

UNIVERSITATEA BABES BOLYAI DIN CLUJ-NAPOCA

FACULTATEA DE TEOLOGIE REFORMATATA

SCOALA DOCTORALA "ECUMENE"

DISSERTATION SUMMARY

THE ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGE OF GOD

THROUGH CHILDREN' DRAWINGS

IN ELEMENTARY CLASSES

CONDUCTOR DE DOCTORAT

DOCTORAND

Prof. univ. Dr. MOLNÁR JÁNOS

GÁSPÁR ÉVA

2017

Table of contents

I. Introduction	
ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGE OF GOD THROUGH CHILDREN' DRAWING IN ELEMENTARY CLASSESS	7
I.1. Factors that influence the image of God in elementary classes of the Hungarian schools in Kolozsvár in the mirror of earlier researches	12
I.2. Hypotheses	16
I.3. Projective drawing as the method of analyzing religious development (the image of God)	16
I.3.1. Definition of projective drawing	16
I.3.2. The most suitable method: SEVEN STEPS CONFIGURATION ANALYSIS (SSCA) by Vass	17
I.3.2.1. General phenomenological map of SSCA	18
I.3.2.2. The presentation of the seven steps	19
I.3.3. Az SSCA completed with the analysis of God image taken into consideration the effects of metaphors and symbols	21
I.3.3.1. A sensus plenior	22
II. GOD'S IMAGE	24
II.1. Theories about the formation of the image of God	24
II.1.1. Psychoanalytical approach	24
II.1.2. Object relations theory	27
II.2. Image of God, concept of God and representation of God	29
II.2.1. A life-affirming image of God	31
II.2.2. Frielingsdorf' negative "demonic" images of God and their origins	31
II.3. I. Researches of the image of God	35
III. TALKING ABOUT GOD	47
III.1. The theological grounding of a life-affirming, personal representation of God	47
III.2. The conflict between the eyes and ear, seeing and hearing - didactical function	50
III.3. Device of God for communication: figurative language	52
III.3.1. Basic forms of the figurative language	55

III.3.2. The role of the figurative language in understanding, especially to metaphors and symbols	56
III.4. Image of God in the light of biblical metaphors	66
III.4.1. God as King, Lord, Warrior, Judge and Lawgiver - monarchical metaphors of God	66
III.4.1.1. Monarchical metaphors of God and their effect on self-image	
Disobedient subject - performance model	67
III.4.2. God as Spirit	68
III.4.2.1. Anthropomorphic metaphors of God from every day life: Builder, Gardener, Shepherd, Intimate Father, Mother, Healer, Friend - evoking closeness, relationship and connection	68
III.4.2.2. Non-anthropomorphic Metaphors of God	69
III.4.2.2. The effects of God as Spirit model on the image of God: Intimate Father, The God of Life, Good Shepherd, Caretaker, Healer, Mother - evoking personal dimensions	71
III.4.3. The effect of the image of God on key Christian notions in the work of M. Borg	72
III.4.4. The biblical stories present in curriculum as moderator variables	72
IV. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN	80
IV.1. Erikson' stages of psychosocial development and Fowler' stages of Faith, children' use of symbols , symbol understanding	80
V. CHILDREN' DRAWINGS	98
V. 1. A short history of the researches in children's drawings and their finding	98
V.2. Characteristics of the stages of drawing according to children' age	104
V.2.1. Stages in the development of children' drawings	104
V.3 The presentation of my research	113
V.3.1. The Analysis of the image of God through children' drawings, instruction and process	113
V.3.2. The detailed presentation of Seven Steps Configuration Analysis (SSCA)	115
V.3.1.1. The detailed presentation of the seven steps	116
V.3.1.2. The completion of SSCA concerning the effects of the biblical metaphors on the image of God	120
V.3.1.3. The sensus plenior	123

V.4. Positive items of the healthy image of God	127
V.4.1.Characteristics of drawings concerning the image of God in Preparatory classes (6 -7 years)	131
V.4.2. Characteristics of drawings concerning the image of God in first and second classes (7-9 years) Érzékleti realizmus	147
V.4.3. Characteristics of drawings concerning the image of God in third and fourth classes	178
V.5. Aesthetic elements	199
V.5.1. The emotional-affective tone	201
V.5.1.1. Warm emotional-affective tone	201
V.5.1.2. Happy emotional-affective tone	203
V.5.1.3 Calm emotional affective tone	204
V. 5. 2 Dinamics of drawings	206
V.5.3. Creativity	207
V.5.3.1. Signs of transcendance	208
V.5.3.2. The angels as spiritual intermediaries	219
V.5.3.3. Spiritual intermediary place - the church	220
V.5.3.4. Spiritual activity - prayer	223
V.5.4. Unique representations of God	232
V.5.5. Mechanism of elaborations	245
V.5.5.1. The tense reduction	247
V.5.5.2. Primer elaboration	250
V.5.5.3. Schematisation of experience	251
V.6. Negative items of the "demonic" images of God	253
V.6 1. The emotional-affective tone	253
V.6.1.1. Angry, aggressive emotional-affective tone	253

V.6.1.2. Fearful, frightening emotional-affective tone	256
V.6.1.3. Cold emotional-affective tone	258
V.6.1.4. Empty emotional-affective tone	261
V.6.1.5. Unclear, confused and bizarre emotional-affective tone	263
VI. SUMMARY	264
BIBLIOGRAPHY	267

