



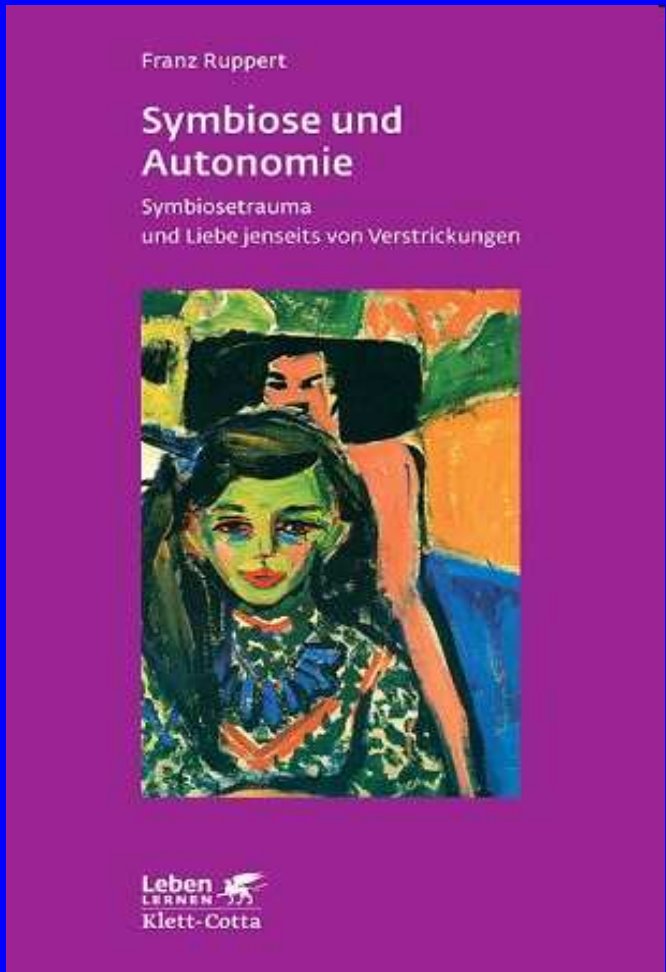
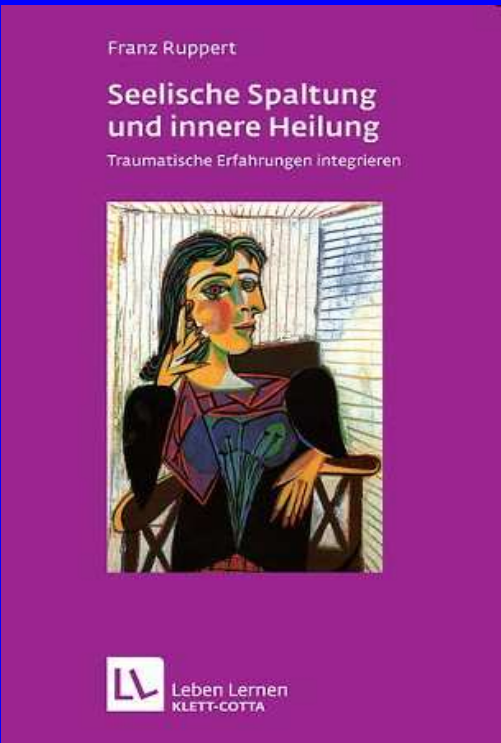
# Symbioses and Autonomy in relationships

What are the consequences of a  
symbiotic trauma?

Oslo, January 2011

[www.franz-ruppert.de](http://www.franz-ruppert.de)

