

Estephany Mejia

Prof. Maret

Prenatal Psych

Apr. 29th, 2023

### Book Review: *Mutual Caring* by Frank Lake

*Mutual Caring* was originally written in 1982 by Dr. Lake. Lake wrote this book while he was dying from cancer. This book is the third edition of *Mutual Caring* but nonetheless this book has important aspects and theories to it.

In the introduction Lake introduces the idea of the first three months and how crucial they are. How the emotional state of the mother and the needs of the fetus go hand in hand. I think this point was something interesting in the book overall because reading more in depth about it makes one think about pregnancy. The impact the mother holds on her child is extremely crucial in the fact that it determines how one formulates their persona. This person later on in life will reflect the behaviors that their mother possessed when they were in the womb. This aspect shows how big of an impact this portrays on an individual and how many believe that babies do not acknowledge what happens to them in the womb. Lake also talks about how that changes the perspective for him about the origins of counseling, and how it formulates different beliefs of how our behaviors correlate back to our fetal stages. He goes ahead and talks about the major personality disorders that lay in infancy and as well as subsequent childhood. Lake states that the place of origin for violent fixated emotions is almost invariably found in fetal emotions with great intensity. This was an interesting thing to read because I know that having certain emotions can affect your baby, but not to the certain extent that it creates or implements certain behaviors a child could have while growing up.

Additionally, I found how certain beliefs back then revolved around how the fetal stage was more of a peaceful and blissful time for the baby, but this theory that Lake presents says otherwise. Lake described how it was incredible that even when a child was barely developed or even had an undeveloped brain they still in a way understood their surroundings and such traumatic events that were going on. This comes to show how a mother's environment while pregnant could really affect a child's behavior, and how possibly their life turns out. No one seems to realize that while in the womb babies are unaware of what's happening, but Lake's theory suggests otherwise on how they are fully aware of what is going on.

Furthermore, I genuinely do believe that whatever impacts the mother impacts the child. The feelings a mother presents in certain situations is what a fetus could pick up on, partially these traumatic events that women go through could be a reason as to why there are many miscarriages. Lake's work primarily revolved around a lot of philosophers and poem work, and he mentioned how if these philosophers were thinking about and gave reason behind the theory, then why would it not be real? This is partially true because one can't say that children experience blissfulness within the fetal period, more so we have to bring other theories to contradict this. Without these additional theories or hypotheses many would stick to the simple definition that the fetus does not experience any traumatic experiences while in the womb, but we have to think that possibly there are periods where mothers' emotions do affect fetuses to a certain extent. The other thing that really caught my eye was how even the way the father acted before conception could have a major impact on the fetus. This is really interesting because one doesn't seem to think that having intercourse with a certain state of mind contributes to how your future child may behave, but hypothesis and theories say otherwise.

No one ever seems to think that their actions while pregnant have consequences to how their child may turn out, but mothers should honestly start thinking about this. Because even when thinking about aborting a child that's inside of you, the fetus could get impacted negatively. Doctors explain how the thought and pressure of even aborting could cause an excessive amount of stress which then correlates to depression, causing the child to get impacted.

Lake goes to describe how often there is always the establishment of breathing patterns when breathing. He explains that this happens to be the most biofeedback mechanism. Lake goes on to describe that the different aspects of fetal experiences seem to be split off into dissociative and stored as safe distances in the brain from each other. He goes on to explain how fixing these distances from each other in the brain could impact deep breathing in a positive way. This is interesting because deep breathing produces theta rhythm brain activity which does promote a conscious focusing on the unconscious contents. Lake goes on to find that respiration patterns during alpha dominant states consisted of chest breathing which is equal to the abdominal activity. This is accompanied by a rhythmic pattern that consists of inhalation and equals to exhalation. Barely breathing as explained by Lake is a huge contribution to onset anxiety. Lake goes on to correlate this back to his theory saying that the belief of the central nervous system was developed before such details to be recorded, but the evidence that we see is embryonic and fetal memory. Researchers saw how theta wave imagery correlated to how fetuses were able to formulate inaccessible information via memory.

Lake seems to describe that we need to become more connected with God in order to heal sufferings that he supposedly put onto us. This expression right here when viewed as a christian does make sense and one seems to ask God why we go through these traumatic

experiences within our whole lives, but as someone who isn't religious are they really going to talk to God to alleviate their suffering? Lake seems to lack a bit of regard towards people who don't necessarily believe in God or the religion. It seems that lake takes a religious perspective more in order to tell one that to alleviate their past traumas one must be needful to god, asking and praying to him to alleviate our traumas. Dr. Lakes seems to go very into depth about the passion and death of Christ and how this is all an act of love portrayed by God, and how the fetal stress syndrome correlates to this. Lake explains that if God loves all of his creation then why put them through torment in the fetal phase. I certainly do understand this because when one is suffering you really do seem to ask god why he put all of these traumatic experiences in one's life. This book does seem to explain thoroughly how a mothers emotions affect children and how the months a fetus is developing contributes hugely to how later in life their behaviors will be affected. No one ever seems to think this, but possibly if this theory presented by Dr. Lake's was to be analyzed more by medical research then possibly we would be able to see whether this is true or not. The thing is though to determine this one must realize that it is ethically and morally wrong to perform any experiments on a fetus that has no say in anything. Since technically a developed fetus is a life and has its rights as equally as a human does.

To conclude I genuinely do believe that Dr. Lake presents a valid hypothesis and theory regarding how children are affected in the womb, but I can't agree with him completely. I do agree that how a woman reacts and responds during a pregnancy could affect a child and could possibly even lead to losing a child, or even developing periods of psychological disorders. Technically, one can't ever know whether this is true and whether certain factors play a role in how a child's behavior develops because of the traumas they have experienced within the womb. Additionally from a christian perspective one does think

as to why God implemented such traumatic experiences if he loves us, but when we view it in a standpoint from someone who is non-religious one doesn't believe that. People who tend to not believe in God simply believe that they themselves bring negative energies to themselves and that therapy could possibly cure all of their traumas. Overall the book itself was a learning experience on how a mothers mental state while pregnant could affect a child.