



**13<sup>th</sup> Itinerant Seminar**  
**“L’IMMAGINARIO SIMBOLICO”©**  
**2<sup>th</sup> Workshop - Expo, October 31 - November 3, 2013**  
**THE FEMININE and THE IMAGINARY**  
**Italy – Marsala**  
**Convent of Carmine – October 31 and November 2/3, 2013**  
**Monumental Complesso San Pietro - November 1, 2013**

**Marsala - Convent of Carmine - November 2, 2013**

## **Cain’s Mother**

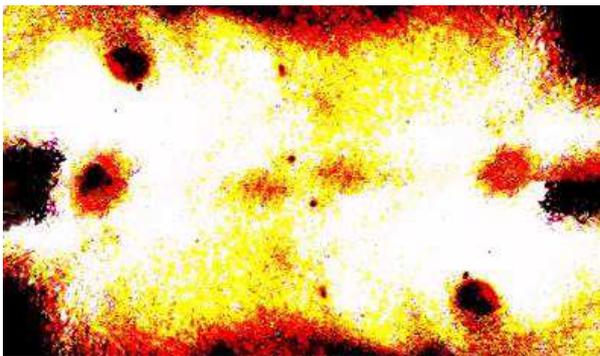
**By Vito Sammartano**  
**Psychiatrist, Psychotherapist**  
**ASP Trapani (Italy)**



# Cain's Mother

## INTRODUCTION

It is more or less part of the experience of everyone of us the fact that the energies of human beings are, in the order of things, intended to be canalized for functional purpose. As it is also part of the experience of who, for various reasons, deals with the hardships of the Psyche, the theoretical/practical fact that the energies that are not canalized would be-



come tensions, by themselves intended to carry a variable degree of pain. To whom? The deep suggestion of the question refers to the image of the “hot potato” or with a greater sense of neutrality, to Lavoisier, as well as ... to the benzene ring (of which, sorry, we’ll probably talk later ...).

However, it will be easy to agree, since now, that human energies (as already the animal energies in general) in the Good – in the Bad – or – who knows circulate: they live the subject-source and they propagate to the near subject, comforting or disturbing, stimulating or destructive.

That’s why also for a discourse on energy, which reflects on other human minds and on theirs, will focus on the game “egg-chicken”. In our case, the solicitation, since about the



destructive energy, the reality is drenched and faceted more than ever.

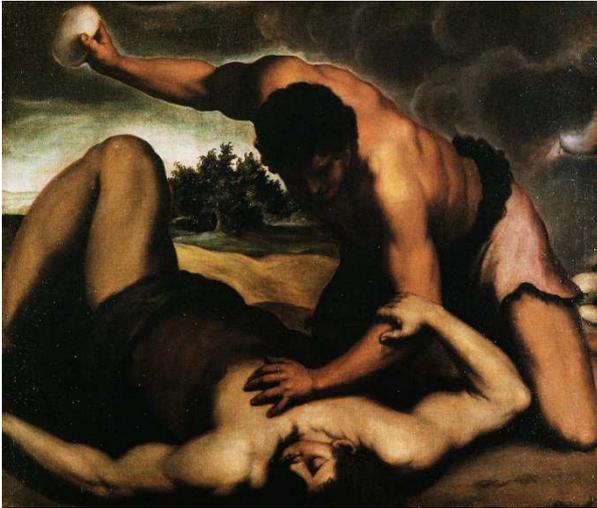
Ending up talking about Cain is therefore quite obvious, taking a look around. But the mother? Which troubled implication tends to make us overlook a discourse about “the woman who gives birth to a murderer”? Do we flatly perpetrate a tradition of untouchability or respond to intimate instances where we maintain lack of cognizance?

## THE “HOT POTATO”

What, in the end, the “hot potato”? In the mythical scenery of Eden, the Tree, the Snake, etc., what is it that creates the real problem? Sex? Disobedience? Or what? Let us, then, be

tempted (and I don't want to steal the snake's job ...) to research the hypothetical solution which is confirmed in different observed facts.

