

International Review of Psychoanalysis of Couple and Family

N° 2008/1 - *The violence in the family and the society*

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EDITORIAL

CARLES PÉREZ TESTOR

Violence in family relationships is a serious problem that has ceased to be a private affair, turning instead into a social problem. Family and domestic violence has always existed, but there is no doubt that in the past 15 years it has become no longer an exclusively internal matter inside the family but a society-wide problem. As soon as family violence appears in the media, the awareness is raised that violence is a social problem due to its incidence in our population and the seriousness of both the physical and psychological after-effects in the victims.

Family violence can only be addressed from a multidisciplinary approach, and indeed it is a phenomenon that is unfortunately both repetitive and chronic. Violence rarely appears as an isolated, accidental episode, rather it happens time and time again.

When we talk about family violence, we can divide it into three different kinds: violence in which parents abuse their children; senior violence in which the victims are grandparents; and couples violence, in which gender plays a key role. And lately, more and more incidents are emerging that involve violence from an adolescent child towards their parents or grandparents.

Despite the fact that child-directed violence in the guise of negligence is still the most common type of violence in families, institutional campaigns focus on violence in couples, and more specifically on gender violence.

The two most common kinds of family abuse are psychological and physical. Emotional abuse always comes with and often precedes physical abuse. Direct, repeated psychological abuse can severely affect the victim's opinion of both himself or herself and their environment. The consequences of this kind of abuse do not necessarily manifest themselves in the short term, rather many of these behaviours have severe repercussions in subsequent psychological development. Contrary to the belief that physical aggression brings a greater risk to the victim's psychological health, it has been shown that psychological coercion without physical injuries can be equally or even more incapacitating and harmful for women. One of the chief characteristics of domestic abuse is that despite the seriousness and frequency of the problem, the victims stay in the violent relationship for a long time, more than ten years on average. Likewise, in many cases they return to the same situation as before even after psycho-social intervention. It is important to identify the factors that influence the decisions of many women who decide to remain in abusive relationships despite the risk of suffering from injuries or even dying.

Many women continue to live with their partner despite their suffering, ignoring the advice from the people around them. It is typical in situations of abuse to ignore what is happening, to close one's eyes to the evidence. Why don't they leave? How can we explain the fact that a woman can withstand brutal abuse for years on end? Why do they not just not reject it but indeed seek justifications for it?

Some researchers tell us that the variables that predict that a woman will remain in an abusive relationship include: 1) unemployment, 2) length of the relationship, 3) economic need, 4) being in love with the aggressor and 5) not being sure where to go. The longer and more severe the domestic abuse, the lower the likelihood that the relationship will be ended. The women become more and more fearful and dependent, and they develop feelings of guilt, low self-esteem and passivity towards the problem. As the abused woman becomes more socially isolated, situations of abuse are more likely to rise. Domestic violence is a complex phenomenon that takes time to come to light,

meaning that it is hard to take purely preventative actions from the start. Still, we must promote preventative and educational interventions that facilitate communication of the abuse suffered and to prevent, to the extent possible, the victim from having to endure this situation again. In terms of care, the victim must feel listened to and supported; a relationship of trust and cooperation must be created. However, victims must also be aided in discovering how, emotionally speaking, they have forged a tie of psychological dependence on their partner that robs them of their independence to think for themselves. Generally speaking, it seems urgent that we promote educational and psychotherapeutic programmes that prompt a change in women's attitudes towards these circumstances and contribute to helping them adopt strategies and prevent the onset of submissive behaviours and the acceptance of the situation of physical and/or psychological aggression. Learning how to handle conflict is a key factor in maintaining satisfying intimacy in adult relationships. If there is a clear deficit in this skill, the understanding that profound mechanisms take part in the exercise or acceptance of violence can help us to eradicate it from the sphere of couples and the family.

All of these considerations spurred around 400 clinics and researchers, including psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers, to gather together in July 2008 at the 3rd international congress organised by the International Association of Couple and Family Psychoanalysis (IACFP) and the Universitat Ramon Llull, Blanquerna Faculty of Psychology, Education and Sports, in conjunction with the Vidal y Barraquer Foundation and the Spanish Psychoanalysis Society. In the more than 150 papers presented, the issue that inspired the title of the congress, "Violence in Couples and Families: A Challenge for Family Psychoanalysis", was intensely debated.

The common denominator of violence inside the family is the denial that it generates in its environment, and even in therapists' psyche, to the extent that this might be considered the prime obstacle for recognising the profound, disturbing psychological effects both within the victim and in their interpersonal relationships. More than a common denial, it constitutes a defence that particularly favours the repetition and cross-generational transmission of violence.

Eiguer, Losso and Packciarz Losso, Loncan, Tisseron, Nicolò, Morosini, Thorstensen, Tosta Berlinck and all the authors who have worked on the second part of the journal (devoted to violence and society) keep asking themselves: “How can we grasp and intervene in situations of violence in the couple and family? How can we deal with its denial, taking into account the unconscious group processes of family ties in the present and their cross-generational dimension? How can we depict with the family group certain violent expressions and account for the repetition that is tied to a cross-generational perspective as the source of these situations? What phantoms, what myths, what hallucinatory returns underlie violent passages as they are being played out? What are the intimate and shared effects in these clinical configurations? How can we think about and treat the psychological traces of social and cultural violence either in the present or transmitted as an inheritance?”

Based on the intense work at the congress and the authors’ consequent profound re-thinking, each one has reflected on the questions and contributions by the audience and other participating experts when revising their articles. The outcome of this second reflection appears in these two monographs devoted to family and couple violence. We hope they prove to be of interest for all our readers.

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FEAR OF FREEDOM AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

*ALBERTO EIGUER**

For 250 years society has worked to make family ties looser, more tolerant, and more egalitarian than in the past. Indeed, the family has been transformed and liberalised. The mentality has changed and women and children are legally protected from conduct which, until recently, limited their autonomy and inflicted harm and hardship. However, violence is still firmly on the increase, overt violence as well as covert, violence which aims to enslave the other. Clinical experience and research both confirm this trend. There is a rise in warnings and convictions for domestic abuse: (ANAES, 2001; A Eguer, 2002; P. Benghozi, 2002.)

In the contemporary family, members feel less secure, parents feel that they are not listened to and that they have lost their authority and that ideals no longer mean anything. I will try to show that these various elements are linked.

We'll start with some bibliographical reminders. In his observations, Freud (1925) remarked that the sight of one's parents making love is, for many children, the first glimpse of adult sexuality. Even if the child has not visually witnessed the scene, which often is the case, he may hear the sounds of the sexual act and how he interprets this will have an impact on him and will give shape to his fantasies. This primitive scene is imagined by the child as a violent act in which the father

takes a sadistic position towards the mother. The child feels excited as well as excluded, humiliated and diminished. For M. Klein (1952) the sexual sadism of the father can be imagined by the child as a fantasy of the father compulsively devouring the mother or in an image of the parents in an embrace where their incomplete bodies become totally entangled (the combined parents). The sadistic impulses attributed to the father are overridden in the end by the oral sadism of the child watching his parents' lovemaking, where he experiences a deep-seated oral wish which is very strong, that is, the desire to devour the breast. Klein's disciple D. Meltzer (1978) draws attention to these sadistic impulses manifesting themselves in parental attacks on their children and yet to be born in the child himself.

According to Freud, the child will go through other experiences which will define how he will understand sexuality: the fear of castration and the moment when he discovers that girls do not have a penis. This seems due to the fact that the young person sees himself as powerless when faced with two aspects of adult sexuality which frighten him: sensual pleasure and domination.

Two important factors are his *prematurity* and his *dependence*, but they are not the only ones. Indeed, my own observations of couples and families have shown that one of the protagonists in a relationship will be the one to « be afraid » and the other to « frighten ». These two feelings and behaviours stimulate each other and we can link these with two others: « to frighten oneself » and « to use the other's fear to dominate him/her. » In light of these observations, the major issue which I will address is whether we as adult or child, man or woman, we are able to accept family ties without constraints.

From liberalisation of gender and generational relationships to the fear of freedom

There are, without a doubt, many misunderstandings nowadays about the consequences of the changes happening within a family. We have seen, in the last few years, the liberalisation of morals and attitudes. Spouses, as well as parents and children, to a larger extent share intimacy, decision making and duties. However, this liberty seems frightening. There is fear of the new sexual freedom, of women's liberation, of children, of the loss of parental authority, in other words, there exists a fear of relinquishing power or losing it. The thoughts of Eric Fromm (1938) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1943) throw light on this

paradox. We fear freedom because we dread to be alone, without the support and warmth of our family, friends and colleagues. Being free implies taking decisions independently, and accepting the consequences of these decisions: success or failure, approval or criticism, praise or shame. The experience of being dependent can occur through these two opposing behaviours.

1. Some people, not knowing anymore how to create a long lasting and fulfilling relationship may try to control and subjugate the other. They do not feel secure and thus fear that if their partner becomes too independent they will not respect and love them and stop treating them as a person.
2. Others adopt the opposite attitude of submission, accepting humiliation without reacting, even if it hurts and even if personal creativity is damaged. The subject may consent to this behaviour, and is very often unaware of the mechanisms of the relationship and the possible consequences on his/her personal integrity.

These two attitudes can coexist within the same person, or be present in turn, depending on the situation. To dominate and be dominated gives shape to an interpersonal whole.

Any attachment to another person certainly implies a kind of dependence, but this can lead to excesses as in the perverted relationship. Domination here is used to deny one's own dependence on the other person and to maintain that it is the other person who depends wholly and exclusively on the one who is dominant. In reality, they are denying their need for each other. However, he knows how to take advantage of the skills and qualities that he finds in his partner and that he himself lacks and of which he is extremely envious, namely emotional intensity, freshness, ingenuity, spontaneity and energy or an ability to generate ideas and to take initiative. Through behavioural manipulation, the dominant partner tries to attain these objectives. Vampirism is a variation of this kind of perverted relationship and its name is aptly chosen.

The subtle nature of this kind of perverse violence at work enables this shift to take place. The benefits to the dominant partner (what we might call the narcissistic advantages) of this vampirism are praised by the agent of the destructive behaviour so that the abused partner may even feel validated by the experience.

We will now discuss family ties. In the family we have one or more interpersonal bonds organised within the structure of a family network with its own laws, positions and functions (A. Eiguer, 1989, 1997). A bond is more than a relationship between two people as a couple influence each other unconsciously building common defences and fantasies.

Sometimes they may forget that they are different and have their own desires. Each person can live as though the other is a part of him/herself. It would be even worse to live as though the other partner were oneself. The drift towards perversion in family relationships may represent an attempt to destroy the other person, in whom individual desire is perceived as leading to criticism, insubordination and autonomy.

It would be useful now to underline that the notion of *freedom* does not rule out the idea of *autonomy*. No matter how authentic the desire for liberty is, it needs to be put into perspective when it comes to family ties, and to any other relationships. We can cut off our dependency on others only by disregarding the fact that we are linked to one another by intense and permanent bonds. It is an individualistic view of the human psyche that maintains that autonomy is the main goal for a human being. Interpersonal relationships imply mutual recognition and a responsibility towards others. This also implies that we can at the same time admit our desire to be different while recognizing the other and remaining essentially dependent on him/her. In order for a child to find his/her way towards emancipation, s/he needs to feel secure in the knowledge that parents want him/her to be free and independent. They will therefore have to equip him/her with the necessary tools to deal with the contingencies of independent life.

If we understand independence to be a synonym of freedom, we are on the wrong track. The notion of *mature dependence* fits the idea of freedom better: it means that we remain free in thoughts and in action while continuing to take others into account (Fairbain, 1952). All the child's mental 'objects' enter into a subconscious dialogue with each other and with the Self (the subject), a dialogue which is often conflicting, and through which the unconscious self feels affirmed in its bid for freedom. Other mental objects are not strongly for or against emancipation. They will suit their position to each case. Parental attitudes which favour the development of the self leave traces on the

child's subconscious, memories more of their acts than their words. The question is: Are we free from others or with others/

As for mutual concern and recognition, I would like to reiterate the fact that the mother's and the father's *concern* is the primary form of the exploration of the needs and wishes of the other, of the infant at the initial stage in life, and later on. Gratitude, which is an act of acknowledgement, represents as well, an important step towards mastering personal freedom. Acknowledgement means putting yourself in the others' shoes, sharing their emotions and identifying with their problems. Freud uses very moving words in *Civilisation and its discontentment*, when he refers to the pain we may feel when a friend is suffering. Living interpersonally means feeling *with* the other person. It is more than empathy. It is identification with the other where we mobilise our internal attitudes and patterns in order to be with the other person (D. Stern, 1985). We also exercise the Superego, one of the major functions of which is the *sense of responsibility* (A. Eiguer, 2008).

Reversal of the trend

Consequently, instances of family violence would seem to be an attempt to reverse the current trend towards more liberty between the generations and genders within a family. It is as though the old masters are trying to get back the power they think they have lost. This is the case in sexual abuse and other perverted behaviour. An incestuous father is a father who needs to impose himself on his child and his partner using the power of his sexuality. By doing this, he disowns his fatherhood and his parental functions and family roles. In less serious situations, fathers or mothers may introduce their child prematurely to the adult world in exchange for tempting gifts of an ambiguous nature: money, presents or seeking their advice as if they were already adults. Indifference, neglect, or punishments can all have the same origin: reasserting power in the face of children who seem ideally strong, and therefore « dangerous ». The consequences of the uncertainties linked to power and sensual pleasure produce other effects which are at the source of other difficulties.

The couple: Physical violence

If we take as example, the man who hits his partner, in most cases the violence is a strong reaction to her wish to leave him or to her saying that she wants to leave. Up until this moment, the couple had established a symbiotic bond which avoided the possibility of any individual expression of originality, as this originality is inappropriately associated with separation and loss. Thus the man fears being abandoned as much as being confronted with the fact that his wife can think, and express herself clearly, is charming and has kept some of her own "je ne sais quoi". These qualities can of course be very attractive to a man; they could be attractive to the husband too. However the opposite is true as femininity makes him « see red ». It is dangerous for him. He cannot tolerate the fact that his wife is able to express her point of view, and can even stand up to him. He considers this a male prerogative. She is supposed to remain submissive and busy herself with the children and with domestic tasks. Fundamentally the eternal battle of the sexes rages on.

Other men, placed in a similar situation and having similar misgivings try other methods using the *psychical power (psychological violence)* in the form of manipulation, persuasion and exploitation.

There are many different interpersonal origins of physical abuse. Sometimes separation and the differentiation of the spouses create a fear of the self disintegrating and the loss of the necessary identifying points for one's own identity. In other cases, there is a fear of losing one's virility in the eyes of others, and that one's *latent bisexuality* would then be visible to all. Many of these spouses say, "You want to leave because you want to make me ashamed". In this case the couple shares many weaknesses as their identity as a couple is scattered and diluted in other peoples' identities.

The following case of a couple seen in therapy is a good example of this. The husband explained the circumstances of their last argument. When he saw a bucket full of water, a mop and a broom in the middle of the sitting-room floor, he « imagined » that his wife had put them there to make him realise that he should do more housework and that he did not do enough around the house and left all the chores to her. This series of assumptions infuriated him and he hit his wife and ended up squeezing her neck and almost strangled her. The wife said that she had put the bucket in the middle of the sitting room with no

ulterior motive. Her husband seemed angered by previous discussions during which his wife had asked him to be more involved in the housework. She acknowledged during the session that she had reproached him on this subject and that they often raised their voices during arguments and this would always end with the husband beating his wife.

With regard to this last example of abuse, I was quite dumbfounded by the interpretation that had triggered the violence. Was this fantasy or delirium? I recall that in many domestic fights, reproaches can be based on projections which are totally unfounded. During the session, the wife could not confirm that her husband could have such projected behaviour outside their arguments. Localised delusion? She does say however, that she has been trying to change her husband, to teach him manners, to care about others and to look after the children and that in fact she has had some success in this endeavour, as he has changed « a bit ». However, the husband seems upset by this : he says his wife puts too much pressure on him that he has had enough. For my part, I cannot see that the results of this education are really beneficial to either partner.

I therefore say to them : «It takes time to change an adult. » I add that both of them seem to want to make the other into somebody « ideal and perfect », perhaps so that they become more attractive to each other and therefore find another reason to love one another. I tell them that it is a very commendable intention, but each should, in this case admit that he is not good enough that he is incomplete. I add that it is hard to recognise your faults and still accept yourself.

Their reaction was interesting. In exasperation, the husband retorts that he has a tendency to be a perfectionist, and that he is proud of it. He cites some examples of how this had made his life easier. When he talks he comes across as being methodical and intellectual in his approach. I am not sure how helpful our conversation was however, though it seemed entirely relevant to me as it addressed the problems in their relationship. However, when I stressed the consequences of trying to change the other person, I was accused of being too didactic.

