduk to Tammuz, from Osiris to Christ, from Caesar to Napoleon, from Jeanne d'Arc to Piaf. It is essential that the hero of our fetal drama be basically as innocent as we ourselves felt in the womb, as innocent as the newborn thrown into the mouth of Moloch, as the innocent Tammuz who was flogged until bloody in Hell or as the sinless Christ suffering on the Cross.(95) Yet, as in the womb, the traumatic ritual of suffering and rebirth must be repeated over and over again, whether in yearly New Year's suffering and rebirth rituals in archaic groups or in the yearly Easter rituals of suffering, death and resurrection in Christian groups. Because all important events in life may stir up superego retribution, every major life event therefore precipitates a suffering-and-rebirth ritual: birth, puberty, marriage, death. Sometimes only a portion of the fetal drama is enacted, as in baptism or circumcision after birth, which repeat the experiences of the amniotic water, the cleansing saving of the baby from the devil, or the cutting of the umbilicus-penis and the establishing of the blood covenant with God. Sometimes the entire fetal drama is repeated, as in initiation ceremonies at puberty where a full suffering, death and rebirth ritual is enacted. But what is most important is that all major group events require a repetition of the fetal drama: at the end of each year, at every spring planting, at harvest time, at carnival time, before battles, at coronations. In fact, many archaic societies not only regularly renewed the potency of their kings and cleansed the group through yearly death-and-rebirth rituals, as Frazer endlessly documented in his study of "Dying and Reviving Gods," some, like the Egyptian, required their lead-

ers to go through a rebirth drama every morning of every day for fear the world would otherwise sink into irredeemable pollution. Christianity, of course, was able to accomplish this cleansing of the group through once-a-week Masses with similar death-and-rebirth content, and modern nations accomplish their cleansing through elections every few years.

(3) The Growing Pollution: The only experience in life which corresponds to the group's basic conviction that the world is forever in danger of being swamped by blood pollution is that of fetal life. The central terror which underlies all group life, from primitive taboo to modern political paranoia, is that of pollution. All social order is upheld, no matter how irrational it may be, to prevent the imminent danger of pollution of group life by a transgressor. Every ritual, every "sacrificial crisis," is performed to cleanse the pollution from the group. (96) The two opposite poles of holiness and impurity have a single placental source; the word "sacred" (sacer) originally meant both holy and defiled in Latin.(97) The menstrual blood of women is the most universally taboo substance on earth because it is equated with

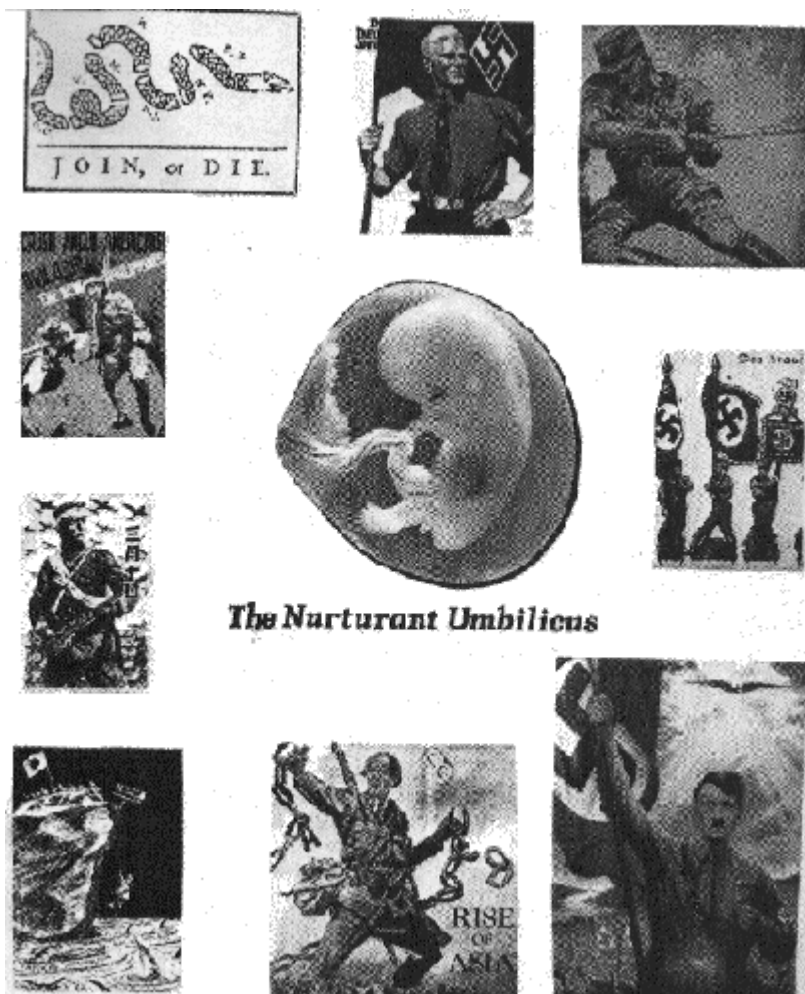


Illustration 3-The Nurturant Umbilicus in History

Clockwise from upper left: American colonies flag; Hitler posters in four versions; Japanese posters in four versions.

polluted blood, and the image of the wildly menstruating "placental" woman is a central subject of myth of many primitive cultures. Indeed, menstrual blood is often itself personified by primitives; since it might have gone to "make a fetus," they say, it must now be dangerous to humans.(98) Menstruating women are believed to be a danger to the whole community: they ruin camp sites, pollute whole forests, decrease herds, rob men of their virility, poison wine, cause crop failure and invite all kinds of group disasters. Yet menstrual blood is at bottom life-giving, too, powerful and sacred; incest between mother and son, the primal personal taboo, is ultimately the powerful wish to return to the original placental source of life.

The clearest example of the group-fantasy of pollution can be found in New Year's rituals the world over. The buildup of polluting blood reaches its visible climax as the sun dips the lowest on the horizon and the days grow shortest. As Eliade puts it, the community acts out this polluted state of the group through "the extinction of fires, the return of the souls of the dead, social confusion of the type exemplified by the Saturnalia, erotic license, orgies, and so on, symbolized the retrogression of the cosmos into chaos. On the last day of the year the universe was dissolved in the primordial waters. The marine monster Tiamat – symbol of darkness, of the formless, the non-manifested – revived and once again threatened. The world that had existed for a whole year really disappeared. Since Tiamat was again present, the cosmos was annulled; and Marduk was obliged to create it once again, after having once again conquered Tiamat."(99) It is this fetal drama of growing pollution, return of the placental beast, and ritual purification and rebirth through violence which we continue to repeat today in group-fantasy cycles of several years in length, only in the political rather than in the religious sphere, as I described in my four-stage model at the very beginning of this essay.

(4) The Nurturant Umbilicus: *As I noted earlier, the fetus has been seen in uterine motion pictures grabbing its own umbilicus when in distress. In Illustration 3, you can see a number of political posters, each showing someone grabbing a pole, rope, chain or other object coming out of their midsection. These are a selection from hundreds of posters I have collected. 100 The single most common political symbol portrayed by nations about to go to war was someone grabbing a pole at his midsection, an image which constituted over one third of all political posters I could find.*

Most of the time, of course, this pole is a flagpole, and the image of a leader holding a long flagpole (umbilicus) with a waving (amniotic water) flag (placenta) colored red (arterial blood), blue (venous blood) or green (Tree of Life) is always a comforting group symbol. One traces the path of one's arterial blood from one's heart to the placental flag each time one "pledges allegiance," by putting one's hand first on one's heart and then pointing it toward the flag. A strong breeze which makes the flags flutter and seem alive stirs our blood, but a lack of wind makes the flag "fall

dead." This condition is so frightening that baseball announcers ominously comment before games that "the flags are dead in left field," and the American flag which was planted on the moon had to have wire put in it

to show it waving, even in that airless space. Early flags and standards most often had placental beasts, serpents or dragons on them, and — as I will describe in detail in the next section — the very earliest flag was the actual king's placenta, complete with hanging umbilicus (see pictures of it on the right-hand side of Illustration 1). In brief, every connecting cord, pole or ladder symbolizes the Nurturant Umbilicus, from the rope or ladder which the shaman used to ascend to Heaven to the Rainbow Snake of primitive lore, Noah's and Jonah's rainbows, Jacob's and Mohammed's ladders to Heaven and so on.(101)

(5) The Cosmic Battle: *The growing pollution of the group always ends in a cosmic battle between the heroic Suffering Fetus and the serpentine Poisonous Placenta. All the struggles of birth are poured into this cataclysmic battle, all the crushing head pressures, the deluge loosed upon the world by the breaking of the waters, the feelings of being torn apart limb from limb, the feelings of asphyxiation – plus, of course, all the sadistic and masochistic fantasies added from later childhood. Every element of the rebirth drama during primitive initiation, from the noise of the drums and the roar of the whirled bull-roarers to the cruelty of all initiatory ordeals, reproduces this fetal battle.(102) Each of the birth struggle elements are so well imprinted in our very bones that when Salk was doing his experiment of playing a normal adult heartbeat at 80 beats a minute for newborn babies – which he found was so soothing to them that they cried less and gained weight more – and he tried moving it up to 120 beats a minute (the rate of the mother's heartbeat when in labor), the babies became so agitated he had to stop the experiment. A similar effect can be seen in contrasting the soothing effect of most music, played at around 80 beats per minute, and the blood-stirring effects of military music at 120 beats per minute-which, when combined with the effects of fluttering placental flags on umbilical poles being marched down the long, narrow uterine passageway of the street, makes the military marching band one of the most powerful rebirth devices ever invented.*

The cosmic battle between the suffering hero and the placental monster is a central subject of myth in every culture area of the world, and is replayed in symbolic form, in mock combat or in real battles, during important ritual occasions. The many-headed placental serpent is fought by Gilgamesh and Marduk, Osiris and Thor, Zeus and Herakles, Pharaoh and Ra – – even Adam got thrown out of Paradise by a serpent, although the battle itself was later edited out.(104) This battle is not only mythically enacted during ritual, it is the sacrifice itself, even when not played out concretely. The basic cleansing ritual of every primitive and archaic group is the

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sacrifice of the beast, and this beast always symbolizes the Poisonous Placenta killed in the feral drama.

The prototypical sacrificial ritual is described by Hubert and Mauss in their classic book, Sacrifice, as follows. The sacrificer is first shaved and purified of pollution, then dressed in an animal's skin. "This is a solemn moment when the new creature stirs within him. He has become a foetus. His head is veiled and he is made to clench his fists, for the embryo in its bag has its fists clenched. He is made to walk around the hearth just as the foetus moves within the womb." Then he kills the Sacrificial beast, and either actually or symbolically eats its body and drinks its blood, pours it on the altar or smears it on himself. (105) The beast is first dressed in all sorts of placental symbols, from crowns with womb-circles and tree-of-life branches to costumes full of

umbilical ribbons. During the killing the sacrificer becomes “merged . . . fused together” with the placental beast, and the killing itself “is a crime, a kind of sacrilege . . . the death of the animal was lamented, one wept for it as one would weep for a relative. Its pardon was asked before it was struck down . . . the knife was condemned and thrown into the sea.”(106)

Every time, then, that man does something which stirs his punitive archaic superego – at bottom, his Poisonous Placenta – every time he goes on a hunt, builds a house, plants a crop or goes to war, he sacrifices, that is, he becomes a fetus and is reborn through the killing of the placental beast. And every time the group itself becomes full of pollution, it imagines that its leader has become the hated placental beast, and it must either kill him in a regicidal or revolutionary act or else find a scapegoat upon which this sacrificial violence can be displaced. Without knowledge of the symbols of the fetal drama, this basic human cultural pattern is quite unintelligible. But once armed with the Rosetta Stone of fetal psychology, it becomes possible, as in the next sections of this essay, to understand from the empirical evidence left to us from each historical period in the past what evolutionary form the fetal drama has taken, beginning with the earliest Paleolithic cultures and continuing right down to the political life of today.

II. THE FETAL DRAMA BY PSYCHOGENIC MODE

In this section, I will examine the major group-fantasies of each historical period in order to demonstrate the forms of the fetal drama as modified by the evolution of parent-child relations. (107)

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THE INFANTICIDAL MODE: SADISTIC PHASE

*In 1962, archaeologist Alexander Marshack, wondering whether Paleolithic man could have been able to record “time-factored” sequences, examined a bone marked with a series of previously unexplained notches and hypothesized that they represented the days of the phases of the moon. Over the next decade, he examined thousands of such bones microscopically, and published his results in a book, *The Roots of Civilization*, which, along with Andre’ Leroi-Gourhan’s work on prehistoric art, has revolutionized modern views of prehistoric man.(108)*

Yet as convincing as Marshack’s investigations are, several unexplained patterns appear in his empirical evidence which require a revision in his explanatory scheme, and which will serve as a useful introduction to the group-fantasies of Paleolithic man. These unexplained patterns are:

- 1. Although Marshack’s bones all show evidence of patterns with phases similar to those of the moon, they are oddly erratic, some cycles having as few as 25 days and others as many as 35. Since lunar cycles are not in fact erratic but occur every 29.5 days, Marshack tries to account for this anomaly with speculations about cloudy nights and uncertainties of when to count the beginnings of the*

moon's waxing and waning. Yet even aside from the improbability that Paleolithic man for 10,000 years was obsessed with a system the rules of which were haphazardly defined, a real empirical difficulty arises from this kind of explanation. For even if the counting rules were imprecise, the system should be self-correcting. As Marshack himself notes, "If he is off by one day here or there in his notation he will always be corrected by the next series of lunar phases The method is, therefore, self-correcting over a number of months."(109) Yet the majority of Marshack's multiple-month examples do not add up to a correct total, a fact he simply ignores. Most add up to less than the correct lunar total. For instance, the Blanchard bone he analyzes most fully has $69+63+40=172$ marks, which he compares to a six-month lunar total of $29.5 \times 6 = 177$ and concludes it is about the same "plus or minus a few."(110) But 172 is a full 5 days less than 177, giving six "lunar" periods of 28.7 rather than 29.5 days.

