

The Window Metaphor: A Practice-Based Concept for Affect Regulation in Psychosomatic Contexts

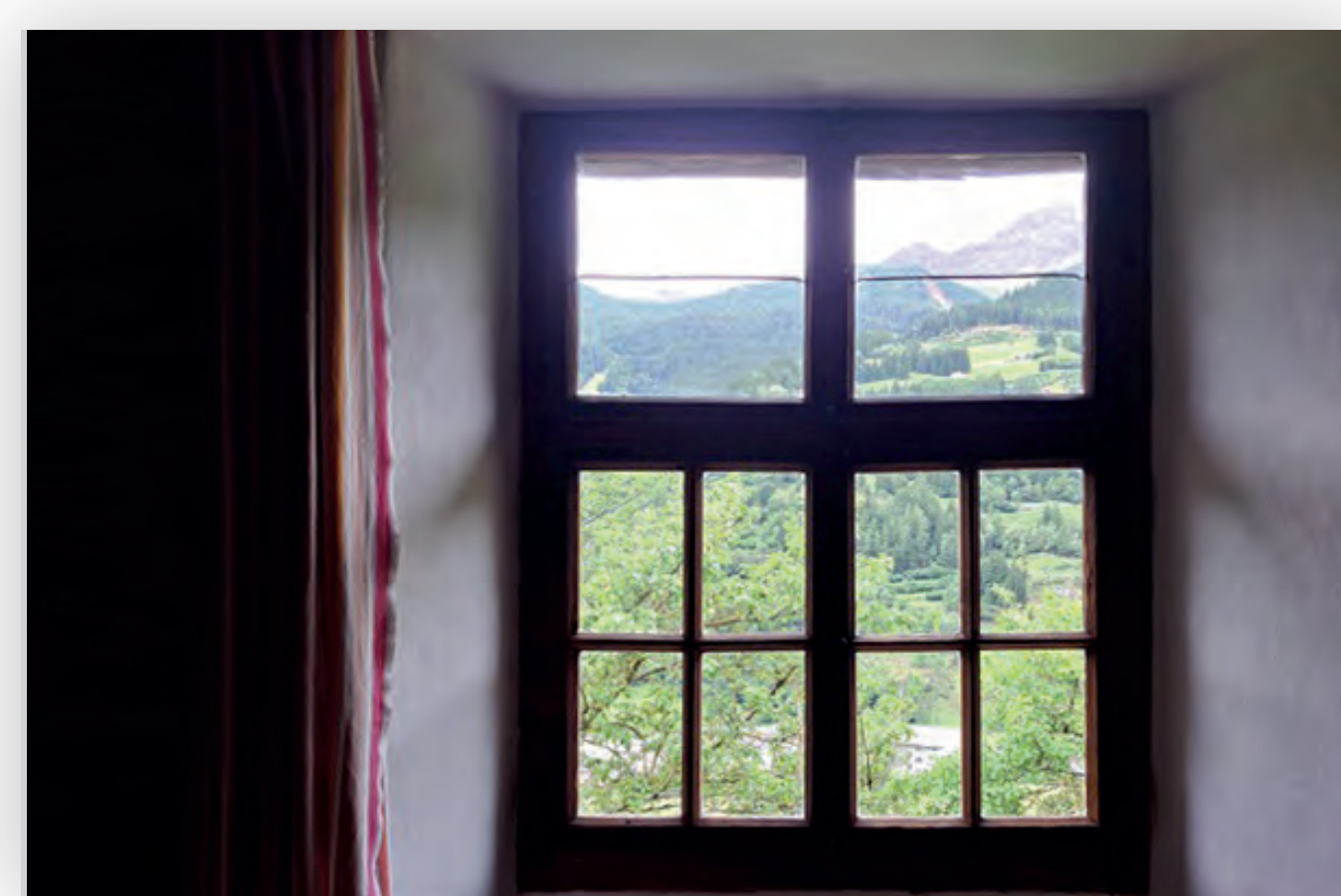
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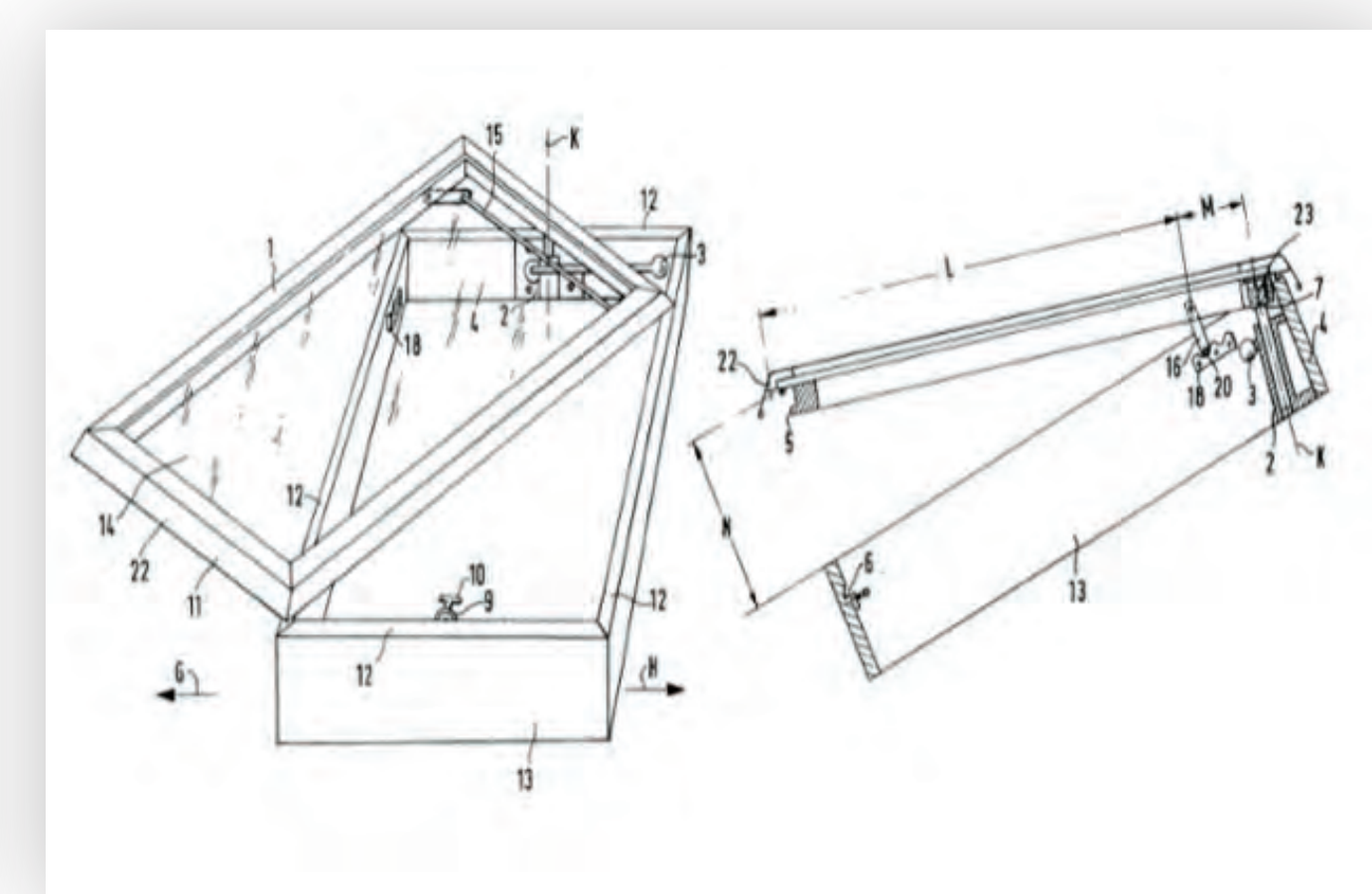
The window metaphor emerged during a constellation as a spontaneous symbolic reaction to an emotionally charged situation.



