

## Childhood and Today's Discontent <sup>1</sup>

### *Bice Benvenuto*

Why today's discontent? Is this any different from the one Freud refers to in his *Civilisation and its Discontents*? (Freud, 1930a). There he saw neurosis as an effect of a psychic discontent, as an incision at the heart of the last century's social structure, its core being the Oedipal triangle. But the hysterical symptomatology, as it was described by Charcot, and later by Freud, is, no doubt, disappearing from our couches, let alone from the DSM.

What about today, then? Lacan already confirmed that the individual mind is social from the start in his 1938 text on family complexes (Lacan, 1938), where he reads the Oedipal complex in historical and social terms. He already envisaged the social decline of the paternal imago as it had worked until the last century, that is, one based on the authority of the father's name. The symbolic function seems, therefore, to need to get diffused by social interventions, social networks, whether virtual or real; it needs more and more substitutes for the patriarch! Although the nuclear family seems to be partly holding together, it is, nevertheless, surrounded more and more by exceptions, which are gradually becoming the norm. The most significant example is the legal permission of the use of sperm banks by which the name, as well as the very existence of the father, gets effaced with the consent of the law, as if the role of the father were no longer considered necessary by our culture, whether officially acknowledged or not. This symbolic vacuum seems to require a new psychic impact from the social, which inevitably brings a modification in both the form and the psychic nature of mental discontent today.

We know, after Lacan, that psychoanalysis is not a merely one-to-one verbal enterprise; its effects are polyphonic indeed. The Freudian subject, for instance, enters in a polylogue with the id, the ego and the superego, while the Lacanian subject is confronted by both the Other and a silent dummy: death. In other words language, in its wide sense, enters psychoanalysis as the social term of its enterprise.

Paradoxically, this polyphonic, convivial dimension is underlined, in a more concrete way, by child analysis where the presence of at least one member of the child's family is now often welcome in the session. Working with children makes an analyst more sensitive to ongoing cultural transformations and consequential changes in classical settings. Child analysts' intuition is that letting the child to speak to relevant others, and be replied to, opens up new possibilities for the development of an analytic polylogue.

In France a psychoanalyst tried to alert and engage psychoanalysis with both social and clinical changes. Her name was Françoise Dolto, very little known in the UK, she was a most prestigious figure worldwide because of her extremely sensitive approach to the soul of the contemporary child. She pioneered the idea of a drop-in place on the street, open to anyone who was accompanied by a child. The creation of the *Maison Verte* in 1979 marked, in my opinion, *a new impact of psychoanalysis in the social*. She marked a passage for psychoanalysis from 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois rituals of private and enclosed consulting rooms onto the streets, to meet people and their children. If Muhammad (the man in the street) will not go to the mountain (of psychoanalysis) then the mountain must come to Muhammad. This entails quite a shift in the analyst's position when working with the unconscious, something that has not repaid her with too much consideration from the psychoanalytic establishment, although she was, theoretically, very close to Jacques Lacan with whom she founded the *Societe Francaise de Psychanalyse* and later the *Ecole Freudienne de Paris*.

I hope all the people attending this conference got the brochure announcing the forthcoming opening of the *Maison Verte-UK* in London, the first of its kind in the UK. I have tried to summarise in it how the *Maison Vertes* work, while taking place in a new convivial setting, highlighting the way psychoanalysis can go a step forward in the analysis of the workings of the unconscious through the changes of our times.

While the *Maison Verte's* work may hold some family resemblance with anti-psychiatry's sensitivity towards the social (Laing, Guattari, Basaglia etc.) it

does not hold a condemning position towards society. Even though society and culture hold the seeds of illness within themselves, as Freud points out in the discontents of civilisation, the latter is, however, a main source of its cure. There being no dichotomy between society and the individual, even for a social outcast, we cannot but find a way through this source of repression and of psychic enrichment at the same time. That is why the social is not condemned but welcome in the *Maison Verte*, in the form of people who drop in, children and grown-ups, the rich and the poor, the ill and the apparently healthy.