2 The motivation he gives for engraving thousands of bones with a major religious system comprised of slightly inaccurate lunar notches seems improbable. One bone with a standard cycle should be all one needs if the purpose is to measure seasons, as Marshack

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thinks, not many variations with thousands of patterns.

3. Most of the bones are painted red, which Marshack parenthetically says may have something to do with "death, blood, birth and renewal," but does not otherwise seriously connect to his lunar theory.

4. Although the moon itself was never portrayed on the bones, many bones were either engraved with rutting animals, pregnant mares or vaginal symbols, or were actually made in the shape of the female torso. Sex therefore seemed to have some part in the "lunar" notation. Marshack at one point near the end of his book asks the reader "Is the image related to the lunar cycle via the story of birth, death, and rebirth and by comparisons between the lunar and the menstrual cycles?" but he never goes back to examine his initial lunar theory in light of this possibility.

As may be obvious by now, I believe the bone markings are actually for keeping track of menstrual periods, not lunar cycles, and that this explanation accounts for all the anomalies described above. Menstrual periods, not lunar, are variable, average 28 days rather than 29.5 days, and are not "self-correcting" over successive periods. The red ochre on the bones symbolizes menstrual blood, and the associated sexual scenes are connected with the timing of sexual intercourse to avoid the woman's menstrual period. Sexual, not lunar, scenes were engraved on the bones because the woman's unreliable sexual cycle is what has to be figured out, not the lunar cycle. Although this does not completely rule out lunar connections, since as we shall see many groups believed the moon was physically connected to the womb, the central focus of this system is in fact sexual and menstrual, not lunar.

What significance might the image of the menstruating woman have for Paleolithic man? Since so little prehistoric evidence remains, I will turn to contemporary hunting and gathering tribes to examine their group-fantasies before returning to our prehistoric evidence and, with awareness of possible differences between the two, see if they do not have some useful parallels.

As the best-documented hunting and gathering groups are the Australian aborigines, I will analyze them in some detail and only briefly touch on other hunting cultures to extend the patterns found among Australian tribes. To begin with, the childhood of Australian aborigines, like that of all contemporary hunter-gatherers, (112) is in the infanticidal mode. That is, they not only kill a large proportion of their newborn without remorse, but also treat those they do bring up with a combination of severe neglect, physical and emotional abuse, and symbiotic clinging. To begin with, many Australian tribes until recently ate their children, not from food hunger but

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from object hunger, so poorly differentiated were they from others. Some ate the fetus itself, procuring abortions for this purpose by pressing the pregnant mother's abdomen and pulling the fetus out by the head.(113) Others ate every second child, out of what they called "baby hunger," forcing their other children to share in the feast.(114) (That the anthropologist who described these habits concluded that parental cannibalism of children "doesn't seem to have affected the personality development" and that these are really "good mothers [who] eat their own children"(115) is more a commentary on the quality of anthropological research than on aboriginal reality.)

The most trustworthy field study of aboriginal childrearing, that of Arthur Hippler, concludes that mothers are "neglectful" of the child, with "routinely brutal" abuse of very young infants varying with "overt neglect" and the use of the breast as a control device.(116) Empathy is so absent that he states "I never observed a single adult Yolngu caretaker of any age or sex walking a toddler around, showing him the world, explaining things to him and empathizing with his needs. While categorical statements are most risky, I am most certain of this." He further says that every movement toward independence by the growing child is experienced by the mother as abandonment of her by the child, and since the world is regularly portrayed as "dangerous and hostile, full of demons," little individuation can take place. The growing child is then routinely sexually stimulated by both parents, beaten up and sexually abused by older children, and terrified by others in the group, so that it is not surprising that the result is an adult who employs magical thinking, psychologically as well as technologically very primitive.

Because of this infanticidal childrearing, the original terrifying fetal experience is little modified, only reinforced by equally terrifying parenting. Because the parent is virtually as infantile and needy as the newborn, the adult superego of every individual is as punitive and persecutory as that of psychotics in modern society. Like all hunters, the mind of the aborigine is characterized by massive splitting and projection rather than repression, by the use of the archaic defense mechanisms of grandiosity and omnipotence, by uncertain self-object boundaries, by a confusion of sexual zones and a predominance of rape fantasies, and by an adult life

full of paranoid fantasies which require continuous undoing rituals to ward off omnipresent persecutory anxiety.

The group life of hunting tribes like the aborigines is a world filled with womb-furniture, and takes place in a dimension the aborigines call "the Dreaming," where every real tree, hole and rock has a "sacred" mythical meaning, that is, a fetal role. Most of life is a literal nightmare-indeed, one careful study(117) shows that during rituals they literally are in a waking dream state. Every possible occasion for pleasure provokes the sadistic in-

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fanticidal superego and requires a propitiation. Birth, puberty, marriage, hunting, in fact, all potentially happy occasions stir up retribution by the unmodified Poisonous Placenta and require a concrete playing out of the full fetal drama of death and rebirth.

The initiation drama follows the pattern of all primitives, only with extremely concrete fetal symbols.(118) The central figure of aboriginal ritual is the Poisonous Placenta, represented in one form by a dangerous but sexually exciting, copiously-menstruating woman called an alknarintja. Not only is she pictured as wildly menstruating, but she is also said to be smeared with blood and to own a magic bull-roarer (tiurunga), a wooden disk marked with placental circles and loops and called the "double" or shade" of the boy being reborn. The bull-roarer is actually called a "placenta" by some tribes and "inside the womb" by others, and is the central religious object given the reborn initiate. The purpose of the initiation ritual is (a) to fight the monstrous Poisonous Placenta – represented by the bull-roarer, which is supposed to swallow the initiate – and then (b) to be reunited with the placenta – the reborn initiate is given his bull-roarer at the end of the ceremony. All the objects of the fetal drama are present during the rebirth ritual. The umbilicus is represented by a ceremonial pole stuck in a hole into which the men pour some of their own blood. The womb is a circular trench with a placental Serpent engraved on its walls and into which the initiate is thrown and buried. The Poisonous Placenta is the bull-roarer, later attached to the umbilical pole, which is whirled about and made to emit a terrible noise to frighten the initiate. The death struggle of birth includes many painful ordeals, such as radical subincision (cutting through the underside of the penis into the urethra.) The amount of real blood in the ceremony is considerable. The blood from the subincision wound – called the boy's "vagina" – is collected and smeared on him to symbolize his birth, and the men of the tribe open their own veins to provide additional blood – which is often drunk by the initiate, symbolizing in the most concrete way the flow of placental blood to the fetus-initiate. This magical placental blood from the subincision wound is at other times also used by the tribe as a fertility device since it has the ability to cause animals as well as humans to be reborn and thus can increase the supply of food for the group.

Even this brief description illustrates the roles of the placenta and its blood in primitive ritual, as well as the crucial role of the menstruating placental woman in myth and ceremony, far beyond her role in sexual taboo. In fact, the very origin of the word "taboo" is from tupua, which is Polynesian for "menstruation," and in every primitive culture known the menstrual taboo is connected with the very foundations of group life. "Greater

than the fear of death, dishonor, or dismemberment has been the primitive man's respect for menstrual blood. The measures he has taken to avoid this mysterious substance have affected his meal times, his

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bed times, and his hunting season; and primitive woman, unable to separate herself from her blood, knew that upon her tabooed state depended the safety of the entire society."(119)

Since the blood of the Poisonous Placenta was visible as menstrual blood, it literally had mana, it was sacer – that is, it was both dangerous and desired. And since all kinship ties are "blood ties" connecting members of the clan, the initiation rite which makes one a member of the clan is a literal sharing of the placental blood – that is, a concrete connecting of the initiate to a group-fantasy of a shared placenta. Every new member of any group enacts this group-fantasy of being connected to a common placenta, whether by drinking placental blood, by pledging allegiance to a placental flag or by other symbolic devices. The menstruating woman, therefore, is the Poisonous Placenta, and in every group ever formed the bloody woman can be found to be a central object of group-fantasy. What is, therefore, concretely true of the Australian aborigine is true in fantasy of all other groups, even today. It will be my task in the remainder of this essay to give the empirical evidence for this seemingly strange concept.

I shall begin by returning to Marshack's Paleolithic bones, which mark phases of the menstrual cycle. Whether these were used as "counters" for menstrual cycles or as part of rituals with "story-telling" functions is secondary: they were menstrual, that is, placental, in essence. They may even have been used at times as bull-roarers, for many contain holes which might have allowed them to be swung on strings-similar to the so-called "baguettes" and other Paleolithic batons which Maringer says had the same "loops, circles and spirals . . . like the batons of the Australian aborigines."(120) In fact, it is only when the placental key is furnished that Paleolithic objects and ritual begin to make sense. The widespread "vulva discs" with various vulval symbols marked on them are also Poisonous Placentas-used in ritual similar to the use of the bull-roarer-as are the great number of vulva-symbols found everywhere in cave drawings. (121) So, too, are the familiar "Venus" statues, which not only are painted blood-red but are almost all abdomen, without feet or face, and, as can be seen in Illustration 1, are sometimes even overtly shown menstruating at the back of the statue.

The notion that these grotesque blood-red statues are Venuses, "love-goddesses, or that they have anything to do with the increase in real human fertility, is a purely defensive concept on the part of moderns. In the first place, they are identical in every detail to the copiously-menstruating alknarintja and similar figures in other hunting tribes, from their red color to their frightening lack of a face and treatment of the braided hair. In the second place, they cannot have anything to do with human fertility because contemporary hunting tribes are highly infanticidal, and parents rarely

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want to keep more than one baby at a time to carry around. That Paleolithic parents were equally infanticidal is certain: not only because prehistoric fossils show a highly unbalanced sex ratio, revealing differential fe-

male infanticide,(122) but also because they have left considerable evidence that they were ritual cannibals, eating their children's brains. (123) In fact, one of the most common confusions of all anthropological and early archaic research is the ascribing of "human fertility" motivations to elements which are in fact part of the fetal drama: every symbolic vagina or womb or "mother" figure is not a wish to have more babies; it is a wish to be a fetus. It is true that this fetal drama often gets linked up to the "fertility" of the herd or of the earth, but this is an adult overlay, not an infantile wish. And it in any case does not apply to human babies.

The Paleolithic menstruating Poisonous Placenta figure can be seen most clearly in the famous great bas relief from Laussel (see Illustration 1), painted all over blood-red, holding her menstrual-blood horn, crescent-shaped like the moon, with thirteen marks on it for the thirteen menstrual periods of the year. McCully says of this figure: "Like later goddesses in mother-earth cults, she was not meant to be loved, but served and placated . . . by the sacrifice of human infants. . . . Her right hand holds a bison horn. Its position gives it the appearance of the crescent moon (which, like a woman's fertility, shows cyclic sequence), while it serves as a container for blood. A blood-filled horn symbolizes the highest fertility in Cretan bull cults. Her left hand sinks into her abdomen, the fecund zone of great significance in fertility ritual."(124) I would only add that it is rebirth not birth, and fetal not "fertility ritual," which are here portrayed. The right hand holding the dreaded menstrual blood container and the left hand in the abdomen are clues to what the blood container really represents.

If we turn to the work on prehistoric art by Leroi-Gourhan, we will find these placental symbols repeated everywhere in a few guises. Leroi-Gourhan's central finding is that the animals and symbols in cave art are all chosen and arranged according to a widely-shared symbolic system, with "female" animals and signs central, and "male" animals and signs peripheral. All bison, for instance, were "female" symbols in cave art, and many drawings were found showing bison and women in identical poses, as though one changed into the other. (125) This beast-woman figure is in fact the Poisonous Placenta, and the subsidiary "male" symbols are the fetus. The drama that is portrayed deep in the womb of the dim cave is the same fetal scene that is dramatized on the stage of all dim cathedrals: the battle with the Poisonous Placenta-beast and the death and rebirth of the fetus-hunter.

This can best be seen in the famous composition from the cave of Lascaux (Illustration 4).



Illustration 4-Scene from Cave of Lascaux

Marshack describes this scene as depicting "a naked bird-headed man with an erect phallus lying or falling before a wounded bison with its entrails spilling. There is a spear in the bison, a bird on the stick and an oddly branched form," usually called a "spear-thrower."(126) If you will look carefully at the scene, however, you will note several obvious errors in this explanation. First, the "spear" is not in the bison at all-it is superimposed on it, with its "point" facing away from the bison, certainly odd if a spear-scene was meant. In fact, the "spear" is not a spear at all. Paleolithic spears are poles with small stones at their very end-this is a long line with a branch line at some distance from the end. Neither is the "spear-thrower" like any one ever seen in the Paleolithic. Spear-throwers are short sticks with a slight notch at the end, while this is again a branched symbol, very much like the so-called "spear" itself. Both, in fact, are versions of the standard placental symbol of a branch from the "Tree of Life," mentioned above, and so often drawn near beasts in cave art (see Illustration 1). The bird-headed man is, of course, a shaman, not a hunter at all, and his shaman's umbilical stick is shown next to him, with its bird on the top exactly as it is found in so many contemporary shamanistic groups. The shaman has an erect penis here just as he does in primitive myth, because he has been reborn, revitalized. The "entrails" are probably not entrails at all, since it is a shamanistic rebirth ritual not a hunting scene; the lines are menstrual blood, as they are on the "Venus" figurines. The scene is in fact

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the complete fetal drama, and contains every one of the five elements we previously described: (1) Poisonous Placenta (woman-beast with "branch of life" signs), (2) Suffering Fetus (dying shaman), (3) Pollution (menstrual blood), (4) Nurturant Umbilicus (bird-headed shaman-stick) and (5) Cosmic Battle (the whole composition, the opposition between dangerous beast and shaman.)