The husband began to show his annoyance and became domineering, a bit like a rooster. Perhaps his masculinity has been wounded in some way? This is the conclusion that can be drawn from this fight. The wife

then spoke in a defensive way explaining how she « needs to see that her husband is changing ».

What conclusions can we draw from this example? Violence seemed to be part of an attitude of extreme intolerance towards the other person, their gender and their personal style. But since men tend to wrongly link their gender identity with that of the person who is dominant, the husband was trying to assert himself through violence.

Wives can also be domineering and marriage can become a game in which each partner takes turns at being the master. There are also cases of wives who beat or manipulate their husbands and of women who react with deviant defences when faced with a husband who physically abuses them. Amidst all these horrors, there are many possible variations and combinations and it is important to identify the underlying mechanisms.

This case shows that at least one of the causes of physical abuse is the fear of losing the upper hand in a relationship, of no longer having any authority over the other person and concomitantly, the fear that the other will become the master. This fear goes hand in hand with the fear of freedom. These fears respond to the changes in society leading to a new equality between men and women, parents and children. Our hypothesis of contemporary violence is still valid. Evidently, the diversity of styles of violence, abuse and aggressions do not permit us to make generalisations here, but we have taken a first step towards confirming it.

In order to examine some deviations of behaviour, I will look at the following examples: the ambiguity of gifts, the capture of a child into incest, the allocation of roles in incest, the flouting of discretion and intimacy and how revenge and betrayal are legitimised.

When the feeling of obligation goes as far as sacrifice

In families, the source of many of these excesses is to be found in the way that care, giving and generosity are shown. Parents are essential to the formation of a child. Without their presence, love, education and transmission of a subconscious legacy, the child could not survive. The parents give a lot of themselves and they naturally have the right to

claim their due. Normally, to give brings about a counter-gift. The child feels indebted towards his/her parents, as s/he has received life and has been brought up by them. The child is therefore grateful to them but can never make up for what s/he has received. S/he will pay off the debt by giving in turn to his/her own children. This is what is called the « vertical gift».

If the child stays indebted to the parents, this can lead to the development of a crushing feeling of obligation, which leads to self-sacrifice, literally by giving up a part of himself, the possibility of achievements, of a happy marriage, and of children who are well-adjusted. There are perverse processes at work. Over-generous parents can do as much harm as inadequate parents.

I have met this clinical reality in immigrant families or in families where one member (adult or adolescent) has problems such as addiction, self-harm, bulimia or drug taking. In these families we find, hand in hand, over-generosity and a great deal of inadequacy. Sensuality tends to make up for the lack of love, gifts for the lack of security, inappropriate confidences for the lack of interest or understanding of the child's privacy.

“Incestuality” (P.-C. Racamier, 1980) is a term used by P. C. Racamier (1978) to talk about untypical family behaviours where all the elements of the incestuous intimacy are present except for physical contact or sexual penetration. Incestuality, notably between a mother and her child, whether a boy or girl, is made easier by a gift-giving policy in which the child feels that these gifts are exceptional and have taken a great deal of effort. « Since I have made a great sacrifice, you must sacrifice yourself too ». For this to happen, the child cannot think, dream or have his own personal world. The perversion of the mother-child bond is the most frequent and the most dramatic type of female perversion. Even if the child is overvalued, over praised and put on a pedestal, in reality he is made into a fetish and considered as part of the mother, her thing, her tool used for her self-idealisation. (A. Eiguer, 2005).

The perpetrator, the victim and the witness

We will now examine other aspects of perverse bonds in families and contemporary couples. One of the characteristics of perversion is to use the other's resources as lust is very much linked to envy.

The perverse partner may help his victim to get started professionally, playing the role of Pygmalion. In doing this, he will try to prove that his « pupil » or his partner, is far from perfect. This would justify the sacrifices, renunciations and reprimands and at the same time, the pupil has to accept that these are necessary. It is quite common that these arguments serve to prove the validity of the ill-treatment being inflicted. In the abuser-abused relationship, the compromise is mutual. However, it is not true to say that for the pervert, the other person is non-existent; it is in fact important that he should be there so that he can be destroyed.

There is a powerful and mutual interplay between the couple, but other people close to them are usually also involved. In the family, those who watch the situation have feelings ranging from stupefaction to enjoyment, including the fear of also becoming a victim. This clinical observation has revealed that a third party can be involved, that is *the witness*. He is not as such the agent of the perversion or the victim/accomplice, but a different person altogether. He is present in the reality and the fantasy shared by members of the family.

The acts of a perverse exhibitionist aim directly at a victim and indirectly at the witness, the policeman or the judge (G. Bonnet, 1983). He challenges the witness, provokes him, runs away from him by going into hiding and reappearing; he also « lets himself » be caught. An unconscious pact seems to bind these three characters together, in spite of any conscious feelings that the victim and the police may have on the subject. They are drawn into this in a seemingly fortuitous and casual manner and react by appearing offended and revolted by their involvement.

However, the witness is a character whose presence is vital to the whole process. Horrified by what he sees, he calls upon the law, insisting on the need to respect it. Taking as examples some of the unfortunate experiences that can be caused by respecting the law, the criminal will then insist in turn on how « ridiculous » it is to follow the law.

Various family examples illustrate the fact that third parties involved in relationship with perverted individuals and couples suffer at a distance from their behaviours. Their characteristics are similar to that of the witness. What is the role of the prostitute's lover, or of the man who watches while his wife engages in internet sex, and even helps her with his computer skills? What is the role of the rapist's wife, who may often be respected, admired and feared by him although he sexually abuses other women in a horrific manner? He may believe that she is unattainable unreachable, that she does not allow herself to be «psychologically penetrated» by his projections. Is it perhaps because of this mutual avoidance that a couple's relationship ends up becoming unexciting ?

In families where an *incestuous father* holds sway, the other family members are involved to different degrees. In an indirect way, the father is stimulated by the effect of his behaviour on others. His wife, depressed and powerless, seems sometimes to accept silently what is happening behind her back: she is a kind of witness to the incest. The father knows how to use his sexual charisma with their daughter in order to overwhelm and humiliate the mother. He knows how to make the sisters of the victim jealous. A family myth is created, which all members of the family more or less believe in, namely that sexuality is a superior symbol of power and strength. The sexual abuse is presented not as shameful, but as a privilege. In the sexual abuser's family, the idea of the sacrosanct/sacred family spirit can be called upon by the perpetrator to demand that the daughter who has spoken out withdraws her accusation.

Patricia was molested by her father when she was between 7 and 8. She said, « He'd have an argument with my Mum and then come to talk to me about it, saying horrible things about her. He did everything he could to create a bad relationship between her and me. I really never had a mother. I've always behaved as if she didn't exist, I have never known her, and I haven't been able to rely on her to help me. My father wanted to be a "single parent". I wonder if that didn't hurt me more than the sexual abuse.» (A. Eiguer, 2005).

The various pieces of this puzzle and the various family roles are not arbitrary, but are linked together. The fact that one of the members of the family is the *stage director* does not exclude the fact that, from a group point of view, the whole is tragically coherent. To think in this way does not minimise the decisive role of the perpetrator who

instigates the abuse. On the contrary, it enables us to presuppose that sometimes the situation can begin to change only by changing one of the elements, which is something that spontaneously happens for example, when an abused adolescent falls in love. He becomes the third party who helps her to realise the seriousness of the situation and to find, if need be, someone to turn to outside the family circle. The psychological consequences on both the victim and the witness are very serious : stunted development, excitement and agitation and pseudo-maturity.

This is how perverts function within a network; the logic of the sexual symptoms is « to group everyone and to organise the crowd”. It seems that the group point of view is more useful than the one which is centred on the individual, and which emphasises the fact the abused daughter or the marginalised wife may actually enjoy the abuse. The abuser is no less monstrous because he is functioning in a group where all the members are involved.

Other family aspects should be emphasised: heightened sensuality in the relationships, indiscriminate sexual pleasure seems to replace tenderness in the family, lack of rules, using other people as objects, and hateful attacks in the mother-daughter, mother-son or sibling bonds. The spirit of revenge allows betrayal to happen and stirring up ill-feelings and sowing discord among relatives is all part of the game (cf. Patricia’s case study).

The roles of the agent, the victim and the witness are influenced by all the members of the group. Each role is influenced by and influences the other roles within the family. The idea of triumphing over the law and ridiculing the symbolic father is strongly reinforced. "There are many of us so we can keep asserting that we are right." Whether he is close by or far from the family, *the witness* has a significant function in the way he watches the abuser who seems to 'ask' him to function like a mirror, to reflect back his own image, something he himself is unable to do, as he has failed to integrate this ability to see himself from the outside (P. Ricoeur, 1990). Essentially, he has a relationship with the witness which harks back to his bond with his father, made up of challenges and provocations and calling into question the fundamental respect for the Law that the father-figure represents. He claims to have mastery over the father (per-version : *vers le père*, towards the father, attempting to overthrow his functions).

We can imagine these three characters in the abusive situation acting out their roles on stage. A general understanding of their relationship helps us to understand the interplay better. Pichon-Rivière (1978) remarks that both actors of the relationship establish a relationship that is so close and warm that they can actually feel that they are being watched by a third party. This can be simply an impression or there can sometimes be a real third party. In reality, they are seeking this watching figure. The latter « interferes » in the communication between themselves, and creates some kind of *noise*. They have the feeling that this third party is watching them or that he makes it easier for them to understand each other, that he calls them into question or protects them, that he attacks them or make them feel secure. In short he weighs them down. The subjects of the abusive bond are then obliged to establish strategies in response to this « presence », which without doubt draws the regard of the third party Superego. Is this « witness », a variant of the group's third party witness? (Cf. also, T. Ogden, 1994.)

When it comes to *transfer*, it is essential to understand the role of the witness (A. Eguier, 2007). The notion of interpersonal bonds leads us to think that abuse leads to a scenario in which the analyst is expected to occupy the position of the witness. Why?

Even if he wished to make his analyst his accomplice, the abuser will have difficulty achieving this. So what is the way out for him? The desire to put the analyst in the role of a witness means that he will also have the role of upholder of the law and so the abuser will try to convince him that it would be ridiculous for him to give up the behaviour that the law forbids.

Perverse behaviours would permit the verification of all the advantages derived from breaking the Law. They show up during sessions as requests to break the internal laws of the session, for example. They are like the end product and an exercise of putting theory into practice; the consequences are used as a general proof that to deviate from the straight and narrow has got advantages: perverse sexuality would thus be more exciting and pleasurable. The analyst could also use this position, however, to actively advocate the law.

Why flout conjugal intimacy ?

A few clarifications on perversion in a couple. By treating each other so shamefully, the spouses are reacting to a breach of the unconscious pacts established between them. One of these pacts is the shared rule of *discretion*, and the desire to respect their intimacy, in other words refrain from sharing their secrets with strangers. Intimacy inspires and is inspired by the trust the spouses have in each other and the feeling that s/he will know how to listen when we talk about personal difficulties or some disturbing events in our past. A sense of propriety in a couple involves each person being reassured that they are not too outrageous or immature. It boosts up self-esteem. In another sense, the individual is less ashamed of himself/herself, of what s/he feels, thinks, does or has done in the past.

The destruction of the intimacy of a couple sets off a chain of disappointments: basically, the partner who reveals the shared secrets makes public the weaknesses of the other person and appears to have stopped caring for them or to be laughing at them. It has been said for a long time that betrayal is an exquisite art practised by perverts and offenders. This is part of their evil 'religion'.

In the therapy of Mr and Mrs French this problem occurs regularly. They seek help after the wife finds a series of notes in her husband's diary which seem to hint that he is seeing another woman, something he firmly denies. About ten years ago, he had had a serious accident followed by months spent in a coma. When he woke up, it was considered miraculous but he remained fragile, anxious, bad tempered and partly amnesic. To this day, Mr French has to write everything down for his job. He has also developed MDP (manic depressive psychosis). His wife has helped and « supported » him a great deal. This is why she feels even more betrayed by his suspected infidelity.

Once the therapy under way, she says over and over that he is fragile and that he behaves like a brute, and that all this has been confirmed by his doctors. Mr French presents some « personality problems as an aftermath of the accident which affected his brain ». Though she adds that she must learn how to « forgive him », she humiliates him. Then she puts forward the opinions of their two daughters: « he is nasty », « unbearable », oversensitive to all excesses such as alcohol. Sometimes she insinuates, which is an even more powerful way to create an effect.

As true as these comments are, they appear in the dialogue as a confirmation of the husband's « disabled status ». As for him, he presents himself as a « whipped dog », and reacts to this situation clumsily by getting angry and ends up revealing the living proof of his weaknesses. All his arguments are demolished. In reality the power over the two girls is at stake in this debate. Each parent seeks the love of their daughters in order to appear strong in front of the other. By unconscious agreement, the daughters are appointed as judges and are turned into parents.

I imagine that in front of the girls, the parents are seductive. The principle of authority is abandoned in favour of the equalisation of roles. The husband's infidelity which was presented as the rationale for requesting couple therapy is prefigured. This was in reality a shift in their rivalry with each other in the presence of another woman (women), their daughters.

During therapy, I slowly managed to deconstruct these cruel perverse positions, showing in turn that each wants to use a third party to assert his/her supremacy.

Conclusions

We find in this case that there is devaluation of the bonds of love and trust by running down the other partner using *malicious talk* and even *betrayal*. Perverse violence breaks away from ethical behaviour and disguises itself as sexual pleasure. Physical violence, expressed without restraint can be a coarse and aborted form of perverse violence. This belongs to a logic of fear. The abuser enjoys his supremacy by fear. But murder is the sign of the failure of the will to power in somebody who is overwhelmed by disruptive forces. I am not able to cite all types of aggression, and this may mean that I have not been entirely convincing, but I believe that many violent situations appear as the result of the fear of freedom and the loss of influence over the other partner and of his/her differences and strengths. This is common to all types of deviant behaviour.

The idea that the emancipation of the other is beneficial to everyone must be defended. There is a unique opportunity in our day to do this so that we can understand that the well being of the others can bring fruitfulness and satisfaction to all.

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THE TRANSGENERATIONAL VIOLENCE AS A PART OF THE FAMILY LATENT VIOLENCE

BODILY REMINISCENCES AND SOMATIC PATHOLOGY

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"Which differentiates man from animal is that man is an heir and not a mere descendent" (Ortega y Gasset)

"Unsuspicious lethal forces can pass on from generation to generation and transmit to the children the conviction that they are destined to accept their non existence as separate individuals, before their parents' eyes" (Mac Dougall, 1989).

Violence comes from the latin *vis*, which means *strength*. It was the name of a goddess of the Mythology, sister of the Victory, and was represented by a female figure armed with an armour and in an willing to murder a child with a mace.

Violence, then, is related with *strength* and with *destructiveness*. It is also related with the fight for power, with the impulse to dominate and eliminate the other.

Piera Aulagnier (1975) has stated that every human relationship implies a certain level of violence, introducing the notion of *primary violence*, the violence necessary for the constitution of the Ego. She defines it as "*what is imposed from the exterior in the psychic field, causing a first violation of the space and an activity that obeys to laws which are strange to the Ego*". This primary violence implies the complicated process of the first identifications. Instead, the *secondary violence* "*follows the path previously opened by the primary one, representing an excess, generally harmful and never necessary for the functioning of the Ego*". The individuals and the families suffer from different forms of violence, and create myths, destined to "historize" the suffered violences. We can remember that Freud stated that "*No generation is capable of hiding the ones that follow it, the significant psychic facts*"

That is to say that families are "bound to transmit" what they were not able to elaborate, which alludes to their shortages, structural defects and narcissistic exigencies, an imperative which obeys to a defensive need to maintain their own psychic life.

The *delegation* (Stierlin) implies that the preceding generations, in agreement with the family myth, will demand unconsciously that the child must accomplish a determined *mission* inside the family orbit (as a *legacy*) independently from its own desire.

Along the history, societies created violent rites with a sense similar to that of delegation. This is the way René Girard (1972) refers to the character of *pharmakos* in ancient Greece, retelling that the cautious city of Athens kept a certain number of miserable people for sacrifices of this type. When a calamity threatened the city, such as epidemics, shortages, foreign invasion, internal disagreements, there was always a *pharmacos* to the collectivity disposal".

This *pharmacos* was the escape victim, a stain which contaminates everything whose death “cleans” the community of all the evil, bringing a sense of tranquility. The *pharmakos* was carried all over the city attracting to him and accumulating inside him all which was impure, after that he was killed in a ritual ceremony in which all the people belonging to the lower classes participated. He had to attract to him all the malignant violence in order to transform it, through his death, in beneficial violence, which brings about peace and tranquility. (The word *pharmacon* in ancient Greek meant simultaneously the poison and the antidote, every substance capable of exerting a positive or negative action depending on the circumstances and the administered doses.

