

the land, like Jonah from the whale. So now the mother's body, after the child is born and the mother and baby are getting to know each other.

That this employs a sophisticated concept of the relationship and that there could be an unsophisticated one, a different one from that of the mother or the infant's viewpoint could be profitably examined. My mind remained in a state of not-knowing, this led to my formulation of the transitional phenomena. I dealt with the concept of 'mental representations' in terms of objects and phenomena of psychic reality, felt to be inside; also, I followed the operation of the mental mechanisms of projection and introjection, however, that *play is in fact neither a matter of internal nor a matter of external reality.*

As to the subject-matter of this chapter, and to the question *whether inside nor outside, where is it?* I was near to the answer here in my paper 'The Capacity to be Alone' which I said that, at first, the child is alone only in the mind. In that paper I did not develop the idea of the relationship between the child and the some-

thing, especially when regressive and dependent in the transition (as in the dreams) have taught me how to find an answer to the question *is play?* I wish to condense what I have learned from this work into a theoretical statement.

When we witness an infant's employment of a symbol for the first not-me possession, we are witnessing both the emergence of a symbol and the first experience of play. An important formulation of transitional phenomena is that we face the challenge to the baby: did you create this symbol and it conveniently lying around? That is to say, the relationship between transitional phenomena and objects is a quality which we observe them.

The symbol of the union of the baby and the mother (or the mother) can be located. It is at the place in the mind and when the mother is in transition from being merged in with the infant and alternatively being perceived to be perceived rather than conceived of. The symbol localizes the union of two now separate things, baby

## THE LOCATION OF CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

and mother, *at the point in time and space of the initiation of their state of separateness.*<sup>1</sup>

A complication exists right from the very beginning of any consideration of this idea, in that it is necessary to postulate that if the use of the object by the baby builds up into anything (i.e. is more than an activity that might be found even in a baby born with no brain), then there must be the beginning of the setting up in the infant's mind or personal psychic reality of an image of the object. But the mental representation in the inner world is kept significant, or the imago in the inner world is kept alive, by the reinforcement given through the availability of the external separated-off and actual mother, along with her technique of child care.

It is perhaps worth while trying to formulate this in a way that gives the time factor due weight. The feeling of the mother's existence lasts  $x$  minutes. If the mother is away more than  $x$  minutes, then the imago fades, and along with this the baby's capacity to use the symbol of the union ceases. The baby is distressed, but this distress is soon mended because the mother returns in  $x+y$  minutes. In  $x+y$  minutes the baby has not become altered. But in  $x+y+z$  minutes the baby has become traumatized. In  $x+y+z$  minutes the mother's return does not mend the baby's altered state. Trauma implies that the baby has experienced a break in life's continuity, so that primitive defences now become organized to defend against a repetition of 'unthinkable anxiety' or a return of the acute confusional state that belongs to disintegration of nascent ego structure.

We must assume that the vast majority of babies never experience the  $x+y+z$  quantity of deprivation. This means that the majority of children do not carry around with them for life the knowledge from experience of having been mad. Madness here simply means a *break-up* of whatever may exist at the time of *a personal continuity of existence*. After 'recovery' from  $x+y+z$  deprivation a baby has to start again permanently deprived of the root which could provide *continuity with the personal beginning*. This implies the existence of a memory system and an organization of memories.

By contrast, from the effects of  $x+y+z$  degree of deprivation, babies are constantly being *cured* by the mother's localized spoiling that mends the ego structure. This mending of the ego structure re-establishes the baby's capacity to use a symbol of union; the baby then comes once more to allow and even to benefit from separation. *This is the place*

<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to simplify matters by referring to the use of objects, but the title of my original paper was 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena' (1951).