Leroi-Gorhan also divides all the abstract signs of prehistoric art into female and male. The central female sign is easily recognized, as it is usually either vulval (triangle, oval, rectangle) or what he calls a "wound" sign. (127) But the "male" signs are not really phallic, if we think of this as spears or other possible symbols-they are usually dots or short strokes. Now in psychoanalytic symbolism, dots or short strokes associated with a triangle represents babies in the womb. I believe this is so also in Paleolithic art. The similarities can be best brought out by comparing a child's drawing with a typical cave drawing.

In Illustration 5 we see to the left two Paleolithic “female” vulval signs, accompanied by many dots below them. To the right is a drawing by a young boy, Richard, who was a patient of Melanie Klein’s. The drawing shows a red “nasty octopus” (the entire circle) with a little fish below it and to the left. This “bad octopus,” the boy said, was in a “blazing fury” and “very hungry” for the fish “babies” in the water, which he, Richard, had to “make alive” again.(128) Richard’s graphic description of the fetal drama, like his repeated drawings of the red “bad octopus” and its watery battle

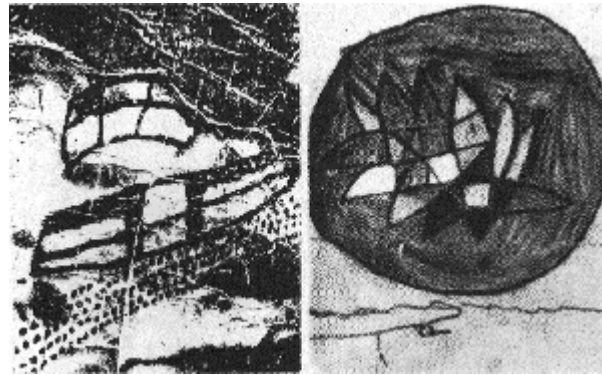


Illustration 5-Paleolithic Signs and Child's Drawing

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with the fish-babies, parallels the similar drama shown in the cave drawings. In fact, as anyone who has taught art to little children can confirm, the placenta, often termed a “sun” or a “mandala” by teachers, is the first object drawn by most children.(129) It usually looks very much like Richard’s “octopus” or the Paleolithic “vulval” signs—a memory, I believe, of the real placenta in both instances.

The Paleolithic cave, then, is a womb-sanctuary wherein the fetal drama is depicted. Leroi-Gourhan sums up his research by saying, “What constituted for Paleolithic men the special heart and core of the caves is clearly the panels in the central part, dominated by animals from the female category and female signs, supplemented by animals from the male category and male signs. The entrance to the sanctuary, usually a narrow part of the cave, is decorated with male symbols, either animals or signs; the back of the cave, often a narrow tunnel, is decorated with the same signs...”(130) That is, the central large cavities contain the placentas and the narrow tunnels at each end contain the fetuses being born. It is not surprising, therefore, to find heel-prints of youth in the mud as though young people had been dancing in the caves, such as the fifty heel-prints in Le Tuc d'Audoubert, near two modeled bison, a discovery which Abbe Breuil said “evokes the thought of some initiation ceremony.”(131)

This equation between dangerous beast and Poisonous Placenta which is depicted in cave art can be extended to the entire life style of all hunting and gathering groups, past or present. One of the curious discoveries of recent ethnography is how easy it is simply to gather the food necessary for life in a few hours a day. Jack Harlan, a specialist in early farming, went out himself to one of the “vast seas of primitive wild wheats” still growing in Near Eastern mountain areas, and, using a 9,000-year-old sickle blade, harvested grain so quickly that “a family group.. could easily harvest wild cereals over a three-week span or more and, without ever working very hard, could gather more grain than a family could possibly consume in a year.”(132)

Contemporary gathering groups can do equally well: "far from being on a starvation level.. they get all the calories they need without even working very hard. Even the Bushmen on the relatively desolate Kalahari region, when subjected to an input-output analysis, appeared to get 2,100 calories a day with less than three days' worth of foraging per week. Presumably, hunter-gatherers in lush environments in prehistoric times did even better."(133) When a contemporary gatherer is shown how to farm, he usually laughs at the notion, like the Bushman who said, "Why should we plant, when there are so many mongongo nuts in the world?"(134)

The question which leaps to mind, of course, is "Why, then, hunt?" Hunting, it turns out, is actually a group-fantasy activity, for it is often highly uneconomical, requiring more calories in the chase than are returned in the capture. To put it another way, hunting, like war, is the group-

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fantasy men do while women gather the food which supports these religious activities. "Kill the Beast" is mainly a game played for fetal and not for caloric motives, whether it is acted out in a cave or in a forest. "Animal Guardian" worship, which historians of religion now agree was the original religion of hunter-gatherer groups,(135) with its worship of an "animal-soul" which rules over the species and the forest, is displaced worship of a placental beast which nourishes, threatens, kills and gives birth to all living beings – the group itself very much included – whether it is represented as a bear-spirit or as a Mistress of the Animals. As Eliade points out, killing this sacred animal is a ritual each time it is done – the soul of the animal is respected and ritually addressed, the bones, especially the skull and long bones, have special rituals connected with them, part of the animal is often offered to the god, its blood is handled ritually, and so on.

The ritually – preserved skull and long bones of the sacred placental animal – and of human beings-have in fact been found as far back as Choukoutien (400,000 B.C.), and deserve closer attention before we leave the Paleolithic. The most widespread Paleolithic ritual on which evidence remains to us is headhunting. Many skulls have been found which show clear evidence at the base of decapitation and mutilation for the purpose of extracting and eating the brain.(136) The skull was then saved, either by putting a circle of skulls in a special area of the cave, or by surrounding the skull with a circle of stones. Many of these skulls were of sacrificed children, and most were covered with red ochre.(137) As bear skulls, too, have been found in similar states, the collecting and ritual eating of the brain from both human and animal skulls was an important early ritual, with many elements identical to those of the skull cults of contemporary primitives such as the Ainu, the Tungus and the headhunting tribes of New Guinea.(138) These skull cults all are centered on sacrifice to a placental beast-spirit or Mistress of Beasts in ceremonies that stress that the soul of the beast or human resides in the brain. The saving of the skull is believed to give protection to the tribe from all kinds of disasters, including retribution for hunting.

That the skulls, too, might represent Poisonous Placentas seems a strange notion, but in fact turns out to be true, as can be seen from the details of the ritual. Among the headhunting Asmat, for instance, the headhunting raid is a prelude to the initiation rebirthing ritual, and the blood from the cut-off head is smeared on the initiate, exactly as is the blood from the subincised penis of the Australian aborigine.(139) The head is obvi-

ously a symbolic placenta. It is roasted, a hole is cut in its base, and the brains are removed and eaten, reflecting the oral sadism of their infanticidal childrearing. The skull is then painted red and placed between the spread legs or on the groin of the initiate—he is then considered reborn, and crawls around like a newborn baby. Other placental symbols connected

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with the skull-cult are many, from the name of the mythical first headhunter (“Man with Wound”) to the pre-headhunting ceremony, where the “men sit around the stone disk which the ancestor-mother had worn on her abdomen... moving their bellies toward the disk while sighing,” like a pregnant woman in labor.

It is less surprising to find all these symbolic “placental disks” among primitives, whether called abdomen-disks or bull-roarers, when it is first understood that the real placenta itself which is born after the baby, is saved and handled ritually by most primitive tribes. The baby’s placenta is called its “double,” “soul,” “brother” or “secret helper,” and is either ritually buried in a special spot or placed in a tree or on top of a pole, which then becomes a Tree of Life. Sometimes it is sacrificed to, and sometimes either it or the umbilical stump are preserved as a potent magic charm, being hung around the neck or waist of the child or kept in special placenta baskets. In some tribes, the umbilical stump is saved and called a “personal serpent” which, being a bridge to the womb, would if propitiated bring its owner much wealth. Sometimes the newborn’s placenta is even eaten by the adults present. In fact, placentophagy is still practiced in various countries, and has even been revived recently among many health food addicts in California. (140)

The clearest example of the connections between placenta beliefs, concepts of the “soul,” and group-fantasy can be seen in the rituals of the Baganda.(141) Here the placenta is called a “spirit-child” and is placed in a plantain tree, which is then eaten by the grandparent so the child’s spirit will remain in the clan. In the child’s naming ceremony, the umbilicus is floated in milk (if it does not float, the child is disowned by the clan), and is then preserved by the owner. The King’s placenta, called his “double,” is considered to have lethal power, and is always carefully dried and preserved, complete with umbilicus, sealed in a pot, and placed on a special throne in a sacred house it occupies all for itself. This Royal Placenta is worshipped by the tribe; it is addressed as “King” by the people, a medium is on hand to give them the Placenta’s messages,” and human sacrifices are made to it Every new moon, the Royal Placenta is smeared with butter and exposed to the moon to give it new strength. A celebration of seven days is then begun, followed, it is said, as the moon wanes, by the menstrual periods of all the women. It is, in fact, the Royal Placenta which has the real power or mana of the group, for when the old king dies, it is only upon being given the old king’s Royal Placenta that the new king is considered to own the royal power. (Indeed, the placental power of the “double” is so deeply felt by the Baganda that another “twin,” their own shadow, is believed to be equally vulnerable, dangerous to step on, lethal to see on a wall, and poisonous if allowed to fall upon any food. Many primitives share this fear of the shadow “double.”)

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The universal meaning of circumcision ceremonies becomes clearer when compared to the ritual treatment of the placenta. Behind the obvious oedipal meaning of a circumcision ceremony which mutilates the child's penis lies the fetal meaning in the similarity between the cutting of the umbilicus after birth and the cutting off of the foreskin during rebirth. Both the foreskin and the placenta are often called "doubles," both are often eaten, and both are often put in trees or are saved by the group. In the present-day Jewish bris, the moyel (circumcisor) gives the infant a yarmulka (placental disk) as compensation for his cut-off foreskin, along with some blood-red wine – exactly as the aborigine gets a bull-roarer disk and some real blood to drink in exchange for his foreskin. In fact, the Australian aborigines actually color the cut-off foreskin red, and either place it in a bag for the boy to keep or put it on the totem tree (Tree of Life) to make the totem animal reproduce. Thus the foreskin, the placenta, the "double," the bull-roarer and the menstrual blood all are symbolical as the placental "Red Serpent" which the aborigine says "controls the heart and blood of man [and] his totem place [and] is the source of men's blood supply" (142)

When aborigines are reborn in initiation rites and drink quarts of human blood for days at a time, they are being literally "tied in" to the blood of the totem clan, and are also being reunited with their own placentas. An indication that this ceremony is not just symbolic "castration" is seen in those primitive tribes which often initiate women (upon their first menstrual period) by dressing them in a red robe and making them drink red water, as though they too were drinking sacred (placental) menstrual blood to unite them to the group. (143) In fact, one Australian tribe, the Bardi, experiences this placental memory so concretely that they save their actual placentas, like the Baganda, also call them their "double," believe they live in their arm blood, and dream that their placentas visit them at night and give them advice. (144)

Thus it can be seen that each element of the group-fantasy life of hunting and gathering groups is a reliving of the fetal drama in its most concrete form. When a shaman describes his dangerous journey to reach the Great Sea Goddess who has caused the group's pollutions, he reexperiences his own birth as directly as does a patient of Grof's under LSD, from the periodic uterine contractions to the passage through the pelvic bone and down through the birth canal. As one shaman describes the experience to the anthropologist:

The earth opens up under the shaman, but often only to close up again; he has to struggle for a long time with hidden forces, ere he can cry at last 'Now the way is open'... he is on his way to the ruler of the sea beasts... one hears only sighing and groaning... as if the spirits

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were down under water... [He] will encounter many dangers in his flight down to the bottom of the sea, the most dreaded are three large rolling stones... he has to pass between them, and take care not to be crushed by these stones... a way opens... a road down through the earth... He almost glides as if falling through a tube so fitted to his body that he can check his progress by pressing against the sides...(145)

I have termed this unmodified version of the fetal drama the "sadistic" phase of the infanticidal mode because it is primarily acted out through rituals symbolizing the sadistic killing of the dangerous placenta-beast, including the whole hunting lifestyle itself. In the next section, I will give the second evolutionary level of the fetal drama, the "sado-masochistic" phase, where the placental beast becomes the "Great Mother" and the fetus becomes her "Dying Son."

INFANTICIDAL MODE: SADO-MASOCHISTIC PHASE

The invention of agriculture and then of civilized urban life which marks the Neolithic is an achievement based on the evolution of childrearing. This evolution consisted of an increase in attention, consistency and identification by the parent with the child. Hunting groups can be distinguished from farming and urban groups by the shift from the impassive mother-who can handle her infanticidal wishes only by either merging with the child or by complete emotional withdrawal – to the mother-father unit, which is able to massively project their unconscious into the child, identify with it, and then severely discipline and shape it. The mark of early civilizations is, paradoxically, connected with the invention of severe physical punishment in obedience training. Even with contemporary groups, the higher the level of culture, the more consistent the child training for "obedience, self-reliance and independence."(146) Although psychological anthropologists have assumed the opposite causal direction – as though agriculture somehow magically elicited the kind of parenting which was necessary to invent and support itself – the evolution of childrearing in fact came first, and the cultural changes followed.

The theme of the second phase of the infanticidal childrearing mode is summed up in the well-known saying from Proverbs 13, 24: "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son: But he that loveth him, chasteneth him be-times." A hunting level parent cannot achieve the stability to consistently physically discipline the child – at most, he or she can strike out impulsively, but disciplinary beating practices are not found among hunters. Controlled beating with instruments designed for the purpose is an advance in the parents' ability to identify with the child – that is, as the Bible says, in

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the ability to "love" the child. When one finds in the code of Hammurabi the punishments "If a son strikes his father, they shall cut off his fingers," and "If a son has said to his mother, 'You are not my mother,' one shall brand his forehead," or when one discovers in ancient Mesopotamian narratives the continuous floggings with canes given children at school who speak without permission, one knows civilized childrearing has begun.(147) The Egyptian teacher who said "The ear of the boy is on his back-he listens when he is beaten," and the schoolboy who thanked his teacher for "taming his limbs" by tying him to the block for three months(148) are both receiving the kind of consistent attention, however brutal, which the primitive hunter simply cannot achieve. So, too, such inventions as tight swaddling-evidence for which I have found at least as early as the second millennium B.C. – is a "moulding and controlling" device which hunters do not use because they do not cathect the child enough to want to control it.