In ancient Rome, *legates* were the public officials sent by the Senate to the recently violently conquered peoples to reconstruct their government.

In families, then, these delegations, these legacies, “delegations of legacies”, exercise a form of *transgenerational family violence*, which means that they impose on the individuals identification models related with family mythology needs and not those of the singular person. Frequently someone or some people take the role of *pharmacos*, as it happened in the case we will comment.

By doing so, one of the consequences of this violence can be the development of what we have called *trivial identifications* (Losso, 2001), a particular type of identification in which the subjects are identified as a sort of caricature of idealized or denigrated characters of the family mythology. Trivial comes from *trivium*, the intersection of three routes in the ancient Rome, and in a figurative sense, it meant a known or very travelled route. We talk about “trivial” since these identifications have “schematic” aspects, repeated, known and even caricature-like aspects of characters coming from shared family fantasies or from the family myth.

In a certain way, it might be said that these are “false identifications”.

This implies that subjects are put under pressure to meet impossible demands that are, in fact, demands from mythical characters, and remain tied to *invisible loyalties* (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973).

These legates are transmitted through the *transpsychic way* (Kaes, 1993, Losso, 2006), that is to say, they are beyond the words, that

go through the subjects' psyche. The transitional space which permits the transformation of the received contents in own elements is missing at this level. The transmission is not performed between the subjects, but *through* them. These are contents "in a rough state", with no possibility of being worked through, and that may be felt by the recipient as something that "withdraws vitality" or as a presence of something "strange", an element that alienates and disturbs. The intersubjective space remains severely limited. What was transmitted is not transformed. It is therefore a *repetitive transmission* of narcissistic mandates and traumatic experiences that couldn't be worked through by previous generations, a repetition in which more than one subject is involved and implies a transgenerational violence.

These contents transmitted with no modification from a generation to another, remain as a schism, embodied, encysted but cannot be introjected. They are the *fossil remains* of Framo (1965) or the *ghosts* (phantoms) that dwell in *crypts* of Abraham and Torok (1978)

As Nicholas Abraham has stated: "*A word buried in the father is a dead man without a burial in the child*"

Eiguer (2007) considers three possibilities of transgenerational violence through three key-words: the "*non-said*", which refers to the crypt, the splitting and the ghost; the "*badly-said*", the damned, the victim of a male-diction, which evokes the possible malediction of an ancestor, and the "*badly said*", the "lost word", which cannot find a status of speech but acts behind the scenes; and the "*excessively said*", the ancestor excessively present who prevents the repression playing its role and disturbs the subject.

Yolanda Gampel (1991) talks in these cases of *radioactive identifications*, meaning that radioactivity is something not felt, it invades us but we don't realize that there is radioactivity in the air (except if we measure it). This radioactivity penetrates us and it will harm us many years later, and we don't know why.

In these cases there is a transgenerational violence that we can call "active", in which identifying models by *delegation* are imposed. But a different form of violence exists, a "*passive*" *transgenerational violence*, which results not from the imposition of models, but from their absence, a deficit of the transmission which one of us has denominated *trophic* (Losso, 2001), that which originates in the family group, as an *intergenerational* transmission. Through this way

narcissistic investments like the narcissistic contract, ideals, values, identifications, defensive modalities, trophic myths, separation experiences (Winnicott`s dis-illusion), family stories, ways of seeing the reality together with intersubjective links that generate a psychic space among the subjects, plastic" identification models, and the identifications are transmitted. This is a structuring transmission, that implies the plurigenerational support from the family group.

it is a "nutrient", nourishing, transmission that stimulates the development, allowing a psychic work of each subject, that then re-encounters and recreates the parts of his/her own history that have been transmitted without his/her awareness.

This transmission implies that a *transgenerational working-through* process could take place, which makes possible the successive transformations of mandates and legacies from one generation to another. A transitional space between the subjects is then developed, creating a –mythical- family history, from which every member is able to take the elements to create his/her own myth.

In contemporary society a "passive" form of violence is exerted through *a deficit of the trophic transmission*. This is a tendency to an absence or a rejection of anchorages to cultural and family standards coming from previous generations. Trophic legacies are minimized, tradition is devaluated and models are looked down on.

Culture of the instantaneous of the immediate, or the image, makes the characters that become noticeable through mass media prevail as *imitation* models (Gaddini, 1969) –not identification ones.

This deficit of the trophic transmission occurs in the framework of particular social messages. For example, the myth of the individual's "independence" as a virtual absolute value together with what one of us has named the "*3 E culture*" (*efficiency, efficacy, economy*- Losso, 1997) and the individuals' valuation based on material progress as a change that can be "objectively measured" contributes to devalue origins. This also favors the self-engendering fantasies that are antagonistic towards solidarity values and the sense of group belonging, which will disrupt the processes of that necessary trophic transmission. .

Following the same order, Kaes refers to the existence of a *culture of the unlimited and of the extreme limits*: "a culture of the danger, but

of the prowess too: the heroicization of death", and a *culture of the urgency*: predominance of the present, of the "here and now", of the zapping. This is a culture in which links are contingent and only the present links are considered. The only certainty is that the future is unforeseeable.

Kaës adds a *culture of the melancholy* too, referring to the existence in the contemporary societies of an interminable unelaborated mourning of the 20th century catastrophes, in which, as a defense in front of the melancholic disenchantment "the catastrophism, the maniac promises and the dreams of domination and control appear".

There is a sort of "rupture" of the narcissistic contract, a *transmission crisis*. The lack of internalization of links in which we can trust, will lead to failures in the constitution of the preconscious and the unconscious.

In our country, we have the sad experience of the cases of children born in captivity, whose parents had been murdered; these infants were registered as the children of their parents' murderers and on other occasions by other members of the "task groups", groups which dedicated themselves to systematic torture and murder of real or imaginary opponents. Here, the violence of constructions based on hiding and lying, which substitutes the trophic transmission of the real generation links, destructs them brutally.

All this leads to a rupture of the symbolic order of the generations, with its consequence, a serious deficit of the subjectivation processes, which will be manifested at some moments as a pathology in one or more of Lagache and Pichon Rivière's three areas: the mind, the body and the action behaviour.

At a wider glance, our globalized society is, as we will see, a complex context for the good development of the mentioned subjectivation processes. Giorgio Agamben has referred to the state of permanent social violence which is lived nowadays, in which he called a "state of exception", a permanent civil war, a moment of the law in which, paradoxically, the rights are suppressed precisely "to guarantee their continuity". This is a "state of exception", in which the legal order is suspended, and what might be provisory has become a permanent and paradigmatic form of government, an idea that Agamben develops following Walter Benjamin. We are living, Agamben says, a situation of "modern totalitarianism" that founds a sort of "legal civil war" through

the state of exception. These states of exception, paradoxically permanent, contribute to the crisis of the links in the current societies. This will put in crisis the subjectivation processes too, substituted by the imitative processes (Gaddini, 1981) and the individualistic illusion (Anzieu) we have already referred to. The present society produces a producer or consumer individual, who for Judith Revel and Toni Negri (2008) is reduced to be a productive unity in a form of monad "without doors and windows...disarticulated and re-articulated depending on the exigencies of efficiency and the maximization of the profits", to which the phenomenon of the "seriation" of that monads, its overcrowding, its constitution in undifferentiated population, its interchangeable character are added: individuation and seriation as characteristics of the current man.

Touraine develops the concept of meta-social guarantors, the big structures that function as a frame and regulate the social and cultural life, which function is that of guaranteeing a sufficient stability of the social institutions and give them legitimacy.

The social and individual violence is a manifest expression of the crisis of the meta-social guarantors, and leads to a crisis of those that Kaes has called meta-psychic guarantors, which are the frame of the psychic life.

A part of that violence is the "always more" of the capitalism, inducing a passion for the accumulation and the consumption, including who are prevented of realizing it. The lack is accentuated. Permanently new offers are created (objects and activities: trips, gyms, diets, etc.) that recreate and feed this state of lack, the sensation of being in lack, which will be saturated (illusively) by the acquisition and use of these objects and activities, in an emaciating circle for the subject: the anonymous voice of the market which dictates identification models, objects, activities. An imaginary "Other" that generates a model of a desirable and amiable subject by the "Other", too. A subject who is always young, slender, permanently active, acquiring objects, hyperkinetic ... This particular model produces a mode of organization that, as Revel and Negri stated, is characterized by their fragmentation, because the exaltation of the consumption, the velocity, the "living on-line" lead to a narcissistic refuge too. A subjectivity in a state of constant heedlessness (connected with screens, cellular phones, mp3's, mp4's, etc.) disconnected from the environment, from the face to face contact with others, with society and with itself, a subjectivity

exhausted by the velocity and the saturation of information. This “being in lack” produces a dissatisfactory state associated with void and depression. The velocity, the isolation, the social fragmentation lead to identification crisis, pathologies of the act, loss of desire.

The corporal reminiscences

In many cases, when there is a failure of the “historization” process, the structural failures together with the subjectivation deficit can make that, not being able to become psychic elements, the split and contents which cannot be thought can remain as imprints in one’s body which we call *corporal reminiscences*. They will consequently lead to psychosomatic diseases, as a manifestation of the suffered -and not elaborated by other generations- traumatic violence.

In previous papers (Losso & Ferrazzano de Solvey, 1985), we started from the Freudian idea that the affects have an equivalence in bodily changes modified by the personal experience: as Green (1973) stated “the affect is itself, a product of an ‘on the contrary’ conversion”. These affects can be transmitted by the transpsychic way remaining then hidden for the consciousness, but they can remain as records in the body, as *bodily reminiscences*. We proposed to denominate *bodily unconscious* to the place of those records, as an analogy with the psychic unconscious, the place for the “representations of the thing”. The organic modifications occurred at this moment will be then the founders of the unconscious corporal answers. Actual *somatic fixations* are then produced as corporal traces which remain established from very precocious experiences transpsychically transmitted. Maybe, we can find in Freud’s “Outline”, an allusion to this fact in his reference to “*somatic processes concomitant with the psychic ones [...] more complete than the psychic sequences*” (Freud, 1938).

Those fixations can be expressed through structural and/or functional changes. One of the possible changes can be an alteration more or less permanent of the synchronization of the bodily *rhythms* or also a predisposition to that perturbation, which will be expressed by a particular tendency of the subject to the dis-synchronization of the biological rhythms.

Gaddini (1982) expresses a similar idea talking about the existence of *fantasies in the body*. In these cases – Gaddini says- there exists a

bodily memory but not a mental one. The experience is neither evocated in the memory nor hallucinated, nor projected to the exterior, but *acted* in the body. From now on, the tragedy will be developed in the body.

In Piera Aulagnier's words, "a text without words ... a text which talks about the bodily matrices, marks...as tracks of times which will always remain as an enigmatic background ..."

The C family

In the case of the family we will comment on -the C family-, the violence suffered by both families of origin, as social violence in one of them and as auto-destructive violence in the other, not elaborated and kept split, reappears as a severe somatic pathology.

The "C" family was integrated by Norma (35), her husband Eduardo (37), and their two daughters, Cristina (5) and Laura (2). The family was sent to our team by Cristina's pediatrician, because Cristina showed severe bronchial and lung problems (bronchial asthma with pneumonic complications and subsequent pleural compromise) which were threatening her life. In two circumstances she had to be hospitalized.

Eduardo was the only child and his father had died when Eduardo was five. His grandfather had committed suicide by throwing himself onto the train rails. His mother suffered from a chronic depressive disorder and had once tried to commit suicide. On that occasion, she threw herself under the underground train, but she survived because she fell between the rails. Eduardo disclosed an obsessive personality with a depressive background.

Norma had a brother, who had been kidnapped and "desaparecido" (missing), during the military dictatorship in Argentina, but both she and her family denied the fact that he could have been dead, although more than fifteen years had passed by then.

During the first stages of the psychoanalytic family therapy, we as analysts in co-therapy, felt that the family, particularly Cristina, transmitted a menace of `psychic annihilation, of breakdown and of

(real) danger of Cristina's death. Consequently we were on a permanent alarm, with a menace that something serious could happen. The sessions material revolved around Cristina's illness, her doctors, her treatments, her evolution and so on.

But as Cristina was getting gradually better, the field climate began to be more "boring"; it became frankly depressive. The depression was in the place of the anxiety generated around Cristina's disease. The family came punctually to their sessions, but we felt that "nothing happened", as if they had been coming "to waste their time".

Countertransferentially, we felt paralysis, futility, boredom and lack of hope. Eduardo said: *"all is pointless. It is better not to talk because if we talk, we'll reach a total conflict with no return"*. "Total conflict" meant annihilation, breakdown and eventually death, which is the only point of no return.

The first consultation had been related to a death threat. The pediatrician had transmitted her concern about Cristina's symptoms, which, she said, "expressed the family's anger, their discomfort". "It is as if she were committing suicide", she added. Cristina said that "she would go under the ground" and communicated dreams in which she and her mother were captured by "monsters" that tortured them, tearing off their hair, and other nightmares in which her mother *was run over by a train* (let's point out that she had never been told either how her grandfather had died or about the grandmother's suicide attempts, or the missing uncle).

We can remember here Gampel's concept of *radioactive identification*.

The transgenerational violence became manifest in the analytic field through the "death mission" Cristina was doomed to fulfill, due to the "pending bills" of her previous generations. Cristina's body was the place of resonance of non elaborated mourning. It summarized all the deaths.

The shared family unconscious working-through fantasy of "C" family was that the real death of the patient-symptom and the concrete presence of a corpse would permit the "working through" of all the mourning that the family had not been able to work through along at least three generations. *Someone had to die*. Cristina was destined to be the family *pharmakos*.

We are here facing violence that is expressed through a transgenerational repetition in the links. Both Eduardo and Norma bore in their respective families, traumatic situations with origins in a not elaborated mourning. The couple was built around this mourning, and a mutual feeling of misfortune, creating a depressive bond in which the shared depression somehow protected the breakdown (the threat Eduardo talked about). They configured a bond organized in the confusion between life and death, where death was "suspended" but it should reappear in the coming generation.

"A word buried in the father is a dead man without a burial in the child" (N. Abraham)

After having analyzed these fantasies in the analytic field, the family was able to start facing the deep pain of their not elaborated mourning and the thanatic delegations from the previous generations. They were able to disclose the ghosts, spreading the cryptic secrets in the therapeutical field and giving a sense to the repetition phenomena. All this helped everyone out and set Cristina free from the repetition and her destiny of *pharmakos*.

We have permitted ourselves to develop different levels of violence with their consequences in families. The "combination" of social violence and transgenerational violence leads to changes in the families and in the individuals which are by no means superficial, which oblige us to clinical re-definitions and to re-think about our treatments.

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LES VIOLENCES DANS LA FAMILLE À LA LUMIÈRE DES TRAUMATISMES VÉCUS PAR LES GÉNÉRATIONS PRÉCÉDENTES : CATASTROPHES ET SECRETS

SERGE TISSERON *

La famille n'est pas seulement un rassemblement de personnes unies par divers liens de parentalité. Elle est aussi un espace social qui fait pont et lien entre d'un côté, les individus qui la composent, et d'un autre, la société. Elle est, pour reprendre une expression de Marcel Mauss, une « courroie de transmission », et cette courroie fonctionne dans les deux sens : de la société vers les individus qui composent la famille, mais aussi des différents membres de la famille vers la société. C'est pourquoi il nous faut apprendre à penser les interrelations et les influences entre ces trois termes : l'individu, la famille et la société.

Je m'en tiendrai ici à un seul aspect de ce vaste problème : les conséquences sur la vie familiale - et en particulier sur les enfants - des traumatismes vécus par les générations précédentes, et liés à des situations de catastrophe sociale.

De tels traumatismes mal élaborés sont en effet souvent à l'origine de comportements épisodiques étranges, excessifs, bizarres, auxquels leurs enfants assistent, ou même dont ils sont victimes. Et cela est

d'autant plus traumatisant pour eux qu'ils ne parviennent pas à relier ce qu'ils voient et entendent alors à ce qu'ils savent et comprennent par ailleurs de leur parent.

Voici quelques exemples ;

Exemple 1 : Un homme qui élève correctement sa fille accepte qu'elle sorte chaque samedi soir. Un samedi comme les autres, il la frappe très violemment au moment de son retour en l'accusant « d'avoir oublié l'heure du couvre-feu ». Puis il refuse de parler de ce qui s'est passé et interdit à sa fille de poser des questions.