It manifested itself as an intuitive resonance with the events of the constellation – not physically present, but psychologically involved.



In the process, unconscious structures gradually became symbolically experiential and communicatively tangible: from resonance to creative symbol formation.



The metaphor combines intuitive-imaginative and rational-reflective approaches, which can be combined with one another.

Background and aims

- Psychosomatic perspectives frequently address situations of heightened affect, bodily tension, and defensive reactions in which inner experience and external situations become difficult to differentiate.
- Metaphors play a key role in providing orientation within such processes.
- While the metaphor of mirroring is commonly used to describe projection and interpersonal resonance, it may be insufficient in states of affective overload.
- This contribution introduces the window metaphor as an alternative conceptual image.
- The aim is to present it as a practice-based way of supporting affect regulation, boundary experience, and reflective distance in psychosomatic contexts.

Method

- The window metaphor is developed through reflective practice in mentoring and psychosocial contexts.
- It describes an adjustable symbolic boundary that allows modulation of openness and distance between inner emotional-bodily processes and external situations.
- Variations of the metaphor allow nuanced descriptions of shifts in affect intensity, defensive reactions, and bodily involvement:
 - open / closed – clear / fogged – transparent / opaque – protective / permeable – movable / blocked
- Structural aspects can also be utilised therapeutically and symbolically: size, materiality, perspective, opening mechanisms or the condition of the window.
- The metaphor
 - remains dynamic and open to confusion, breakthroughs and unexpected resonance (“a bird might fly into the window”);
 - combines intuitive-imaginative with rational-reflective approaches, thereby allowing for both emotional engagement and observational distance.
- The contribution is conceptual and descriptive; no empirical study design is applied.

Results

- Practice shows that the window metaphor offers a clear language for describing and modulating affective intensity.
- It supports differentiation between inner processes and external triggers and helps to reduce experiential overload by introducing perspective and choice in how inner states are approached.
- At the same time, it opens up access to unconscious dynamics, combining creative symbol formation with reflective perception.

Conclusion

- The window metaphor
 - provides a simple, practice-based conceptual tool for supporting affect regulation and boundary experience in psychosomatic contexts;
 - complements existing metaphorical frameworks by offering a functional image for working with emotional intensity and defensive dynamics;
 - offers an innovative, practice-oriented concept at the interface of psychosomatics, symbol formation, bodily experience and creative reflection;
 - is not intended as a self-contained model, but rather as a practical creative principle.
- Its meaning emerges through practical application: through experimentation, adaptation and reflection within specific psychosomatic processes.
- This poster invites to explore the metaphor independently and develop it further within various therapeutic and psychosocial contexts.

References

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