This is not to say that early civilizations are not infanticidal: newborn infants could be found piled on the dung-heaps of every city, and massive infant sacrifice proliferated in every early civilization, as I have elsewhere detailed. (149) But the sacrifice of the newborn, usually the firstborn, was itself an advance in ability to identify, since hunters only see their children as fully human when they reach puberty, at which time they go through the fetal initiation ordeal. But early civilizations put newborn babies through the rebirth ordeal, sacrificing their best-loved (most identified with, masochistically) first child to the Poisonous-Placenta god, "passing through the fire of Moloch" with wild cheers, as in Carthage, or being eaten by holy crocodiles, as in Egypt, while, Plutarch says, their mothers felt "proud" of them.(150)

The evolution from the sadistic schizoid personality of the hunter to the more disciplined and therefore more internalized sado-masochistic personality of early civilizations can already be seen prior to the invention of agriculture, in the Mesolithic. For instance, in Mesolithic art such as that of Spain, drawings proliferate of life-like human beings in some relationship to each other, as compared with the placental beasts and bizarre figurines or stick-figure drawings of men of the Paleolithic.(151) Likewise, many cultural advances which showed a decrease in persecutory elements and an increase in ego control were in fact achieved in the Mesolithic, prior to the invention of agriculture: the first containers, such as pottery and nets; the first cemeteries; the first round houses and permanent villages; the first organized religion centering on man, woman and child; etc.(152) Since the womb, and the mother, were no longer seen as places of horror full of destruction, womb-houses and womb-containers could be invented and used without openly sadistic fantasies breaking out. Only when people could achieve this new level of consistency in childrearing could they settle down more permanently instead of always having to move on, endlessly avoiding their fantasized buildup of blood pollution through abandonment of every

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campsite, endlessly searching out and killing the placental beast. Once settled in villages in the Mesolithic, once pottery and houses were invented out of the safer womb, then agriculture invented itself as wild grain seeds grew in the refuse-heaps of the villages. As Hawkes puts it, "Plants sought man out as much as he sought them out, because of their specific manurial requirements"(153) – that is, wild weeds themselves evolved into replantable varieties as soon as psychological conditions allowed people to settle down in more permanent villages. This theory is similar to the one which the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein speculated might be true when she wrote: "Could then the ferocity of early man's attacks on the mother's body be responsible for the intellectual inhibitions? And could the reason why agriculture was the first invention... be that it was women not men who did the inventing, who could investigate the effects of seeds and cross-breeding... and therefore only women who had not destroyed the mother so badly that they could not 'know' her body (ground, as agriculture, or basket, as pottery, etc.)."(154)

Agriculture, the domestication of cattle, and the invention of cattle-drawn ploughs could only occur when man achieved enough reduction of his sadism to stop hunting the placental beast and instead settle down and "save the beast" in a resurrection-centered cattle-cult and "save the baby seed" in a fertility-centered crop-cult, both based on fetal drama rituals.(155) This decrease in the sadistic version of the fetal drama is also at the base of the shift from the purely kinship organization (all are connected directly to the same invis-

ble sacred placenta) to a more hierarchical, class organization (divine leader is the placenta, as well as the fetus.) One of the reasons I term this phase the "sado-masochistic" is that the ability to organized and be subordinate and masochistic is an advance over the primitive's community of sadistic equals. It takes trust and a considerable decrease in sadism to have a leader, be he king, priest or even slaveowner, and the growth of differences in both wealth and "power" requires the ability of the subjugated individual to project good and bad parts of himself into another. The severe stratification of all archaic civilizations – often including the outright slave status of the majority – is caused by the ability of this majority to use masochistic obedience as a psychic control mechanism, not by any increase in "power" by a minority. Hunters are simply too sadistic to use masochistic obedience as a defense and too persecutory to trust a leader.

With this increase in masochistic defenses and in obedience training in childhood, archaic civilizations could achieve all the advances dependent on group organization, such as irrigation farming, defense of the group, etc.,(156) and were able to begin to develop the ego control mechanisms required to outlaw private vengeance and slowly achieve the group's jurisdiction over crime. These advances were dependent on psychological, not economic, progress-there being no good economic reason why hunting

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groups cannot have kings, priests, slave classes or criminal laws. The only writer who understands the crucial importance of psychic primacy to any theory of the evolution of early civilization is the psychoanalytic sociologist, Eli Sagan,(157) whose work on ancient Greece and on early complex societies brilliantly elaborates much of what I will only briefly be able to touch upon here.

The central figure of archaic group-fantasy, the so-called "Great Mother," is the Poisonous Placenta, only now with a combination of placental and human attributes: "she who fashions all things [and] gave birth to monster serpents, sharp of tooth and fang, filled with poison in-stead of blood, ferocious, terrible and crowned with fear-inspiring glory."(158) The fetal hero cleans out the group's blood-pollution and achieves his own rebirth by defeating the placental serpent-goddess. The classic form of the battle, repeated in hundreds of variations for other groups, was the Babylonian epic of the fight between Tiamut and her off-spring, Marduk. That these battles often have partial oedipal themes is quite true, for Marduk claims supremacy over his father as the price for slaying Tiamut. Yet the oedipal reference (159) is only cursorily mentioned, a subplot to the main fetal drama of the fury of the poisonous female serpent whose heart is pierced and arteries cut by the brave hero.

This group pollution and rebirth through the battle with the placental serpent by the Marduks, Gilgameshes and Zeuses of archaic times is, moreover, played out in central group rituals which represent the pollution-rebirth struggle by public processions and mock battles, such as the Sumerian New Year's festivals in which the Great Serpent who threatens to reduce the world to chaos is annually defeated. These rituals form the matrix for every archaic group activity. As Halpern says, "culture is the work of the hero, the mother-killer,"(160) and agriculture itself, as Eliade puts it, is the "product of a murder" in all archaic myth (161) – which is why food is sacred and rebirth rituals necessary for planting, so the placental Tree of Life may be annually renewed. These rebirth rituals could be seen even before farming was invented, as in the images of the

horrible vulture-goddesses or leopard goddesses of pre-agricultural Catal Huyuk or Halicar, which give birth to animal or human babies (see Illustration 1.) Both the goddess and her bull-child only slowly and uncertainly assumed human form as childrearing evolved further. These paintings on the walls of Catal Huyuk which show the vulture goddess attacking headless men are beautifully counter pointed by molded bas-reliefs on adjoining walls of women's breasts, each with a vulture's beak protruding from red-painted nipples.

As the bull-baby who was born of the goddess slowly turned into the youth-god who had to die and be resurrected in an annual descent into the underworld, sado-masochistic fetal myths and rituals multiplied, featuring

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the devotion (extending often to self-castration) of the young fetal god and his priests to the bloodthirsty serpent-goddess.(163) The blood of the sacrifice, like the placental blood in primitive initiatory rites, was real and plentiful. Blood was " 'sprinkled' on the worshipper, and on the new priest at the time of his consecration. It is 'sprinkled' before the sanctuary, around the altar, on the altar, at the base of the altar, on the side of the altar, on the horns of the 'mercy seat,' and sprinkled or poured on the burning sacrifice."(164) In initiatory rituals, blood was also used quite lavishly, as Prudentius described in the *Taurobolium*:

A trench was dug, over which was erected a platform of planks with perforations and gaps. Upon the platform the sacrificial bull was slaughtered, whose blood dripped through upon the initiate in the trench. He exposed his head and all his garments to be saturated with the blood; then he turned round and held up his neck that the blood might trickle upon his lips, ears, eyes, and nostrils; he moistened his tongue with the blood, which he then drank as a sacramental act. Greeted by the spectators, he came forth from this bloody baptism believing that he was purified from his sin and "born again for eternity."(165)

That the fetal drama was also concretely played out by killing live human babies and youth is now beyond doubt, for human sacrifice has been found all over the ancient world, right down to the child sacrifice "into the mouth of Moloch" of Judaic and Carthaginian historical times.(166) But the majority of the time group stress was successfully contained within ritual group-fantasy, including for the first time organized war, and the fetal drama could be played out in sado-masochistic rituals which put equal stress on the death and suffering of the fetus and the death of and reuniting with the placenta. The replaying of the fetal drama could in fact defeat real death itself, as when the scattered parts of Osiris' body were reassembled they were made whole by being wrapped in a cow's skin, called a "meshkent" or "placenta." In fact, the usual Egyptian tomb ritual involves the rebirth of the dead man or woman by wrapping him or her in a "meshkent" skin and waving a wand in the shape of a placenta over him, while addressing his ka amulet as "my heart, my mother, my heart whereby I came into being."(167) At the great Egyptian Sed festival, the pharaoh himself cleanses the group's pollution by curling up "like a fetus," wrapped in an animal skin, and coming forth to cry "the

pharaoh has renewed his births!" During this festival, the pharaoh leads a huge procession, preceded by his actual placenta stuck on the top of a long pole, complete with

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dangling umbilical cord (see Illustration 6) – the concrete prototype of all flags and standards to follow. Just as with the Baganda and other primitives previously mentioned, the pharaoh's placenta was thought to be his "double," his ka, his "helper," his "twin" who would help him in battle.(168) Separate pyramids were even built for the pharaoh's placenta. In fact, the placental ka or double of every Egyptian was believed to accompany him everywhere, and it was the goal of each of the 500 million Egyptians who were mummified "to rejoin their kas," their placentas, in after-

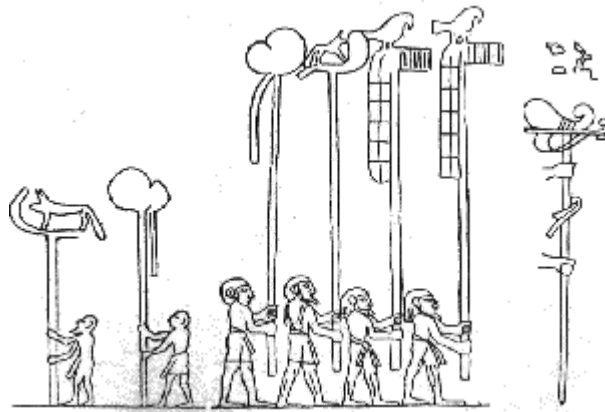


Illustration 6-Egyptian Standards of The Pharaoh's Placenta

life. This placenta twin, whether as the Egyptian ka, the Babylonian "in-dwelling god," the Iranian fravishi or the Roman genius, is the original "soul" of all mankind, the original "guardian spirit," and wooden models of actual placentas or else statues of kas are found in most Egyptian tombs.(169) All flags and banners are therefore sacred, placental, whether they are made of actual placentas, of rags dipped in the enemy's blood or of images in the shape of reptilian dragons,(170) for, as Grafton Smith puts it, the "sanctity of the flag is due to the fact that originally it was supposed to be functionally active as the life-giving powers of the king, and the celestial source of all life represented by the king's placenta."(171)

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The symbol of the placenta, either as swastika (see the public area of the Hissarlik statue in Illustration 1), as the pharaoh's standard (Illustration 6), or as a simple circle within a crescent moon, contains the power of man. The ka is often equated by the Egyptians with the "heart" of man, and each Egyptian wore a "heart scarab" amulet with a message to his ka on the back. The Sumerian symbol for the placenta, the lugal, was their symbol for "great man" or "king."(172) Both goddesses and kings were often represented by concrete placental images. In Egypt, for instance, where the main goddess Isis was represented in processions as a gold uterus,(173) the symbols of divinity of the pharaohs were the placental serpent on their forehead, the ankh (life symbol, derived from uterus), or the sceptre (branch from placental Tree of Life) which they carry in their hands.(174) Those serving the pharaoh were often called "guardians of the placenta of the pharaoh,"

and the standard with the Royal Placenta appears associated with his kingship from the earliest royal monuments to the end of Egyptian history.(175) In royal birth scenes, two babies are often shown, one representing the pharaoh himself, the other his ka, or twin, his placenta born after him, in order to represent the source of his power or vital force.

It should not be thought that all these placenta-images were mere "symbols" of kingship. They were the power itself in concrete form. As Frankfort puts it, the "large class of objects consisting of some sacred symbol in a bracket at the top of a pole from which streamers hang down . . . are true fetishes, replete with power [and] very closely related to the king: the falcon, the ibis, the wolf, and the Royal Placenta."(176) During the King's coronation, hymns were addressed directly to the Red Cobra-Crown itself, which contained the Isis-god, and the king, first stating that he had "come from her," ritually addressed the placental crown as follows:

O Red Crown, O Inu, O Great One
O Magician, O Fiery Snake!
Let there be terror of me like the terror of thee
Let there be fear of me like the fear of thee
Let there be love of me like the love of thee.
Let me rule, a leader of the living.(177)

Thus do all leaders derive their power from being "crowned," like a newborn "crowns," in a rebirth ceremony that confers upon them the blood-power of the worshipped placenta. From this moment on, the leader is literally a man-god, a fetus with the power of the placenta. As fetus, he undergoes the suffering and rebirth roles in the fetal drama in all its forms, in daily rebirthing of the sun, in annual festivals, in the birth ordeal of war. As divine placenta, holder of all placental fetishes-crown, scepter, robe, banner, flag-he is worshipped as the source of all blood-power "flowing" to the people, he sustains all life. These two roles-fetal and placental-

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are often confused by moderns, but never by the people of archaic times. As Fraser and others have documented, when the group gets too polluted, the king often has to die-but it is the placental-king who must die so the fetus-king can be reborn: "Le roi placental est mort; vive le roi foetal." More often, of course, when the group imagines itself polluted, the king can consult some entrails or go off to sleep in a temple and dream an alter-native method of cleansing the group, such as hallucinating a god's command to rebuild part of the temple or conduct a war of some sort.(178) But whatever the delusional solution to the group-fantasy of pollution, it is as representative of the placenta that every leader holds his divinity, his charisma, his "power."