Exemple 2 : Un enfant rentre de l'école et chante à son père la chanson qu'il a apprise. Elle débute par ces mots : « J'ai du bon tabac dans ma tabatière, j'ai du bon tabac et tu n'en auras pas ». Son père fond alors en larmes et le supplie d'arrêter de chanter. Puis il se replie sur lui-même, prostré, et ne dit plus rien.

Exemple 3 : Un parent oblige son fils à aller acheter du pain très loin de la maison, alors qu'il y a une boulangerie à côté, et le punit durement, sans donner d'explications, s'il enfreint cette règle.

Exemple 4 : Une mère de famille, qui cuisine habituellement bien, fait régulièrement un plat immangeable. Le père distribue ce jour-là aux enfants des sacs en plastique pour qu'ils puissent faire disparaître la nourriture en faisant semblant de manger.

Toutes ces situations de violence faite à un enfant ont un point commun : elles sont liées à un traumatisme vécu par un parent et imparfaitement élaboré par lui. Dans le premier exemple, le père, qui avait fait la guerre d'Algérie, avait vu à la télévision une émission sur ce sujet, et ce reportage avait réveillé en lui le souvenir traumatique de l'époque où il frappait durement des civils qui ne respectaient pas le couvre-feu imposé par l'armée.

Dans le second exemple, le père est un ancien déporté qui revoit, en écoutant son fils, le Kapo du camp de concentration lui dire : « J'ai du bon tabac, et tu n'en auras pas ».

Dans le troisième exemple, le pays a été déchiré par une guerre civile, avant qu'une amnistie générale ne jette une chape de plomb sur le passé. Le boulanger d'à côté se trouvait appartenir à l'autre camp que le parent.

Enfin, dans le quatrième exemple, cette mère de famille refait régulièrement le plat qu'elle mangeait, et qu'elle n'a pas digéré, quand elle a vu son père mourir d'une crise cardiaque devant elle.

Dans toutes ces situations, le parent est le premier traumatisé, et son enfant est victime par un mécanisme que j'ai appelé « par ricochet »¹. Tout d'abord, je vais donc décrire ce mécanisme puis j'évoquerai les conséquences que cela a sur le déroulement d'une prise en charge familiale.

A. La catastrophe et le traumatisme

1. Les traumatismes ne se « transmettent » pas

Contrairement à ce qu'on entend parfois, les traumatismes ne se « transmettent » pas, pas plus que les catastrophes. En revanche, les traumatismes mal symbolisés s'accompagnent chez un parent de la mise en place de gestes, d'attitudes, de comportements, qui peuvent être traumatiques pour un enfant. Ou plutôt, ce qui est souvent traumatique pour l'enfant, c'est que ce qu'il voit ou entend ne reçoit aucune confirmation explicite, et que c'est même parfois dénié par le parent qui dit : « Mais non, tu te trompes, je n'ai pas dit - ou je n'ai pas fait cela ». Et lorsque le parent dit cela, il y croit, parce qu'il est victime lui-même du clivage qu'il a mis en place pour faire face au traumatisme qu'il a vécu. Il est coupé en deux, entre une partie de lui-même qui revit régulièrement le traumatisme passé, en mélangeant le passé et le présent, et une autre partie de lui-même, qui se comporte comme si le traumatisme n'avait pas existé.

2. Un traumatisme est toujours partiellement symbolisé

Après l'erreur du traumatisme qui se « transmettrait », une seconde erreur consiste à dire que le traumatisme pourrait être « insymbolisé ». Dans la vie psychique, rien n'est jamais « insymbolisé ». Mais pour comprendre cela, il faut accepter l'idée que la symbolisation verbale n'est pas la seule forme de symbolisation. A tout moment, l'être humain symbolise ce qui lui arrive à la fois avec des mots, des images et des comportements. Et la preuve que la symbolisation verbale ne remplace pas les autres, c'est qu'on peut

avoir symbolisé un deuil avec des mots, et que cela n'empêche pas de porter chaque année des fleurs au cimetière sur la tombe du mort, et de verser une larme ! Nous avons besoin de mots pour nous distancer des souvenirs, mais aussi de gestes et d'images pour les rendre vivants. Les deux participent au travail psychique de la symbolisation.

Lorsqu'un événement traumatique vécu par une génération a été correctement symbolisé, il trouve donc naturellement sa place dans la famille à la fois sous la forme de récits, de commémoration et d'images qui en rendent compte. Sa transmission est ainsi assurée de trois façons complémentaires : par des mots, des rituels et des images.

Mais lorsqu'un événement grave vécu par une génération n'a pas pu être correctement symbolisé, il est présent d'une façon seulement, par exemple par des émotions ou des gestes. Le problème est que ceux-ci sont coupés de toute formulation explicite puisqu'il n'y a pas eu de symbolisation verbale. Ces formes partielles de symbolisation peuvent être activées par un film ou une émission de télévision, mais aussi par un élément sensoriel isolé comme un bruit, une lumière ou une odeur. Celui qui est dans cette situation peut alors se mettre à frapper d'une manière inexplicable son conjoint ou ses enfants, leur imposer des punitions énigmatiques, les humilier ou encore leur infliger des violences psychologiques invisibles. Il est dans une sorte d'état second, confondant le passé et le présent, et, souvent, au sortir de cet état, il ne se souvient de rien. Et pour cause, il est clivé ! Entrons maintenant plus précisément dans la logique de ce mécanisme. Et, pour y parvenir, il nous faut distinguer entre deux processus exactement opposés : l'introjection et l'inclusion psychique.

3. Le travail psychique de l'introjection

Une catastrophe n'entraîne pas forcément une névrose traumatique. Celle-ci dépend de nombreux facteurs, liés à la personnalité, à l'histoire, à la réceptivité de chacun, mais aussi à son entourage. Le processus le plus efficace pour y faire face est ce que les psychanalystes ont appelé la symbolisation, et que les américains nomment *mentalisation*.

Elle ne concerne donc pas le « symbolique » qui est de l'ordre des symboles constitués. Elle est le *processus* par lequel chacun se

constitue ses propres représentations de ses expériences du monde. Celles-ci revêtent trois formes : sensori-motrice (ce sont des gestes, des émotions et des attitudes) ; imagée (ce sont des images mentales ou matérielles) ; et enfin verbale (nous utilisons des mots pour en parler)². Ce travail n'est pas forcément conscient ni forcément volontaire, et il est en grande partie automatique. Lorsqu'un événement a été correctement symbolisé, sa transmission passe donc à la fois par des récits, des images partagées et des mises en scène, notamment à l'occasion de fêtes rituelles.

Mais, pour être correctement réalisée, cette symbolisation nécessite l'intervention d'un tiers.

4. L'échec partiel de l'introjection et ses causes

En cas de catastrophe, le premier choc traumatique est la catastrophe elle-même. Elle submerge le sujet de sensations, d'émotions, d'états du corps et de fantasmes tellement inhabituels qu'il en est bouleversé.

Mais à ce premier choc s'en ajoute souvent un second. Fréquemment, la victime d'une catastrophe ne trouve pas d'interlocuteur pour l'aider à s'en donner des représentations. Pire encore. Plus la catastrophe est violente, plus la victime a besoin d'un interlocuteur... et moins elle a de chance d'en trouver un. C'est qu'il est très difficile d'accepter d'écouter quelqu'un qui a vécu des choses terribles comme une déportation, une famine, un viol, une torture. Au traumatisme constitué par l'afflux de sensations et d'émotions impossibles à maîtriser, s'en ajoute donc un second : le sentiment de la trahison des proches. Et c'est encore pire lorsque la personne traumatisée rencontre une volonté politique d'amoindrir les choses.

On peut ainsi dire que le traumatisme « frappe toujours deux fois », pour reprendre le titre d'un film américain célèbre³. Il frappe la victime au moment de la catastrophe elle-même, puis au moment où les interlocuteurs privilégiés dont elle attendait aide et soutien se dérobent à lui.

5. Les conséquences de l'échec de l'introjection : le clivage et l'inclusion psychique

Lorsqu'un événement ne peut pas être symbolisé correctement, le psychisme réagit en enfermant dans une sorte de « vacuole » -ou de « placard » - psychique tout ce qui n'a pas pu être symbolisé : des sensations, des émotions, des états du corps, des représentations de soi et des autres et tous les fantasmes angoissants qui sont venus à l'esprit⁴.

Une telle inclusion constitue une forme d'inconscient, mais différent de l'inconscient constitué par le refoulement dans la théorie freudienne. Tout le refoulement est inconscient, mais tout ce qui est inconscient ne relève pas forcément du refoulement. Ici le mécanisme en jeu est le clivage. L'inconscient mis en jeu par le refoulement concerne les désirs sexuels culpabilisés, tandis que l'inconscient mis en jeu par l'inclusion psychique - qui est une forme de clivage partiel localisé - est de nature traumatique. Une telle inclusion crée une situation de « Secret » bien différente du secret relationnel courant, puisqu'il s'agit d'un secret psychique que son porteur cherche à se cacher à lui-même. J'ai proposé pour cela d'écrire ici ce mot avec un « S » majuscule : le *Secret* est un état psychique bien différent d'une situation de communication dans laquelle une personne ment sciemment à une autre. Le problème est que cette situation - qui correspond encore une fois à des expériences mal symbolisées - va perturber la vie relationnelle avec les proches et pouvoir porter son ombre sur plusieurs générations.

B. Les suintements de l'inclusion et ses conséquences

1. Les suintements du traumatisme

Quelle que soit la violence d'une catastrophe, elle a toujours reçu une symbolisation partielle, en générale sensori-motrice. Il en résulte des formes de symbolisation qui surgissent de façon inattendue et discordante. Ce sont les « suintements » du traumatisme mal symbolisé.

1. Des émotions incompréhensibles.

Dans son film *Mystic River*, Clint Eastwood met en scène un homme d'une quarantaine d'années en train de raconter une histoire à son fils au moment de l'endormir. Il y est question d'un enfant effrayé par un monstre et qui s'enfuit, sans doute une histoire proche de ce qu'est chez nous *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*. Mais soudain, le spectateur assiste à un changement brutal dans l'intonation et les mimiques de ce père. Il comprend que celui-ci ne décrit plus la fuite d'un garçon surpris par un loup, mais sa propre course éperdue lorsque, vingt ans plus tôt, il s'est échappé de la cave dans laquelle deux pédophiles l'avaient séquestré pour abuser de lui. Cet homme ne raconte plus un conte, il ne raconte pas non plus son histoire de façon explicite, il met littéralement en scène un traumatisme secret... et destiné à le rester.

J'ai eu à m'occuper d'une situation proche. Une mère qui avait fugué de chez elle pendant son adolescence et avait été violée, portait vingt ans plus tard ce drame comme une tache que rien ne pourrait effacer⁵. Elle n'avait évidemment jamais raconté cet événement à son fils... mais elle avait pris l'habitude de lui raconter presque chaque soir l'histoire de la chèvre de Monsieur Seguin⁶. Comme dans le film de Clint Eastwood, c'est un peu son propre viol qu'elle racontait. Preuve en est que son fils, une fois devenu adulte, lui fit part de la question qu'il s'était toujours posée sans jamais oser lui en parler : « A quoi ressemblait donc le loup ? »

Le problème est que vers l'âge de quinze ans, ce garçon commença à aller très mal. Il se mit à fréquenter des lieux et des personnages louches. Il se mit à jouer à son tour le rôle de la chèvre de Monsieur Seguin, peut-être avec le secret espoir de voir enfin le visage du loup... Il passait aussi beaucoup de temps à jouer à un jeu vidéo – *World of Warcraft* – où il jouait le rôle d'un mort vivant et passait son temps à hanter d'épaisses forêts sous le pseudonyme de « Wolf », le loup !

2. Des comportements incompréhensibles

C'est par exemple le parent qui évite systématiquement la rue où se trouvait l'immeuble de la police pendant la dictature. L'enfant ne reçoit aucune explication cohérente, et pour cause : le parent s'est trouvé dans le camp opposé à celui auquel participait le boulanger pendant la guerre civile, et il lui est impossible d'en parler.

3. Des comportements imprévisibles

Les comportements incompréhensibles du parent traumatisé sont aussi souvent imprévisibles. Il réagit à un bruit, une odeur, une lumière... Ce sont ces détails qui déclenchent la reviviscence du traumatisme. Par exemple, l'écrivain Jean-Claude Snyders nous raconte comment son père – qui était un ancien déporté – avait parfois des colères terribles et totalement inattendues au cours desquelles il semblait prendre plaisir à faire souffrir son fils. Et il nous raconte aussi comment, à d'autres moments, ce même père se déprimait de façon mystérieuse sous l'effet d'une souffrance inexplicable. En fait, le père de Jean-Claude Snyders revivait sa déportation, tantôt à la place de la victime qu'il avait été et tantôt en s'identifiant aux kapos et aux nazis qui l'avaient fait souffrir par plaisir. De nombreux enfants nés de parents déportés ont ainsi raconté que ceux-ci, bien qu'apparemment adaptés à la vie sociale, passaient par des moments étranges et violents dans leur vie familiale.

4. La mise en scène du drame passé

L'écrivain Serge Valetti raconte comment sa grand-mère hurlait tour à tour avec la voix d'une victime et celle d'un agresseur, au point que les voisins appelèrent un jour la police en pensant qu'ils entendaient un viol ! En fait, cette femme avait probablement été victime d'un viol bien longtemps avant, et c'est cet épisode qu'elle revivait régulièrement dans son grand âge. Serge Valetti n'a pas trop mal géré cette situation – et les effets probables sur sa mère – puisqu'il est devenu écrivain de théâtre ! Quoiqu'il en soit, il n'est pas rare qu'un parent anciennement traumatisé se mette parfois à parler comme si un étranger s'exprimait par sa bouche.

5. Le passé et le présent mélangé

Le parent en proie à un passé traumatique mélange volontiers le passé et le présent, comme pour l'ancien militaire évoqué précédemment.

Voici un autre exemple. L'écrivain George Sand - qui s'appelait à l'origine Aurore Dudevant - a perdu son père - prénommé Maurice - d'une chute de cheval quand elle avait quatre ans. Sa grand-mère, qui

ne pouvait pas faire le deuil de son fils, a demandé la garde de la fillette qu'elle a obtenue. Mais cette grand-mère s'est révélée rapidement perdre la tête... Elle dormait avec sa petite fille et l'appelait « Maurice » en la prenant pour son fils disparu. Or le père de cette grand-mère, dont elle n'avait jamais fait le deuil, se prénomme lui aussi Maurice. La fillette ne savait donc jamais si sa grand-mère la confondait avec son père ou avec son arrière grand père ! Une fois devenue grande, Aurore Dudevant est devenue un écrivain, mais elle s'est toujours habillée comme un homme, fumait la pipe, et s'est choisie un nom de plume masculin. En fait, quand on connaît son histoire, on comprend que ces diverses particularités étaient des façons de gérer la mort de son père, et aussi les traumatismes que sa grand-mère et sa mère avaient fait peser sur elle.

6. Des propos apparemment dénués de tout sens

Enfin, un parent traumatisé peut dire des choses apparemment dénuées de tout sens. Ainsi de cette mère dont le père avait disparu quand elle avait cinq ans et qui empêchait son enfant de dire que son père à lui était parti lorsque c'était le cas. Dès que le petit de trois ans et demi avait commencé à dire pour la première fois « Papa parti » au moment où son père partait travailler le matin, cette mère le lui avait interdit en pleurant et en criant : « Non, non, papa n'est pas parti ! ». Cette femme ne réagissait pas aux propos de son enfant par rapport à la situation réelle, mais dans la continuité du traumatisme qu'elle avait subi elle-même au moment de la disparition de son propre père.

2. Les ricochets du traumatisme

Un enfant qui vit de façons répétées de telles situations risque de développer divers types de symptômes. Certains sont liés directement aux situations troublantes qu'il vit avec son parent, d'autres aux histoires qu'il se raconte pour essayer de comprendre ce qu'on lui cache.

1. L'insécurité psychique

Les enfants *insécurisés ambivalents* ont souvent des parents qui présentent des réactions inconstantes et imprévisibles avec leurs enfants. L'enfant craint le départ de son parent mais, épuisé par les efforts qu'il a fait pour tenter de se passer de lui, il n'est plus disponible pour son retour. Tout se passe comme s'il avait envisagé déjà que ce retour puisse ne pas se faire. Quant aux enfants *insécurisés-désorganisés*, leurs parents sont souvent des victimes de traumatismes graves non résolus, par exemple des deuils ou des carences éducatives précoces. Ils sont capables d'alterner des comportements extrêmes et inexplicables de telle façon que leurs enfants développent à leur tour des peurs inexplicables et des inquiétudes paradoxales.