KEYWORDS

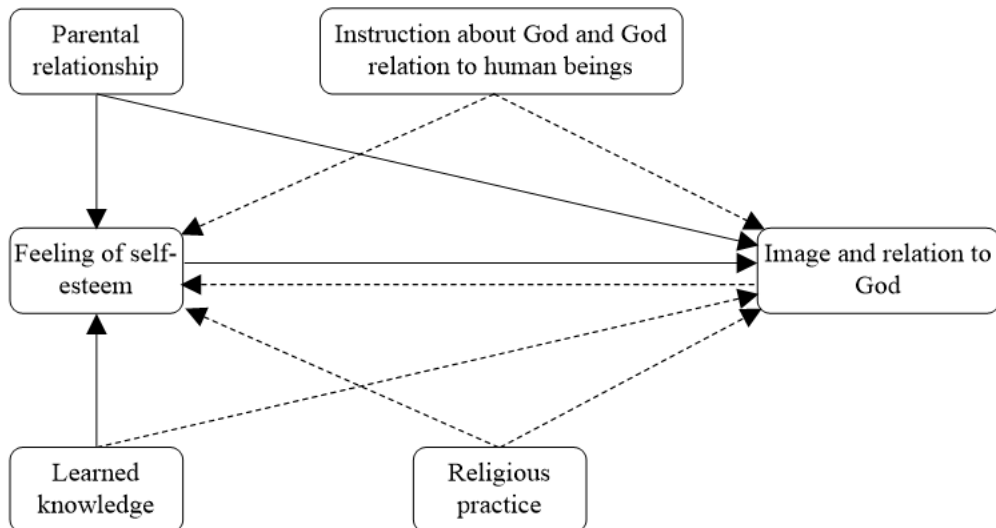
God's image, projective drawings, externalisation, SSCA method, conscious, unconscious, visualization, emotional-affective tone, aesthetic elements, uniqueness, mechanisms of elaboration, tense reduction, primer elaboration, schematisation of experience.

CONTENT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

An Analysis of God's image through children drawings in elementary classes

The work consist of five chapters. The first chapter is the presentation of my thesis: The Analysis of God's image through children drawings in elementary classes and its relevance in the religious education.

First of all, I summarized up the result of the researches in this field, in order to have a sight in comparing the result of the mentioned german, english, hungarian researches with the one I made in the elementary classes of Hungarian schools in Cluj-Napoca. For this I used the Bernhard Grom's figure, who worked out the relationship of the image of God with other factors in an individual's life. I found it very useful because it takes into account the complexity of the factors that interfere and interact in the shaping of the way that one perceives God. The thickness of the lines in the diagram reflect the influence that each factor exerts. As we can see two of the factors stand out in the schema: parental relationship and self-esteem, and also the strong influence of one's parental relations on a person's self esteem.



Grom' s schema on the factors that influence the formation of the image of God:

PR - parental relationship

OR - relationship to other significant persons and groups

SE - feelings of self-esteem (self-concept)

G - image and relation to God

I - Instruction about God and God relation to human beings

RP - religious practice, prayer, worship, scripture reading, religious discussions, the child's own reflections

Some psychologists' affirmations about the drawings have a great impact on me in choosing the method of projective drawing:

An American author-, child psychiatrist, and professor emeritus at Harvard University - Robert Coles affirmation's made the first impact on me in choosing the method of drawing, who realized that the children drawings are far more informative than their verbal communication. Researchers from New Zealand¹ also proved Robert Coles affirmation, that twice more information is achieved if the children have the opportunity to draw, not only to talk about their spiritual life.

Marvin Klepsch and Laura Logie in Children draw and tell² statement made the second impact on me: "Drawing speaks louder than words in the early stages of a child's development, ideally suitable as a technique for uncovering information about the inner self" - say the authors of the book.

Schweitzer also finds that by the drawings of the children about God we can have an insight in the religious development of the child. So drawing is also a suitable technique for (uncovering) the religious development of children and the child development is best illustrated by his/her image of God.

All these affirmations lead me to the conclusion that drawing is a communicative tool and tends to recount for more things to the interpreter (researcher) than language, because children don not yet have sufficient capabilities for abstract linguistic expression, but they have symbolic communication methods such as drawing. While many children dislike answering questions, drawing proves to be a quickly, easy and enjoyable way.

We can say that drawing is the same field of expression as play, and we know how important is the play for their development. Through drawing children also express their fears, joys, dreams and pain and also can give us leads about their relationship to the world and God.

¹GROSS, Julien; Hayne, Harlene, Drawing facilitates children's verbal reports of emotionally laden events, in *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, Vol 4(2), Jun 1998, 163-179.

²Klepsch, M., Logie, L. *Children draw and tell. An Introduction to the Projective Uses of Children's Human Figure Drawings*, Routledge Brunner, New York, 1982, 43-44.

Hypotheses

1. With increasing age the anthropomorphic representations of God are less frequent. The older the children are, the less often they choose an anthropomorphic representation of God.

2. The image of God, which according to Rizzuto every child brings under her arms, the unconscious, subjective one is changed by the stories of the Bible, the metaphors used to express God, and every person and his/her image of God in interaction with the child has a great impact on the child representation of God. Listening the stories about God and the visualization of his/her God experience has a positive influence on the child' image of God. The mechanism of elaboration experience like primer elaboration, schematization of experience and tension reduction are the best examples for this, which will be presented in the last chapter.

3. From religious education results the understanding and a more subjective use of religious symbols, because the personal experiences and thinking have a great part in it, so the children are not just coping the symbols without understanding but their drawings reveal a more personal relationship between God and child. The chapter V.5.4. shows this.

Projective drawing is an externalization of a cognitive-emotional structure which has more components and are present in every child in other proportions. The term externalization cannot be replaced with the term projection because contain both conscious and not conscious components. A projective drawing or painting as an externalized cognitive structure, consists of several components present to different extents in each case. Some of the most important components are:

- a. projection as a construction of the individuals world
- b. the projection of the unconscious contents

- c. communication process - pictures are forms of communication (SSCA interprets the picture and also the process of communication as a message of communication)
- d. learned schemas, signs. (for example the heart what is the symbol of love)

The SSCA I found the suitable model for the projective drawings, which having a rich repertoire of methods and techniques is the most suitable model to recognize the personal or distorted images of self, and God.

The reason why the researchers who take a scientific stance have held doubts about the projection method is the fact that subjective factors of the interpreter have a great influence when analyzing the picture.

Even if the projection method cannot satisfy the standards of reliability and validity as a psychological analysis, it is an important tool. Analyzing children's drawings has always been a systematic measure to evaluate children's perceptions and attitudes towards their environment.

The configuration analysis consists of seven phases which constitute individual steps of understanding the projective drawing. The method can be used for the psychological interpretation of any projective test produced by psychological patients as well as healthy adults and children.

