

Colorful Maternity: The Different Nuances of Care on Winnicott's Psychoanalytic Perspective

Cristiane Ajnamei dos Santos Alfaya*

Centro de Ciências da Saúde, Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia (UFRB), Brazil

***Corresponding Author:** Cristiane Ajnamei dos Santos Alfaya, Centro de Ciências da Saúde, Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia (UFRB), Brazil.

Received: November 01, 2021; **Published:** November 30, 2021

Observational studies on the act or attitude of caring for the newborn child began with the direct observation of mother-infant relationships in the 1940s, based on the studies by René Spitz and Anna Freud with children separated from their parents in institutions and under conditions of war. The studies carried out in these conditions of separation, in which the mother was not present to attend to the child, could verify the nature of child dependence and the importance of care behavior for the child's overall development (physical, psychological and social).

The descriptions of severe pathology as a result of the absence of a main caregiver, who in the context of institutionalization of the child referred to the mother, encouraged new observational longitudinal studies on affective relationships. Among these studies, we can mention Donald Winnicott, Margaret Mahler and John Bowlby, who admitted the importance of care relationships from the beginning of life, especially the quality of the bond with the caregiver, for the child's socio-emotional development.

Since then, the characteristics of the behaviors observed in situations of mother/father/caregiver-infant interaction have become targets of study in the analysis of the affective bond in different development contexts. Longitudinal and observational studies, in the area of human development at the beginning of life, opened paths so that we could better understand the potential and plasticity of the human psyche for the act of caring, in terms of creativity and adaptation, in the different situations faced on the day-to-day throughout the life cycle.

In this sense, this study aims to discuss motherhood, considering the behavior of caring in light of Winnicott's theoretical conception on the subject.

Winnicott understands human development from the ego's emotional maturation processes (integration and personalization) linked to the reality principle (environment) towards autonomy. In terms of emotional maturation or ego development, the author does not postulate specific stages in terms of age during the life cycle. On the contrary, it defends the continuous state of becoming of the individual in the different circumstances that present themselves, feeling that he exists and occupies a space, even though, apparently, limited by his own body. Paradoxically limited, the individual in the process of developing his autonomy, by feeling that he is and exists, can truly do and become different (potential still). In this sense, it is possible to identify both the potential and the plasticity of the human psyche [1].

At a conference entitled Primary Maternal Concern, Winnicott defined the concept as a special psychological state of heightened sensitivity beginning in pregnancy, lasting up to a few weeks after birth, in order to provide adequate care for the baby. At the same conference, the author states that in cases of adoption, the state of heightened sensitivity could be experienced in the same way, reaffirming the development of primary maternal concern. In this sense, the biological aspect cannot be considered as a triggering factor for the capacity for primary maternal concern. The identification process with the baby, which the state of heightened sensitivity provides as a result of the partial regression of the caregiver's ego, is the main characteristic involved in the state of primary maternal concern. The identification

process with the baby is supported by the caregiver's childhood experiences, which are re-edited in the current relationship with the child through the projection mechanism [2].

Later, at the conference entitled Paternal-Affiliate Relationship Winnicott does not abandon the concept of primary maternal concern, considering the increased sensitivity to the baby's needs, but expands the care behavior to the real and subjective aspects of the environment in which the baby participates. Understanding the care of the environment in a broader way includes all objects (people and things) that are dedicated to the care of the baby, in order to promote the development, health, and well-being of the child [3].

Although some objects in the environment are hostile and insensitive to the baby's needs, it is essential that the child has the opportunity to experience care behaviors, characterized by devotion and love for sensitive objects (people and things) concerned with survival, development and health of the baby. For Winnicott [4,5], the continuous process of maturation towards autonomy, innate to the individual towards life, through the encounter of internal (infant) and external (other) objects also depends on the holding (support), which involves both physical and emotional provision. care of the environment. The behavior of caring promoted by the environment (external object/ other) is highlighted, regardless of gender, sex, color, race, ethnicity, extending motherhood to the environment, and not exclusively to women.

In this sense, this study reflected motherhood through care behavior independent of gender, sex, color, race, ethnicity, economic and educational condition, based on Winnicott's theoretical concepts.

When considering motherhood as the presence of the act or attitude of caring characterized by devotion, love, sensitivity, support and concern for the child's development, health and well-being, motherhood can be extended to a person or institutional organization.

According to this study, the initial function of the caregiver environment is to provide the baby with an auxiliary ego that facilitates the integration of their bodily sensations, external stimuli and their motor skills. Also, the importance of the caregiver environment providing a gradual failure of adaptation, so that the child's mental function develops satisfactorily, giving rise to the capacity for self-care as an expression of the development of autonomy and maturation.

Bibliography

1. Winnicott DW. "From pediatrics to psychoanalysis". Rio de Janeiro: Imago (2000).
2. Winnicott DW. "The environment and maturation processes". Poro Alegre: ArtMed (1983).
3. Winnicott DW. "Babies and their mothers". São Paulo: Martins Fontes (1988).
4. Winnicott DW. "It all starts at home". 3rd edition. São Paulo: Martins Fontes (1999).
5. Winnicott DW. "Play and reality". Rio de Janeiro: Imago (1975).

Volume 10 Issue 12 December 2021

©All rights reserved by Cristiane Ajnamei dos Santos Alfaya.