En même temps, parfois, l'enfant peut sentir surgir du fond de lui ce qu'il n'a pas eu le droit de voir, d'entendre et de comprendre lorsque son parent revivait ses traumatismes passés. Cette situation correspond exactement à ce que décrit Antonin Artaud : « On regarde, effaré, l'apparition de l'au-delà ». Par exemple, l'enfant entend la voix des compagnons de guerre des parents tués au combat.

2. La culpabilité

L'enfant confronté à des manifestations de souffrance ou d'inquiétude chez l'un de ses parents se questionne toujours sur leur origine. Et, parfois, il peut penser qu'il en est lui-même le responsable, comme cette fillette qui, voyant sa mère et sa grand-mère angoissées et muettes pendant la guerre – parce que son oncle avait disparu – pensait que les deux femmes se taisaient parce qu'elles lui en voulaient à elle ! Dans les premières années de la vie, en effet, l'enfant se perçoit volontiers comme le centre des préoccupations des adultes qui l'entourent. Le problème est que celui qui commence à se sentir coupable de la souffrance de son parent risque bien de s'engager toujours plus loin sur ce chemin et finir par se sentir coupable de nombreuses situations dans lesquelles il n'est pour rien.

3. La honte

Quand un enfant ne parle pas de quelque chose qui lui est arrivé, c'est souvent parce qu'il en a honte. C'est pourquoi, quand ses parents se taisent, il imagine fréquemment que c'est parce que ses parents sont honteux. Certains enfants tenus dans l'ignorance de ce qu'on leur cache se mettent ainsi à imaginer le pire... Et ce « pire » est finalement plus destructeur pour eux que ne l'aurait été la confiance du secret. Ils se persuadent que leurs parents seraient coupables de quelque acte terrible qu'ils voudraient lui cacher. Mais l'enfant qui grandit en ayant l'impression que ses parents auraient commis quelque chose de honteux court le risque d'installer cette honte à l'intérieur de lui... et de se sentir ensuite honteux sans savoir pourquoi. De tels enfants ne sont pas, comme les précédents, rongés par la culpabilité, mais plutôt par la honte, et celle-ci n'est pas la leur, mais celle qu'ils ont imaginé à leurs parents et intériorisée.

4. L'hyper conformisme

Enfin, certains enfants perdent confiance dans leurs propres capacités, notamment lorsqu'ils sont confrontés à des parents qui nient l'existence d'un secret et leur disent que les choses ne sont pas telles qu'ils les ont vues, entendues ou pressenties. Ces enfants ont l'impression de ne plus pouvoir faire confiance dans leurs capacités à comprendre le monde. Il peut en résulter de nombreux troubles de l'apprentissage. Mais, ayant perdu toute confiance dans ses capacités de comprendre le monde, l'enfant peut aussi décider de devenir soumis et obéissant en toutes circonstances.

5. La création

Une dernière façon pour l'enfant de réagir est de tenter de remettre au dehors ce que son parent, en proie à son passé, a fait naître chez lui. Par exemple, le cinéaste Alfred Hitchcock évoque la façon dont sa mère s'amusa à lui faire peur et accorde beaucoup d'importance à ce qu'il appelle le transfert de culpabilité par l'échange des regards⁹. Tout se passe, dans ces entretiens, comme si Alfred Hitchcock évoquait une catastrophe vécue par sa mère et jamais nommée, mais entrevue par lui dans son regard. Et Hitchcock est devenu ce cinéaste qui a su nous

mettre chacun à la place d'un enfant « scotché » dans son siège, assistant terrifié aux défilements dans un œil immense, celui d'un écran de cinéma, des fantômes d'un autre.

Le cinéaste Hanecke nous parle, quant à lui, de la collaboration de l'Autriche avec le nazisme d'une façon qui fait une grande place au silence familial. C'est notamment le cas dans le film *Benny's vidéo*. Un enfant accomplit un meurtre sans comprendre vraiment pourquoi, mais le comportement de ses parents nous donne l'explication. Ils font soigneusement disparaître le cadavre avec une application et une efficacité qui évoquent la manière dont l'Autriche a tenté de cacher son passé nazi. L'enfant ira les dénoncer à la police. Les parents, restés impunis pour les crimes de leurs propres parents qu'ils ont cachés, sont finalement punis pour avoir voulu cacher de la même façon le crime de leur fils.

C. Le thérapeute confronté au traumatisme familial

1. Créer un territoire de sécurité

La première chose à réaliser, avec de telles familles, est de constituer un territoire de sécurité. Pour cela, il faut éventuellement accepter que la famille déplace quelques objets dans le bureau de consultation : on ne se sent bien « contenu » que par un espace qu'on a la possibilité de transformer. Si cet espace n'est pas construit et garanti, rien ne peut se faire.

2. Se rendre attentif aux incohérences

Il est également important, avec ces familles, de prendre acte du fait que présent et passé sont souvent mélangés. Le thérapeute ne doit pas hésiter à faire référence à des violences passées vécues par la famille. Par exemple, devant une violence à laquelle il assiste, il peut dire : « Vous êtes violent, mais peut-être il y a eu des moments de violence dans votre famille » ; plutôt que s'en tenir à dire : « Vous êtes violent ».

De la même façon, face à un parent qui ment sans cesse, le thérapeute peut dire : « Il a dû y avoir beaucoup de choses cachées dans votre famille ».

Mais le plus important est de pointer les manifestations d'incohérence, notamment de la part des parents. Les petites manifestations d'incohérence pendant la thérapie sont souvent le signe d'incohérences beaucoup plus grandes dans la vie familiale. Le meilleur guide dans ce domaine est évidemment le sentiment d'étrangeté ou de bizarrerie éprouvé par le thérapeute. Il est essentiel, avec de telles familles, de toujours indiquer explicitement qu'on ne comprend pas lorsque tel est le cas. Et c'est d'autant plus important lorsque l'un des enfants présente des signes de culpabilité grave, de honte ou d'hyper conformisme, qui peuvent être autant d'aménagements pour faire face aux comportements incompréhensibles d'un parent.

3. Être le thérapon

Dans la Grèce ancienne, on appelait « thérapon » une personne qui avait deux qualités importantes : d'une part, elle était le témoin du héros au combat, comme Patrocle pour Achille dans *l'Illiade* ; et d'autre part, elle rendait les honneurs funéraires et aidait à enterrer les morts. Pour être ce témoin attendu, il ne faut pas hésiter à tenir parfois des propos empathiques du genre « C'est terrible ce que vous avez vécu », (pour le parent traumatisé) ou : « Hélas, c'est pas facile de s'y retrouver avec un père qui est parfois un peu perdu avec sa propre histoire » (à destination de son enfant). Quant au fait de devoir « Enterrer les morts », il nécessite d'abord de savoir nommer le passé.

Mais de telles rencontres supposent que le thérapeute soit capable d'entrer en résonance avec la victime et ses descendants. Et pour y parvenir, il doit disposer de zones de résonance qui lui permettent de rencontrer à l'intérieur de lui des blessures semblables à celles de son interlocuteur. Cela ne peut se faire que s'il est disponible à sa propre enfance en lui-même, et notamment à ses propres traumatismes passés, et aux traces laissées en lui par les traumatismes des générations précédentes. Ce sont les coïncidences et les interférences entre les uns et les autres qui créent les conditions d'une nouvelle intersubjectivité. Il en résulte pour chacun la possibilité de repenser

son histoire individuelle et familiale à la fois comme cause et conséquence de l'histoire de tous.

En conclusion,

Nous voyons comment la mémoire des catastrophes du passé participe à la construction de la vie psychique des nouvelles générations, et notamment à la mise en place de leurs capacités de symbolisation. C'est pourquoi elle est une clé permettant à nos enfants de mieux surmonter les drames du futur. Et c'est là que le thérapeute familial a un rôle citoyen à jouer. En effet, si la chape de plomb qui pesait sur les secrets de famille commence à être levée, le silence est encore souvent la règle autour des catastrophes qui ont frappé un pays, une ville ou une région. Beaucoup préfèrent se taire pour ne pas perturber les survivants, voire pour ne pas « traumatiser » les nouvelles générations. Pourtant, c'est le contraire qui est vrai. Chaque désastre a en effet une Histoire que chaque société se doit de recueillir : c'est la reconstitution du passé au plus près de la réalité. Mais il a aussi de multiples mémoires : ce sont les expériences vécues, et parfois imaginées, des témoins et protagonistes du drame. Ces mémoires sont dans un échange permanent avec l'Histoire. Les mémoires nourrissent l'Histoire tandis que l'Histoire relance et stimule les mémoires. Mais le rôle des mémoires individuelles ne se réduit pas à leur rapport à l'Histoire. Les événements vécus par un individu ne prennent en effet leur signification qu'en référence à d'autres qu'il a lui-même vécus, et aussi en référence aux mêmes événements vécus par d'autres.

C'est pourquoi la mémoire n'est pas immobile, mais vivante. A chaque fois qu'elle est convoquée, elle s'enrichit de nouvelles précisions dont on ne sait pas, d'abord, leur part de réalité et d'invention. Cette caractéristique est nécessaire à la lente assimilation du passé. Elle a pour conséquence que la mémoire n'est pas que devoir, mais aussi invention et fantaisie, et que son rôle principal est moins de commémoration des morts que de liens entre les vivants.

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1 J'ai introduit cette expression en 1996 dans mon ouvrage « *Secrets de famille, mode d'emploi* » (Ramsay, Réedit. Marabout, 1997. J'avais été précédé par deux psychanalystes français Nicolas Abraham et Maria Torok, qui ont tenté de penser ces phénomènes dès le début des années 1970. Mais leurs travaux avaient été très mal reçus par leurs collègues de la Société Psychanalytique de Paris (Abraham N. et Torok M., *L'écorce et le noyau*, Aubier Flammarion, 1978).

2 La « roue d'engrenage » entre le biologique/individuel et le social/collectif, sur laquelle Marcel Mauss s'interrogeait, est en fait constituée par ces trois roues imbriquées que sont les trois formes complémentaires de la symbolisation.

3 « Le facteur sonne toujours deux fois », film de Tay Garnett (02 mai 1946, USA, 12 novembre 1947, France).

4 Nicolas Abraham et Maria Torok, *L'écorce et le noyau*, Paris, Flammarion, 1978.

5 Pour un exposé complet de ce cas, on peut consulter mon ouvrage *Vérités et mensonges de nos émotions*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2005.

6 Il s'agit d'un conte dans lequel une petite chèvre qui veut découvrir le monde ronge sa corde, monte dans la montagne, s'émerveille devant la beauté du monde, puis se fait manger par le loup.

7 Mary Ainsworth, une élève de Bowlby, a imaginé une situation expérimentale appliquée à des enfants de douze à dix-huit mois, qu'elle a désignée sous le nom de « Situation étrange ». Son dispositif consiste à observer et noter les réactions d'un enfant au cours de séparations et de retrouvailles entre sa mère et lui, ainsi qu'au moment de l'introduction entre eux d'un inconnu. Elle met en évidence quatre modes d'attachement en fonction de quatre styles de réponse, bien que certains auteurs soulignent que tous les enfants ne peuvent pas être rattachés à ces catégories : l'attachement sécure, l'attachement insécurisé-détaché, l'attachement insécurisé ambivalent, et l'attachement insécurisé-désorganisé.

8 Dans ses divers films sur les conséquences de la guerre civile au Cambodge, le cinéaste Rithy Panh montre que des enfants peuvent présenter des hallucinations en relation avec les traumatismes non élaborés de leurs parents.

9 Entretiens avec François Truffaut.

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PAEDOPHILE CHILDREN: BOOMERANG VIOLENCE IN THE MIDST OF THE FAMILY

ANNE LONCAN *

« Violence, and its intimated death, have a double meaning: on one hand the horror which drives us away, linked to the attachment inspired by life; on the other a solemn and at the same time terrifying event which fascinates us and brings in a supreme uneasiness. »

G. Bataille, *Erotism*

To talk about paedophile children is to show the manner in which these children come to us, pinned by the Law on the threshold of adolescence, for having had sexual activities with children younger than themselves. It is also wondering implicitly about the very nature of the child, « polymorphic pervert », and presenting many questions and hypothesis: are these big children perverts because they remained in infantile positions, or have they gone along a psychic path which led them to these perverted acts? If we put forward the hypothesis that

the child is merely the principal actor of a drama which has been played before, what are the formations and psychical process which, within himself and within the family have left the field clear for this « perverse » possibility? Where does the violence boomerang which explodes in the family after paedophilia has been brought to light come from? How can PFT receive and treat the violence mobilised before and after revealing the facts? A short clinical illustration will help with our thoughts.

Giving up the multiplicity of instinctive addresses, but for which destination?

We know that polymorphic perversion in the first years of life corresponds, in the etymological sense, to the instincts's successive changes of direction. Without developing these well-known notions, let's remind ourselves that during this journey, the strength of the instinct will be quantitatively curbed and qualitatively redirected, which will progressively lead to, at the end of adolescence's changes, the definition of a « libidinal profile» specific to each one of us, carrier of conscious or unconscious traces of the steps that fashioned it.

In young children, sexual activities fit little if any, in a multifocal oral and anal order which is completed by an interest for the genitals and sexual games, be they lonely or shared. All these activities form a springboard for the taking off of psychical life which anchors itself to the developing primordial links.

We can consider that mutual erotic exploration is part of discovering the body, what it does and its resources and that it shows a well placed vital impulse since it implies taking the other into account. The usually understanding attitude of the parents goes nevertheless together with the conviction that it is necessary to curb it somewhat. This gives the parents a triple headache, more or less conscious, when exercising their authority: to help the personal development of the child, keep family harmony, and take into account the demands of social life.

For Freud (1905), the beginning of the latency period is « influenced by the body and fixed by heredity », but it is also the result of the upbringing which builds up « dykes » to stand against the strength of the instinct. The beginning of the latency period following the first

impetuosity means that the parental methods have been successful. A period of relative calm is under way, since the flow of the instincts has been at the same time put into order and redirected, prepared for sublimation, towards study and identifications, for example. Before getting to the second part of his topography, Freud had noticed that the primary instinctive bearings found themselves then without any use or even could generate disgust, but he did not bring forth any strong arguments.

All these constructions allow, in principle, to move away from the first instinctive addresses. This is why persisting shared sexual activities, when the period of latency is on the wane, at the time of the emergence of adolescence, puts into question not only the one who commits the misdemeanour or the criminal perverted actions, but also the position of the parents, whose failings are brought to light and examined.

The situation of young offenders remains up to now looked at under the angle of social morals, with, on top of this, all the care taken by professional people so as to avoid a premature branding of the child. With regards to the psychopathology concerned, we notice few salient features, apart from a better knowledge of the psychological context of adolescence: intensification of desire, by means of physiological change, the concomitant oedipal reactivation, which happens in a double move of confrontation and shunning. Repression of affects is a significant data. The frequency of previous sexual abuse, possibly incestuous, from the parents or in previous generation is classically highlighted. Nevertheless, if the vulnerability of these young people is put forward in literature, it is to hint at a major issue: that of the potential repetition of the offence.

To begin with, it should be remarked that these paedophile children/adolescents are doing these acts to other children much younger than themselves and on whom they use a natural superiority and coercion, this domination being, more often than not, psychological. The notion of perversion is inevitable, not in the etymological sense any more, but in the psychopathological sense. Some psychoanalytical studies were undertaken about the process, the structure of the subject, (Aulagnier, 2001), and the intersubjectivity which distinguishes it (Eiguer, 1989, 2001a). For the pervert, the object is necessary, the mode of satisfaction which goes with it is rather constant, both having been chosen according to the history of

the subject. Therefore when thinking about child/pubescent paedophilia in terms of a lack of maturity, occasional regression or an already well established entry into perversion, our clinical tools of psychoanalytic family therapist seem to be the best option for helping with these situations where the whole family is subjected to intense hurt. We will try to identify, from where we stand, some of the family parameters which may contribute to this type of problem coming up.

Questions about family functioning

Some studies have been undertaken on sexual offenders's families (Ciavaldini, 2001; Savin, 2001), in cases marked by incest, usually perpetrated by the father. The generational repetition factor has been presented as well as repression of affects which need then to be mobilised (Ciavaldini, 2006).

Even so, for young sexual offenders, it is the issue of parental authority which takes centre stage.

If parental authority is first the father's, who embodies it, it is also the mother's ; whether it comes from the father or the mother, authority is given out by the paternal function at work in both of them. It finds itself, at the same time disembodied and symbolised, in the shape of the super-ego, which in the child on the threshold of adolescence, is still in the process of growing stronger. This agency, the super-ego, will be at work in any conflict of authority to decide of the outcome. It establishes itself more or less deeply in each person and acquires a family outline defined at the same time by successive identifications from one generation to the next and by the intra- family repercussions marked by the authority at work. For the family super-ego, the acknowledgement of common and shared limits is agreed by all.