As childrearing slowly improved during antiquity, overt placental representation in god and leader began to be supplanted by more phallic imagery. Poisonous serpentine goddesses were replaced by more overtly phallic male gods, snake cults associated with mothers by phallic snake cults associated with fathers.(179) schizoid polytheism by more integrated monotheism, and religious purgation festivals by ethical systems and

tragic drama. Many authors, from Briffault to Reik, Patai and Lederer, have documented the evolution of Judaism, for instance, from the rebirth rituals associated with blood-thirsty serpent-goddesses to those of monistic Yahweh worship.(180) But the supplanting of the sacrificial religious style was dependent upon the transformation of the infanticidal mode of childrearing into that of the "abandoning mode," a development which was to transform the sado-masochistic fetal drama of the ancient world into the new masochistic version of Christianity.

THE ABANDONING AND AMBIVALENT MODES: TRIUMPHANT MASOCHISM

The world of antiquity was filled with the cries of newborn babies dying in the fields and roads, where they had been exposed by their parents to be eaten by packs of hungry dogs. But as the Christian era approached, some Greek and Roman cities began to restrict somewhat the right of parents to kill their newborn, some requiring that the approval of five neighbors be obtained before killing them, some restricting the infanticide of firstborn males, and one, Thebes, according to Aelian, even making infanticide illegal altogether.(181) Those who had evolved beyond infanticidal childrearing formed the earliest Christian communities; as the Epistle to Diognetus observes:

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Christians are not different from other men in their accent or in their clothing: they follow local customs of eating and living. They marry like everybody else, they have children, but they do not practice the exposure of new-born babes.(182)

It was this ability to reduce the overt acting out of infanticidal wishes which was the accomplishment of the abandoning and ambivalent childrearing modes of the Christian era, substituting instead the sending of unwanted children to relations, to other families (fosterage) or to monasteries or nunneries (oblation). Christian parents were able to achieve closer, more consistent, more delegating relationship with their children, reducing the necessity for archaic splitting and massive projection into the growing child. As a result, rather than the "schizoid" personalities of the infanticidal mode, the Christian era produced what is now called "borderline" and "narcissistic" personalities, whose central anxiety was about abandonment, not death. Where the Egyptian prepared his whole life for dying, the Christian lived more in fear of "God's turning his face away from him." And rather than living, like the ancients, in a world of psychotic dream furniture, full of split-off internal objects, medieval man moved into and out of psychotic breaks precipitated mainly by threats of abandonment. It is against these fears of abandonment which the major institutions of feudalism and monastic life were constructed, both "clinging groups with severely hierarchical organizations full of sublimated homosexual submission rituals.

Because of the decrease in splitting in the Christian personality, boundaries between self and object could now be somewhat better established, so that even though desires for merging, with God and lord alike, were

still paramount, at least a "personality" or cohesive self-image could be established for the first time in history, unlike the fragmented ego centers of antiquity, which didn't even have a word for an organized self.

In fact, it was the ability to form a grandiose self and an idealized parental image which was the main historical accomplishment of those Christians who were able to go beyond infanticidal childrearing. For only by being able to fantasize an idealized, caring parent (Christ), can the Christian solution of triumphant masochism be realized, for only in the presence of an imaginary caring parent can one dramatize one's masochistic sufferings and self-denials.(183) An archaic Egyptian would have considered the saying "the meek shall inherit the earth" unintelligible, for meekness and self-denial could have been expected to bring no pity from a sadistic serpent-goddess. The masochistic display of all those ascetic saints, of all those holy men fasting in the desert or scourging themselves with chains, of Christ himself hanging on the placental Holy Cross, required the presence of an observing parent whose pity could be counted upon.(184)

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All the elements of the fetal drama continued to be present in the Christian group-fantasy, but each were transformed by the historical achievement of the masochistic personality. Christ, of course, was the Suffering Fetus, the fish, the sacrificial lamb whose birth ordeal and death on the Placental Cross (Tree of Life) and liberation from the tomb (womb) were the central fantasies of Christian ritual. (Peter makes the birth imagery concrete by asking to be crucified upside down, like a baby being born, saying while he was hanging on his cross upside down that "the form in which you now see me hanging is the representation of that man who first came to birth.") (185) So, too, the Eucharist repeated the cleansing of sin by the eating of the body and drinking of the blood of the god. But what a difference the Christian solution was from the sacrificial group-fantasy which dominated former times. The Placental Beast did not have to die, so it could be merged with the fetus, and the Son, who has accepted his death and homosexual surrender in an ecstatic identification with God, could be equal to God for the first time in history. No wonder when Paul put forth this new formula he was considered blasphemous. All one need do, he said, is repress one's aggression and sexuality, passively submit, incorporate the masochistic suffering Son on the Cross, and God will be compassionate, not infanticidal, and will help one triumph over all others, even over death itself. God as Poisonous Placenta now only required Christ to die once; man, by mystical union with his infanticidal death and rebirth, could live forever.

The degree to which the Christ-fetus was God was, of course, the subject of much controversy by Gnostic groups and others, for he had always to remain both mortal and divine for the Christian formula to work. Never-theless, there was an enormous difference in Christ's divinity from that of the pharaoh's. While the pharaoh could only wear the placental Red Crown and receive messages from the Gods, Christ himself had the powerful placental blood in him, so it could be drunk directly from him by the worshipper without the necessity of killing a sacrificial beast. Further, Christ needed to be killed and reborn historically, only once, not daily, and could sit at God's right hand as an equal, because he accepted God's sacrifice of himself in a triumphant masochistic surrender.

Once this masochistic solution to the fetal drama is recognized, the rest of the symbolism of Christianity becomes more intelligible. For instance, the strange concept of the Trinity, especially the identity of the Holy

Ghost, is easier to understand when it is remembered that all "spirits," like Egyptian "kas," are placentas, and the Holy Ghost, the "spirit by which Christ was made incarnate in Mary," is the placenta too, as Hippolytus reveals in the following passage:

Grant Paradise . . . to be the womb; and this is a true assumption the Scripture will teach, when it utters the words, "I am he who forms thee in thy mother's womb." ... If, however, God forms man in his

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mother's womb – that is, in Paradise – as I have affirmed, let Paradise be the womb, and Edem the placenta, "a river flowing forth with Edem, for the purpose of irrigating Paradise," meaning by this the navel. This navel, he says, is separated into four principles; for on either side of the navel are situated two arteries, channels of spirit, and two veins, channels of blood. [When] the caul in which the fetus is enveloped grows into the fetus that is being formed in the vicinity of the . . . navel – these two veins through which the blood flows, and is conveyed from Edem, the placenta . . . nourish the fetus . . . And in this way the spirit, making its way through the ventricles to the heart, produces a movement of the fetus.(186)

Once this placental origin of the Holy Ghost is recognized, much of the imagery of Christian ritual becomes clarified. One is baptized "with the Holy Ghost" in a cleansing and rebirth ceremony which is almost identical to the annual purification festivals of archaic groups, for baptism, as John Chrysostom says, "represents death and burial, life and resurrection when we plunge our head into water as into a tomb, the old man is immersed, wholly buried; when we come out of the water, the new man appears at that moment."(187) And when liturgy says it is through "the will of the Holy Ghost" that Jesus lived "in three earthly dwellings: in the womb of the flesh, in the womb of the baptismal water, and in the somber caverns of the underworld,"(188) the hidden placenta is evoked in its original abode.

Yet it was the Holy Cross, more than the Holy Ghost, which inherited the placental imagery of antiquity. The Bible actually speaks of Christ being "hanged on a tree" (Acts 5, 30) and taken "down from the tree" (Acts 13, 29), and it was not until the fifth century that the Holy Cross rather than a Tree of Life was pictured. Even then, the Cross was often drawn in the form of an Egyptian placental ankh (as a cross with a circle on top) or had the pagan Tree of Life imposed upon its center-indeed, Byzantine liturgy still calls the Holy Cross "the tree of life planted on Calvary."(189) But no matter how represented, the placental Cross dominated Christian ritual, whether it was placed in homes for adoration while holding a string of umbilical rosary beads, or on the sacrificial altar of the basilica or cathedral-the very navel of the world, the Celestial Jerusalem where, under dim, womb-like vaults dominated by the placental disk of the glowing Rose Window the fetal drama of the sacrifice and rebirth of Christ is acted out.

It goes without saying that it requires far greater self control and instinctual renunciation – and therefore more parental care and discipline – to live a Christian life even relatively cleansed and free from sin – that is, sex-less and aggressiveless – than to live the impulse-filled, periodically cleansed life of ancient man. Therefore the masochistic ideal of Christian

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asceticism is attained by few on earth, even among the clergy. Yet masochistic, homosexual surrender to Christ, priest and lord for the purposes of absorbing their phallic power could be the life-style of every man. The pattern which was set in childhood was reinforced in adolescence. Roving gangs of “youths” were common in medieval times, which practiced homosexual submission to the older among them, and which also practiced nightly collective raping attacks on unprotected women. These homosexual raping gangs would “force the doors of a woman’s house and, without concealing their identity and mixing brutality with blandishments, threats, and insults, would rape their prey on the spot, often in the presence of two or three terrified witnesses. Sometimes they would drag the victim through the streets, eventually pulling her into a house whose keepers were accessories to the plot, where they would do as they pleased, all night long.”(190) The youth, which included sons of leaders of the community, would rarely be fined, while the victims of the brutal rape attacks were considered disgraced, were thrown out by their husbands, and were often forced into prostitution. Historians have found cities where these gangs constituted the majority of the city’s youth and where gang rape made up 80 percent of all sexual assaults, and have concluded that violent gang rape actually “constituted a veritable rite of initiation or virilization” for much of medieval youth.

This triumphant absorption of phallic power through masochistic homosexual submission to a grandiose leader gives the medieval period its characteristic mixture of submissive piety and psychopathic violence. When priest and king both ordered, when the phallic absorption was at its height, all of Europe could march off to Palestine on a Holy Crusade, under placental banners of crosses and serpents, and sacrifice some Moslems or Jews, receiving a cleansing of one’s sins as a reward. This cleansing is often experienced as coming from a divine heart, usually shown as drinking the blood spouting from the vaginal wounds of Jesus, or, later, from the wound of the placental Sacred Heart of Jesus, pictured as glowing with life and divine love.

During the late medieval period, as the abandoning mode of childrearing began to evolve into the ambivalent mode and previously normal persecutory schizoid lifestyles became unacceptable, overt paranoid episodes began to be increasingly termed “insanity” and “madness” rather than being integrated into normal religious ritual activities.(191) For instance, the catatonic who “believed that he is lying in his coffin, thinking himself a dead man,” who previously might have been integrated into an Egyptian mortuary ritual, now was diagnosed by physicians as a “melancholic.”(192) The “holy man” of early Christianity who constantly wounded himself now was usually simply termed “mad.” The reason that scholars have found that “paranoid schizophrenia [was] the major form of insanity during these several centuries”(193) was because the most advanced psychoclasses, brought up by adults who were beyond the infanticidal

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parenting mode, now shared group-fantasies and constructed group rituals which no longer were designed to handle the defensive needs of schizoid personalities. This less advanced schizoid psychoclass, stripped of its group defenses, would often be forced to "fall ill" with idiosyncratic paranoid symptoms similar to those which in antiquity would have been shared by all in the group. This is just one illustration of the general principle that each historical period robs their less advanced psychoclasses of group defenses, and drives into "insanity" people who previously were considered "normal" because they could use group defenses to prevent regression.

This same principle of psychoclass conflict is the cause of the much-discussed abrupt rise and fall of witch-hunting in the sixteenth and seven-teenth centuries. The accusations against witches were actually identical to the fetal fears about the Poisonous Placenta which have been discussed in this essay. For witches only did exactly what all monstrous goddesses and menstruating women always did; as the infamous 1488 Bull of Pope Inno-cent VIII states, they "have slain infants yet in the mother's womb, as also the offspring of cattle, have blasted the produce of the earth, the grapes of the vine, the fruits of trees [and] hinder men from performing the sexual act and women from conceiving. "(194) That Satan, whom witches were ac-cused of consorting with, was also the Poisonous Placenta can be seen from his bestial horns, red color and serpentine umbilical tail. And that Christianity, like every group-fantasy, was engaged in a never-ending struggle against the placental Satan was hardly new to these centuries. What was new in the Reformation was advances in childrearing among a minority which produced a psychoclass conflict powerful enough to "turn the world upside down" and strip the European psyche of many of its most basic defensive group-fantasies and rituals. This collapse of the Christian group-fantasy in the sixteenth century by a more advanced psychoclass plunged the less advanced psychoclasses into terrible anxieties about repressed wishes previously bound by medieval Christian beliefs and rituals. As psychohistorian William Saffady puts it: "The abandonment of religious ceremonies . . . would produce, they implied, a danger in personality of a Christian man, transforming him into a beast" who might even break out into a mass incestual and patricidal acts once traditional ritual was dropped or changed. (195) For instance, once transubstantiation (the concrete reality of the eating of Christ's body and drinking of his blood during the Eucharist) began to be questioned, the oral cannibalistic desires released from this group-fantasy then had to be projected into the "cannibalistic" witch, who was believed to eat babies at nocturnal meetings which parodied the Eucharist.(196) So, too, many group-fantasy defenses-against fetal, oral, anal, or phallic material-which were removed from Christian ritual and belief by the minority, then led to terrible anxieties and regressive behavior in the majority.