The first step is a preliminary analysis, instead of a blind diagnosis, the enrichment of the existing knowledge!

The second step is a process analysis: 1. observe the process of drawings and interpretation process variables (earlier and later drawings should be compared), observe the behavior.

The third step is a phenomenological description. Phenomenological analysis means an objective description of the picture in which interpretation must be avoided, in other words: a concise description of drawing in which evaluative adjectives are avoided.

The fourth step is intuitive analysis means in this model - 1. viewing with an open-minded attitude; 2. focus of the viewer's spontaneous attention; 3. motor-emphaty; 4. kinaesthetic-emphaty; 5. visualization of the drawing; 6. emphatic questioning; 7. single sentence description.

The fifth step is Global analysis, the areas of this steps are: emotional affective tone; personal style of depiction; integration, spontaneity, harmony; personality levels (in human figure); movement aspect, form aspect, placement and use of colours;

The emotional or affective tone elicited by the drawing, due to its high information quantity is one of the most important interpretative criteria of SSCA, because, in most cases, it is a direct reflection of the subject's emotional affective condition.

The emotional-affective tone can be: warm emotional-effective tone; happy, cheerful, playful or idealized affective tone; fearful,tense or anxious emotional-affective tone; empty or cold emotional-affective tone; wild, frightening, hostile emotional-affective tone; fearful, frightening emotional-affective tone; confuses, bizarre emotional-affective tone.

The sixth step is the item analysis which has 6 areas: 1. only interpret clearly identified unusual phenomena; 2. patterns instead of a dictionary style analysis; 3. context analysis (anamnesis and test behaviour) instead of isolated items; 4. enactive, iconic and symbolic level analysis; 5. formal, structural and content analysis; 6. content analysis in 11 steps.

In the SSCA method, pictures are analyzed as forms of nonverbal communication, which may disclose new psychological meaning. The SSCA divides symbol analysis into general and psychoanalytic symbol interpretation, the first provides a much wider scope for interpretation than the more specific psychoanalytic analysis. There are three basic principles of the symbol analysis in SSCA:

1. Focuses on the primacy of the subject's own associations, the individual's associations not the universal interpretations recorded in lexicons.
2. The primacy of distinguishing attributes instead of mystical, esoteric interpretations - we seek for the most important properties of the symbol, which distinguish it from other similar objects.
3. The primacy of spatial and temporal proximity (symbolic interpretations correspond to the subject's own culture and period)

The most important step is to find the essence of the drawing. The essence of the picture is its most important psychological content, formulated in a brief and concise

manner. The essence can be summed up in a single short sentence and should not be confused with the title of the picture. The essence expresses deeper and more significant content.

The configurations begin to function if at least three items in the pattern of variables allocated to the interpretation occur together. The term item means sign or characteristic in the SSCA method used for any meaningful characteristic of the picture like: the process of creating the picture, test behavior, verbal projection and verbal comments. Item configuration is a combination of items to which a psychological interpretation can be assigned. According to the basic rule of the configuration analysis - same items have different psychological interpretations in different item configuration.

The larger the number of the items belonging to a configuration that are present, the higher the certainty factor of the interpretation of the pattern will be.

To this essence (psychological content) I associated the *sensus plenior* which in our research expresses the affective dimension of children towards God.

The instruction of the projective drawing was: "Draw a picture how you think God is present in your life" - this instruction made possible for children to detach themselves from the stories of the Bible and allow children personal associations from their life.

This affective dimension I could result from: the anamnesis, the process of drawing, the explanation or title given to the drawing by the child, and the personal events from their lives in which God appeared as a loving and caring God or a distant, stern, rejecting or punishing God, to which I could easily associate a metaphor of God.

The General Phenomenological map worked out by Vass Zoltan³ is also supplemented by me with the God metaphor.

At the beginning of using the SSCA method, it takes a long time to perform a complete analysis, but after having experience in the interpretation of drawings, the whole procedure will become an inner thinking strategy and the seven steps will emerge into one process.

³ VASS, Z. A hétlépeses képelemzési módszer, Flaccus kiadó, 2011.

The second part is dealing with the difference of the concepts: image of God, concept of God and representation of God, because these are often confused and lead us to misunderstanding.

The image of God is rooted in early formative experiences, and has a more powerful impact on our emotions and behaviors than our doctrinal statements about God.

In other words our images of God are unconscious, subjective, the concept of God are doctrinal affirmations about God, objective and conscious. The image of God and the concept of God may not be the same.

The concept of God has often been considered crucial in the development of an individual's personal faith.

Borg⁴ in his book "The God we never knew" treats how we image God. He strongly believes that our images of God matter in our lives. He says, "Tell me your image of God and I will tell you your theology."⁵

Frielingsdorf, theologian and psychologist show us that our images of God, both conscious and unconscious are often rooted in our earliest childhood experiences and these images of God have a great impact on children's spiritual well being. If their image of God is distorted, their whole relationship with God can be distorted. If they have negative images of God, it is likely that they will experience a great deal of spiritual distress. According to the author there are four main "demonic" images of God: God as a punishing judge, God as demon of death, bringing death instead of life, God as a metaphysical book-keeper enforcing the law and God as demanding achievement and success. The above mentioned author invites us to explore how those experiences have shaped one's perceptions of God and encourages us to develop God images that are healing. He also sees the main task of practical theology in counteracting such images of God: Demonic Judge versus God of mercy and love; The God of death versus the God of life; The Accountant versus The Good Shepherd, The Taskmaster versus the God of fruitfulness.

⁴ American New Testament Scholar, Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University

⁵ BORG, M. The God we never knew: beyond dogmatic religion to a more authentic contemporary faith, 57

The traditional anthropomorphic view of God establishes our doctrines and belief. Borg presents also a possibility and does so very successfully: in chapter three of his above mentioned book explores a variety of biblical images of God and their effects on images of ourselves and of the religious life. The author recognizes the evocative power of the metaphors for God which are carrying many rich associations and emphasizes that many of these metaphors are relational, imaging not only God, but ourselves in relationship to God. The diversity of these metaphors leads the author to sort them into categories:

a. anthropomorphic and nonanthropomorphic images

Anthropomorphic images portray God in humanlike form: God as king, judge, lawgiver, shepherd, wise woman, father, mother, lover, healer.