However, perverse behaviours show as much a lack of personal knowledge of these limits as their inefficiency for the family. This brings us to the hypothesis of an intra-family conflict on the notion of evil and the family's relation to violence. This conflict takes its origins, of course, in the previous generations, but it also takes shape through the work of the alliance link which will process it differently and may give it new characteristics. Finally, the whole of the family links, in particular the brotherly link will ensure a constant state of alertness. The family super-ego undertakes the organisation of this distribution.

However, it would seem that, in the situations we are looking at, the family super-ego remains ineffective when it comes to structuring proscriptions, compromising thus the operational qualities of censorship.

The time factor and family temporality

If authority is exerted in a transient period which requires time (Carel, 2002), so as to bring about some result in a negotiation which is at the same time internal and intersubjective, correlatively we should notice that establishing internal « dikes » cannot be done instantly. Freud says that it is necessary to see disgust and modesty establish themselves so that they can contain the instinct before it reaches full strength. A race is set between the instinct's flow and the barriers which are put in its way to thwart any eventual perverse prolongation. The family psychical temporality, which find its balance around the rythm of each member, organises itself according to the preponderance of reality's demands put forward by parental authority. There again, the upbringing factor, myths and ideals are at work to define a perception of time adequately shared. Family temporality is punctuated by events which change its outline: birth, people leaving, marriages, death, some of which have a more traumatic impact than others. These internal traumas to which can be added other traumas striking from further back, thwart the establishing of the consciousness of time which has been lived, of its link to past and future and thus jeopardize the accession of the modesty and disgust affects which are involved in lulling sexual instincts. Their deferred effects are familiar to the perverse and acted mode on which instinct's reappearance will express itself.

The distorsion of temporality expresses itself, for example and obviously so, through the age difference in children partners of unlawful sexual activities. It shows a crushing of temporality from the oldest initiating child, bringing straight away the attention on the impact made by previous family or personal traumas. The attention given to family temporality and its development during therapy, as well as its counter-transferent treatment will play a decisive part in the therapeutic process.

Family envelope, intimacy and fences

The failings linked to time which has been lived, are mixed in with the anomalies of the family psychic envelope. We owe this spatial metaphor to D. Anzieu¹, D. Houzel (1990) and E. Granjon (2005), in particular. In charge of dynamic, screening, filtering and interface functions, it works for the family self. Several processes happen there, away from the outside world for the making, transformation and transmission of shared psychic contents which help build the feeling of belonging (fantasies, representations, myths, family ideals). The psychic envelope is the place « par excellence » for an immersion in intimacy for the family members. Inasmuch as intimacy has its origin in the body sharing mother-child, each subject is in theory able to find it again under a more or less worked out form. As the base of family links and the feeling of belonging, the experience of intimacy is put into question in cases of sexual offences from a child. It is marked by incoherence and regression, made poorer by reducing exchanges with the outside, retracted by the contact with the rigidity of the family envelope which is no more than a shell without give. This shell broadcasts and accentuates the outside world's threats and becomes an echo chamber for the family's internal wounds.

In therapy, mobility, physical closeness and looking for contacts appear multiplied to replace the amputation or the lack of parts which would have been psychically functioning better within intimacy; these manifestations depend on the archaic modalities of transference, they are calls sent to the therapist, and they are at the same time vague and heart-rending, for want of something better. Physical closeness, sensoriality and sexuality are in a contiguity which renders them potential metonymic representatives one to the other. A partitioning in family life is a defensive answer to this, and this spatialises the failure to resort to an intimacy where would be unfolded stronger intersubjective links and whose narcissistic anchorage would be tempered by diverse object investments. Instead of this, feeble abilities to fantasize and dream together appear.

Clinical example

Some information taken from a therapy practiced together with my colleague Alain Lafage will illustrate the previous propositions. We are

talking about a family comprising two parents in their forties, and three boys aged respectively 17, 13 and 8 at the time of the first consultation. This family seems to have all the conditions required for a good insertion in the social fabric.

The second boy, Corentin², had sexual activities with a neighbour, 7 years younger than himself. He has just reached penal coming of age. Without waiting for the court's legal recommendation, the parents take medical advice and quickly take up the offer of PFT given to them. The sentence, which happens almost a year later, will fall like a guillotine blade and revive the violent impact suffered by the family when they discovered the facts. Its severity will take into account the « seriousness » of the offence.

The effectiveness of parental authority appears here rather compromised by some factors which illustrate the links theory. The father is a polite man, with measured manners. He expresses himself easily, in a way very much in keeping with his superior level of education and his profession, one of the main characteristics of which is to exert authority. His wife, who used to work in administration, is looking for a job, having been made redundant by the company she worked for due to closing down.

The play of authority and transgression should have had everything to work properly. But this is not the case. Corentin has always transgressed, including putting himself into danger through his actions: borrowing his father's motorbike or move the family car and leaving it without the handbrake on. His older brother Dorian, who presents himself as exemplary (he wants to become a teacher), has had a very difficult relationship with his father, attacking him and insulting him repeatedly. The violence which permeates the links in this family splashes out onto everybody. Authority is desavowed: even though each person identifies its meaning, it is constantly flouted in deeds, with the unconscious mutual complicity of the parents, as we will see.

Some reshaped aspects of the family history enable us to glimpse the source of the deep imbalance which compromises the exercise of authority. The link of alliance had been built upon the refusal of the young woman of her own father's authority, thought to be excessive (she ran away as an adolescent to get away from it); her meeting with a chivalrous and conquering young man will seal their union. On the

mother's side, men are, if one can say so, professionals of the super-ego whose beliefs and values, even, are in every instance the total opposite of her husband's. Corentin's deeds represent a ground-swell attacking what symbolizes this particular lineage. Paradoxically, Corentin, out of all the family members is the only one who goes to mass with his mother, in the tradition of maternal ancestors. The disaster of the link of alliance seems in keeping with the ambivalence of the mother who couldn't resolutely turn herself away from her father to build her couple and family: she remains totally subjugated by her father's ascendancy on her, and faced with him, feels « like a little girl ».

Thus, the very notion of authority paralyses her and she shows herself incapable of relaying her husband's authority, which is thus invalidated. Inasmuch as the relay in the alliance link doesn't work, the father could lean on his own lineage. But as a matter of fact, no such thing is happening. There is no spontaneous association on the subject of his parents or his siblings and if we try an opening through questioning the possible analogies between father and son, nothing happens. The black-out is almost complete on this lineage apparently without any problems. Without much support in his filiation and alliance links, the father can only uphold his authority through violent gestures, using the whole body (tone of voice, movements). Everything happens as if Corentin had followed this path: the ascendancy he has on the little neighbour does away with parental authorisation and finds itself with only a domination aspect where the body takes centre stage.

Bringing the body and sex into play exposes a fault in the family building its **intimacy**. Several clinical elements show the thickness and rigidity of the family psychic envelope, and the defensive nature of these characteristics, notably when faced with the ascendancy of the maternal grand-parents. This also shows its fragility. In the midst of the family, a feeling of being jailed, locked in and threatened by the outside has developed itself and is being reinforced by the conflict with the neighbours. This imprisonment doesn't nevertheless profit the family belonging, the signs of which are more disparaged than claimed. Inside the family circle, each one is isolated and defends the possession of his own territory. The brothers are terribly jealous one of the other and are merciless rivals for their mother's love. Corentin, for example, asks his mother to come into his bedroom when he wants to speak to her without being overheard, safe from prying ears. These

ears are usually those of Valentin, the youngest. Mortified, he tells us that he hides himself to spy on what's happening and try and pick up something of the secret meeting. He rebels against his not being able to participate in the conversation, displacing the fantasy of the primal scene to a level which takes his inadequation from the projection massively at work. He himself seems to want to try to seduce the mother by taking a marked feminine stance. In this closed and partitioned intimacy, the pressure of the instinct of the start of adolescence which troubles Corentin is cramped; it bumps into objects which are too near. The little neighbour is thus a more « reasonable » target.

As we have shown previously, **the temporality** meets some major distortions. There again, everything seems to be in place to help with the implantation of a temporality well in step with social times, but the markers remain flat, inoperative. The meeting, the marriage and successive births, the parents changing their jobs, the various villages they lived in, the schools they went to, the family projects : each of these elements carry a violent aspect and potential traumas which shows up the weakness of the organising markers of temporality.

Conclusion

The story of this family has led us to explore the family territory of a child/adolescent on trial for paedophilia with a small boy. Within the framework of group therapy, we were able to notice a few particularities. We will highlight the notion of a social conflict between the original families of the parents, conflict anchored in the alliance links, strengthened and reinforced by the asymmetry of the investments of the respective parental lineage to the detriment of the father's lineage. In the mother's lineage, on the other hand, the grandfather is the focal point, playing the part of the perfect tyrant. These singularities added to an intense oedipian circulation within the family and previous excessive authority towards the mother evoke defensive processes, the failure of which is materialized through unlawful deeds. Multiple displacements have been at work to thwart the temptation of incest (mother/child, between brothers) as well as the temptation of violence. It is therefore outside the family circle, but close by, that the constraint of an older child upon a younger one will take place, with the aim of satisfying the instinct if not a game. In the very midst of

family links flow other disorganizing elements, in particular the paradoxical treatment of intimacy and temporal depression.

It is impossible to conclude without highlighting that for a young child, the conflict he has to solve between good and evil as regard to sexual activities which he likes is incomprehensible without outside help. It cannot be resolved if there is no effective parental authority. In situations similar to the one we have seen, the individual super-ego of the already grown child has not been able to strengthen itself because of a lack of family consensus on a super-ego anchored in the precedent generations and ratified within the pact of alliance.

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¹ The functions of the Skin Ego according to D. Anzieu (1989): keeping together, container, shield against-excitement, individuality, intersensoriality, upholder of sexual excitement (which enables the differentiation of the sexes, libidinal charging up. In 1985, he added: inscription of tactile sensory traces, concept close to the pictogram (Aulagnier, 2001), and an autodestruction function.

² The names are obviously fictitious. The information on this case have been changed to protect the people involved, but without changing its import.

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THE GENERATIONAL ROOTS OF VIOLENCE IN YOUTH

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More and more frequently we are witnessing outbreaks of violence in Western societies, especially in young people, and, in particular, in adolescents. Episodes of bullying as early on as in latency and sometimes even earlier, violent behaviour in groups or at school, vandalism, or, on the contrary, damage to one's own person, such as scarification, piercing and the like, or violent games on the internet, are just some of the occurrences that require adequate understanding. They do not appear to be merely an expression of the mechanisms used up until now in order to explain them, often with reference to a lack of direct drive satisfaction or identification with the aggressor. These mechanisms seem to be significantly more complex. There also appears to be widespread confusion regarding these phenomena. In my opinion, it is necessary to distinguish between aggression and violence and between violence and sadism. Many adults, and, in particular, many parents, complain about their adolescent children's violent behaviour and often, even in the first consultation, we realize that they are only talking about the aggressive aspects that are used by adolescents to try to break away. They do this by acting out a developmental mourning or things that adolescents use to define their identity and to "subjectivate". Parents who are strongly ambivalent

about their children's separation, live these separating dynamics as being aggressive, and at times they really are very aggressive. Regarding these issues, adolescents need a response from their parents that is similar to the one described by Winnicott in, "The Use of the Object," facing a child's aggressive threat: "I will kill you," the parent could answer, "Here I am, I am dying," and a minute later, "Here I am, I am living." With this kind of response the parent reassures the adolescent about the natural existence of his aggression, but disappoints him on his destructive omnipotence, so, as Winnicott says, the sense of reality, something an adolescent painfully needs. Here, we are in the area of healthy aggression which, in my opinion, along with sexuality, is one of the organising instances of adolescence (Nicolò, 2006). Even if the distinction between violence and sadism seems evident from the start, in some situations these phenomena overlap. I think that the major difference lies in the pleasure which is derived from sadistic situations, it is related to the need for power over another person and for causing suffering. A pleasure that can be eroticized and that is not normally present in a violent situation, although at times we see pathologies on the border of violent and sadistic functioning or where violence contains sadistic aspects. In other cases, the later development of violent personalities in the direction of sadism depends not only on personality organization, but also on casual factors that may end up structuring personality, such as traumatic meetings.

Like many other authors, Glasser distinguished between self-preservative violence and sadism or malicious violence (1985) (Meloy, 1992, also distinguished predatory violence from affective violence). The latter is found in psychopathological personalities and is planned, cold violence, while the former represents the reaction to a real or imagined threat. I am going to discuss this latter aspect of self-preservative violence and affective violence, because in my opinion, this is the kind of violence that is typical of today's youth, both at on an individual level and in gangs.

Due to the physiologically traumatic nature of adolescent development processes, such as the integration of a sexual body and narcissistic object rearrangement, normal aggression, as mentioned above, that is one of the organizing instances in this period of life, may have a triggering effect if it collides with previous traumatic functioning which in its own time may have characterized the subject's family.

Therefore, we can see the precipitation of a double trauma. The violent adolescent tries to rid himself of the traumatic process that he cannot elaborate, by attacking an enemy or whoever provides him with an opportunity to do so, as he has projected his shameful or rejected parts of his own Self onto this person (Nicolò, 2005; 2006). This process provides temporary relief and acts as a dam against breakdown (Nicolò, 2005; 2006) and, most of all, it provides negative identity that is built on omnipotence, the denial of dependence and self-sufficiency. During this period of life, violence has the unconscious aim of defining identity and it becomes a big effort when differentiating and defining, even against the other or against reality. It also provides a sense of strength and power, when, for both personal reasons and for typical adolescent dynamics, the adolescent feels threatened and is also afraid of passivity. Violent acts thus contrast depressive experiences or identity anxieties that these adolescents cannot integrate or elaborate, and, in one single act, they soothe tension and internal and external conflicts, and manage to avoid the feared danger of elaboration that neither adolescent children nor parents are able to complete.

Understanding family functioning

Among the many factors that contribute to the genesis of violent behaviour in adolescents, family functioning is certainly one of the most important. But what happens in families where an adolescent is violent? In the family that is seen as an emotional and affective learning context, from very early on, adolescents learn from transpersonal and interpersonal defence mechanisms, how to defend themselves from anxiety and mental pain. In these families, acting out, concretization, inability to conceive time, difficulties in containing tension and in controlling impulses, but most of all, difficulties in thinking, are some of the most frequent and most well-known features. This specific quality of family life humiliates and confuses the phase-specific needs of adolescents and may create a situation where a violent identity becomes the only possible survival strategy. We are all well aware of some of the mechanisms that induce the repetition of violent patterns in these families. We know for sure, that, often, abusing parents have been abused as children. Identification with the aggressor, dissociation and denial are well described mechanisms in cases of abuse and violence. Dissociation is frequently

kept alive by the need to keep violence and abuse secret. Then, we can see an apparent and real identity in families and family members who are contradictory. In this situation, a child learns special functioning modes and does not see it as a subject who has the rights of an individual. A huge gap is created between the child that is imagined in the parents' mind, and the real child in front of them. Moreover, and for various reasons, the abused child becomes invisible for the abusing father and the non-protective mother, while the abused child's needs are not recognized by them at all. All this will lead in turn to an adult who abuses and harasses without even being fully aware of the meaning of his actions. This invisibility, this misrecognition is one of the most pathological aspects of this functioning (Nicolò, 2005; 2006).

This ever denied or unrecognized need for being seen in one's own identity is amplified and becomes explosive in adolescence because it is amplified by the phase-specific needs of this age.

a) Regressive and indifferentiating functioning

There is however another aspect that I think is crucial in this context: the fact that violent behaviour is the expression of individual and family regression to a more primitive mental and organizational level. In one of the most impressive films that describes violence in adolescent groups, "Lord of the Flies," we see the progressive deterioration of functioning and relations in a group of adolescents who are stranded on a desert island. In a very short period of time we witness the emergence of group functioning that follows the basic assumptions of messianic dependence from a leader and fight and flight, with a serious paranoid regression. More reasonable people are marginalized and even killed. The fear of solitude, of feeling helpless in the face of difficulties and the need to define oneself defensively with a strong identity generates thoughtless adhesion to group functioning. As Amati Sas, drawing it from Bleger's theory, calls it, there emerges "a defensive regression to a state of ambiguity," born from violence, and generating violence.