Therefore, whatever our personal cultural position in relation to the Bible may be, it seems to me more than fair to say that Faith is not necessary to capture the intense symbolic value of facts and characters, as well as significant socio-historical references: it cannot appear to us a casualness that Eve, the First Woman, is presented as the product of Adam's rib and then an annex of him: this hierarchy of the existence had to confirm, without shaking, the way of life in the world of the patriarchs: wars and work for men, proliferate and caring for women. Here is the focal premise for that *quiddity* which is the real hot potato: God imposes the *quiddity* to the First Human Being, Adam imposes the *quiddity* to Eve (who is one of his ribs ...), the Snake proposes a *quiddity* to



Eve, so that Human Beings enter the world of Choice and Free Will. And Eve, the First Woman, at the birth of Cain, the first born, will choose to say: **"I've gotten a man from the Lord"**, jubilant cry of the first woman, that after being a slave to an husband, becomes the Mother of a Man. In the hebrew text "sexual action" refers to "Adam" (term used in the early chapters to indicate the human being before the sexual distinction between man and woman): he is the subject, while his woman is only the object. The verb used (*yadà*) literally means "to know"; in the Bible is used for **943** times, but only in 12 or 13 cases to express sexual intercourse; here arises, however, in evidence a relationship is not harmonious, the result of the domination of a subject on the other. The presence of this verb gives, then, a negative value to the union between Adam and Eve, emphasizing the subjugation of women to the power of man, who doesn't recognize the dignity of a person, but only as "object" of his own desire (it's not "mirror image" wrote that *Eve-knows-Adam*).

When Eve, immediately after giving birth to her firstborn, pleased exclaimed "I HAVE GOTTEN A MAN FROM THE LORD", proposes to us two fundamental elements: the first is that she has acquired (the name "*qajin*", in English "*Cain*", derives from the verb "*Qanah*", which means "to acquire") – and therefore, **she "owns"** – a Man (= male/husband), so that she can compensate her submission to Adam; the second concerns Cain's pathernity, unexpect-



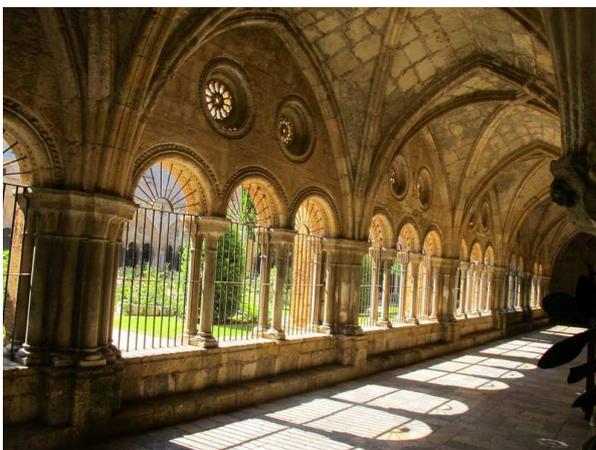


tedly attributed to God, leaving Adam out of the relationship between mother and son. The woman who has felt possessed by Adam, now owns and dominates her son, seeing him as the alternative to her husband.

### CAIN

Cain, then, is the result, and at the same time the victim, of a distorted human relationship, that would realize what the divinity had announced to the woman: *“Towards your husband will be your instincts, but he will dominate you”* (3,16). The son is manipulated by his mother to assert the dominion of the man, establishing with him a unique and privileged relationship, that doesn't leave room for any other.

On the other hand, the words of Genesis, in their strict sense, leave more than a question open: *“The Lord appreciated Abel and his offer, but he didn't appreciate Cain and his offer”*. **Why?** Predictable, the first docking of didactic, doctrinal fervor: being Cain the fruit of the Original Sin, is bound to be disliked by the divinity. **And Abel?** Do we have some reason to think that it is a “purified fruit”???



But suddenly, the hand of the artist opens a gash in the dark: the capital of a cloister in Tarragona shows Cain, as a small child, who is jealous of his little brother being breast-fed by their mother; and tries to tear him away from his mother's arms; even more we approach, in the patient “weaving”, to define the “**quid**”.

Eve's second child doesn't seem to get any consideration in his mother's eyes: there are no words of gratification for him, and he is not even recognized as a son, but simply as a **brother**; he was given a name that expresses all its inconsistency (*“Abel”* means “blow”,



wind, vanity), since his arrival does not break the privileged relationship between the mother and her eldest son. The divine response to the two offers would compensate for the injustice suffered by Abel: he, who was rejected as a son by his mother and brother, is now being “looking at” by God, and his consideration gives him back consistency. Cain is worth in the eyes of Eve, but Abel is worth in the eyes

of God.

But this cannot exhaust the meaning of what is transmitted to Cain from his mother: that everything offered, that everything yours which breastfeeding and the subsequent pre-verbal communicate to the totalitarian narcissism of little Cain; the “quid” is something that the son, basically, perceives of wanting, that is offered to him by his mother, and that he **doesn't want** to share with anyone. So we approach the “Fraternal Complex”.



### THE FRATERNAL COMPLEX

We just remind here that in psychoanalysis the complex is intended as a set of unconscious representations and investments, concerning the relationship between the subject and other subjects (or objects); it is characterized by the conflict between opposing and irreconcilable psychic forces, and the resolution of such conflict takes place through dreams



and neurotic or psychotic symptoms that establish “compromise formations”.

