

BOOK REVIEW

SPERANȚA FARCA. CHILD'S INDEPENDENCY. FEAR OF SEPARATION. Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2018, 271 pages, ISBN 978-973-50-6153-1

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Andreea Diana SCODA

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RECENZII

SPERAN A FARCA. INDEPENDEN A COPILULUI. SPAIMA DE SEPARARE (Child's independency. Fear of separation)

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Andreea-Diana Scoda*

Institute of Educational Sciences,
Bucharest, Romania
andreea.scoda@ise.ro

Speran a Farca's book, *Independen a copilului. Spaima de separare*. (Child's Independency. Fear of separation) sees light in 2018, and it was published by Humanitas Bucharest, under the "Parenting" collection coordinated by Otilia Mantelers.

Speran a Farca is a psychoanalyst specialized in the mother-child relationship, former researcher in the Department of Educational Theory, Institute of Educational Sciences Bucharest, current Director and Associate Lecturer in the Department for Teacher Training, National University of Arts Bucharest (UNArte).

Her previous work focused on certain topics related to: the development of the mother-child relationship; the development of interactions with other important people in a child's life (grandparents, friends, physicians, babysitters, etc.); the reaction and solution to various behaviors from a child or adult related to different contents that reveal aggression, anger, isolation, etc.

Among her written books, we can recognize: *Cum întâmpin m copilul, ca p rin i, bunici, medici i educatori* ("How do we receive the child, as parents,

* Researcher, PhD., Institute of Educational Sciences, Bucharest, Romania.

grandparents, physicians and educators”), *Ce tr ie te copilul i ce simte mama lui* (“What a child lives and how does his/her mother feel”), *Psihanaliza i cele patru vârste ale Eului. Cum devenim p rin i* (“Psychoanalysis and the four ages of the Ego. How do we become parents”), *Gr dini a mea favorit ! Ghid pentru p rin i i educatoare* (“My favorite kindergarten! Guide for parents and educators”), *The Newborn and his Mother*, etc. As one can notice, the author has consistently in addressed challenging topics in her writing.

Looking into this volume, Speran a Farca has accomplished to bring together many fields of interest which are of great significance. Thus, we are dealing with a volume which, for psychology, psychoanalysis and pedagogy, is relevant. The author discusses various themes which for parents, psychologists, educators, school counsellors and even physicians in this respect, could reflect upon when faced with common or uncommon problems in developing the child’s independency from a fragile age up to adulthood. In this sense, she includes in this volume essential “remedies” for their everyday life through frequent suggestions or recommendations, which are mostly likely to be based on her experience, on the one hand as psychoanalysis and on the other, as a researcher during her years at the Institute of Educational Sciences in Bucharest; aspects that shouldn’t be taken lightly but more so, as an added value in our view.

The author’s main theme in this book is “separation”, a key factor in developing a child’s independency: “separation allows a new perception of time, space and affective environment, leading to important acquisitions for independence” (2018, p. 14). What our readers should comprehend is that the emphasis is mainly on the need to practice various strategies in order to develop “pillars” of stability and independency in correlation to the child’s needs; aspects that are underlined by our author, S. Farca, throughout this book.

Our main “character” that upholds this “separation” is the mother, the person that has to understand the prerequisite to let his/her “child go”. In her view, through the different stages of one’s life, in our case the child’s, which starts from eating, walking on its own, until receiving an occupation is precisely based on the relationship between the two through time, space and the affective environment created, in order to assure the acquisition for

independence. In other words, in this equation, we are discussing about the mother-child relationship which is to be considered a *modus operandi*, in that the mother's presence from the beginning of her child's life is just as important as understanding the need of how to assure this "separation" that will take place; a separation process that will determine the attainment of the child's independency: "the baby knows that outside the uterus, the world, he/she will survive, because the mother has a cure for everything he feels" (2018, p. 11).

The author's book contains an introduction, with six chapters and several associated subchapters. These chapters could be understood through a holistic approach, seen as a whole from the beginning till the end: slowly, slowly, they detach themselves, as the theme of the title suggests, where each chapter becomes more and more "independent" through the support of these subchapters giving this theme more connotations for the readers. Likewise, the child is detached from his/her realities based on the mother-child relationship as they comprehend and achieve this separation by not feeling the fear of separation or of being free to be on their own: "The fear of separation is found beyond babyhood: the child who enters the community, the adolescent, the newly married, the mother with the little child, the human who cannot rely on his abilities to survive" (2018, p. 12).

The author offers in these chapters and subchapters many examples, descriptions, explanations, etc., with psychoanalysis or psychological illustrations for the readers from a parenting perspective, which is applicable for many areas, such as education, child psychology, psychosocial stages, sociology, neuroscience, etc.