God as King: "For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth". Psalms 47,2

God as Judge: "Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon." Judges, 11.25

God as Lawgiver: "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;" Deut.28,58.

Nonanthropomorphic images speak of God as rock, fire, light, eagle, lion, fortress, shield.

God as a rock: "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." Deut.31.

God as fire: "For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." Deut.4,24.

God as a shield: "Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great." 2 Samuel 22,36.

God as fortress: "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." Psalms 18,2.

b. distance and images of closeness

king, lawgiver, warrior - even the father image, because the father was a small king in his family in the framework of the patriarchal family.

the shepherd, mother, lover, friend, healer, fortress - are images of closeness

God as healer: "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee." Exodus 15,26.

c. male and female images

God as a mother: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isayah 49,15.

God as a shepherd: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth." Psalms 80,2

What Borg finds surprising although the Bible originated in a patriarchal culture, there are female images of God: God as nurturing mother, wise woman... etc.

There are two models of God, the monarchical model that clusters together images of God as king, lord, lawgiver, father which leads to a performance model of Christian life and the model God as Spirit, this model clusters together the images of God that point to intimate relationship, which leads to a relational model of the Christian life.

In the performance model sin is central, sin understood as disobedience to God is the most important problem, the emphasis on the sin affects not only the way the whole Christian story is told but also confers identity.

The monarchical model suggests that Christian life is about meeting God's requirements, in this way generates a performance model.

The model of God as Spirit leads to an image of Christian life that stresses relationship, belonging and intimacy.

Spirit is used to refer to God's presence in creation, its meaning is sufficiently broad to make the synonym for the sacred. The Hebrew word for spirit is ruach, which also means breath and wind. The associations of both are suggestive, we cannot see the wind though its presence are felt, breath is like wind inside the body. Metaphorically, God as a spirit is both wind and breath, a non-material reality outside of us and within us. Speaking of God as Spirit evokes both transcendence and nearness.

The image of God (unconscious) and the concept of God (conscious) together form the representation of God. In my research I use the term image of God because in elementary school I found the best term to indicate the conjoining of beliefs and feelings related to God, beliefs that are largely unconscious. The curriculum also provides insight in how can this concept of God develop by listening the stories of the Bible, the effects of the figurative language on the child, which affects mental health and personality development.

The third chapter of this work deals with the question above, how can we achieve a life-affirming representation of God through story-telling.

So our purpose is to recognize these images and influence into a personal, life-affirming representation of God. God can be neither described nor defined. God is incomparable.

How can we achieve this? By story telling.

“Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation”.(Joel 1,3)

“And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.”(Deut. 32,46-47)

The tradition of the story-telling is one of the earliest form of teaching and inspiring children.

Furthermore, because they are hearing an illustrated story, the listeners are forced to create the pictures of their own minds. This increases their ability to visualize which helps their creative imagination grow.

“So belief comes of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” Romans 10,17

Although believing in God is through hearing, visual culture is affecting everything because through eyesight we obtain the majority of information about the world. Images and narratives in cultures are closely connected. Mankind thinks in images first and only later in words. The roles of the images is important, the figurative aspect of the language is emphasized because of its didactical and mediatory function. While the language is a system of symbols and communication through symbols/images meet the demands of mankind everything was bequeathed by means of figurative language.

“The mysterious truth of that God, who is the Wholly Other, and dwells in the inaccessible light, cannot be expressed by means of a direct word”⁶

God’s message is also transmitted through figurative language and it is also true that is rich in powerful and helpful imagery about God. God is pictured in Scripture as King, Shepherd, Comforter, Counselor, Healer, Helper, to name a few. These images from Scripture can provide a dramatic contrast to our disturbing images. Contrast, for example, the image of God as a bully with this description of God as both a powerful ruler and as a tender, gentle shepherd.

The nature of the religious language is metaphorical. Why God choose this figurative language? The reason for exploring metaphor theories is the belief that research into the understanding of religious language needs to take into account the metaphorical nature of the religious discourse about the way metaphors are understood.

According to the semantic theory, metaphor is a heuristic device to comprehend the world and God.

The rhetorical theory viewed metaphor as a peculiar way of naming, in order to surprise and provide amusement.

Long before we were old enough to think in words, we thought in pictures or images. These images are loaded with emotion.

The emotive theory focuses on the the affective experience evoked by a metaphor, because metaphor aims to evoke an affective experience by creating a link between the emotive meaning of a metaphor and the emotionally coloured personal ties

⁶ BRÜMMER, V. *Speaking of a Personal God. An Essay in Philosophical Theology*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, 37.

allowed by the metaphor. In Borg words' the metaphors have an affective dimension. "They do not simply lead to a set of intellectual conclusions about God's nearness and lover, or as wind and breath, or as nurturing mother"⁷ compared to imaging of God as a distant king, lawgiver, and judge?

A metaphor - says Ricoeur makes one think, creates tension and expresses or addresses affective experience. Or in Tillich's⁸ words: the purpose of metaphor is to suggest similarities between things that are different, to introduce novelty and surprise, and to encourage novel insights.

Symbol can provide a medium through which children can explore the meaning of their existence, and meaning-making metaphorical language can open up new avenues to the sacred. "Every symbol is finally a hierophany, a manifestation of the bond between man and the sacred" (Ricoeur 1967, 356).

Decoding the figurative sense of the symbols require work and give us strength.

Children' age and cognitive development are important factors to consider when analyzing children' pictures. Children' drawings can provide valuable information on the development of children' environmental perceptions. Drawings are affected by knowledge, age and the ability to draw. Traditional and theoretical approaches suggested that the children' drawings reflect their state of conceptual and intellectual development.

Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development has eight stages, he assumes that a crisis occurs at each stage of development. According to the theory, successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and the acquisition of basic virtues. Basic virtues are characteristic strengths which the ego can use to resolve subsequent crises. (We are interested in the first four stages regarding children' development)

The theologian James Fowler proposed a framework for spiritual development. By doing this he suggests that spirituality is a basic aspect of human existence that develops in predictable ways, just as cognition or social behavior or motor skills.