The birth of another, similar to him/herself, generates feelings of rivalry, hatred, resentment for the mother, the struggle to get the parents' exclusive love, as well as depressive feelings for the loss of supremacy. According

to the psychoanalyst Adler, the firstborn will keep the traits of competitiveness and independence, for the struggle of supremacy over his brother, while the younger brother will always brood his own inferiority complex that he will try to compensate as a form of “will power”.

Melanie Klein will focus, instead, on **envy** as one of the traits that found the fraternal relationship. According to Lacan, fraternal complex corresponds to the “intruder's complex”,



the resolution of which is to identify the narcissistic Ego with this mirror image of the brother. Therefore, the Ego takes place on the basis of the identification with the other, and then the resolution of intruder's complex plays a decisive role in the birth and development of subjectivity. Intruder's complex is located within the **pre-oedipal triangle**, organized by the **Mother-Phallus-Child relationship** (Phallus as an object of desire of the Mother, in the Child's imagination).

The *"third"*, the rival, in the pre-oedipal configuration is not constituted by a total object, such as the Father in the oedipal triangle. It is, rather, a partial object and therefore the Father can be located in the same group of partial and rival objects, together with brothers or sisters.

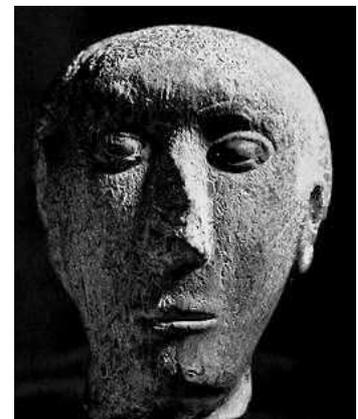


And we easily reconnect to the beginning: what else is the "Phallus", between the different cultures of the world, if not **"authoring energy"**, the energy that *"brings the news"* (see Shiva and the symbolic representation of the ovoid inside the traditional phallic little statue of the divinity): an incandescent nucleus that in an optimistic forecast, as the rambling electron of benzene ring stabilizes in time the six carbon atoms, fill the need of pushing, of inner motion,

of renewal of each of us. Yes, **in time**. But the absolutist unconscious of a child doesn't know *"time"*, therefore he/she cannot live its hope. Instead, it will be strong and authentic feeling the difference, eternal like a sentence, between him, small satellite with little or no energy, which is continually needed by the child; this brings us back to the primordial Klein's



*"envy"* mentioned earlier (a term intended as latin *"look bad"*, *"look against"* and not *"craving"*). And if the child, prey of his unconscious by definition, doesn't live the time, who must render him/her a **serene sense of the transformation of things**, if not the mother?



## THE "QUID"



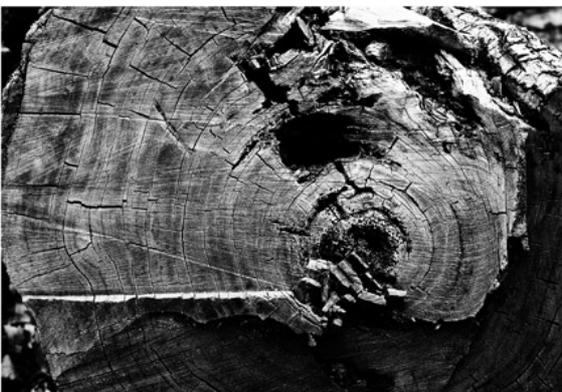
So, here is that we allow ourselves to encode (at the cost of carelessly trespass into heresy) the greatest sin of the adult man against himself, which in our case becomes a sin of the mother against herself-adult and in relapse, against the future of the child: **don't believe in time**, don't live the adult hope of transformation of things and (of course) the healthy **joy of project**. And if at the center of the essence of Eve time doesn't exist, she will feel and will

conceive a still and eternal "total space" that will be viscerally communicated to the child as that "**everything now**" as the only, fundamental object of desire. Here is that the **quid** is clearly configured: energy as total power or, in other words, the ancestral insanity to believe in a total transformation, everything now, "diabolically" losing the awareness that in the "absolute whole" is inconceivable "transformation": it is conceivable only in the world of the multiplicity. So, the perverse logic of "everything at once" leads man to naively and overbearingly dream of being "God". He, then, will see the other as an unbearable limit, a threat: from here, the germ of violence, the



physical elimination of the contender as an easy solution: I, human unity in the world, living and non, of partial and multiple things, conceive the ancestral delusion of becoming

