"Parent material" of soil is "accumulated largely through rock weathering", according to Byers et al. (1938). Jenny (1941) defined "parent material as the initial state of the soil system." The French use the term "roche mère" (Duchaufour, 1970) and the Germans say "Muttergestein" (Fiedler and Reissig, 1964). This little essay is a kind of farewell to mother rock and parent material as unnecessarily anthropomorphic terminology. "It is only science that has emancipated man from the complex weave of correspondences, based on analogy, metaphor ..." (Turner, 1973). Do we feel a need for emancipation in pedology?

The concept of the initial state, as emphasized by Jenny, has persuaded many of us to prefer such terms as "primary material" (Whiteside, 1959) or "initial material" (Buol et al., 1973). Whiteside equated traditional and proposed genetic soil horizon designations, examples of which are summarized as follows:

Cl horizon = Wm horizon \([W = \text{water leached or slightly weathered mineral horizon; } m = \text{residual concentrations of minerals from primary material (from mother)}]\)

C2 horizon = P horizon \([\text{primary material; a mineral horizon, consolidated (c) or unconsolidated (u), relatively unaltered by weathering}]\)