1. Trust versus mistrust

⁷ BORG, 77.

⁸ TILLICH, P. (1964)

In the first stage of trust versus mistrust the infant looks towards his primary caregiver for stability and certainty. If the infant receives the care he/she needs, he/she will develop a sense of trust, which will carry with him/her to other relationships. Many psychologists of religion agree that the success in this stage will influence his/her later belief in God. If this stage ends with an unsolved crisis, the infant will carry the basic sense of mistrust with him/her to other relationships. It may result in anxiety, heightened insecurities, and an over feeling of mistrust in the world around them.

From the first days of life we began storing memories of our emotional experiences. Images of our mother's face when she was distressed and when she was pleased, or of our father's face when he was angry or when he was laughing – all are stored in our memory. These images became linked with the soothing we felt or with the increased fear we felt in interacting with these important faces and voices. All of our experiences, from our earliest days, have been stored in our minds, some of them as emotionally laden images.

These emotionally laden images of parents or of other early caretakers form the basic foundation of our expectations in relationships with all other people, including God.

Fowler also finds that consistence nurturance is very important through which the child develops a sense of trust and safety, while negative experiences may cause children to develop distrust with the divine and universe. Fowler calls this stage from birth to 2 years Primal or undifferentiated.

2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

Children (18 months - 3 years) begin to assert their independence, by walking away from their mother, picking which toy to play with, discovering that he or she has many skills and abilities, such as putting on clothes, playing with toys, etc. Such skills illustrate the child's growing sense of independence and autonomy. Erikson suggests that parents allow their children to explore the limits of their abilities, encourage to become more independent meanwhile protect the child so that constant failure is avoided. If children in this stage are supported and encouraged in their increased independence, they become more confident and secure. If children are overly controlled, or not given the opportunity to assert themselves, or criticized they begin to feel inadequate in their ability to survive, and may then become overly dependent upon others, lack of self-esteem, and feel a sense of shame or doubt in their abilities. The aim has to be “self control without a loss of self-esteem” (Gross, 1992). Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of will. This is the stage in which fantasy and reality often get mixed together. During this stage, our most basic ideas about God are usually picked up from our parents and/or society.

3. Initiative vs. Guilt (age 3 to 5)

Playing is very important at this stage because it provides children with the opportunity to explore their interpersonal skills through initiating activities.

They begin to plan activities and initiate activities with others. If given this opportunity, children develop a sense of initiative and feel secure in their ability to lead others and make decisions. If the parents stop these initiatives in order to protect the child, the child will overstep the mark in his forcefulness, and the danger is that the parents will restrict his initiatives too much. Some guilt finds Erikson necessary, otherwise the child would not know how to exercise self control, but too much guilt can make the child slow to interact and inhibit creativity. A healthy balance is needed between initiative and guilt. In Fowler's opinion this is still intuitive-projective stage.

4. Industry (competence) vs. Inferiority (5-12 years)

Children are learning to read and write, to do things on their own. Teachers begin to take an important role in the child's life as they teach the child specific skills. The child's mates and friends will gain greater significance and will become a major source of the child's self-esteem. The child at this age feels the need to win approval by demonstrating specific competencies that are valued by society and begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments. If children are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel confident in their ability to achieve goals. If this initiative is restricted or not encouraged by parents or teacher, the child begins to feel inferior, doubting his own abilities and therefore they may develop a sense of inferiority. Some failure may be necessary so that the child can develop some modesty. Again, a balance between competence and modesty is necessary. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of competence.

Children start understanding the world in more logical ways. They generally accept the stories told to them by their faith community but tend to understand them in very literal ways. They have a strong belief in justice and reciprocity of the universe. From this literal understanding results that they imagine God in an anthropomorphic way. God is like a parent figure.

5. Identity vs. Role Confusion

The fifth stage is identity vs. role confusion, and it occurs during adolescence. During this stage, adolescents search for a sense of self and personal identity, through an intense exploration of personal values, beliefs and goals. According to Erikson, this is important to the process of forming a strong identity and developing a sense of direction in life.

These periods of time were important for my research to emphasize what is needed for a healthy personality: trust, initiative, self-esteem. The mental health is of great importance in one's life.

I found important an overview of the theories and researches about the children's drawings because the results of such researches contributed enormously to the understanding of the visual communication of the child, and are main works in this field.

In the interpretation of drawings is essential to have insight in the stages of drawing, focusing on the characteristics of these stages in the drawing of children in elementary school. That involves mostly three stages: the pre-schematic stage (4 to 7 years), schematic stage (7 to 9 years) and stage of dawning realism (9 to 11 years).

The presentation of the research

The first hypothesis that the anthropomorphic representations are less frequent with increasing age. The older the children are, the less often choose an anthropomorphic representation.

With the development of cognitive thinking the anthropomorphic image of God changes in an invisible God expressed by a metaphor.

The image of God anthropomorphic or not doesn't show that affective dimension of the child towards God. How can we recognize the healing, life-affirming images of God or the distorted ones? For this in my research I supplemented the SSCA method with the metaphors of God found in the children' explanations, the title of their drawing, their behavior through the drawing process, their nonverbal communication.

Summarizing these, by the term God concept I allude to the affective or evaluative aspect of the mental representations of God, it considers the positive or negative value a child assigns to God: caring and loving God or a distant, punishing, rejecting God image.

The children' representations of God in my research show predominantly a loving, caring God who is turning to the human beings and wants to be with them and help them. Both the anthropomorphic and the symbolic drawings show this. (Pictures of God as a friend, to whom they are talking to, God present at their birthday' party; God who helps them in various situation - in studying, learning to swim, in having success in several sports; God their savior against monsters; God is the healer and also the light in the dark.

Mental health (no psychiatric diagnosis) in configuration if it is accompanied by the following items: conventional or warm emotional-affective tone, happiness projected in the picture, such drawings prepared with increased emotional and attentive involvement, the human beings in drawings are loveable, the drawing is differentiated and realistic with rich details, controlled light shading and unhesitating,

quickly drawn strokes, harmonious and well proportioned composition. Fantasy involvement is the behavior of healthy, spontaneous subject who view the task as a challenge, the drawings are creative we can recognize an evasion of the projection of truly personal content, the picture becoming unique. All these characteristics accompanied with the content of the drawing in which God in the child personal association appears as Savior, Healer, Benevolent Father resulted from his/her explanation or title of the drawing given by the child it means that he/she has a personal, healthy image of God.

