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Spitz, Rene. The first year of life. New York. International Universities Press, Inc. 1965.

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To show: "how growth and development in the psychological sector are essentially dependent on the establishment and the progressive unfolding of ever more meaningful object relations, that is, social relations." (4)

Method: longitudinal studies (for 2-2½ year follow-up) of infants who were observed directly, given personality tests, and took part in experiments. The children were from two different institutions, the Nursery and the Foundling Home. In the nursery the children were cared for by their mothers who were delinquent girls who were pregnant on admission. Whereas the Foundling Home the children were cared for by nurses, each child receiving at best one-tenth of a nurse. There the children were kept isolated with sheets hung round their bed. (30)

#### Development of perception and relatedness

"The infant's inability to perceive his surround lasts for a number of weeks. Toward the beginning of the 2nd month an approaching human being begins to acquire a unique place among the "things" in the baby's surround... In terms of perception, in his second month the infant reacts to the external stimulus only when it coincides with the baby's interoceptive perception of hunger. At this stage the perception of the surround is predicated upon tension generated by an ungratified drive." (50) 2 or 3 weeks later, the infant follows human faces with concentrated attention. (50) A nursing baby will look at the mother's face, not the breast. (81) and in the 3rd month the baby responds to the adults face by smiling. (86) At this stage point the child begins to make the transition from primary narcissism to the stage of the preobject with the establishment of the first organizer". "At the 3 month level, a major integrative step takes place, which places many of the discrete ego nuclei together into a structure of higher order complexity, forming the rudimentary ego" (105)

When baby nurses, stares at face, not at breast



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### Theoretica Significance cont.

- g. "The protective function of the stimulus barrier is taken over by the emerging ego" (105)
- h. "Even the naive observer, unburdened by theory, cannot fail to be impressed by the infant's shift from passivity to directed activity at the stage at which the smiling response appears. (107)
- i. "Finally the emergence of the smiling response initiates the beginning of social relations in man. It is the prototype and premise of all subsequent social relations." (107)

### On aggression:

"The capacity for action leads the infant to a rapidly progressing development of a diversity of ego systems, beginning with the body ego, to which others are added later. Directed action proper becomes not only an outlet for the discharge of libidinal and aggressive energy, but also a device to acquire mastery and control through the psyche, thus expediting development. In the literature this function of directed activity, of actions as such, in promoting development during the 1st year of life has not been duly considered. We speak often enough of the aggressive drive; it is rarely spelled out that the aggressive drive is not limited to hostility. Indeed, by far the largest and most important part of the aggressive drive serves as the motor of every movement, of all activity, big and small, an ultimately of life itself." (106) (see Spitz 1953)

"That portion of aggression which is channeled into goal-directed action will have to overcome obstacles, but it may also encounter facilitations in achieving its aim. The manner in which this aim is achieved determines the action patterns that will emerge and their structure. In proportion to their success, such action patterns will be preferred to the random discharge of aggression; later on these action patterns will lead to the consolidation of a variety of ego apparatuses (eg locomotion, speech, etc.) It seems to me that a closer study of these early action patterns... is desirable!" (107)

### Role of Mother-child relations:

Discussed in terms of an interacting dyad in which both partners are sensitive to each others moods and affect. "Affective signals generated by maternal moods seem to become a form of communication with the infant... this mode of communication between mother and child exerts a constant pressure which shapes the infantile psyche." (138)

### Affects of Unpleasure:

These affects follow a parallel course to those of pleasure (ie with the emergence of the smiling response being their most impressive manifestation) "Beginning with the fourth month, the child expresses unpleasure when his human partner leaves him" (143) and not when his toys or familiar objects are removed. This indicates the development of memory traces and Spitz stresses the importance of frustration in learning.

The second organizer : At the eighth month the child becomes anxious when confronted with a stranger. "What he reacts to when confronted with a stranger is that this is not his mother, his mother "has left him" (155) This marks the establishment of the libidinal object, the crystallization of affective response, and the integration of the ego. "The psychic sphere, somatic, mental spheres combine to make directed action possible. "These action sequences permit the infant to discharge affective tension in an intentional directed manner, that is, volitionally!" (162)

The role and evolution of instinctual drives: "...the libidinal and the aggressive drives participate in equal measure in the formation of object relations. At birth, however, and during the narcissistic stage following birth, the drives are not yet differentiated from each other... The libidinal and the aggressive drives are differentiated from each other in the course of the first three months of life, as a result of the exchanges which take place between the mother and child. At first these exchanges take place in the form of discrete, disconnected experience in the specific sector of each other. This is true during the narcissistic stage up to the age of three months, when the preobject will become established... During the narcissistic stage and during this



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transitional stage, the drives "lean onto the gratification of ...oral needs. The mother... who gratifies the infant's oral desires; she becomes the target of the infant's aggressive and libidinal drives. This target, the mother, is not yet perceived as a unified, consistent unchanging person, or rather, a "libidinal object"." (168-9) During this stage the infant is considered to have two objects: the good object (to which libido is turned) and the bad object against whom aggression is directed.