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Thus what Trevor-Roper calls "the general crisis of the seventeenth century,"(197) from its religious and political wars to its persecution of witches, is the result of severe psychoclass conflict. New childrearing modes by a minority produced modern personality types which changed traditional group-fantasies, threatening the majority of less-advanced psychoclasses with being overwhelmed by fears and wishes which could now only be projected into heretics, revolutionaries and witches. It was not until the invention of a new group-fantasy, "national sovereignty" – a new "womb-surround" which could bind the conflicts of the personality – that the religious wars and witch-hunts of the early modern period could be ended. Proof that the group-fantasy of na-

tionalism – which of course most groups today still share – is based on a modern version of the fetal drama will be the task of the remainder of this essay.

INTRUSIVE AND SOCIALIZING MODES: MODERN NATIONALISM AS A FETAL DRAMA

The establishment of the intrusive mode of childrearing, with its closer, more consistent parenting based mainly on psychological rather than physical control devices, enabled early modern men and women to achieve for the first time what Melanie Klein has termed “the depressive position,”(198) a reduction of persecution and splitting sufficient to allow the individual to unite good and bad parental images and to begin to handle guilt and reparative feelings. This new personality could then begin to invent modern science in the intellectual sphere, the industrial revolution in the technological sphere and married love in the personal sphere.

Each of the advances of the modern personality, however, was only accomplished by evolving out of a matrix of fetal fantasy in which it had previously been embedded. We have seen how early religious systems contained fetal fantasies of a geographical system centered on an umbilical central world axis (axis mundi) or navel (omphalos), complete with megalithic astronomical sighting systems and serpentine geodetic forces. (199) It was out of such fetal fantasy, full of mythological struggles with world dragons and death-and-rebirth solar imagery, which the first astronomers had to construct their early scientific systems. So, too, the first chemists had to invent their science out of a long tradition of alchemy, which was everywhere composed of elements of the fetal drama. The alchemist “saw alchemical vessels as wombs [where] the foetus grows” from such elements as “Dragon’s Blood,” and after nine months gives birth to a “Royal Child” sitting in a Tree of Life, a “Philosopher’s Stone” which was born from lower metals in the alchemist’s vessel.(200) Early scientists such as Newton and Boyle were certain they saw such images present and such fetal dramas going on in their labs, and it took several centuries before the distinction between alchemy and chemistry was made clear.

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Modern politics, too, was invented out of a matrix of earlier fetal symbolism. As the locus of the fantasy of placental power began to shift from the monarch to the “nation,” early modern political theorists invented an “intencio populi [which] is the center of the mystical body of the realm . . . the heart from which is transmitted into the . . . members of the body as its nourishing blood stream the political provision for the well-being of the people.”(201) This mystical central heart, this new placenta which nourishes each person of the realm, this corpus mysticum of the embryo, as Fortescue termed it, might be located either in the leader or in a small representative group, but it represented the realm, and sustained and controlled the realm through its nourishing blood.

It is when the placental imagery began to be shifted from the monarch as holder of power to the “nation” that the modern group-fantasy of nationalism could be born, with its emphasis on contiguous national boundaries, racial purity, and mystical participation of each citizen in the national fetal drama – especially war. The leaders of the nation periodically consult this mystical central “heart of the realm,” exactly as did the pharaoh when he went off to a temple to dream the placental god’s message, only now it was known as “the

will of the people.” This “nation’s will” which is consulted (when, say, Congress meets on whether to go to war over the Gulf of Tonkin “Crisis”) involves the same fantasy as the pharaoh’s consulting “the will of the gods” in his dream-temple; it is determining the condition of the group-fantasy as to how polluted the group feels, how much collapse of ego boundaries the group is experiencing, and how much rage it is feeling against its “central heart.” As we will see in the final section of this essay, the leaders of modern nations very often go off to a symbolic dream-temple to consult their placental god when choosing an enemy at the end of each “collapse” stage (FS3).

The evidence for the four-stage fetal cycle in modern national politics is contained in my previous work on group-fantasy, as summarized in the opening pages of this essay. Because the majority of people in modern nations were raised in the intrusive and socializing modes, the nationalist group-fantasy within which we enact the fetal drama today consists of the worship of a “national will,” as interpreted by elected leaders, inevitable growing pollution of this “national life-blood,” a collapse of national will, and a sacrificial battle against a bestial enemy, often another nation, to cleanse the national bloodstream and accomplish the rebirth of national vitality. Americans today, like Paleolithic men 15,000 years ago, still worship a Poisonous Placenta in the form of a dangerous Great Bear, filling our magazines with its pictures and devoting much of our energies to its killing – only now it is a Russian bear which we are hunting. We elect leaders and hope they have the power to hold off the dangerous beast – which is why America has never gone to war in the first year of any president’s

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term.(202) But the growing pollution of national life-blood is irresistible, the collapse of group defenses inevitable, and national sacrifice and rebirth painful. As Hitler said to an aide on the eve of his invasion of Poland, as they both watched the red glow of the northern lights, “This looks like lots of blood. This time things won’t go without force.”(203)

Since all our “greatest” leaders – from Caesar and Napoleon to Churchill and Roosevelt – were sacrificial priests with the blood of millions on their hands, we must take very seriously this central ritual, as seriously as, say, the Aztecs took their periodic ritual sacrifice of youth to their god. When our magazines show an America bristling with atomic missiles pointed at a Russian bear, a psychohistorian must learn to take the image as an accurate rendering of what current American group-fantasy feels like. For an examination of the most recent sacrificial crisis in American group-fantasy, I will now turn to an examination of the group-fantasies and events surrounding the Carter presidency and the so-called Iranian “Crisis.”

III. THE FETAL DRAMA IN AMERICAN GROUP-FANTASY

It is my strong belief that psychohistory is a science, and that it is the task of a psychohistorian to form testable hypotheses and make clear predictions based on these hypotheses, so that by disproving portions of them new theory can be formulated. Accordingly, after I first proposed the four-stage model of historical group-fantasies, I made a series of predictions at the beginning of Jimmy Carter’s presidency about the future events which would take place if the theory were correct.(203) These predictions were:

1. That by 1979 American confidence in Carter would collapse,
2. That this collapse would be accompanied by powerful group-fantasy images of both Carter and the nation disintegrating, strangling and dying,
3. That the nation would by the end of 1979 ask Carter to find a "humiliating other" upon which their rage could be projected,
4. That this new enemy would likely be located in the Middle East, and
5. That Carter would be encouraged to "get tough" with this enemy, and would respond with military action which would be likely to lead to war.

The remainder of this essay will be devoted to showing that the first four of these predictions were proved correct, with what was called the Iranian "Crisis" actually being a well-motivated solution to the "collapse" stage, and that the fifth prediction was partly correct and partly wrong, since U.S. military action in Iran was "aborted" short of war. But before moving to

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an examination of these events, I first want to note the reaction of readers to my first efforts at psychohistorical prediction, as a revealing lesson in the powerful anxieties aroused by our new science.

I have long been used to the outrage of most of the scholarly profession in reaction to my psychohistorical work, and have often tried to ascertain the reasons behind this reaction. But my brief 20-page article in our Jimmy Carter and American Fantasy book – probably because it was the first time I had written about current group-fantasies – produced a storm of rage beyond anything I had yet experienced. Reviewers seemed particularly incensed about any claims to scientific methodology. Garry Wills, in an article headlined "PSYCHOHISTORY IS BUNK," called me a "snake-oil salesman of our 'scientific age,' " a person who had a "Mickey deMause method" which might drive the readers "bonkers."(205) Others deplored my "outrageous" nerve in making predictions,(206) my "determinist" methods,(207) my "insolence of a science major,"(208) and my pretensions at writing what the Wall Street Journal termed "science fiction."(209) Publishers Weekly called me a "feeble oracle,"(210) the New York Post said I was a "revisionist" who wrote "gobbledygook,"(212) and The Atlanta Constitution thought my predictions "psychobabble . . . pure trash . . . gunk . . . hogwash."(212)

My fellow psychohistorians proved even more upset at my attempt to make predictions: The Psychohistory Review termed them all only my own excited fantasies;(213) Peter Loewenberg told a reporter my predictions were "irresponsible sensationalism" since "both history and psychoanalysis deal [only] with postdiction, with reconstructing casuality in the past;"(214) John Fitzpatrick said that "psychohistorians don't have the ability to make very discrete predictions about what a president will do;"(215) another psychohistorian told a reporter "I don't like to air all psychohistory's dirty linen in public, but deMause's insistence on the 'scientific' nature of his evidence has caused a lot of rancor;"(216) Robert Coles told Newsweek "Some people mark up walls with ugly words, other people do psychohistory;"(217) The Chronicle of Higher Education termed my work "a can-

cer that is metastasizing through the whole body of the historical profession;"(218) and John Demos said "somehow we have got to apply some brakes" to this kind of psychohistory.(219)

That "applying some brakes" to my "cancerous" writing in fact implied action as well as words soon became apparent, as scholarly journals refused to review the book, scholarly associations turned down my membership application "because of the controversial nature of your work,"(220) graduate students using my theories were denied their doctoral degrees because of their association with me,(221) undergraduates were told to drop their work for my journal or else they would be refused entry into graduate school,(222) and one of my co-authors of the Carter book was threatened with the loss of his tenured professorship in connection with his association with the book.(223)

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Obviously what happens when psychohistorical interpretations are made about current rather than past group-fantasies is that the group which shares the fantasies responds in the same way as does a patient when his psychoanalyst makes a premature interpretation – with deep feelings of humiliation and rage. The infantile content I wrote about could not have come from the group-fantasies they believed in-so it must be coming from my own infantile "excited fantasies," and I myself must be infantile, a childish "Mickey deMause" who publishes his fantasies in a journal which is "an adult comic book."(223) As Bion once put it, groups do not appreciate the investigation of "the characteristics of the deity whose cult is at the time flourishing."(225) The only favorable response the Carter book received was in Germany;(226) in America, psychohistorians are more acceptable when they write about Hitler and the Germans.

THE COLLAPSE STAGE OF CARTER'S GROUP-FANTASY

The collapse stage of Jimmy Carter's presidency took place during the year 1979. America, the richest and freest nation in history, at the peak of its prosperity with the largest Gross National Product and the smallest number of people under the poverty line in its history, with no war or internal turmoil for the first time in decades, began to share a group-fantasy of total collapse of its potency. After a brief rise in Carter's confidence polls following his success at the Camp David Middle East peace negotiations (for a Fantasy Analysis of which see my "Historical Group-Fantasies").(227) American confidence in him rapidly declined throughout the first eight months of the year. Time magazine's "State of the Nation" poll in April was headlined "The Trouble Is Serious;" reporters began asking Carter at news conferences why he was "exhibiting weakness and impotency;" George Will in Newsweek said Carter was now on "a downward crumbling path [as] America's decline accelerates;" the Washington Star headlined America's "SLIPPING TOWARD IMPOTENCE ACROSS THE GLOBE;" the New York Times one day carried two articles, the first asking Carter to resign as "the weakest and most incompetent president since Martin Van Buren" and the second by a psychiatrist saying that Carter needed psychiatric treatment; and a nationwide poll for the "most out-standing incompetent" in history elected Carter hands down.(228) Speculations about Carter's sanity multiplied; one day, when Carter simply delayed a speech he was to give to the press, "the unexplained cancellation caused world-wide speculation that Carter had gone bonkers," and his appointments secretary had to assure newsmen that "Carter was sane and in charge and knew what he was doing."(229)

mg (see Illustration 7), feelings which we both wished upon him and shared ourselves, since ultimately it was the American people who were sharing the group-fantasy of collapse and disintegration. But the group rage at having a placental leader who was failing, weak and strangling soon

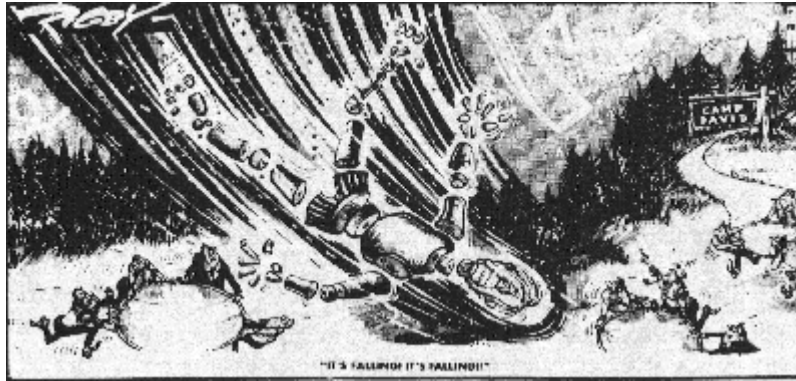


Illustration 7 – Carter Falling and Disintegrating

began to be shown in cartoons of placental octopuses strangling Carter or ourselves (Illustration 8) – suddenly the Poisonous Placenta appeared



Illustration 8 – Carter Being Strangled by a Poisonous Placenta

everywhere in cartoons, strangling us, as OPEC, as inflation, as governmental red tape, as junk mail, all cutting off our oxygen. (These two car-toons are typical of over 400 showing strangulation, falling and disintegration in my files for these months, whereas I could only find a dozen, all showing milder “falling” feelings, from earlier months.) Death wishes toward the placental leader proliferated. Carter began being called “a terminal political case,” “among the political ‘walking dead,’” and “buried politically,”(230) and one major newspaper even featured the following in-terview with a labor leader as their front page lead:

*"Is there any way the President can redeem himself
in your eyes?"*
"Yes, there's one way he can do it."
"What's that?"
"Die."(231)

Since America imagined it both depended on its leader for life-giving blood and wanted him to die, the enormous ambivalence during the summer of 1979 began to make people feel like they were in danger of going mad. In an article headlined "THE SUMMER MADNESS," James Reston announced that "Washington was having a nervous breakdown," several magazines that summer ran front cover headlines simply entitled "SUMMER MADNESS," and Rosalynn Carter was sent on a cross-country speaking tour, according to one newspaper, "to defend her husband's mental ... health."(232)

Carter did what every placental leader must do when faced with a group going mad with feelings of collapse, pollution and disintegration: he went "up on a mountaintop" to a dream temple (Camp David) and consulted with the gods as to how to end the pollution. He himself was so polluted, he was taboo – like a menstruating woman, he was so dangerous he had to be isolated. For two weeks a parade of advisors and others visited him on the mountain, and when he came down he pronounced his discovery: we were going through a "crisis of confidence ... that strikes at the very heart, soul and spirit of our national will and is threatening to destroy the social and political fabric of America."