In the preparatory classes (6-7 years) the children being in the fairy tale stage draw God as a king or father of all children, with beard, or in the clouds, God is being glorified as the highest being.

In the realistic stage children draw God as a human being, but God doesn't appear anymore as a fairy tale figure, but realistically as a person who has influence in human life. The children express this by drawing God helping people and guarding over them and the events on earth.

In the lower age the depictions of God are anthropomorphic, the older the children get the more often they use abstract or symbolic instead of anthropomorphic representations and they proved to very creative in the depiction of God in an anthropomorphic way by using special characteristics or attributes, which emphasized the difference between God and human beings. Such special attributes which emphasize the difference are: God with a crown, God with beard - symbolizing God's wisdom, God in clouds, God in light, God with glory in companion of angels; the size symbolizing the greatness of God (God being bigger than human beings)

Sometimes the drawings and the explanation of children or the title of the drawing given by the child is not in accordance with the signs that reveal something else: for instance, a child spoke of a benevolent and merciful Father, yet deep inside himself, he is dominated by a merciless, demanding God, who requires achievement. Again we have to emphasize that subconscious images of God never correspond completely with conscious images and the subconscious images of God ultimately determines and forms the child. Our purpose is to discover subconscious (distorted) images of God and through the Bible stories and metaphors replace this distorted image with positive and healing images of God.

The images of God are also related to their images of themselves. Distorted images of God usually corresponds to self distortion. If they see God a punishing, vengeful God, they see themselves bad who are deserving punishment. If they see God with impossible expectations, they likely see themselves not good enough. How can we recognize these distorted images of God? And if we recognize how can we influence these images into a personal, life-affirming representation of God.

As a consequence of the negative self image the image of God is also distorted, so the items of the negative self image indicates the distorted image of God, too.

Negative self image is accompanied by self-criticism, mutilation of the picture, an unusual small size and weak pencil pressure. It is interesting to realize that the aggressive or fearful emotional-affective tone or other items what we should consider as aggressive do not show the drawer's aggressivity, it shows the child's anxiety or it is just the influence of cartoons, we can interpret only if other items show aggressivity.

The fearful emotional-affective tone indicates anxiety. Anxiety can have many forms. In childhood fears and anxieties are common occurrences and are considered to be a component of normal development. Children' fears are described as reactions to real or imagined threats, when these fears intensify and persist. Anxious school refusal, from a clinical viewpoint, school refusal cases require comprehensive assessment and treatment. Advances have been made in the treatment of school refusal. The researches⁹ are talking about two primary diagnostic "subgroups" of school refusers—separation anxious and phobic. Phobic school refusers had a later age of onset and showed more pervasive (severe) school refusal than separation anxious school refusers. By contrast, separation anxious school refusers were more likely than phobic school refusers to have mothers who had a history of school refusal problems. The implications of these findings are discussed.

Depressive mood or risk for depression is accompanied with: dissatisfaction with the picture, in many cases crying before or during the drawing, depressive symptoms,

8. LAST, C., STRAUSS, C. School Refusal in Anxiety-Disordered Children and Adolescents in *Journal of the American Academy, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, January 1990, vol.29, issue 1, pages 31-35.

social isolation, psychosomatic symptoms, unusually long drawing times, indifferent emotionless gestures and facial expressions, sadness or hopelessness projected into the picture, the human figure has the emphatic qualities of being lost and insecure (Sad face, closed eyes).

The need for emotional support is also very frequent in depressed patients. The other components of the configuration are: social isolation, empty emotional-affective tone, depression, sadness, hopelessness, loneliness and disgust.

The quality of being lost may also be an unconscious expression of the desire to be cared for. The drawing also project the hunger for love and the need for emotional support.

Evasive behavior is indicated by short, indifferent answers; other associated items include unusually short drawing times, immediate reactions, cautious behavior, very few details and careless lines.

Slow expression may be an indication of inadequacy of feelings if it is accompanied with self-criticism, the addition of new details to the finished picture and light pressure.

For the drawer drawing pictures is an effective method to release one's mind. The symbols help the state of mind to transfer from the unconscious level to the conscious. Pictures are symbols recount something extremely deep and complex. It is normal for the symbol (drawing) to carry aspects that are unknown or indecipherable and there are times when the drawer cannot understand the drawing he/she drew.

“It is in the visualization of ideas and the expression or representation of our ideas, that we can bring something more clearly into consciousness”¹⁰. A drawing might be seen as an externalization of an idea or concept of God. (This is an important step in recognizing the image of God, because a healthy, personal image of God is very important in the mental health' of the child)

Drawing and visualization can assist children in their shift, from everyday spontaneous concepts to more complex ideas, for instance the concept of God. When

¹⁰ BROOKS, M., Drawing and young children exploration of “Big Ideas” in International Journal of Science Education, vol. 31, 2009, pages 319-341.

young children are encouraged to revise and dialogue through and with their drawing, they are able to represent and explore increasingly complex ideas.

Drawings release mental energy - even children faced with difficulties may be able to overcome their problems. It could be said that it is basis for which drawing is used as a psychological treatment in cases of distorted images of God.

However the therapist or interpreter is dealing with an individual, the pictures are a medium for communication. The analysis of pictures is a system that allows children to become more conscious, and if the conscience is expanded, the contents of unconscious would be spared from being abused and ignored. When a single symbol or theme appears repeatedly, it merits attention, and there are instances in which there are hidden meanings behind them. This is because unconscious thoughts, feelings and actions are the root source of symbols and themes.

The most important mechanisms of elaboration to which I found examples in my research are: primary elaboration, the schematization of experience and tense reduction. Primary elaboration is the recreation of experience without the reduction of stress in children drawings and the desired object (or desired action) by a picture. The child simply draws what he desires. The picture retains dramatic tension.