Before a more detailed description of the *Maison Verte* setting, I find it helpful to point out its theoretical divergence from Melanie Klein's object relations theory. By questioning the fundamental role of the object in the object relations theory, the MV experience is to highlight instead the importance of the relation to the fundamental humanity of others, right from the start of life, even from the moment of conception. The psychic dimension comes forth as a human, and therefore social dimension, as the genesis of the subject resides in their relation with that human being who takes care of them. The mother is not an anonymous carrier of a series of objects (breasts, nipples, penis, the inside of the body etc.) but the real addressee of her baby's relation to her body. Objects in themselves cannot be relational; an object is defined by the fact that you cannot relate to it. We use things, even in order to hurt ourselves, but they do not relate to us. If we believe they do, they stop being objects and become representatives of some human involvement, like in fairy-tales where animals, objects and monsters act in the place of people. It is rarely the other way round. Maybe Kleinian objects too take on a life of their own on the stage of the baby's phantasies, because of a human mother who is the very flesh of those objects; it's not that she simply has them.

For Freud too there is a fundamental principle of the psyche *qua* human: the pleasure principle. In fact, Dolto's view is that all babies are first driven towards the mother as towards their source of pleasure. We are marked by an original coexistence in utero with the mother, whose placenta is the source of nourishment and, therefore, of pleasure. Here we have a radical turn away

from Kleinian thought where the foetus, or the baby who takes in the mother's nourishment, is moved primarily by a will to destroy her breast, that is, by the death drive. A certain degree of aggressiveness is not a prerogative of the death drive alone, it is needed by life itself in order to subsist in the face of all kinds of threats to our sensual pleasure, the baby's only sense of existence. That is why we eat animals and fight against what resists our will. The life drive runs on beyond the good and the evil of human morality. The desire to live and fight for it can be crueller than a peaceful, obedient giving up, which is indeed closer to death. Is not this the drama of the neurotic indeed?

### Feeling and Sensing

Yet there is a subtle common thread between Klein and Dolto that I would like to highlight. Klein recognised the evidence of an original *sensitivity* of the infant's mind that she called *feelings*. The newborn *feels* the experiences which come either from outside, or from inside their bodies. The Anglo-Saxon term *feeling*, which has no corresponding word in Romance languages, covers many meanings such as affects, sentiments and even love, as when you say, *I have feelings for you*, and, in a more concrete way, it can mean *sensing*. This is the term I would choose to describe the baby's early perceptions.

Sensing, besides being the activity of the senses, is also a *making sense* of them. If, according to Lacan, we are born into language, we are also born into the discourse of the flesh and its senses. We cannot exile the body from our mind and consider it, or parts of it, an object, neutral matter to be moulded by our minds. The living body can never be an object, or just a series of objects. According to Lacanian theory, there are, in fact, two kinds of body: a visible one, the image of the body the way a mirror returns it to our gaze, and an invisible body, made up of those parts of it that are excluded by the narcissistic mirror image. The infant's body, even though still a premature and fragmented one, is not neutral matter. It is endowed with the senses that give it a sensorial cohesion and a way of communication through sensorial body codes exchanged with the mother. Messages are exchanged through touching, gazing, through her voice and smell. If the infant's body is plunged

from the beginning in the waters of language, its new amniotic liquid, which places it in a larger background, it would be an empty concept if we didn't take into account that, beside language with its universal system of signifiers, there is a sensual order with its universal codes pertaining to living *matter*. We could call it the sensual language of the living, which has nothing to do with the inert body of scientific discourse. <sup>2</sup>

Dolto conceives an *unconscious image of the body*, which does not constitute the ego's exterior unity of the body, it would rather belong to the id, to be considered not a cauldron of chaotic drives, but marked, from the very beginning, by the presence of others, a *relational Id*, as it were, not at all alien to a symbolic universe (Dolto, 1984). We are, therefore, marked from the start by those who welcome us (or not) into the world. Said and unsaid words get incarnated in the body and offer new elements of psychic organisation by changing it. Therefore the primordial relation to the mother is already the core of a social link, a link that can easily degenerate into a loop-knot, a seducing as well as an oppressive enclosure. What to do? Dolto would say, '*Go to the Maison Verte with your child and... socialise*'.

### **Beyond the Threshold: the *Maison Verte***

First of all the *Maison Verte* offers a place to enter. Once you have crossed its threshold, you find yourself in a familiar, intimate place. But it may feel odd or foreign at the same time. It might somehow reflect the space of the unconscious in Freudian topology: the most hidden and intimate psychic place, but at the same time the most foreign place; most far away from our consciousness.

