**What's Going On In There? The Developmental Work of Pregnancy by Michael Trout, MA**

**References and Study Questions**

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**STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. What is your reaction to the core notion that pregnancy involves *work*?  Does it interfere with pre-existing ideas that are important to you, for example, that pregnancy is *natural* and *uncomplicated*?
2. What is your reaction to the idea of the fetus as a “foreign body” that must be noticed, acknowledged and, eventually, accepted and integrated into the Self?
3. Can you think of an example, in your own work, of a family in which this initial step of “acceptance of the foreign body” may not have been accomplished?  Do you know why?
4. What might be some of the results — medically, and with respect to attachment — of failure in this first developmental step?  When might we see any results?
5. What is your reaction to the idea that the baby is witness to mother’s psychological/developmental work?
6. What does the author mean by suggesting that it is important that the baby notice the messages mother is giving, and that it is, from an evolutionary perspective, important that she give them?
7. There are dozens of things — both from within and from without — that might interfere with, or facilitate, the normal psychological/developmental work of pregnancy.  The author mentioned only a few.  Have you encountered others in your work?
8. The author speaks of a developmental period during which the baby is experienced as part of the mother’s body.  What are the implications of this [perhaps unconscious] perception?  How might this affect the nature of mother’s grief (and the differences between mom’s grief and dad’s grief), should the baby die during this developmental period?  How would such grief change if the baby dies during a later, more differentiated developmental period during pregnancy?
9. Does it strike you as odd to think of baby and mother differentiating in the last weeks of pregnancy?  Can you think of a family, in your own work, where there was evidence of this?  What do you think happens when such differentiation does not occur?
10. What do you find yourself musing about with respect to attachment, in the context of this developmental work of pregnancy?
11. What are the implications of these ideas for ART (assisted reproductive technology), including selective reductions of a multi-fetal pregnancy?