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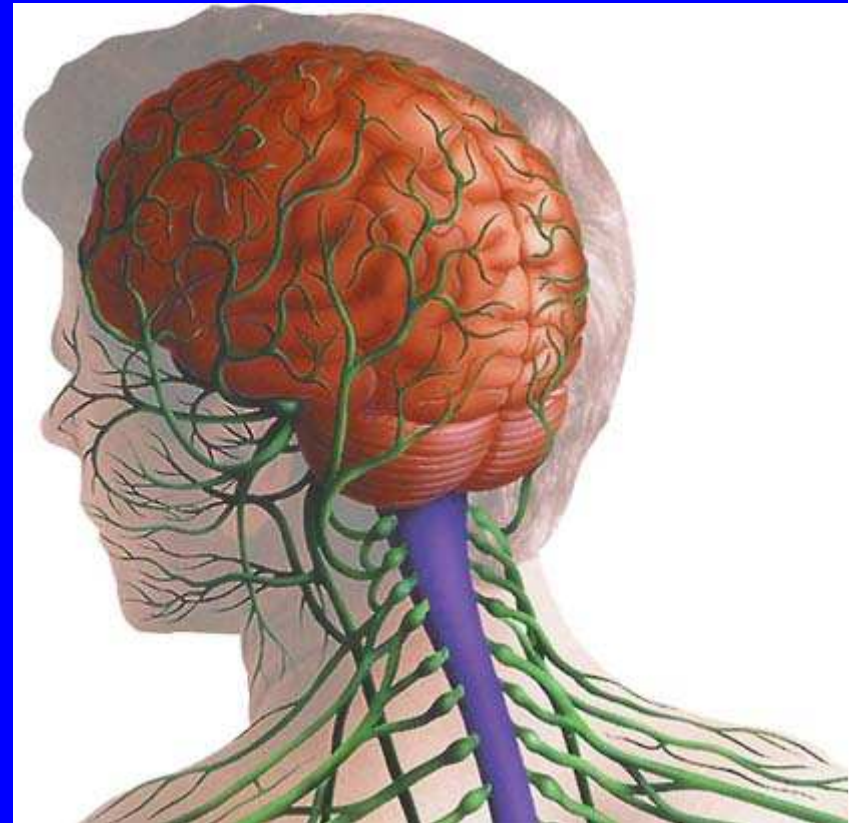


• New book 2010



# What means „Psyche“?

- Helping the living organism to get access to realities
- outside his body
- within his body
- in order to survive and to procreate.



# Main abilities of the Psyche

- to percept
- to feel
- to think
- to remember
- to be self conscious



Amor und Psyche

Psyche is not a person but a aggregation of different functions to process informations.

# The Psyche is ...

- specific for a species
- adaptive to natural and social environments
- selective in relation to available informations
- in a process of permanent development

# Dimensions of reality

- reality A: objective reality
- reality B: psychologically transformed reality
- reality C: psychologically invented reality

# Potential errors of the Psyche

- maladaptation
- wrong selection of informations
- developmental disruptions
- confusing different realities

# If we don't care for our Psyche there is a high risk ...

- that psychic processes become independent from reality A
- and the living organism has to serve the Psyche.



Makarova Sasa  
amor und psyche

A photograph of a herd of brown horses grazing in a green field. The horses are the central focus, with some in the foreground and others in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Basic human conditions - being a altricial, gregarious and sexual animal

- Synchronization with the psyche of others (mirror neurons ...)
- anxiety to be alone, panic at losing contact
- desire to belong
- readiness to support the mother figure and the herd (e.g. sacrifice one's own life or sanity for the sake of others)
- different realities for males and females
- needs for being individual

# Symbiotic necessities

- being nurtured
- being kept warm
- contact with bodies
- contact with eyes
- being understood
- being supported
- belonging exclusively to another person



**Symbiotically every child is doubly bonded to her mother:**

**passively: the emotional qualities of the mother are an imprint in the child's soul**

**actively: the child clings to her mother and tries to support the mother**



**The symbiotic love of a child towards her mother is one of the most powerful emotional forces.**

A sunset over the ocean with palm tree silhouettes and a hammock. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the water and sky. The silhouettes of palm trees and a hammock are visible in the foreground.

# Needs for Autonomy

- to gain confidence in own one's perceptions and feelings
- to develop independent thoughts and opinions
- to rely on one own's abilities
- to become self-responsible
- to become self-sufficient

For children “safe bonding” (J. Bowlby) to their parents is fundamental for self confidence, confidence in human relations and mental health.

All their capacities can develop in a healthy way.