The diagnosis was perfect: the "national heart" was indeed stricken and dying. But what sacrifice could possibly satisfy the monstrous polluting Poisonous Placenta? Carter first tried what Time termed a little "bloodletting... a temple cleansing...Three days down from his meditations at Camp David, Jimmy Carter embarked last week on a purge as complete and bloody as any in recent Presidential history – an upheaval that swept away nearly half his Cabinet in 24 hours."(233) The bloody sacrifice was dismissed by the gods, the people, as insufficient: it was termed "like rearranging the chairs on the Titanic."(234) The ship of state continued to sink

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in its polluted waters, and Carter's polls fell to the lowest figure for any president in American history. What was to be done?

It should be remembered that at some level every group and every leader knows that finding an external enemy to blame will relieve feelings of group pollution and weakness and will unify the group. After all, psychohistory merely makes conscious what is unconsciously shared and communicated all the time by historical groups. Despite Carter's sincere election promises to end American reliance on military solutions to its problems, despite his appointing the nonmilitant Cyrus Vance as Secretary of State, he nevertheless acknowledged the eventual probability that he would be asked to "get tough" with some enemy by appointing as his foreign policy advisor the well-known hawk Zbigniew Brzezinski, who, according to what one White House advisor told

Newsweek, seemed well aware of the necessary solution to the collapse of confidence in Carter: "At a meeting with Congressional staffers last year, he [Brzezinski] agreed with the suggestion. . . that a 'small war' might be useful to prove the President's toughness. "(235)

Accordingly, during the fall of 1979, Brzezinski and Carter suddenly rediscovered a brigade of Russian troops in Cuba. Amidst a storm of furious protest and calls for action in Congress, Carter proclaimed a new Cuban "Crisis," asked the nation to "remain calm," and announced that "I will not be satisfied with maintenance of the status quo."(236) Yet, short of shooting Russians, it soon became obvious that there was no sacrificial scapegoat in Cuba this time, and so the "search for the humiliating other" went on.

THE GROUP-PSYCHOTIC INSIGHT: SACRIFICING HOSTAGES IN IRAN

A nation's foreign policy is primarily conducted for the purpose of keeping enough pots boiling around the world to enable its leader to find a sacrificial crisis on foreign soil when the nation needs one. Although no really useful enemy which could play the role of bestial Poisonous Placenta was available during the fall of 1979, there was one pot that had been boiling hot during the previous months which might provide the needed group-psychotic insight" and act as the humiliating enemy which was responsible for America's feelings of pollution and strangulation: Iran. Since the beginning of the year, Iranian revolutionaries had been grabbing Americans in Teheran, tearing down flags, and chanting "Death to the Americans" in mass rallies which periodically would attack American installations and personnel.(237) Despite continuous pleas by Americans in Iran to remove personnel and equipment to safety, to tighten security (as had been done effectively in Afghanistan), and to take other prudent

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measures against possible attack by the revolutionaries, despite clear warnings from the American military of the possible consequences (one American general asked "How many Americans will have to die before we do anything?)"(238) Washington refused all actions but one. This one action proved symbolic of the sacrificial nature of leaving the Americans defenseless. After 100,000 Iranians attacked the American compound on May 25th and tore down the American flag, precautions were quickly taken to protect the flag, by covering the flagpole with pig grease and putting a barrier 20 feet from its top to discourage climbers.(239) The unconscious message was clear: protect the placental flag, protect "national honor," sacrifice the personnel.

But the Iranians did not get the message clearly enough for them to take decisive action. Something obviously had to be done overtly by American leadership to produce the sacrificial victims. For months, the obvious provocation which could move the Iranians against the Americans in Teheran was at hand: the ousted Shah of Iran had been asking to enter the U.S. Despite efforts by Henry Kissinger, David Rockefeller and others to "save our national honor" and let the Shah in, clear reports from U.S. advisors and from the C.I.A. stated strongly that "if the Shah were admitted to the United States, the American Embassy would be taken and it would be a threat to American lives."(240) Over and over again as mobs attacked them, American Embassy officials asked for substantially more guards and stronger protection; there were continually refused. By August, as the Brzezinski group pushing for the admittance of the Shah grew larger, a Top Secret message

was sent from Iran to Washington saying: "The danger of hostages being taken in Tehran will persist. We should make no move toward admitting the Shah until we have obtained and tested more effective guard force from the embassy."(241) Still no substantial new guards were provided and no personnel removed. The sacrifice was being prepared: if the Embassy were attacked, and Americans killed, America would have its bestial enemy, and the group-fantasy crisis could be solved through military invasion.

There was one remaining difficulty to resolve: both Carter and Lance stubbornly opposed letting the Shah in. Once, in late summer, when Brzezinski and Mondale pressed Carter to let him in, Carter blew up: "Blank the Shah! [Carter used the word "Blank" in retelling the event.] I'm not going to welcome him here when he has other places to go where he'll be safe."(242) This resistance by Carter to the group-fantasy demands to "get tough" and "save national honor" by letting in the Shah came from personal strengths and a determination not to involve America in war risks for trivial reasons. It was Carter's personal strength which I had obviously misjudged in making the last of the five predictions which I had made earlier-primarily, I think, due to the sketchiness of our information on his childhood and personality, so that I had assumed he would react more like

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Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon than like Dwight Eisenhower to col-lapse anxieties.(243) In addition, I should have invented a quantified "Rage Index" of the comparative violence contained in group-fantasy during col-lapse stages, so that the strength of the pressures toward violent action could have been more accurately forecast. In any case, Carter remained strong (for which he was called "weak"), and continued to refuse to admit the Shah.

Yet the fact remained that the commands of the "national will" poured into the White House from all over America: "Get tough, find us an enemy, we can't stand the strangulation, we can't stand hating you so much!" The group around Carter had no choice: they had to lie to him to get his consent. Despite consistent medical advice to Carter's staff that the Shah was in no immediate medical danger and that his medical problems could be easily taken care of elsewhere,(244) Carter was told that the Shah was "at the point of death" and that he needed treatment which could only be obtained in New York. Carter, according to the report of one person present, asked, "When the Iranians take our people in Teheran hostage, what will you advise me then?"(245) and, according to another, that we "would likely be faced with a situation where a group of fanatics grab Americans."(246) Despite these clear dangers, Carter agreed to let the Shah in. There was only one crucial condition, one important omission, which accompanied his decision, and this was obviously Carter's main contribution to the cave-in to group-fantasy: the Americans in Teheran must remain unprotected. As the New York Times reporter put it, "One option that, curiously, was never seriously examined was the evacuation of embassy personnel prior to admitting the Shah."(247) The next day, the Shah had his gall bladder removed in New York, and nine days later, exactly as predicted by everyone, Iranian revolutionaries took the Americans hostage.

"UPHEAVAL" STAGE F54: THE IRANIAN "CRISIS"

As should be obvious by now, what was called the Iranian "Crisis" was not an external crisis at all, but in fact the wished – for and carefully- manipulated solution to the earlier real crisis of collapse of group-fantasy. The rage against Carter was now split off and projected into the Ayatollah Khomeini and his jeering mobs of demonstrators, who – having found their own solution to the collapse of their revolutionary group-fantasy – were happy to contribute to America's humiliation by parading bound hostages before TV cameras and hanging Carter in effigy. Instantly, all "collapse" imagery disappeared from the American press. As the New Yorker observ-ed, "President Carter's rating of approval.. doubled during the crisis. The public's sudden rush of affection for its country seems to have included its country's President.' (248) By splitting off his Poisonous Placenta image,

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Carter was now transformed into a Fighting Fetus, a representative of every American fighting against the bestial humiliating enemy. All of America projected their personal rages into the group-delusional solution. When I asked over 800 people who attended several speeches I gave during the first week of the crisis how they felt now, most said "It feels good... we feel unified... we can't be pushed around any longer... it is good to be an American again... my personal life and disappointments don't seem so important any more." The nation began the fourth fetal stage of "upheaval" with the leader's designation of the humiliating enemy. Former President Ford called Iran "more serious than any crisis the U.S. has faced since the end of the World War II," and tens of thousands took to the streets to vent their anger, burn Iranian flags, insult Iranian students studying at American colleges, throw rocks through windows of local Arab bakeries, parade posters of actor John Wayne "as a symbol of two-fisted nationalism," and shout "Send in the Marines" and "Nuke the Ayatollah."(249)

America felt good again. One columnist put it bluntly. In his article "Why The Ayatollah Deserves Our Thanks," he explained: "The Ayatollah and the street mobs that pass for government in that backward, chaotic land, have done this country a hell of a favor. And I don't mean by practically guaranteeing the reelection of Jimmy Carter. The Iranians' contribution lies in prodding the United States into a renaissance of national pride and unity we feared had evaporated... "(250)

Even when Russia invaded Afghanistan, Americans could feel good about their strength. Carter, calling the Russian move "the greatest threat to peace since the Second World War,"(251) could easily end detente, begin "the new Cold War," and threaten "military force" in the Persian Gulf as though his earlier promises of military restraint were never made.(252) With the adoption of the delusional solution, the world made sense once more. The mood of the nation at the beginning of 1980 was one of calm pride:

What's it like in Washington now? Breathtaking. Let's begin with President Carter. Crisis everywhere... He looks calm. He invites in small groups of reporters and answers questions off the record with such low-keyed candor that they find themselves, in spite of themselves, feeling protective... Carter is an impressive figure... Carter looks calm... (253)

The cartoon in Illustration 9 shows the delusional solution which produced this strength and calmness. The ambivalent leader was now split into two parts. The good leader, now young, strong and determined, wrapped in a

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Illustration 9 – The Delusional Solution by Splitting

placental American flag and drawn in white, is shown at the left. The bad leader, the Poisonous Placenta, old, foreign-looking and drawn in black, is shown at the right. The price of the split, squeezed in birth agony by the um-bilical rope the two leaders pull between them, is the sacrificial hostages. These hostages were vitally necessary to the delusional solution. As William F. Buckley said, the real danger was that they might be freed without violence:

But what if the Ayatollah merely frees the prisoners... The public will be left with the sense of an unconsummated transaction. We will be looking to Carter to see what form he elects for punishing the enduring government of Iran, and here is the rub. It is unlikely, the hostages having been returned, that the U.S. will want direct military action of the kind that results in death for men, women and children.(254)

During the early months of 1980, the unconscious aim of American policy was to keep the hostages in captivity, even to provoke their death, as a cleansing sacrifice and as a punishment for our rage. The Shah was officially escorted around to various military hospitals by Air Force planes, infuriating the Iranians, and the press constantly played up Carter's speeches of his "readiness to use military force" regardless of the consequences. After the Shah finally left the U.S., Carter even wrote what the New York Times called an "inexplicable" letter to the Shah's sister, asking him back, saying "Our preference now is that he receive treatment under

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Dr. DeBakey's care either at Gorgas, the U.S. hospital in Panama, or in Houston, Texas -a move which was tantamount to a death sentence for the hostages. "We were certain," Hamilton Jordan recalled later, "that if the Shah exercised his right to come back to the United States, some of the hostages would be killed. We had real warnings to that effect."(256)

Yet some direct action still had to be taken to produce the sacrificial violence that would end the upheaval stage of the group-fantasy of rebirth. In fantasy, it was not just a diplomatic matter: in fantasy, a horrible Poisonous Placenta was still strangling the nation and cutting off its oxygen supply. Time magazine dramatically portrayed how we felt just before the military action against Iran (Illustration 10), showing placental flags plastered over our faces and umbilical ropes tied around our chests, as direct a reliving of our own birth as can be portrayed. American reporters tried to explain to puzzled Europeans who were not part of the birth group-fantasy why "Seldom has there been more talk of war, its certainty, its necessity, its desirability. "(257) Amidst demands that he "stiffen the national spine" and "take charge" to allow America to reach the "light at the end of the tunnel.. about to be born,"(258) after a major "economic" speech which saw a "NEED FOR PAIN AND DISCIPLINE,"(259) and backed by polls now showing a majority of Americans favoring invasion even if hostages were killed, Carter gave the go-ahead to a "rescue raid."

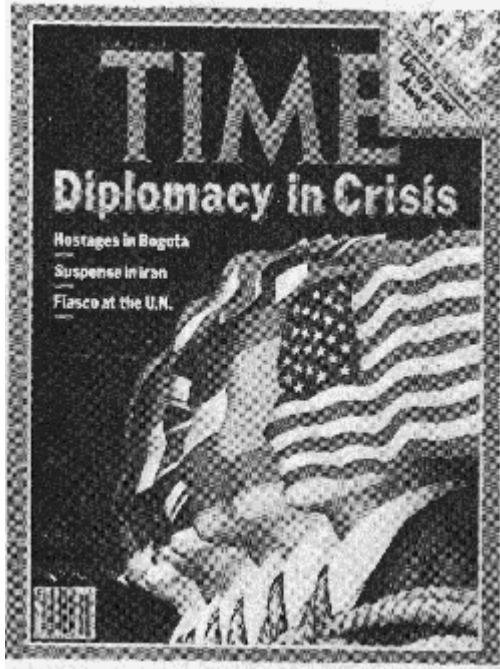
Illustration 10 – Suffocation By Poisonous Placenta During Birth

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That the military raid was bound to result in the death of many if not most of the hostages was considered certain, by Carter, by Vance, by his advisors, and by the Pentagon.(260) Yet a "sacrifice for national honor" was finally deemed necessary: the poisonous bestial enemy must be defeated and the birth upheaval terminated. As Brzezinski put it during the April 11th meeting of the National Security Council at which the decision to invade was made, America had to "lance the boil,"(261) thus ending the infection, the pollution of the national body.