A further discussion of this point seems useful in order to explain what takes place in situations where adolescents repeat some of the complex attitudes and functioning that characterized their family of

origin with their peer group. Bleger's suggestion, as assumed by Amati Sas, concerns the existence of an ambiguous core that is deposited in the environment and becomes the bearer of the most undifferentiated aspects of the Self. A residue of the primary undifferentiation will always remain in adults, writes Amati. When there are sudden changes, both due to sudden motions in the context and to changes in the subject (emigration, or mourning, for example) the mobilization of ambiguity to be deposited may be experienced as uncertainty or anxiety in varying tones. Violence and traumas determine defensive regression at the "intersubjective" level. According to Amati Sas, conformism and the inability to criticize are related to the existence of this ambiguity that is used by the Ego for its mimetic quality, with numbing and indifference used as shields to protect the structure. This regression causes great alterations in human relations and introduces misunderstanding (misinterpretation, paradox, ambiguity). This misunderstanding, in addition to the malleability and penetrability induced by violence, sabotages the effort at identification level (Aulagnier) and also the moral and ethic dimension.

Using more familiar terminology, I would say that in these families and in the links between these families and violent adolescents, we can see a regression to a primitive, lightly differentiated level that is always present but inactive in the functioning of any family. Since violence is a threat to the sense of safety of the Self, both the need for belonging and sharing with others and the fear of isolation increase defensively and cause regression to primitive forms of functioning of both the subject and the family group. In this situation the "subjectivation" of family members, in particular of adolescent children, becomes a threat. Since violence by one or both parents and their lack of recognition and their misunderstanding of the real needs of their children create an atmosphere of insecurity, misunderstanding (as suggested by Bleger and Amati Sas), lies and confusion (in Meltzer's terms) prevail as a mode of functioning and identification. Cynicism towards the truth will intoxicate the ethics of family relations and will destroy any earnest wish to learn.

This kind of functioning makes the relationship of these adolescents with their peer group problematic as they also tend to repeat the misrecognition, aggression-flight, submission-prevarication dynamics, that is subtly typical of their families, with their peers. Since misunderstandings, lies and ambiguities have attacked their identity,

they have to show it and impose it in order to demonstrate that they possess it, while, at the same time, they have no true internalized tools to think, differentiate and “subjectivate”. This will then facilitate their passive adhesion to peer groups who are organized as gangs. In this climate there is no difference and therefore no-one is a culprit or a victim, but everyone shares the same functioning, where the violation of limits and boundaries permits everything and there is no mourning but only omnipotence and the rejection of the Oedipus. This kind of functioning and identification is pre-Oedipal, archaic and a-specific. A 17 year old boy, who I treated in family sessions because at school he bullied younger children in addition to showing behavioural problems at home, brought a dream to a session after 8 months of treatment. He was in an unknown house, not his own. They called him for lunch, but to his surprise he realized that this family had unrecognizable faces. They seemed to be hidden behind stockings, which made them all look the same. This seemed to scare him. Stimulated by his younger sister, he associated the stockings to exciting episodes seen on TV or narrated by other people concerning hold ups and various other crimes. The parents seemed to undervalue the content of the dream, just as they undervalued their son’s problems. They cannot escape the idea that, in reality, the sessions are only an opportunity for showing their anger and disappointment for a son that does not obey them.

In this example, the second skin, that is metaphorically shown in the dream as the stockings covering the relatives’ faces, is a tool for making people homogeneous, and this illimination of identity is also the cancellation of the sense of responsibility. It is not possible to identify who does what. In addition to both the sense of regressive undifferentiation that is typical of these families, and to the misrecognition-misunderstanding of identity, other mechanisms are both active and related to these.

b) Functioning according to the law of the strongest

Most sessions in the first year of therapy were organized by Fabio, 20, on the discovery and mockery of my mistakes or incompetence. His repetitive pattern consisted in trying to make me fall into his traps and beat me with his dialectics. In a family session I learn that this tendency is very strong in his father, who humiliates the rest of the family with his ability of rhetoric and vast erudition, but his mother

too, who is a college professor, subtly colludes with it in a sort of sadistic entertainment that humiliates the other participants. The effect of this consolidated attitude leads both children to refuse to talk with either father or mother. Father, a legal expert is always ready to have the last word on good and evil, on what anyone should or should not do. Later on, I learn of his history as a womanizer, that is frequently very humiliating for his wife. For example, right after the birth of their first son, he was away pretending to be working, while he was in fact spending time with his lover.

These two clinical vignettes show how these families are dominated by patterns of obedience to and humiliation by the strongest member. The rule is either suffer or cause suffering. In extreme situations, where families become gangs, there is no differentiation between parents or between parents and children at the level of limits and ability to contain. A person in this mental condition – writes Meltzer – cannot think, but is very apt at exploiting the thoughts of others for aims that are not those that are conceived with originality. Thinking thus deteriorates and is used as a power tool. The father function is powerful and patronizing, and due to the corruption of the fatherly instance, one has the feeling that there is no justice. One of my adolescent patients was very proud of attacking the police, moving his rebellion against his father outside the family, and he stated that true justice consisted in attacking a corrupt power. He saw no difference in stealing and in being robbed and used the word “to take” for this, but, however, taking or being taken happened just by chance and he considered it an irrelevant event.

In the case of this young man (and of others like him), his typical provocation and anger and fits of violence (his friends used to call him the Tirade because he was often angry and would make endless tirades towards his friends) were aimed at discussing this split in a specific breaking point and also at stimulating his environment to do the same. At times these actings may be considered as communications of aspects of a parent that the adolescent carries along without elaboration. In other cases we can see the repetition of real traumatic scenarios that, in a Winnicottian perspective, are used to force the original environment to provide responses that are different from those given on earlier occasions. We can even sometimes see the fantasy of the existence of an idealized, pure dimension and, when acting outs start to decline, we notice the effort

at repairing the damage done and at trying to restore a pure aspect. An example of this is in the case of a boy who always held me in stalemate and is now working as a volunteer with homeless people. As Winnicott (1984) said, acting for these patients is an alternative to despair. Quite often, the patient feels hopeless and lives in a state of depression or dissociation, thus masking the state of chaos that is always impending. I think that violence and antisocial acting must be evaluated with caution, but, at the same time, they are a form of communication.

A mass killing that ended with the death of its protagonists took place at the Columbine High School in Colorado.

On April 20, 1999 two students, Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebod, 17, entered the school in West Denver, Colorado, with handguns and bombs and committed suicide after having killed 12 school mates. Their story has been told in two films: *Bowling at Columbine* by Michael Moor (2002) and *Elephant* by Gus Van Sant (2003). Like suicide bombers, for these two students too, death was the price paid for the killing. From their notes, later published on the internet by the Denver police, it appears that they prepared the killing in advance and let their intention leak out at school.

They were both isolated and friendless. From a certain date on in their diaries, we can see slogans and symbols of Nazi propaganda, admiration for the well known serial killer Charles Manson and drawings of mutilated or wounded people.

Harris writes that he wanted to kill all his friends, sparing only those who were isolated like himself.

“I want to destroy as much as possible”, he writes, “and I must not be distracted by sympathy, pity or prayers. The most beautiful thing is hating” (from *Il Corriere della Sera*, July 9, 2006).

Nowhere in the journal is suicide mentioned, on the contrary, it seems that they had prepared a flight plan to run away to some foreign country. A possible alternative was to hijack an airplane and make it crash over New York. But after the killing, the two boys killed themselves in order not to get caught.

In this story the victims are a group of hated persons. The difference between these two students and suicide bombers is that the former get excited at killing, love blood and blood shedding. It is the wish to kill that dominates their mind and drives them to shoot. For this reason the two students wanted to avenge the mistreatment and offences that they had suffered and had completely identified with in the destructive figures of Nazis and serial killers.

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THE VIOLENCE INVOLVED IN REFERING TO CERTAIN FACTS, OR ELSE KEEPING THEM SECRET WITHIN THE FIELD OF FAMILY PSYCHOANALYSIS

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A secret is a form of psychic violence exercised by those who know something and hush it up over those who, in contrast, do not have access to this information. The information we are referring to is connected to the individual's self-knowledge, as well as of knowledge regarding aspects of his family history.

Freud¹ clearly pointed this out when he claimed that no generation is able to conceal from the next the significant situations it has gone through.

Information is transmitted to, and imprinted in, the developing psyche. The violence of silence is accompanied by mechanisms of denial that tend to operate as a transpersonal² defense which, in turn, induces the repetition of that which is being silenced and which reappears in the unconscious processes that underlay the relationship between the family members. However, there is also violence involved in directly referring to certain experiences and their consequences.

The purpose of this paper is to make reference to the violence involved in openly speaking about certain facts, or else in hushing them up, within the field of consultation, i.e. when from the very beginning, the patient claims he agrees to family therapy only if the therapist agrees, in turn, to not to speak about certain aspects of the life of the patient. There is an “untouchable” area to which they will never allude.

The family member who makes this request is alluding to a pact of silence that goes back to the time when the events that have been silenced took place. However, the paradox relies on the fact that, on telling the therapist about this secret, the patient is also telling about the existence of certain facts that must remain excluded from any possibility of analysis. The therapist is thus involved in a pact, the implications of which cannot yet be fully known.

This situation involves different kinds of violence:

- The violence of what the individuals have experienced which cannot be put into words but nevertheless persists as memory.
- The violence of meaning, as certain actions from the past seem to have altered the individual's self-image. What aspects of him/her have become vulnerable?
- The violence of the secret that must be kept and the violence of the pact that is imposed upon the therapist by one of the members of the family, as a precondition to the work of psychotherapy.

Each of the former in turn, opens up new queries regarding the following:

- How can the therapist work with a family whose members have become ill because certain important facts have been silenced (while at the same time the repetition of these become manifest in their symptoms) if the therapist himself is also asked to keep silent as the first condition to make historisation possible?
- How can the therapist warn his patients about repetition, which is enacted in each new generation, if repetition is anchored in the therapeutic process itself?

- How can the therapist disclose the family's fantasies and myths? Should we not consider the request that we be part of a pact of silence as a new passage to action?
- What is the position of the therapist within the psychic space of the patient? Is he an "accomplice", or rather a hostage who, on bowing to the demands of the patient, becomes trapped because he has agreed to not address certain things, the implications of which cannot yet be fully known?
- What will be the meaning of this pact of silence within the therapeutic process, a pact that is known and accepted only by some of the members of the family? Could it be, perhaps, what makes the therapeutic relationship possible?

These questions could help us reflect upon the meaning, as well as the consequences (for the patients and the therapist), of openly speaking about certain facts, or else of hushing them up. To do so, we take violence as a starting point.

I shall now illustrate these ideas with a clinical example³ :

María brought her adolescent daughter for consultation due to a persistent pain in the bones of the mandible, which continued despite the fact that the girl was on medication. In fact, the daughter was not the only one affected: one of her brothers had suffered cancer of the mandibles, which required surgery on four different occasions as he rejected the bone implant.

The girl was referred to a therapist by three different doctors: her GP, her rheumatologist and her dentist.

During the interviews with the girl, and while she was drawing her family genogram, certain details turned up that required further analysis, as we realized that certain situations had been repeating themselves throughout four generations.

When I decided to call the rest of the family to work together (something to which the girl had agreed), the mother asked for a private interview, where she consented to family therapy (the parents and their three children).

However, she warned me that there were certain aspects of her life and that of her husband that were only known to themselves and to which they had sworn they would never allude. [In fact, husband and wife had in their youth, during the seventies, belonged to a left-wing revolutionary political organisation].

Thus, María was warning me that certain experiences could not be “touched”, as it were. Their children knew nothing about them, as husband and wife had decided, before their birth, that these episodes of the past would be a jealously guarded secret. This secret was part of conjugal loyalty.

Danger, do not trespass

This request involved me (the therapist) in a situation where there was little margin for choice: either I agreed and tried to work with what was possible, or else any possibility of moving that which was operating on the body of the daughter due to a deficit in the symbolic process would have to be cancelled there and then. In fact, I had already seen in other cases of psycho-somatic conditions which did not respond to medication that the common factor was the trans-generational transmission of traumatic experiences, where the patient was the hostage of a history to which he had no conscious access.

We could say that the request made by María involved giving up a symbolic process in order to have access to another.

The purpose of the therapeutic process would be to understand that which had emerged “in code” as it were, in the body of the designated patient, as in my view, if certain secrets could be divulged within the family, certain repetitive elements would have the possibility of being reviewed without necessarily openly alluding to the “forbidden past”. For this reason I decided to agree to María’s request for secrecy, but I nevertheless clarified that there might come a time when, on working on some aspects of the family history, I would need to have some interviews with her and her husband.

However, I wondered if this could be the repetition of other relationships that had been “sealed with pacts”, as it were.

In any case, the family therapeutic process lasted for three years, during which certain violent traumatic situations were revealed (i.e. during the Spanish Civil War their male ancestors had been taken prisoners and murdered and the surviving women had been raped and forced into exile). These situations, which had been transmitted from generation to generation without any psychic working through, had attacked one of the children (who had suffered physical illness and whose life had been at risk) and was now affecting the daughter.

The children, who belonged to the fourth generation, could then have access to the family history. Their parents told them about it and they, in turn, were able to listen, to enquire, to make connections and to understand things they had taken responsibility for, so that they could "rearrange", as it were, what they had inherited from their family in a way less painful for them.

After three years of family therapy we put an end to treatment. The therapeutic purposes had been achieved and it was precisely this positive result what led me to reconsider the beginning of this treatment and its circumstances.

What would have happened if, within the therapeutic work with the family, those aspects of the history of the parents which I had agreed to not address at the beginning had emerged?

I wondered if it was as vital for me to help the daughter as it was for the mother, despite the fact that she was the one who had set conditions for our work notwithstanding the illnesses suffered by her children. In addition, if I had refused to keep silent about certain facts, would not the mother have felt that, in consequence, she would need to distort these same facts?

And if this had been the case, would it not have been another way of concealing the secret, a "camouflage", as it were, which was, in addition, an indicator of intolerance within the transference-countertransference relationship?

Can there not be "truths" that cannot be said, because they would force an individual to face intolerable aspects of himself?

In her book, Rachel Rosenblum⁴, writes: "A person can die because certain things were never said, or else because they were "wrongly said" or "wrongly heard", or "wrongly received" (...) However, writing

about oneself could also bring the individual too close to childhood traumas, end in the public disclosure of the hatred felt for other victims, reactivate feelings of shame and of guilt ...”

Coming back to the clinical case

María had warned me that there were certain circumstances in her life to which she would not refer.

In my opinion, María was still honouring a pledge made to the group she had once belonged, a pledge to keep silent about certain things **then and forever**. This was the condition demanded both to her and her partner in order to be accepted, to belong to the group, as silence was the essence of their political activities.

Indeed, during these political activities and when certain situations became dangerous, the members of the group pretended they did not know each other in order to avoid cracking under interrogation and “telling”. Although María did not say this explicitly, I had a feeling that she had been searching for a sense of belonging, which was paid with her commitment to carry out certain actions and keep silent about them.

I think that those actions, which were demanded of María and her husband, faced them with repudiated and unthinkable aspects of themselves. Was the need to “belong” worth it?

In addition, there was certain mystique surrounding this revolutionary group but, was there any difference between this mystique and that of the other group, that of their opponents? Is it not the same type of violence? I believe this is an interesting point to consider.

In my opinion, it was not pride in their convictions what had led María and her husband to conceal their past, rather, they were haunted by feelings of guilt and shame because they felt that there was no difference between what they revolutionaries did and what their enemies did. Putting this into words, and admitting it **would have been a catastrophe**, which was avoided by the pact of silence that assured them of reciprocal protection.

Therefore, if any information “leaked out” both María and her husband would have run the risk of having to face those unacknowledged aspects of themselves.

In this sense, María had warned me there was something “dark” that could not be “touched” and in my opinion agreeing to this was therapeutic, because it meant accepting their needs. There were many things that could be analyzed, but María and her husband nevertheless knew there was an aspect in their lives which was far from satisfactory: the feeling that they had been part of that which they had opposed was very painful, and, in addition, was the way in which the transgenerational trauma was repeated. Therefore they tried to survive with these two aspects of themselves at war. However, there was always the fear that their children would find out about this traumatic space-time in their lives. This became even more complicated when they were able to understand, by virtue of the therapeutic work, that the unconscious transmission nevertheless had taken place.

During the sessions with the family María’s daughter referred to her dreams, and even drew pictures of them: there were always things behind bars, all her dreams were in fact “behind bars”. Could these have been the bars behind which her mother had been held prisoner and tortured? Or were these bars, perhaps, those of other clandestine prisons, where María had not precisely been a prisoner, quite the contrary? The return of certain affects involved unbearable, unthinkable violence and grief for the parents and emerged as pure unconscious contents in the dream processes of the daughter. In fact, my hypothesis was that the girl dreamt about what her parents had kept secret.

María had also avoided making reference to her sufferings while she was held prisoner, but emphasized she never cracked under interrogation, as if she wanted to highlight the virtues of silence. She was then able to tell her children about this kind of silence, as if it was different from another silence, a non-chosen silence.