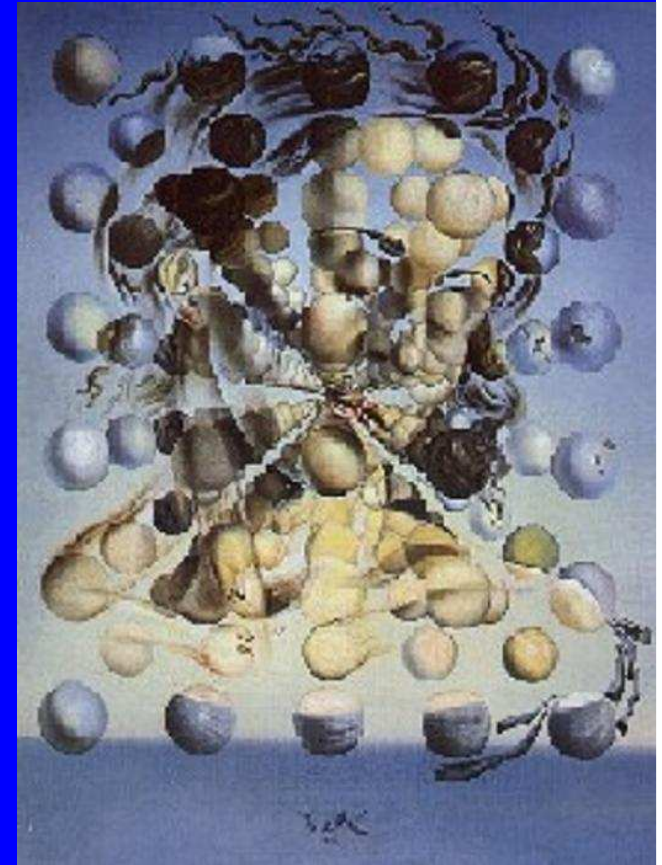


# Love

- between child and mother always exists.
- between mother and child only happens, if the mother is not traumatized.

# Trauma and parental love

- Traumatic experiences destroy the capability of parents to love and care emotionally supportive,
- because of their surviving mechanism, traumatized parents avoid deeper emotional contact with the child.



# A life experience gets traumatic

- ... if we or others face a mortal risk and are helpless and incapable to deal with that.