You are unlikely to cross the *Maison Verte*'s threshold unless you and your child have some sort of demand, or suffering. But you don't have to be necessarily conscious of it. Someone may already have a precise demand, or necessity for it; others come across it accidentally, maybe making the first step towards its threshold just out of curiosity. The offer, that is, a *Maison Verte* in the neighbourhood, will have created a demand. Like in a street market, you

look around in case you find something you stopped looking for, or you hadn't looked for yet. A certain disengagement is the peculiarity of contemporary attitudes to any psychic approach. Even those who have been sent there by a doctor, or school, may not have any personal demand for it. They have not chosen the place, one among many other therapeutic possibilities on the market.

The objects today's market-culture imposes as desirable have created a sort of obstruction in the freedom of desire. This obstruction constitutes the first resistance to any therapeutic venture, and the *Maison Verte* makes no exception, apart from the fact that it does not require such an engagement. It does not rely on a conscious engagement, or idealisation of psychoanalysis. The *Maison Verte* would rather offer the possibility of crossing its threshold almost by chance. In fact, beyond the threshold there is nothing but an opening, a mere finding oneself on the other side.

### **Casa Verde**

This sense of entering a different space was somehow confirmed by the children who would come to the *Casa Verde*, a *Maison Verte*-like space that the *Associazione Dolto* had set up in a nursery school in Rome two afternoons per week after school hours. You could see those children, who had been all day inside their nursery school, running into the *Casa Verde* room rather than running towards their parents who had come to pick them up. Instead the parents had to chase them into the *Casa Verde*, which consisted of a very big room with no windows, but with trees and skies painted on the walls. The children would keep running around the room for a while, appearing excited by the many simple toys scattered around, laughing and asking questions as if thrilled by such a place, lacking in expensive toys, high tech gadgets or nice food. Mothers also found it extraordinary that, after a whole school day, their children wanted to stay in yet another classroom rather than to go outside, go swimming or do any other physical activity. The park became our rival on fine days when mothers had to make the decision whether to give in and stay in an enclosed room (which the *Casa Verde* ultimately was), or insist and take

their children out into the open. But the children seemed to have immediately sensed the *threshold effect* of the *Casa Verde*, wonderland does not need parks and swimming pools, but the freedom to play with one's own fantasies, to speak *non-sense* and be responded to. These children must have sensed permission, not to some kind of entertainment, but to another kind of pleasure, which the parents were slightly slower in accepting.

### The Claustrophobic Mother

Once Mark, aged about four, broke into the *Casa Verde* room like a rocket and his mother, who was chasing him, stopped abruptly outside the threshold calling him back. As the child was ignoring her, I went over, on the other side of the door where she was standing, and invited her to come in and fetch her child if she wanted to. She explained in a gracious way that she could not, as she was claustrophobic and could not stand crowded enclosed places. In the meantime, Mark was running around and falling dangerously over other children. He was really the one who was filling up the room with his anxiety-provoking actions. Eventually someone managed to bring him over to his mother who had remained outside the threshold, and they left... and returned the next time.

Initially, their second visit was similar to the first: mother at the threshold, Mark ravaging about inside the room. There were desperate attempts on the mother's part to catch him when he was nearer the door, but to no avail. Eventually, she seemed resigned to waiting for Mark until he might have been ready to go. At one point I went up to her with a cup of tea, which she gladly accepted and drank. While chatting to me she made a step over the threshold and stood there. After this first step, each time she came, she made a step further into the room. She could enter the room as much as we had accepted her outsider position (in relation to the *Casa Verde* as to her child). The *Casa Verde* had to make an extension outside its threshold in order to include her. We turned ourselves into go-betweens through that phobic space dividing mother and child. After a couple of weeks she was sitting in the middle of the room chatting to other parents, and became one of the *Casa Verde*'s most

regular frequenters that year.

No one mentioned her claustrophobia again, not until the *Casa Verde*'s last day before the summer holidays. She came over to me to say good-bye and thank me for what we had done for her child. Mark had become much more manageable, she said, since he had started coming here. Maybe thanks to her having bravely managed to be inside the *Casa Verde* with him, I said. Startled she replied: *True, I forgot my claustrophobia. Has it gone, then?* I replied with a question: *Do you remember when it started?* She grew thoughtful, and then had a start: *Since Mark was born.* We said no more, but smiled at each other and said good-bye.