"Around the 6th month of life, a synthesis takes place. The ego's growing influence makes itself felt by integrating the memory traces of innumerable repeated experiences ..; Eventually this results in the fusion of the images of the two preobjects....A single mother, the libidinal object proper, emerges." (169)

"...From now on she will focus on her person the infant's aggressive as well as libidinal drives. The fusion of the two drives and the fusion of the good and the bad object into one, namely, into the libidinal object, are therefore the two factors facets of one and the same process. The "good" aspects of the mother immeasurably outweigh the "bad" aspects. And in the same way the child's libidinal drive outweighs the aggressive one, for his libidinal drive is proportionate to his need. Consequently the good object appears to predominate in this fusion, which is probably why the libidinal object was also called the love object." (169-170)

After the eight months, "subtle shadings of emotional attitudes begin to emerge. Jealousy, anger, rage, envy, possessiveness on the one hand, love, affection, attachment, joy, pleasure, etc. on the other, can be observed toward the end of the first year of life. (177)

The origins and beginnings of Human communication: the third organizer (Chap XI)

"...this phase of development is marked by the conflict, between the child's initiative and the mother's apprehensions." (184) The child's locomotion requires more prohibition on the part of the mother and she thus teaches the child the concept of negation: the "No." "...the affective charge of unpleasure which accompanies frustration, and which provokes an aggressive thrust from the id. A memory trace of the prohibition is laid down in the ego and will be invested with this aggressive cathexis.

"Now the child is caught in a conflict between the libidinal bond which draws him to his mother and his aggression provoked through the frustration imposed by the selfsame mother. Between his wish and the object's prohibition, between the unpleasure of opposing the mother and thus risking loss of object and later loss of love, he will have recourse to a compromise solution. This consists in an autoplasmic change provided by a defense mechanism, that of identification, which at this stage, is just emerging. However, he will make use of a rather special variant of this mechanism; this is the "identification with the aggressor" as described by Anna Freud (1936). (186) (in fact this is identification with the frustrator but Spitz makes the point that the difference between frustration and aggression is only one of degree)

"When the child identifies with the libidinal object, this identification with the aggressor, in Anna Freud's terms, will be followed, ... by an attack against the external world. In the fifteen-month-old infant, this attack takes the form of the "No" (gesture first, and word later) which the child has taken over from the libidinal object. Because of numerous unpleasure experiences the "NO" is invested with aggressive cathexis. This makes the "No" suitable for expressing aggression, and this is the reason why the "NO" is used in the defense mechanism of identification with the aggressor and turned against the libidinal object. Once this step has been accomplished, the phase of stubbornness (with which we are so familiar in the second year of life) can begin." (187)

With The development of the "No" marks the formation of the 3rd organizer. "The "No", in gesture and in word, is the semantic expression of negation and of judgment; at the same time this is the first abstraction formed by the child, the first abstract concept in the sense of adult mentation. The concept is acquired with the help of a displacement of aggressive cathexis; I believe that displacement of aggressive cathexis are characteristic



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of every abstraction. Abstraction is never the result of identification as such; it is the result of a two-step process. The first step consists in our use of aggressive energy to detach certain elements from what we perceive. The second step is the result of the synthetic activity of the ego (Nunberg, 1930) in that

the elements detached by the aggressive energy are synthesized. The product of this synthesis is either a symbol or a concept. The first such concept in the life of the child is negation." (190)

Deviant and disturbed object relations

Since the mother is considered dominant in the dyad, "disturbances of the maternal personality will be reflected in the disorders of the child" (206)

Table IV (page 209)  
Etiological classification of psychogenic diseases in infancy according to maternal attitudes

Psychotoxic  
Quality)

Etiological factor provided by maternal attitude	Infants disease
Overt primal rejection	Coma in newborn (Ribble)
Primary anxious overpermissiveness	Three month colic <i>(like hypochondriac child with mother who interprets all cries as hunger)</i>
Hostility in the guise of anxiety	Infantile eczema <i>(a case of that predisposition for increased cutaneous response as mothers don't like to touch them)</i>
Oscillation between pampering and hostility	Hypermotility (rocking) <i>(child's development arrested at level of a crawling mother who inhibited discharge of a child to articulate rocking)</i>
Cyclical Mood swings	Fecal play <i>(follows mother who is excessively unsympathetic to sense of loss of good object child at anal stage)</i>
Hostility consciously compensated	Aggressive Hyperthymic (Bowly) <i>(see below)</i>

Efficiency  
Quantity)

Partial Emotional deprivation	Anaclitic depression
Complete emotional deprivation	Marasmus

The hyperthymic child

Case material is scarce and the maternal attitude is rather inconspicuous. Also the child's response does not become full-blown later in the child's development (after the first year). The mother is conflicted. "For such mothers the child serves as an outlet for narcissistic and exhibitionistic satisfaction - and not as a love object. However, such a mother is aware that her attitude toward her child is improper, she feels guilty, and therefore overcompensates consciously by a subacid, syrupy sweetness. This maternal attitude is primarily found in intellectual and professional circles. They fathers in these cases turned out to be aggressive...capacity for overt expression of hostility. In their relations to the child, they are hearty, loud and somewhat exhibitionistic types, who do not know where to stop, and as often as not may frighten the child through rough and ready handling, over the concerned mother's protest." (265) "...the children were exceedingly familiar with inanimate objects, and



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clever in manipulating them. But in the social sector of their personality their developmental profile shows a conspicuous retardation, in line with the kind of human relations offered them by the parents. By the...second year, they are apt to be hyperactive, not very sociable, destructive with toys...they are uninterested in contact with human beings, and become hostile when approached." (see Bowlby 1946 on aggressive hyperthymic children) 266