# Two “classical” types of trauma

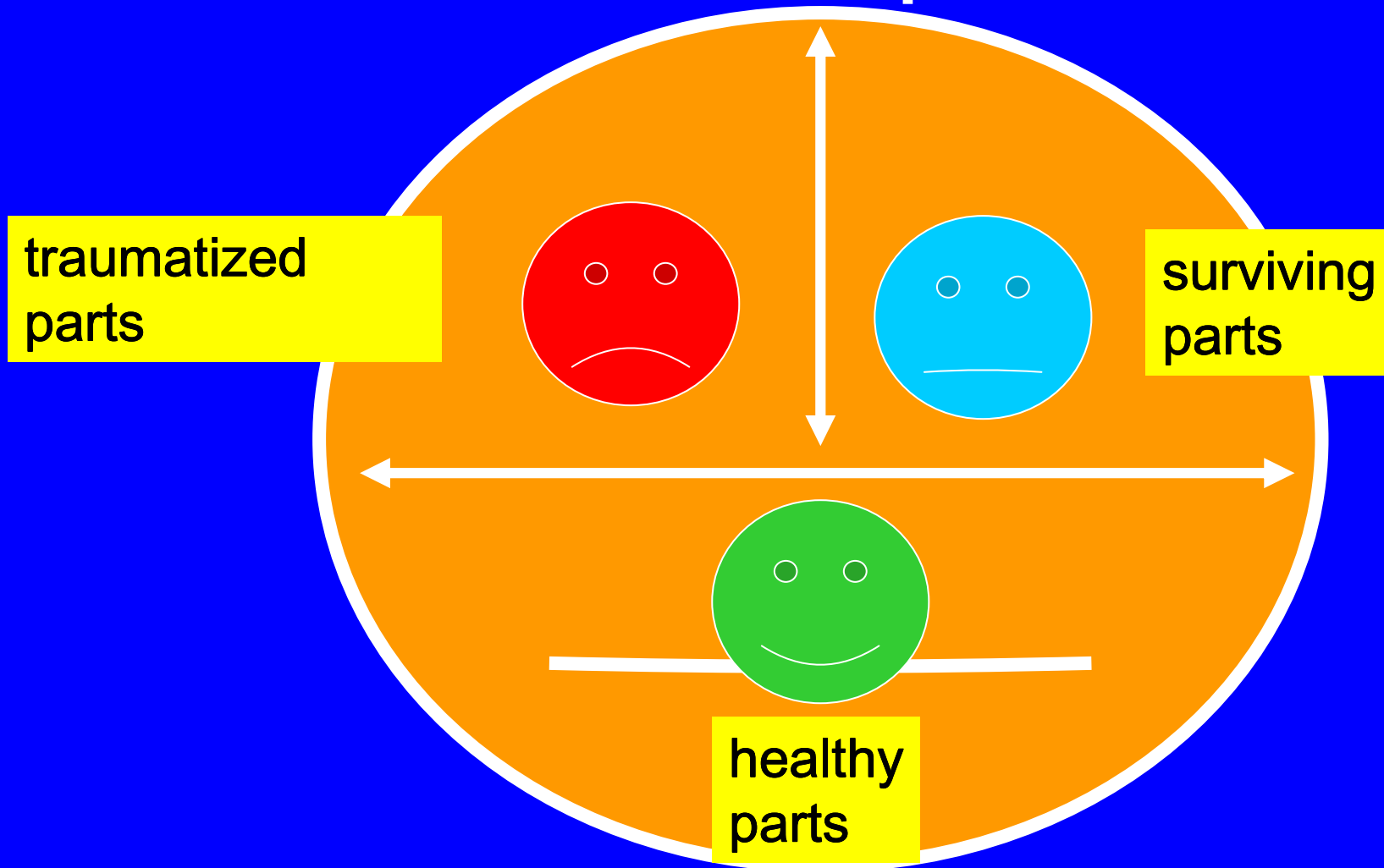


- caused by life threatening events (e.g. war, accidents, rape, natural catastrophies)
- caused by loss of a person (e.g. early death of parents, loss of children, adoption)



**When traumatised  
we freeze,  
dissociate  
and split the  
personality in  
order to survive.**

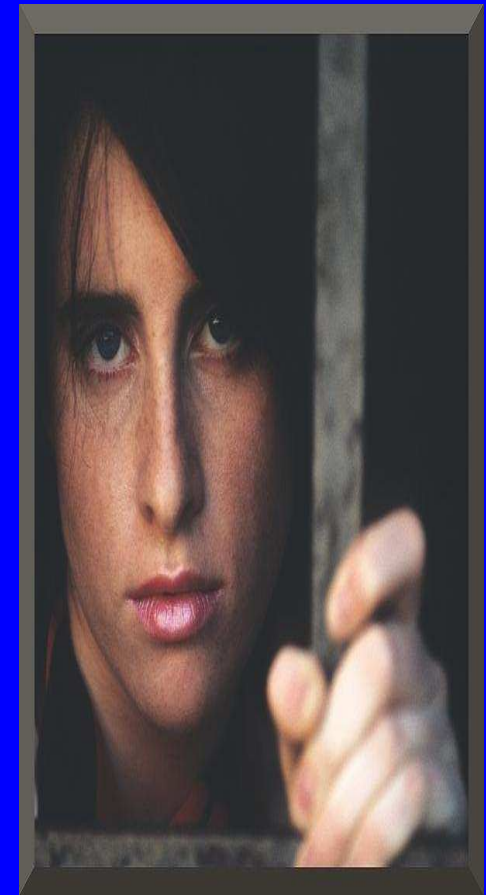
# Split in the personality structure after a traumatic experience

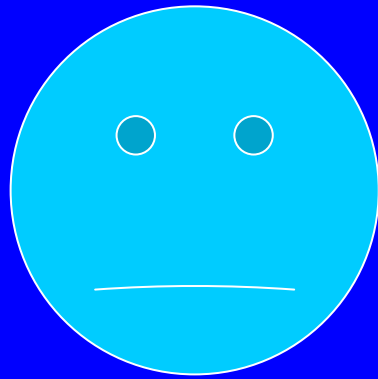




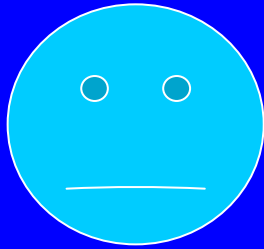
## Characteristics of the traumatised parts

- store the memory of the trauma
- are always the same age as they were, when the trauma occurred
- are still engaged with the traumatic experience
- can unpredictably and suddenly be triggered





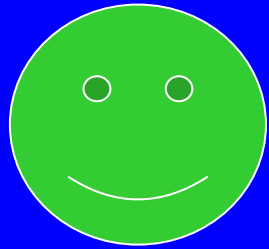
Surviving reactions  
and mechanisms  
protect the organism  
and the soul  
helping to survive a  
traumatic experience.



## Characteristics of the surviving-parts

- constructing and guarding the split
- denying and suppressing the trauma experience
- avoiding
- controlling
- compensating
- producing illusions
- producing new splits





## Characteristics of the healthy parts of our personality

- True realism
- capable of regulating feelings
- Contact with oneself
- ability to make safe bonds and resolving bonds if necessary
- ability of self-reflection
- self-responsibility
- love of truth
- optimism and basic confidence
- strong enough to confront traumatic experiences

# The symbiotic entanglement with traumatized people produces two extra types of trauma



- Trauma of bonding (being rejected by the person one needs to bond to)
- Trauma of confusion in a bonding system (caused e.g. by murder, sexual abuse, incestuous relations within the bonding system)

Traumatized parents produce a psychic field in which their children suffer from a “Symbiotic trauma”.