Isn't it strange that this exchange of words took place at the end of the process and after the symptom had gone, without this mother even realising herself? Was it a cure? She wondered, so do we. From our perspective each new step she had been making on this side of the threshold was also a step inside an unconscious space where she was kept roped to her child, a no-breathing space. When Mark had run into the *Casa Verde* room he was possibly taking refuge in it and, with his dangerous behaviour, was asking for help. Probably the *Casa Verde* was also standing for the child's desire to have the mother at that safe distance, but with his behaviour, he was also forcing his mother gradually to come closer to him and overcome her fear, helped by the mediation of other people. She could be with him as long as she was free of being in company of other people at the same time. I think that the *Casa Verde* had provided a breathing space for their survival via a silent speech: our cups of tea, brought to her outside the door, had made an extension of the room up to the threshold in order to welcome her claustrophobia.

If we define cure by the disappearance of the symptom, this mother seemed cured of her phobia. From an orthodox psychoanalytical point of view, as there were no interpretations of the unconscious causes of her symptom, it could not be an analytical treatment. This view is challenged in the *Maison Verte*. Interpretations can be a means to facilitate a working through, or to help lessen the anxiety and the resistance that goes with it, but do not cause

the opening of the unconscious by themselves. In this case Mark's mother had been able to articulate her complaint before she could start working on her underlying problem: her no breathing relation to her son. The symptom gradually disappeared as she faced it head on in the *Casa Verde*'s fashion, that is, without verbal interpretations, without their conscious and often standard speech form which cannot but be addressed to the patient's consciousness, especially when this is ridden by anxiety before the end of the session. In the same way Mark's mother had needed an interpretation to go home with, when she had to interrupt her attendance to the *Casa Verde* for summer holidays. An interpretation she was able to give by herself with a start and with a smile. Of course, my work consisted in asking the question.

### The Agora-Effect

Lacan went close to this problem when he identified in the *analytical act* the spring of psychoanalysis: constructed interpretations leave their place to *interventions*, free-floating responses to the other's unconscious questions. More than well formulated verbal interpretations, the unconscious needs the living immediate response of the other. False responses, commonplace chat, power abuses happen here as anywhere else, but not being a one-to-one therapy, abuses and suggestions can be always challenged by someone else. One is in a dimension of transference within the public square, the *agora* – a place of open assembly – away from the *claustrum*, the mother-child's, or analyst-analysand's closed cloister.

Still, the *Maison Verte* is officially designed simply as a means of prevention against children's mental disturbance by way of socialisation. Even if the use of the words *prevention* and *socialisation* do not mean much in psychoanalytical jargon, they nevertheless function as a message for the guests: that anyone, whether they consider themselves ill or not, has a chance to drop in. Contemporary discontent does not spare anyone and anyone can freely attend and benefit from it in different, individual ways. If civilisation holds the seed of illness, the strategy of socialisation aims at the seed by dealing with primary relations. If seeds already contain the potential illness, then prevention

is already therapy, as far as one intervenes at the root of the pathogenic knot. And, in this sense, the *Maison Verte* cures.

Even if it was found to be particularly effective for an easier inclusion into schools of children from immigrant or socially disadvantaged families, psycho-social problems do by no means stop at the less privileged cases in society. We need to reflect on transformations of family ties that have deep effects on the psychic development of children in contemporary society. The phenomenon of a growing isolation of the nuclear family, and more often of single parents, highlights a form of decline of the paternal function. This brings along also a transformation of the maternal one, as well as the instability of sexual identities. The timing and the forms of the formative experiences children encounter in their relation with others are rapidly changing. While we are losing many of the rites of passage which once marked our psychic and social life, new ones are either too uncertain or not emerging at all. What is replacing the order of the wider traditional family with its own protective net when children had to face traumatic experiences of loss and separation? Is there a new structure supporting both working mothers, who lack the safety net of the extended family, and children and babies who have to face their primary separation from these mothers? Is there any form of thought-out process (both psychically and legally) for all those children, now mostly left to themselves, who undergo that most painful but frequent rite of passage – the process of their parents' divorce? Is there any kind of safety net for the neglect and marginalisation of immigrant families and their children? There are gaps in the structure of today's family and society that are fertile ground, even for standard or well-to-do families, for the suffering caused by new silent symptoms spreading in the contemporary era: depressive syndromes, feeding problems, addictions, juvenile delinquency.