The first chapter entitled "Door towards separation" (*Poarta c tre separare*) consists of two other subchapters, which simply contextualize the idea surrounding "separation", alongside with other terms such as: "anxiety", "fear" of separation and the fear of "abandonment". The general recommendation for her readers when encountering difficulties in achieving this "door of separation" on both parts (child and mother) is to learn to have trust in one another (2018, p. 11). An incentive we recommend, in that you trust that this book will respond to some of the answer's parents are looking in to achieving their child's autonomy.

In the second chapter, “Characteristics of separation” (*Caracteristici ale separării*), the author discusses about the potential distance between mother-child, a distance which is represented through the space developed for assuring the child’s independence. In this part of the book, she concentrates on some main symbolist axes in which both mother and child face as they perceive the distance of separation in time, space and in their affective environment through: language, play time and fairy tales. Apart from this, our author provides the readers with other definitions, sets of categorization or examples familiar to the writer, in order to elaborate different hypotheses. Thus, Sperană Farca highlights in this part of the volume that the healthier the maternal relationship between mother-child is from the beginning, the better the chances for the child to become independent (2018, p. 23).

“Acquisitions specific to segregation” (*Achiziții specifice separării*) is another chapter in this book, where the acquisition process is explained comprehensively and where in her view, it can be accomplished easily when the child discovers the way to keep his/her mom in mind. This process takes place when he/she moves away from the mother, “recollection”, through the support of the introspection process: “Introspection is the way to maintain the relationship with the mother in terms of autonomy” (2018, p. 29). She goes on with highlighting the forms in which interiorization of mother occurs before the child undertakes certain functions: bipedal walking, sphincter control, ability to feed on their own, the ability to communicate verbally (2018, pp. 22-91). One of her recommendations for adults is “to respond simply and in a true sense to the child’s curiosity” (2018, p. 38). In other words, it is important to experiment and to assure play time with the child in this communication process no matter the prejudices on the adults’ part.

In the chapter “Individual configurations of separation process” (*Configurații individuale ale procesului de separare*), Sperană Farca emphasizes the fact that other key people or factors contribute to this separation process, such as: paternal support (how he fits in the triangle), society and community inclusion (adaptation to cultural and his/her environment) and the child’s livelihood (contradiction process felt by the child) (2018, pp. 100-194). In this part of the book, the author presents some more delicate topics,

“Abandonment and adoption”, in which she explains that in both situations the parents, natural or adoptive, are confronted with similar fears” (2018, p. 133).

In the penultimate chapter, the author highlights the fact that there are “Safety limitations in assuring separation” (*Limite asigur toare pentru separare*), in which through different processes in which the child goes through: frustrations, interdiction, borders or decisions, etc., he/she becomes independent. These aspects support the child’s independence by setting clear rules, responsibility and understanding the consequences of their actions: “the readiness to reorient from the world towards the subjective responses of the parent keeps the child in a state of addiction. The child needs to be able to cope with the natural consequences of his acts, in order to adapt himself” (2018, p. 210).

In the last chapter of this book, “The importance of the play in separation” (*Importan a jocului în separare*) the author presents, as the title suggests, aspects associated to “play”: how to role play (why from a therapeutically perspective), where it could take place (magical place), the benefits (adaptation, experimentation of freedom, etc.), the consequences related to the lack of play (frustration, boredom, etc.) and the forms of play associated to developing an independent child (“Hide go seek,” “Yo-yo”, “An-tan-te”, etc.).

Our author hopes to guide the adult in various directions in developing on the one side their child’s independency, while not neglecting to give attention to the mother’s fear of separation due to the tendency to frequently put barriers through reflection or projection of one’s own traumas from childhood, giving of birth or felling different postpartum symptoms that can affect this separation, on the other hand.

These chapter are independent as the readers can observe, allowing them to select their main areas of interest. As a recommendation, this book would be more rewarding and useful if one were to read the book from cover to cover and thus, he/she has a sense of consistency between each chapter. In the framework of these six chapters, with much ability Speran a Farca guides us, provides examples, describes techniques and operational methods,

especially, for how mothers in order to forsake the fear of separation between herself and the child, after giving birth to her child, an aspect which brings together many mixed feeling: how to identify this fear, how to approach it, how to achieve results, how it could be approached in the stages of development (childhood until adulthood), etc. In other words, the author constantly makes the transition from the theoretical approach to the practical one, in order to enable, likewise, the capacity to tackle the different issues assumed throughout this book.

We can therefore perceive the emergence of this book in Romanian of importance for literature reading, useful for those with psychological or non-psychological approach, who are looking to become mothers, by simplifying as a starting point various response to apprehend, particular fears or challenges that parents face, as for instance, the children's need to discover the world around him/her that may be frightening for even a very prepared mother today. An artistic part of Speran a Farca's work is revealed in her suggestions when describing various themes, themes which are associated to different stories or fair-tales (e.g. Andersen, Grimm, Ispirescu, etc.) without, however, neglecting the scientific confirmation of these practical proposals.

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