The schematisation of experience means that the tension loses ground and the drawing resembles to a schema. It is a process during which the initial tension ceases because he/she manages to convert it into motivational energy.

The religious education with the results personal relationship with God, in which the children do not copy the religious symbols without understanding, because through personal experiences in which God is presented as a savior or healer, just to mention a few, give an intimate, personal note to the God-child relationship which is manifested in their drawings.

Jakob Streit¹¹ also recognizes the function of story telling by making a distinction between playing and the listening to stories, playing is extrinsic, story-telling is intrinsic activity. While listening to the stories of the Bible, fantasy affects the child emotions: a resonance is created between the message of the story

¹¹ STREIT, J. Nevelés, iskola, szülői ház és a Steiner pedagógia, Gödi Print, Budapest, 1995,18.

and the thinking of the child in which both the conscious and the unconscious begin working, the symbols and archetypes start functioning in children' mind.

The drawing is the best method of a child to express his/her wishes, joys, doubts, anxieties, his/her feelings toward God showing that affective dimension which is necessary to conclude his/her image of God.

Through pictures I was able to be closer to children. For me pictures can be useful communication tool, if used effectively.

LITERATURE

1. BALÁZSINÉ SZÜCS J. Rajzelemzés belemagyarázás nélkül, Szort BT, Budapest, 2008.
2. BALDERMANN, I. A Biblia, a tanulás könyve, A bibliai didaktika alapjai, Kálvin kiadó, Budapest, 2003.
3. BAUMGARTEN, I. Pásztorálpszichológia, Semmelweis Egyetem, Interdiszciplináris Szakkönyvtár 4., Budapest, 2003.
4. BECK, A.T., RUSH, A.J., SHAW, B.F., EMERY, G. A depresszió kognitív terápiája, Budapest, Animula kiadó, 2000.
5. BLACK, M. Models and Metaphors, Studies in Language and Philosophy, Cornell University Press; First Edition edition,
5. BORG, M. J. The God we never know, Beyond Dogmatic Religion to a More Authentic Contemporary Faith, Harper San Francisco.
6. BUCK, J. The House-Tree-Person Technique, Revised Manual, Los Angeles, Western Psychological Services, 1966.
7. BREM, L. GRASER, Familie in Tieren, München, Basel, 1957.
8. BROWN, R. E. The Sensus plenior of Sacred Scripture, St. Mary's University, 1955.
9. BRÜMMER, V., Speaking of a Personal God. An Essay in Philosophical Theology, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
10. BURNS, R.C. , KAUFMAN S.H., Actions, Styles and Symbols in Kinetic Family Drawings, An Interpretive Manual, New York, Brunner and Mazel, 1972.
11. CASSIDY, J. The Nature of the Child's Ties, Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Application, New York. Guilford Press, 1999.
12. CLAUSS, G., HIEBBSCH, H. Gyermekpszichológia, Akadémiai kiadó, Budapest, 1983.
13. COLES, R. The spiritual life of children, Houghton Mifflin Company Boston,

14. CORMAN, L. Le Test du dessin de famille dans la pratique medico-pedagogique, Paris, 1964.
15. ELIADE, M. Képek és jelképek. Fordította Kamocsay Ildikó, Európa Könyvkiadó, 1997.
16. ERIKSON, E. Childhood and Society, Norton Company, INC, New York, Second Edition, 1963.
17. FABINY T. A keresztény hermeneutika kérdései és története, Hermeneutikai Kutatóközpont, Budapest, 1998.
18. FARKAS A., GYEBNÁR V. (szerk), Vizuális művészetek pszichológiája 1-2, Szöveggyűjtemény, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1998.
19. FEUER M. A gyermekrajzok fejlődéslélektana, Akadémiai kiadó, Budapest, 2000.
20. FREUD, S. Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci. 1910, Gesammelte Werke, VIII. Kötet
21. FREUD, S. Gesammelte Werke VII.
22. FRIELINGSDORF, K. Istenképek, Ahogy beteggé tesznek - és ahogy gyógyítanak, Szent István Társulat, Budapest, 2007.
23. FROMM E, Pszichoanalízis és vallás, Akadémiai kiadó, Budapest, 1995.
24. FRYE, N. A Biblia igézetében, Hermetikai füzetek 4, Budapest, 1995.
25. FRYE, N. Kettős tükör. A Biblia és az irodalom, Európa kiadó, Budapest, 1996.
26. GERŐ Zs. A gyermekrajzok esztétikuma, Flakkus kiadó, 2007.
27. GRÜN, A., DUFNER, M. Az egészség mint lelki feladat, Bencés Lelkiségi Sorozat, Bencés kiadó, Pannonhalma, 2009.
28. GOODENOUGH, F.L. Measurement of intelligence by drawing, Yonkers, New York, 1926.
29. GRÜNEWALD, G. Graphologische Studien, Zürich, Rentsch, 1954. Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984.

30. GUARDINI, R. A megtámadott hit, Kairosz kiadó, Budapest, 2015.
31. GYÖKÖSSY Endre, Életápolás, vallás- és családlélektani esszék és tanulmányok, 1991.
32. HAMVAS B. Scientia Sacra, 1 rész, 2 kötet, Medio kiadó, 1995.
33. HANES, M.J., Roads to the unconscious. A manual for understanding road drawings, Oklahoma, Wood’N Barnes, 1997.
34. HALSTEAD, M. Multicultural metaphors in Education in the Era of Globalization, Philosophy and Education, ed. Klas ROTH and Ilan Gur Ze’ev, Springer Science and Business Media, 2007.
35. HÁRDI I, Dinamikus rajzvizsgálat, Medicina könyvkiadó Rt., Budapest, 2002.
36. HAUERWAS, S., WHY NARRATIVE? Readings in Narrative Theology, Oregon.
37. HÉZSER G. A pásztori pszichológia gyakorlati kézikönyve, A református zsinati iroda sajtóosztálya, Budapest, 1990.
38. JUNG C.G. Gondolatok a vallásról és a kereszténységről, Kossuth kiadó, 1996.
39. JUNG, C.G. Az ember és szimbólumai, Göncöl kiadó,
40. KÁRPÁTI A, Firkák, formák, figurák - a vizuális nyelv fejlődése a kisgyermekkortól a serdülőkorig, Dialóg Campus kiadó, 2001.
41. KÁRPÁTI A., Vizuális képességek fejlődése, Nemzeti tankönyvkiadó, 1995.
42. KELLOGG, R. Analyzing Children’s Art. National Press Books, California, 1970.
43. KISS T. L. Keresztyén erkölcsi nevelés gyermek és serdülőkorban, Református Pedagógiai és Katechétikai füzetek, RPI 2002, 121.2006.
44. KLEPSCH M., LOGIE L.: Children draw and tell, An Introduction to the Projective Uses of Children’s Human Figure Drawings, New York, 1982.
45. KOLLÁR K., SZABÓ É. Pszichológia pedagógusoknak, Osiris, Budapest, 2004.
46. KOPPITZ, E. Psychological Evaluation of Children’s Human Figure Drawings, New York: Grune and Stratton, 1968.