In over three decades of experience, the *Maison Verte* has proved the effectiveness of a phase of 'primary socialisation'. This consists in the inevitable introduction of the child to a broader social context than the fusional relationship with the mother or the small family circle. It is called 'primary' because it still takes place in presence of the mother. This is why her presence,

or that of any other adult family member representing her, is the crucial condition for participation to the *Maison Verte*'s activities. Separation from the mother or from the family with no preparation is a brutal passage for the child, a trauma, in other words, and, as such it can lead to malfunctions in biological rhythms, sleep and/or digestion. Malfunctions that, if not understood in time, will develop into more serious pathogenic effects.

The MV is not a place of individual or group therapy, counselling or re-education, but one for play and meeting people. Through an experience of conviviality, the child is included in a gradual socialisation process respectful of his family identity. Children, even at a very early age, manage to tolerate separation on the basis of a process of becoming more autonomous from their mothers, a process that gradually develops from the day of birth. This delicate process of independence inevitably generates in children the anxiety about losing cohesion of their body image, which is still linked to the presence of the mother, to a sensual relation to her. Separation from the mother causes in children the anguish of losing their original resource, therefore of losing themselves. The presence of others is crucial to encouraging children's separation process, as they gradually develop a mirror image of the body more independent from the mother's image, with a gender of their own and a place in the family group. Through the triologue mother-child-MV *welcomer*<sup>3</sup>, starting from the degree of independence children have already acquired, they are made ready for contact with other children and adults, and to freely experiment with that small, outside world the *Maison Verte* can represent for them.

Dolto's bet was that an analytical position before the child's words and knowledge could be maintained also in a setting that is not an individual psychoanalytic session. Here those others who surround the child in their daily life, parents, siblings, grandparents, nannies, are invited to speak too. It is not a family therapy; it is not their behaviour or their family dynamics as the object of interest or of interpretation. Speech is entrusted to the guests, both children and adults, but there is a third party who is listening, not only the MV *welcomer*, but also other mothers and children. One speaks to another

but is also addressing a third. The MV welcomers are often a medium for an otherwise impossible dialogue; by lending their ears to those who do not want to hear, they turn themselves into means by which to elaborate and act on what is happening, by either challenging or reassuring comments or just listening. If a certain degree of anxiety gets released by articulating what bothers you, the presence of a listener can challenge and change a pathogenic perspective. The most hurt or hurting feelings, family stories or even a temper tantrum may acquire a new meaning if there are others involved in the action. Speech can be addressed to the daughter or the father, but for a transference effect it passes through the MV welcomers, who have the function of holding the message-words by making themselves a means of access to one's own words and the other's. The welcomer embodies somehow the threshold-effect, a hole through which words pass. This is equivalent, in a different setting, to the state of mind typical of the psychoanalyst: their floating attention to true and lying words (lies are only the other side of truth) which float too; pieces of truth that appear and then vanish. Perhaps truth is this very free flowing, its own becoming (what was true yesterday may no longer be true today). We can get stuck in an anachronistic fixed truth and the neurotic child or family are characterised by a fixation to a dogmatic and inexorable truth. The neurotic is not Heraclitian.

Here words are not necessarily meant as vocal messages, but as what can be communicated also in silence, in between the lines, while playing with the MV welcomer, in a fight or in the absence of a dialogue. The guest knows that the absence of words or the excesses of their behaviour will be registered by the welcomer as well as by other guests, that some pieces of truth have been lodged there to be found again when they return. Just in the time of a visit, of a chat. This is how the *Maison Verte* likes to engage the unconscious in an informal, disengaged setting.

### Words and Listening

Listening is not only the MV welcomer's prerogative: 'a child who plays is a child who listens', says Dolto. So, as children play with water, sand or

whatever, they will be included in the conversation if it has anything to do with their stories, their conception or the projects their parents have for them.

What about babies who cannot speak? As I have explained earlier, babies are immediately immersed in the amniotic liquid of language. Words can be understood by babies as long as they relate to the experience of their senses. This was the case with Mathew, who was only three months old when he first came to the *Casa Verde* with his mum. The mother was anxious about having to raise the baby by herself – her husband was working in the north of Italy and her family living in another town. Her big problem was the baby's sleeping habits: he slept mostly during the day, when his mother was out at work, and was awake at night demanding his mother's presence. Because of her lack of sleep, she would often let him cry throughout whole parts of the night. What kind of work can you do with such a young baby? I talked to him while he was in his mother's arms, explaining to him what she was telling me about his sleep. The problem got better as his mother got into the habit of spending some time near his bed talking to him.