The child is helpless and incapable of getting a stable and safe emotional contact with his parents.



## Characteristics of the traumatized part in a symbiotic trauma

- despair that there is no love from mother
- deep loneliness
- panic to die
- suppressed anger
- suppressed sadness

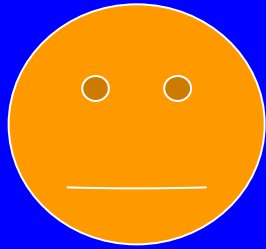




# Characteristics of the surviving parts in symbiotic trauma

- Fighting to get into contact with the parents
- idealising the mother or the father
- identifying with the surviving mechanisms of the mother/father
- Feeling responsible for the parents
- repressing and denying one's own trauma
- identifying with the traumatized parts of the mother/father





## Healthy structures within a child

- Own lifepower and energie
- Own strong will to live
- Healthy basic needs
- Joy to move and exercise the body
- Joy to play
- Joy to learn and solve problems
- ...



# Consequences of a symbiotic trauma for a child

- no capacity to distinct between own feelings and those of the mother
- not living one's own identity
- lifelong symbiotic entanglement in relationships
- mental illnesses like hyperactivity, depressions, psychotic states



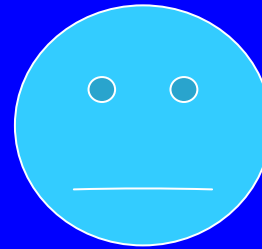
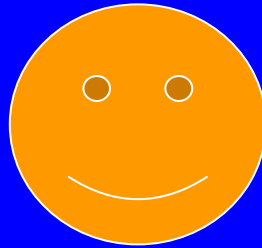
# Characteristics of a symbiotic entanglement

- always looking to others
- distraction from own problems
- clinging and merging
- weight of expectations on others
- anger, hate and violence in relationships
- illusions of love

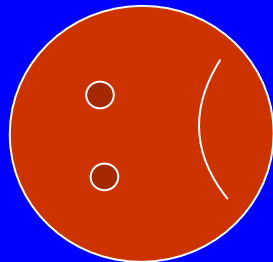
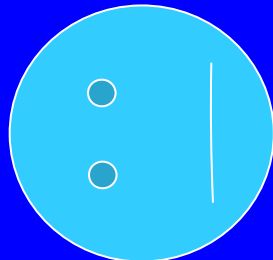
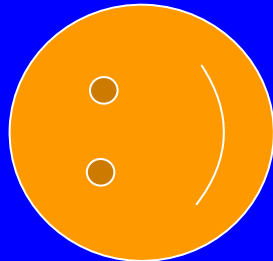


# Who is interacting with whom?

Person A



Person B



HP/HP	HP/SP	HP/TP
SP/HP	SP/SP	SP/TP
TP/HP	TP/HP	TP/TP

# Constructive und destructive types of symbioses

- Equivalence
- Giving and taking is in balance
- Empathie and love
- Separation is possible
- Dominance and submission
- Exploitation
- Anxieties and aggressions
- Separation is forbidden

# Autonomy - true or pseudo ?

- Self-reliance in relationships
- Accepting support if necessary
- Confidence in others
- Realistic self-assessment
- Isolation and withdrawel
- Anxious to be dependend
- Distrust
- Presumption and Narcicism

# „Constellations of the Issue“

- support true autonomy
- show the symbiotic entanglement
- minimize the risk of retraumatization
- support the integration of the psyche
- create love beyond symbiotic entanglements

# Steps towards solving a symbiotic trauma



- strengthening the healthy parts and the will to finish symbiotic entanglements
- distinguishing between proper and entangled feelings
- giving up the illusion to save mother or father
- understanding one's own surviving strategies and illusions
- getting into an emotional contact with one's own traumatized parts
- being neither a victim nor a perpetrator
- balancing out symbioses and autonomy

# Important distinction in psychotherapy

- **Disintegrate** traumatic structures that are incorporated by symbiotic entanglement with the parents
- **Integrate** one's own splits in the personality structure

# Literature

- Franz Ruppert (2008). Trauma, Bonding & Family Constellations. Understanding and Healing Injuries of the Soul. Frome/UK: Green Balloon Publishing (2010 translated also into Russian).
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