But the "rebirth of American will" was not to be accomplished that day in April – the military action had to be "aborted." No Iranians and no hostages were sacrificed, and no defeat of the monstrous enemy was accomplished. Instead, only humiliation and defeat, and eight dead Americans left on the sands of Iran. Carter took full responsibility for pulling back the task force and for not using the alternative plan to continue the assault with the hundreds of planes and ships in the area. Again, this strength of character on Carter's part in deciding not to risk full-scale war was considered "weakness" by his critics. As Richard Nixon, who often blurts out the unsayable feelings of the nation, later put it, "one of the major errors that President Carter made [was] that his primary, and in fact it seemed to me his only concern.. was the lives and safety of the hostages."(262) Carter would not be forgiven this "weakness." It now felt like America was choking" on a "bone in the throat" from its own "powerlessness."(263) The national rebirth would have to be accomplished another way: through the cleansing sacrificial death of the leader himself.

Like the ritual sacrifice of the divine king of archaic societies, it is always possible to clear up the



group pollution by stoning the old, impotent leader to death.

America conducted the defeat of Jimmy Carter in the election of 1980 in an atmosphere filled with overt death wishes. Cartoons constantly showed him falling to his death and otherwise being killed. In August – exactly 17 years after the assassination of President Kennedy – 70 million Americans were glued to their TV sets to find out “Who Shot J.R.?” Carter’s final “landslide defeat” was pictured as a painful “stoning” to death of Carter by Reagan (Illustration 11). The portrait of Carter in defeat



Illustration 11 – Sacrificial Stoning of Divine King

printed near the cartoon appeared to confirm the actuality of his death. (Illustration 12.)



Illustration 12 – Proof of Carter's Death

America was quite clear about the reason for the ritual sacrifice of Carter. In the "struggle between anger (at Carter) and fear (of Reagan).. anger would win by a landslide," said one reporter. "That was no election. That was Mount St. Helens, pouring hot ash over the whole political landscape."(264) A Fantasy Analysis of Time's post-election article on Carter's defeat sounded like the report of a Spanish priest watching a bloody Aztec sacrifice in horror: "savage.. angry.. buried.. triumph.. dismembered.. killed.. happier.. flesh.. tears.. hurt.. hell."(265) Jimmy Carter had refused to clear out our pollution by sacrificing Americans; he himself then had to be sacrificed. His mistake was in not recognizing the ultimate source of the pollution: in ourselves. As Tom Wolfe put it:

People were just waiting for Carter to say, "You know what you've been doing, I know what you've been doing, we're not kidding each other. You're all out there cheating on your wives and your husbands.. You're letting your communities sink in a sump of decadence and corruption, and you're encouraging lust and pornography. It's no secret and it's time that we did something about this cesspool of immorality."(266)

Wolfe entitled his article "Let's Have a Call To Arms." The person who responded to this call to arms to stem the disintegration and pollution of an

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immoral America was Ronald Reagan, who had been preaching just these themes for decades. His nomination acceptance speech left little doubt as to his recognition of his fantasy role in the fetal drama of national disintegration and rebirth through violent sacrifice:

Destroy.. disintegrating.. weakened.. calamity.. sacrifice... destroy.. rebirth.. eaten away.. wasted away.. renew.. sacrifice.. flows like a mighty river.. injure.. turned the national stomach.. destroy.. freeze.. exhaustion.. destruction... weakness.. .disasters.. weakness.. war.. war.. blaze.. (267)

After Reagan's election, a two-month timeless "intercalary period" intervened, when, as in archaic times, the old leader is mourned, the new leader takes on the placental attributes and time is again renewed.(268) Finally in January 1981, Reagan took over his office in a burst of rebirth imagery. His inauguration, which coincided with the return of the hostages, was celebrated by a nation awash with millions of placental flags and yellow umbilical ribbons – symbols both of the reestablishment of the tie to the new leader and to the hostages who had returned to life after they had been wished dead. Normally unemotional TV announcers vied with each other to sing their praises of the national rebirth: "After 20 years of pessimism, after assassinations, Vietnam and Watergate, at last the burden was off our backs. It was America Reborn, America All the Way!"(269) "It was like a wedding where the birth of a bridesmaid's baby upstaged the groom."(270) "It's like carrying a baby . . . like a rebirth."(271) The ticker-tape procession for the hostages produced "crowds sometimes ten deep (which] lined the 17-mile route, cheering, laughing, weeping and waving flags, and, of course, yellow ribbons."(272) The yellow ribbons proved so potent a symbolic umbilicus that tens of millions of them were hung on trees and poles all around America, just as the aborigines hung the umbilicus itself on trees. And, just as other primitives ritually burned the umbilicuses of newborn babies, American radio stations broadcast appeals to send the yellow ribbons to a special Post Office Box in Florida so they, too, could be burned all together in a special ritual in honor of the reborn hostages.

Ronald Reagan was shown in cartoons as a proud father handing out cigars for the birth of his new babies, as a placental balloon with a yellow umbilical ribbon shining over the White House, and as feeding everyone. The New York Times anointed him as "the first President in years who.. is radiating charm, decency-and competence," and the Washington Post confirmed that "all of Washington and most of America seems to be wrapped in a bubble of euphoria inflated by Ronald Reagan..."(273)

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Yet to a psychohistorian, all this euphoria seemed more manic than joyful. Carter had not in fact died, the hostages had not died, no one – except for the quickly forgotten eight soldiers – had died a sacrificial death, so the poisonous Placenta was still raging nearby, panting for the blood of its sacrificial victim. The cartoon in Illustration 13 dramatically portrays American group-fantasy on the day of Reagan's inauguration-with the Poisonous Placenta barely kept in control by the slashing sword of a worried Reagan.



Illustration 13-Poisonous Placenta as Reagan Becomes President

Although most "honeymoon periods" of other presidents are low in angry fantasy language, it soon became apparent to perceptive observers that "despite the relaxed banter of the President in news conferences and despite the approving polls, there is a low, mean hiss to be heard in the land [as shown by] the snarling, deliberately nasty way people are coming to treat each other." (274) Reagan asked his staff to be "meaner than junkyard dogs" in slashing the budget, headlines of "CUT, SLASH, CHOP" were repeated everywhere in the media, and cartoons laughingly depicted everyone from government employees to babies and the elderly being chopped in half by axes and swords. (275) Despite the fact that federal government employees were actually 100,000 fewer than a decade earlier, Washington itself was identified as a bloated Poisonous Placenta with tentacles choking the people. The government itself therefore had to be chopped into pieces-no matter that the results were "cruel, inhumane and unfair," (276) or that Congressmen could say of the slashing "it's heart-breaking. We spent years putting these programs together and they work. Now they are being destroyed." (276) American pollution had remained uncleansed by sacrificial death. Therefore, the government itself had to perform an act of self-castration as a magical gesture to restore the fertility of the polluted land-exactly as priests of Cybele used to castrate themselves to satisfy the fury of their goddess. Sadistic horror movies were now considered as "the new

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wave," featuring bloody "cut, slash, chop" scenes that paralleled Reagan's budget cartoons. (277) The Anti-Defamation League reported a threefold increase in anti-Semitic incidents from the previous year; the C.I.A. was "unleashed"; and Reagan's five-year budget plan provided for over a trillion dollars more of horrible new weapons and for a quarter million additional military personnel-representing a military buildup that was "three times as large as the one that took place during the Vietnam War." (278) The placental beast remained so near that when he spoke to the country Reagan told Americans his main job was going to be "holding back an evil force that would extinguish the light we've been tending for 6,000 years.' (279)

National magazines reported the steady rise in undischarged American rage quite openly. Harper's reported that "the fevers of war are once again upon us.. beneath the surface of recent American events can be felt the gathering strength of attitudes and emotions that permit us to think about war in ways that were impossible even a year ago." (280) The New Republic told the same story from inside the administration:

For the first time since the 1950s, the possibility of nuclear war with the Soviet Union appears to be seriously accepted by key figures inside and outside the U.S. government. What long have been unthinkable thoughts now are entertained by influential men and women in Washington.. A senior White House foreign policy specialist says: "In 30 years, I never thought war was really possible: now I think it is possible.. "(281)

The cleansing sacrificial climax to the fetal drama seemed to be unreachable. During the month of March, 1980 a new group-fantasy developed in America: since Reagan was unable to provide the necessary cleansing violence, he would have to be scarified too! Perhaps a martyr's blood could fertilize and cleanse the polluted

nation. As can be seen in Illustration 14, in the final weeks of March, the media broke out in an orgy of front-page suggestions that Reagan should be shot, from the threatening revolvers on the covers of both Time and Newsweek to the graves in front of the U.S. Capitol Building on the cover of The New Republic. The cover of U.S. News the same week featured a picture of what it called "angry, frustrated" Americans under a headline that said "\$60 BILLION OF FEDERAL WASTE-REAGAN'S NEXT TARGET," thus artfully combining the message "WASTE [shoot] REAGAN" with the equally explicit delegation that "REAGAN'S [is the] NEXT TARGET."(282) There was such an outpouring of media imagery suggesting that Reagan be shot during this week that, at a meeting of our Institute for Psychohistory's on-going Reagan Fantasy Committee, we discussed our concern that the media

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Illustration 14 – Delegating the Shooting of Reagan
All cartoons and covers appeared prior to the shooting of Reagan.

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covers and all the stories with "shoot... kill ...die" in them might soon lead to an assassination attempt.

These assassination commands were the images on the news stands when the psychotic gunman pulled the trigger and shot the President. Since Hinckley had been in possession of weapons when he was in the same city as President Carter several months earlier without shooting, it is quite possible that now he pulled the trigger as a delegate of the national group-fantasy. Less stable personalities often act as history's sensitive receptors of hidden messages. Alexander Haig, for instance, the most unstable personality within the Reagan group, must have picked up the shooting messages too, since he began to argue the question of proper lines of succession to the President several days before the shooting, as though he felt it coming. The reactions of the rest of the country also seemed to reflect people's unconscious complicity in the shooting. Several newspapers reported local classes of children breaking into cheers on hearing of the assassination attempt. After the shooting, Hinckley's name disappeared from the press. One newspaper editor asked after the shooting, "Why Isn't Reagan Angry? Why Aren't We All Angry?"(283) No one was really angry at the shooting, no one – including Reagan and his wife – pushed for gun control, because everyone knew the shooting was necessary. Hadn't many Americans been predicting with a laugh for months that Reagan would die in office (supposedly because all American presidents elected in a year ending in zero did so)? Hadn't "Re-elect Bush in 1984" been on many car bumpers since Reagan's election? Just as Kennedy had to be shot a year after the Cuban Missile "Crisis" failed to really cleanse the national pollution and rage, so, too, Reagan had to be shot a year after the Iranian "Crisis" failed to cleanse the nation. The difference, of course, was that Kennedy died, and Reagan didn't. The long – desired rebirth had been aborted again – and one week after the shooting Time's front cover displayed our feeling with the one-word headline: "ABORTION."

Before long, therefore, national group-fantasy would call for another sacrificial victim to play out the final cleansing act of the fetal drama. Just as Christians for centuries had been transfixed in adoration before a placental Sacred Heart of Jesus, complete with a vaginal wound and glowing with life, so too Americans now found on their newsstands after the shooting a picture (Illustration 15) of the placental Sacred Heart of Reagan, the Crucified One who had risen again-complete with a vaginal door and glowing with new life-symbol both of the placental source of life in the womb and of the sacrificial violence yet to come.



Illustration 15 – Placental Sacred Heart of Reagan

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for CHAPTER 7

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108. Alexander Marshack, *The Roots of Civilization: The Cognitive Beginnings of Man's First Art, Symbol and Notation*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972; Andre' Leroi-Gourhaa, *Treasures of Prehistoric Art* New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.; for a psychohistorical discussion of these two works, see Robert S. McCully, "Archetypal Psychology as a Key for Understanding Prehistoric Art Forms" *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory* 3(1976): 523-42.

109. Marshack, *Roots of Civilization*, p.28.

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Basic Books, 1974; GSa R6heim, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Australian Myth and Ritual*. New York: International Universities Press, 1945. It might be noted that the actual placenta is noisy, and the main sound the fetus hears in the womb is the surging of blood through the placenta-thus it is appropriate that the placental bull-roarer be noisy.

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121. Marshack, *Roots of Civilization*, pp.297, 319.

122. Henri V. Vallois, "The Social Life of Early Man: The Evidence of Skeletons," in Sherwood L. Washburn, editor, *Social Life of Early Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, p.225.

123. Maringer, *Gods of Prehistoric Man*, pp.10-19.

124. McCully, "Archtypal Psychology as a Key for Understanding Prehistoric Art Forms," p, 528-9.

125. *Ibid.*, p.542.

126. Marshack, *The Roots of Civilization*, p.277.

127. Leroi-Gourhan, *Treasures of Prehistoric Art*, pp. 145-6,173.

128. Melanie Klein, *Narrative of a Child Analysis: The Conduct of the Pscho-Analysis of Children As Seen in the Treatment of a Ten-Year-Old Boy*. New York: Delta, 1975, pp.66-79. Klein correctly interpreted the scene of the battle as the mother's womb, but couldn't figure out what red "octopus" drawings were, so called them the "father's penis."

129. Rhoda Kellogg, *Analyzing Children's Art Palo Alto: National Press Books*, n.d.

130. Leroi-Gourhan, *Treasures of Prehistoric Art*, p.144.

131. *Ibid.*, p.181.

132. John E. Pfeiffer, *The Emergence of Man*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969, p.366.

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