47. KORHERR, E.I. A valláspedagógia fejlődéslélektani alapjai, Jel Kiadó,
48. KOZMA Zs. Jézus Krisztus példázatai, Íránytű kiadó, 2002.
49. KRAMER, E. Art as Therapy, Collected Papers, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London and Philadelphia, 2000.
50. LAKOFF, G.P., JOHNSON, M. Metaphors we live by, The University of Chicago Press and London, 1980.
51. LOWENFELD, V. The creative and mental growth, Mcmillan, London, 1965.
52. LUQUET, H. Les dessins d'un enfant, Paris, F. Alcan, 1913.
53. MALCHIODI, C. A. A gyermekrajzok megértése, Animula kiadó, 1998.
54. MÉREI F., BINÉT Á., Gyermeklélektan, 2003.
55. MÖNKES, F.I., KMOERS, A. Fejlődéslélektan, Pedagógiai Pszichológia I, Budapest, 1998.
56. NAGY L. Fejezetek a gyermekrajzok lélektanából, Singer és Wolfner, Budapest, 1905.
57. NAUMBURG, M. An Introduction to Art Therapy: Studies of the "free" Art Expression of Behavior Problem Children and Adolescents as a Means of Diagnosis and Therapy, Teachers College Press, 1973.
58. NÉMETH D. Hit és nevelés. Valláslélektani szemléletmód a mai valláspedagógiában, Ráday nyomda, Budapest, 2002.
59. NÉMETH D. Pásztorálintropológia, Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem, L'Harmattan kiadó, 2012.
60. NICOL, M. Dramatizált Homiletika, Luther kiadó, Budapest, 2005.
61. ORTONY, A. Metaphor and Thought, Second edition, Cambridge University Press, 1993.
62. OSBORNE, G.R. A hermeneutika spirálisa. Részletes bevezetés a bibliamagyarázathoz, Keresztyén Ismeretterjesztő Alapítvány, Budapest, 2001.
63. PIAGET, A törvény fogalma a gyermekkorban, Gondolat kiadó, Budapest, 1970.

64. PIAGET, INHELDER, Gyermeklélektan, Osiris kiadó, Budapest, 2004.
65. PULVER, M. Symbolik des Schriftfeldes, Zürich, Orelli Füssli, 1949.
64. RANSCHBURG J., Pszichológiai rendellenességek gyermekkorban, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1998.
66. RICOEUR, P. Bibliai hermeneutika, Hermeneutikai Füzetek, Budapest, 1995.
67. RIZZUTO, A.M. The birth of the Living God, A Psychoanalytic Study. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press. 1979.
68. ROTH M., VINCZE A. .E, Bevezetés a fejlődéslélektanba, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010.
69. SCHARFENBERG, J.H. Kampfer, Mit Symbolen leben, Soziologische, psychologische und religiöse Konfliktbearbeitung, Olten, 1980.
70. SCHWEITZER, F. Vallás és életút. Vallási fejlődés és keresztyén nevelés gyermek- és ifjúkorban, Kálvin kiadó, Budapest, 1999.
71. SOMFALVI E., A gyermekkori szorongás oldása bibliai történetekkel, doktori értekezés, 126 (letöltve 2017 március 8)
72. SÜLE F. Valláspatológia, Gyurik Gyula kiadó, Szokolya, 1997.
73. STREIT, J. Nevelés, iskola, szülői ház és a Steiner pedagógia, Gödi Print, Budapest, 1995.
74. TAKÁCS B. Gyermek-játék-terápia. Az integratív játék módszere, Okker kiadó, 2001.
75. TÁNCZOS V. Szimbolikus formák a folklórban, Kairosz kiadó, 2007.
76. Tihanyiné VÁLYI Zsuzsanna, Amiről a gyermekrajzok beszélnek, Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó, 2009.
77. VAJDA Zs. A gyermek pszichológiai fejlődése, Helikon kiadó, Harmadik átdolgozott kiadás, 2006.
78. VASS Z. A hétlépéses képelemzési módszer, Flaccus kiadó, 2011.

79. VASS Z. A rajzvizsgálat pszichodiagnosztikai alapjai, Flaccus kiadó, Budapest, 2006.
80. VASS Z. A képi kifejezéspszichológia alapkérdései, Szemlélet és módszer, L'Harmattan, 2011.
81. VASS Z. Formai-szerkezeti rajzelemzés, Flaccus kiadó, Budapest, 2007.
82. VERGOTE, A. Valláslélektan, Interdiszciplináris Szakkönyvtár, Budapest, 2001.
83. VIANU, T. Problemele metaforiei si alte studii de stilistica. Bucuresti: Editura Academiei, 1957.
84. WADESON, H. Art Psychotherapy, New York, Wiley, 1980.
85. WELLEK, R., WARREN, A. Az irodalom elmélete, Osiris kiadó, Budapest, 2002.
86. WIDLÖCHER, D. Was eine Kinderzeichnung verrät, Frankfurt am Main, Fisher
87. WIKSTRÖM, Ö. A kifürkészhetetlen ember, Animula kiadó, Budapest, 2000.
88. WINNICOT, D. Therapeutic consultations in child psychiatry, Hogart, London, 1971.