A couple of months later the mother came up to me with a tired face and said that his sleep had got suddenly much worse. Nothing could calm him down and she was exhausted from lack of sleep. 'Has anything happened recently?' I asked impulsively. Some silence, then, embarrassed, she 'confessed' that she had started weaning him from her breast. While she was telling me this Mathew, who was in mother's arms, threw his arms at me for the first time. His mother begged: 'He wants to come to you'. I took him and, incredibly, he put his head on my shoulder and started to sob and sob like a grown-up in despair. Startled and moved his mother said: 'He really wanted to tell you how he feels. He's never sobbed like that before'. With these words she had given me permission to communicate to him my understanding of his suffering; a suffering we all go through: the loss of the breast. 'It feels so terrible now, but later you will enjoy the new food, growing bigger and playing with dad at the *Casa Verde*'. He fell asleep on my shoulder, his new object of pleasure and communication. My words were simply acknowledging his distress at not being able to appeal to his senses, which were suddenly deprived of

their object of smell and taste. I was trying to help him to make sense of his experience of loss, because words can help making sense of the sensual gap.

Failed communications, failing to understand one another, especially between mother and child, are part of life. But sometimes the failed message can turn into violent action. Words about what is being experienced at a particular moment, in the present, is a characteristic of human beings alone, and the freedom to use these words, even to express one's own most forbidden desires, slows down the time of the impulse towards pathological and aggressive actions. Words take time to be uttered, a time that suspends the pathological act; words do not afford immediate gratification but time for reflection, and in the *Maison Verte* setting they become a means for unconscious elaborations. We do not give up our desire if we can express it rather than act it out. In the suspension of the act, which speaking involves, the process of thought and inventiveness will find an opening in which to enter. Keeping this opening of the mind is the foundation of mental health for psychoanalysis.

### **What about the Parents?**

Separation is not only a problem for the child. In fact, it is often the mother too who finds this separation, or at least recognising her child's independence, difficult. The mother, or whoever acts in her place, will take advantage of the environment in various ways: like the children with the games, adults will find time to relax and take their minds off their everyday problems together with other parents and the MV welcomers themselves, sometimes with a hot drink. I was struck by the fact that also the children, even the youngest who never drank tea, could not wait for their cup, not because they like its bitter taste; tea, in this case, is not like a demand for food or sugared dummies, but for that sweet-bitter taste that is part and parcel of the process of losing primordial sweet tastes for new, bitter, but exciting ones.

The MV welcomer's discreet participation, with no prescriptive or interpretative function, will consist in making parents feel free to chat about 'frivolous matters'. Thus they are given the opportunity to talk about themselves, to be

truthful in their relationship, whether difficult or not, with their child. The effect of the conversations will be that some hidden truths will unintentionally be set free. Once they are uttered, even the most unpleasant truths change their anxiety-inducing and painful quality. New words can take not only the children but the parents too on a search for new, less pathogenic, solutions.

A relaxed environment lends itself to the expression of everyday suffering and to its being listened to, also to the advantage of children, who will feel freed from the maternal anguish, until then unexpressed, but painfully felt. A vicious circle is thus broken: a tacit complicity of the mother-child couple, where each absorbs and makes their own the other's anguish. Once this potentially pathological bond of dependence is undone, the pair tends to open up to others and get ready for future separations.

For this to happen there must be transference at work, and if this is conjugated through different figures, it arises primarily from the place as such. Permission to partake in convivial pleasure can help evade some of the barriers of resistance, the guardian of consciousness. Pleasure of playing or its adult equivalent, the disengaged chat (that is, not engaged in a neurotic psychic fixity) are the *Maison Verte*'s means of freeing desire, of letting the unconscious message float free – if there is someone who can hear it.

## notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper, an introduction to the section 'Childhood and today's discontent' at the 2013 CFAR conference, contains excerpts from the author's chapter in 'Theory and Practice in Child Psychoanalysis'. (Hall, G. et al., 2009)

<sup>2</sup> We could infer a homology between language and sensual codes, as Teresa Brennan did in her, *The Transmission of Affects*, as they both pre-exist and inhabit the subject (Brennan, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> The general rule is that there are three people welcoming the children and their parents, called *accueillantes*, which literally means 'welcomers'. I keep this literal translation as we have done in the MV-UK. The welcomers can be voluntary workers, teachers, trainees, paediatricians etc. There is always at least one psychoanalyst and one male welcomer.

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