**the One** (the *Divine Whole*) through the destruction of all the other multiple existing units.



There is an exquisitely adult meta-message that (beyond opinions and cultures), should be collected from Genesis:

"... *Have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds in the sky and over every living creature that crawls on earth ...*"

"... *I give you every herb producing seed which is upon the whole earth and every tree in which there is the fruit producing seed: they will be your food ...*"

In this context, the reported practice of human sacrifice configures and confirms what I am willing to accept as a paradigm of what I define as “*psychic magic*”: **to accomplish a big event, someone or something has to die actually or symbolically.** To deepen this point is another story “*that must be told another time ...*”, but here is a need to emphasize that is accepted in the religious text a manipulative-propitiatory use of animal but NOT human; as if to say (stripping for a moment the issue of ethical-moral pregnancies) that it doesn’t get spoiled, not even to get a “*big event*”, the superior biological organization which the human being is. The divine indication given to



the First Man to relate with all things, living and non (but not human), that surrounded him, is a wise indication to draw energy from them for any choice (it is assumed to be constructive); in contrast, with the appearance of the other human beings, there is the temptation to subtract to the other human being his own energy, his own source, thus proposing a substantial disorder in the plot of different lives: the energy, which was already canalized in an individual story, is stolen and therefore is forced to take a functional “*step backward*”, returning anonymous, **amorphous power back in the hands of the thief-murderer.** The teaching that should have been spread is the human adult pleasure to look for in Reality the *small bricks* of

what exists and build, a little piece at a time, their own individual human story, and not succumb to the diabolic temptation to destroy a “*human building*” which is already well built, to whom you can steal all the bricks at once.



**But it takes time.** What is Time for Eve? In the Eden, under the “wing of God”, there is no Time, since nothing changes, but everything is given to her. The Snake offers her the world of **Choice**, of Possibility and of Time, but (from that moment on) the Eden is finished for her: from the moment of awareness she loses the “*Everything*” of Eden, anything she wishes



must be searched, one by one. But the experience of the fruit offered by the Snake is to have all the awareness in just one bite to jump at the foot with the same despair for the loss of the *everything-now* of the Eden (that we smartly could call unconscious ...), the easy way, the murder.

### **BUILDER OF CITY**

And what is more bitter is that he is alluded to a specific purpose of such extreme action.

*“Cain left God and went to live in the town of Nod,*

*at East of the Eden. Now Cain joined his wife who conceived and gave birth to Enoch; then, he became builder of a city, that he named Enoch, after his son ...”*



From verse 17-24 unravels genealogy of Cain, condemned, yes, to wandering life, but also builder of the first city, ancestor of breeders, musicians, blacksmiths. All the progresses of



urban life are thus attributed by the Yahwist Author to the bloodline of Cain, the damned. And many others will come, not last Romolo, who will build the *Caput Mundi* on the blood of his murdered brother.

And if a “mark” is given to Cain, there is also a “mark” given by the secret feelings of the soul of Eve-Mother to the mothers of other generations: the name “Eve”, anglicized from Latin, derives from the Jewish “*chawwah*”, which is not a real name, but means “*Root of Life*”.

Therefore, the woman is called “*Life*” because she was “*the mother of all the living*”; it is a



royal title, it was the title of the Queen Mother: in Jerusalem the Mother of the King was extremely important, but not his wife. This is an extremely important role, so much so that the Queen Mother was called “*Ghevirah*”, the “Powerful”, the woman who has command. Eve, “*Chawwah*”, the Life, is the Mother of all the Living, is the first of the series of the Queen Mothers, she has a decisive role in the history of mankind, **passing on the “mark” of**

**ambition of becoming the King’s Mother**, fertile and sad land of patricides and fratricides for the throne.

And we, if we just look around, what do we find for all this? Perhaps the fact that, through thousands of years of history, it is the sharing of values and desires that stirs the clash, mostly a “conflict between brothers”, where ever the desired object cannot or does not want to divide among the aspirants. Every culture, in fact, contains a “seed of self-destruction”, a principle that changes the common belonging in crisis of all differences, in reciprocal violence. This is also the dark



side of globalization, which strongly confuses the traditional references on which the order and the social peace are resting, forcing an even more massive sharing of the above mentioned values and desires, creating unusual brotherhoods made of petroleum and Coca-Cola, but because of this, instigating new fratricides.

Faceted, twisty and gloomy appears to us, therefore, the fate of Eve, first “Queen Mother”, as that of her damned son, and we feel very conscious of having displayed if not a small part of the various aspect of the theme ...

But, even so, it has been a pleasure to share this little. Just like the pleasure of throwing the stone in the pond to enjoy the view of the circles that are formed in the water ...

Vito Sammartano