The silence of pride is different from the silence of shame. María had told her children that, thanks to her silence, her husband (back then her boyfriend) “had managed to escape”. To hush meant not to denounce others to her captors. However, the pact of silence between María and her husband was what supported their relationship. If they

referred to the past, that would be a testimony of the horror, a horror they had contributed to create. What was at stake then was if María and her husband would bear to go on living once others, including their children, knew what they had been capable of doing.

What kind of loneliness was haunting this couple? Where did this loneliness full of deaths (which apparently required to be expressed in the same violent codes suffered by their ancestors during the Spanish Civil War) come from? Where did exile, the unknown places where hostility reappeared come from? Did having power necessarily involve belonging to the most violent group? And what was being vindicated by this?

The parents' active participation in violent political activities had contributed to create their identity at a certain time in their lives. However, precisely this was the aspect of their lives they had decided to conceal from everyone, including themselves.

Situations equivalent to these were worked through during the family sessions by means of role-playing, which included the representation of dreams. Thanks to these clinical activities many associations emerged, by virtue of which certain affective situations, which were similar to those we would not allude to, could be analysed. The dreams of the daughter had penetrated into the crypt of her parents.

Now that some time has elapsed since this therapeutic process ended, I would like to share with my colleagues some of the reflections that this experience has awakened in me:

- Perhaps my willingness to not address certain issues could be considered as a way of helping the parents be less hard on themselves, in order to reduce internal feelings of persecution.
- Perhaps, on respecting this pact of conjugal alliance, I became a dependable figure who could help them analyse other aspects of the family history, connected to age-old secrets, which were probably similar to the forbidden traumatic situations.
- And finally, perhaps the fact that both the therapist and the parents had belonged to the younger generation during the seventies in Argentina facilitated the construction of an adequate setting in which certain circumstances could be understood. In

contrast, it might also have worked as an obstacle to the approach of certain issues.

I believe that these questions and reflections might help us approach the issue of both addressing certain circumstances directly, or else keeping silent about them. In fact these are forms of violence and in addition, are part of the process of the cure. Sometimes, speaking about something means living but at other times it puts the individual on the threshold of death. For us therapist, being able to tell the difference between them is interesting as well as difficult.

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¹ Freud, S (1913): *Tótem and Taboo*, in Complete Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIII. Pp. 142 a 148. AE. Bs As .1994.

² Nicolò, A. M. (1995): La Folie a deux: hipótesis – modelo de un funcionamiento Interpersonal. Revista "*Psicoanálisis & Intersubjetividad*" n° 1. (www.intersubjetividad.com.ar) Buenos Aires. 2007.

³ With this clinical case I have approached the issue of traumatic trans-generational transmission and psychosomatic conditions in my paper "El cuerpo como escenario de la dramática transubjetiva". This subject is reintroduced in the paper presented in this Congress by the Research Team on Families and Couples from the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association, coordinated by Dr. R. Losso and of which I am a member. The paper in question is called "Violencia de estado y Violencia revolucionaria y sus consecuencias en la clínica".

⁴ Rosemblum, R. (1998): Mourir de dire. *Bulletin de la Société Psychanalytique de Paris*. Août. 1998.

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PROCESSUS IDENTIFICATOIRES DANS LES CONSTELLATIONS OEDIPIENNES FAMILIALES: UN CAS DE RELATION EXTRACONJUGALE

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Nous présenterons ici l'organisateur oedipien et ses processus identificatoires comme référence principale dans la thérapie d'un couple dont la plainte est celle d'une liaison extraconjugale du mari et le traumatisme qui en découle.

La littérature concernant la psychanalyse du couple et de la famille est marquée, comme cela ne pourrait manquer de l'être, par les préférences théoriques de chaque auteur. Comme le dit Nestor Braunstein dans son livre *Gozo* (2007, p.54), la psychanalyse a connu divers moments et chacun d'entre eux correspondra à une modalité différente de la concevoir ; il en est de même pour sa pratique, la place de l'analyste et le processus de sa formation.

Toutefois, comme la structuration oedipienne est le principal organisateur de la famille, l'oedipe sera toujours présent de manière implicite ou explicite dans l'esprit de l'analyste, quand celui-ci se trouvera en face du groupe familial. L'inverse équivaldrait à admettre qu'on devrait donner le même poids aux interventions de tous les membres de la famille. Le sens commun lui-même nous conduit à penser que la parole d'un père, celle d'une mère et celle de l'un de

leurs enfants ne peuvent être reçues de manière identique. Dans la famille, chaque membre parle à partir de la position qu'il occupe et qui lui est assignée à l'intérieur de la structure familiale, autrement dit chaque prise de parole de la famille exprime avant tout une position d'où l'on parle. Personnellement, je crois que la tâche principale de l'analyste du couple et de la famille est d'identifier la position d'où chacun parle ; en d'autres termes, de rendre conscients les discours des divers Autres qui, ensemble, constituent cette famille.

Selon Freud (1917, p.333, 337) et Lacan (1938, p.45), la famille s'organise à partir de l'oedipe et de ses vicissitudes. Lacan dit que c'est le complexe d'Oedipe qui définit la forme spécifique de la famille humaine et de toutes ses variations.

Pour Eiguer (1983,p.30) « Différemment des groupes informels, la famille a comme premier organisateur l'oedipe et ses transformations. Ce fait constitue justement la particularité de l'organisation familiale, sa raison d'être sociale ». Et (p.20) « C'est l'oedipe de chaque partenaire qui intervient dans le premier organisateur de la vie familiale inconsciente, le choix de l'objet (choix amoureux), et ce sont les objets parentaux intériorisés qui constituent le noyau de l'inconscient familial ». Cette phrase implique que, lorsque j'accueille un couple, je ne suis pas seulement en contact avec le couple d'individus qui est devant moi, mais avec au moins quatre autres, ou même davantage, selon les situations : leurs géniteurs, quelquefois les géniteurs de ces derniers ou d'autres figures ayant joué un rôle parental. L'expression constellations oedipiennes est pour cela très éclairante car il s'agit en effet d'un entrelacement ou d'une imbrication des parcours oedipiens de chaque membre de la famille. Le noyau de l'inconscient familial, pour utiliser le terme d'Eiguer, est donc formé par l'ensemble de ces fantaisies, ou de cette mythologie, qui constitue ce que nous appelons ici organisateur oedipien. Nous savons que la manière dont l'individu résout l'énigme oedipienne marquera toutes les phases de l'évolution de celui-ci et donc aussi son choix amoureux, la construction de sa vie conjugale, et la constitution de l'oedipe chez ses enfants. Il s'agit en fait d'une transmission transgénérationnelle de positionnements dans la famille au moyen de refoulement, sublimation et identification. Chacun de ses nouveaux membres occupera une place, une position qui lui est destinée, à partir de laquelle il opérera, à sa manière. L'oedipe instaurera la différence sexuelle par l'identification avec le géniteur du même sexe et la répression du désir pour le géniteur du sexe opposé. Simultanément, la différence

générationnelle s'établira par la détermination de l'ajournement de la possibilité de la réalisation sexuelle génitale. Nous réfléchissons sur la manière dont la famille ou le couple se comporte en face du complexe d'Oedipe – s'ils le répriment, l'éluent ou l'excluent (forclusion) – et donc également comment ils se comportent par rapport à la différence sexuelle et générationnelle, même si la famille est monoparentale dans les diverses formes que celle-ci présente (abandon, « production indépendante », mort). Dans ces divers cas, il peut ne pas y avoir la figure réelle du père, mais le vide constitué par l'absence de celle-ci aura un sens et provoquera une réaction. Selon Eiger, la famille, de même que l'individu, s'organise selon un mode névrotique, pervers ou psychotique (Eiger, 1983, p.33) ce qui entraîne des conséquences aussi bien pour le *setting* que pour le choix des concepts théoriques nécessaires à la compréhension de ce *pathos* familial spécifique.

Parler d'organisation oedipienne implique de parler de processus identificatoires. Selon Freud (1921), identification primaire et résolution de l'oedipe sont corrélées. Jean Florence (1994, p.118) parlant de l'importance des indentifications dans la formation du symptôme dit : « Il n'y a pas de symptôme qui ne soit motivé par un roman, c'est-à-dire un ensemble de relations entre des personnages, entre une pluralité de personnages. L'identité névrotique est une identification romanesque ; elle est un mode de pensée inconscient qui modifie le moi. Le moi subit les effets du désir sexuel que représentent les personnes qui agissent dans le roman hystérique. Ce langage situe le moi comme une scène où s'opère une pantomime déterminée ailleurs, sur une Autre scène. Le désir sexuel est l'agent, l'acteur, le sujet actif des scènes qui métamorphosent le moi. Prendre au pied de la lettre le mot identification (Identifizierung) ne va pas manquer d'entraîner de sérieuses conséquences. Le moi vole en éclats, devient malléable et corvéable, soumis à la passion de l'autre, à celle du multiple, de la libido inconsciente, marionnette d'un drame dont il ne peut arriver à deviner les véritables motifs sinon en suivant le jeu des identifications. Celles-ci conduisent à un roman représentatif des pulsions et des défenses inconscientes. Double jeu qu'autorise le romanesque, jeu dramatique étant donné que le désir se met en scène, diffracté en une série de personnages d'emprunt, d'aspects contradictoires ». Ce passage de Florence, décrivant les processus identificatoires complexes et dramatiques qui se produisent dans la formation du symptôme chez l'individu, permet d'augurer la complexité encore plus grande du fonctionnement familial, qui est lui-

même, comme nous le verrons, la résultante de l'entrelacement, ou de l'imbrication, des processus identificatoires individuels.

Dans le cas que nous allons maintenant relater, il est possible d'établir un rapport entre la formation des symptômes présentés par le couple et les diverses constellations oedipo – identificatoires concernées. J'ai choisi en effet de vous présenter maintenant quelques séquences de séances qui m'ont semblé fondamentales pour la compréhension de l'entrelacement des symptômes individuels et de ceux du couple. Mes interventions cherchent à interrompre la chaîne répétitive des représentations individuelles sur le lien, ouvrant ainsi un espace à de nouvelles représentations et à de nouvelles dynamiques conjugales.

Le cas

Alberto a 43 ans, Beatriz 42, et ils exercent l'un et l'autre une profession libérale. Ils ont une fille adoptive de 11 ans, Luciana. Beatriz me raconte qu'ils sont venus me consulter parce qu'Alberto a eu une liaison extraconjugale avec une collègue de travail, l'année précédente. Outre qu'il l'a trahie, dit-elle, il lui a menti, car il a nié toutes les évidences que Beatriz avait relevées peu à peu et, finalement, après qu'il avait été pris en flagrant délit avec sa maîtresse, elle « l'avait mis à la porte ». Alberto était resté un mois chez ses parents, quand il s'est aperçu de la « bêtise qu'il avait faite ». Il a immédiatement essayé de la reconquérir. Il est alors revenu à la maison, et Beatriz et lui ont décidé de chercher une aide, condition qu'elle a posée pour qu'ils puissent recommencer à vivre ensemble.

Beatriz, d'un ton accusateur, bien que contenu, rapporte en détail tout ce qui est arrivé : les attitudes de l'ex-maîtresse, les dénégations de son mari, l'isolement affectif où ils se trouvaient, chacun de leur côté ; sa souffrance et celle de leur fille. Elle conte également que leurs rapports l'un avec l'autre se dégradaient depuis longtemps déjà. Comme femme, elle se sentait moins que rien, il ne s'intéressait plus à elle, la laissait de côté, ne prenait pas en considération ce qu'elle disait. Il lui reprochait en outre de ne pas contribuer suffisamment à l'économie domestique, ce qui l'humiliait beaucoup. Quelquefois, pour des questions d'argent, sa colère éclatait et il lui disait des paroles dures. Beatriz relate encore qu'elle a connu deux fortes dépressions et qu'elle avait eu envie de mourir, qu'elle restait couchée (elle n'a

sollicité l'aide de personne) et qu'elle n'est sortie de tout cela qu'à cause de sa fille.

Alberto, qui l'écoute, se recroqueville sur lui-même dans son fauteuil, pâlit. Il a les traits décomposés mais il est d'accord avec ce qu'elle dit, que les choses se sont bien passées de cette manière, qu'il sait qu'il a mal agi, qu'il faut qu'il change, spécialement par rapport à la difficulté qu'il a de communiquer avec elle et avec sa fille. Il ajoute qu'il est déjà en train de changer et qu'il est venu ici disposé à réparer son erreur. Il raconte qu'il lui a été nécessaire d'aller habiter avec ses parents pour s'apercevoir que les rapports qu'ils avaient entre eux étaient mauvais : une mère qui veut tout régenter, y compris son mari, une soeur bien perturbée, et le père retraité qui ne supporte pas de rester à la maison avec les deux femmes et passe de nombreuses heures par jour à travailler comme prestataire de services en sous-traitance. Je lui demande de m'expliquer pourquoi son père ne supporte pas les femmes à la maison. Il explique que sa mère a toujours été dominatrice et que lui-même, quand il était petit, n'écoutait pas ce qu'elle disait, ni les reproches qu'elle lui faisait ; il n'y prêtait aucune attention et vivait dans son monde à lui. Il me raconte un souvenir de son enfance encore très vivant, où il joue avec sa petite auto, caché derrière le sofà de la salle de séjour pour se mettre à l'abri des interventions possibles de sa mère. Celle-ci est, jusqu'à maintenant, fortement hypocondriaque et toujours en quête de médecins et de médicaments. Ils habitaient alors un petit appartement et lui passait la plus grande partie de son temps devant la télévision. Comme il était très bon élève, ils le laissaient tranquille. Maintenant il se rendait compte de la mauvaise qualité des rapports entre ses parents et ne voulait pas de cela pour lui.

Beatriz est une femme d'apparence très jeune, jolie et soignée de sa personne. Il semble que ses parents l'aiment beaucoup, qu'ils lui donnent leur appui. Elle s'identifie à sa mère, celle-ci se présentant comme quelqu'un qui agit « comme il faut ». Elle, comme fille unique, est très consciente de sa fonction, qui est de correspondre aux attentes de ses parents à son égard. De son côté, Alberto, comme il le dit lui-même, semble faire en ce moment un grand effort en direction d'une plus grande complexité émotionnelle. J'émetts une première hypothèse de travail (à mon usage) à savoir que possiblement la mère envahissante a engendré des dissociations importantes dans sa vie psychique, ce qui a produit chez lui isolement, aliénation et pauvreté affective. Je le sens « peu raffiné » émotionnellement. Il ne disposait

pas d'un modèle paternel lui permettant de faire face à l'invasion de la mère ; le père s'enfuit de la maison et lui, jeune garçon, se réfugie dans la télévision et les études. Lacan (1938, p.104) dit : « dans les formes diminuées de l'image paternelle, il y a une déviation de l'énergie de sublimation de la direction créative vers sa réclusion en un idéal quelconque d'intégrité narcissique ». Alberto se réfugie dans l'isolement affectif, développe peu ses habiletés relationnelles et de communication ; plus tard, sa femme dira « il ne me parle pas, il n'écoute pas ce que je lui dis ». A d'autres moments, il s'identifie à la mère envahissante. La femme me dit : « Quand nous nous sommes mariés, il est devenu mon propriétaire ». Alberto, devant les frustrations inhérentes à la relation, oscille entre l'identification au modèle aliéné du père et l'identification à la mère dominatrice et autoritaire. Dans mon travail auprès de ce couple, j'ai dû tenir compte de la problématique pré-oedipienne d'Alberto dans son rapport avec sa mère, qui l'a amené à se retirer dans un isolement affectif pour se protéger contre une éventuelle invasion par les contenus susceptibles de conduire à la folie, qui étaient ceux de sa mère. Dans le transfert qu'il opère sur moi et latéralement sur Beatriz, nous sommes toutes les deux identifiées avec la mère perturbatrice et il se replie sur lui-même, pâlit d'anxiété, car cette fois-ci il ne peut se dérober, comme il l'a toujours fait, comme son père, au risque de perdre son épouse. À la fin des premières séances, il déclare soulagé "J'ai survécu, du moins pour ce qui est d'aujourd'hui ».

Quand je leur demande à quel moment ils sentent que les problèmes ont commencé, ils répondent qu'au début les choses allaient bien, que tous les deux travaillaient beaucoup pour pouvoir acheter l'appartement, lui en particulier ; ils ne pensaient pas à avoir un enfant. C'est alors qu'on décèle chez Beatriz un problème gynécologique et qu'elle commence à suivre un traitement. C'est à ce moment qu'elle apprend l'existence d'un bébé nouveau-né, une petite fille, abandonnée, en attente d'adoption. Elle est très sensibilisée, va voir cette enfant, et ce fut, selon elle, « le coup de foudre ». Quand elle fait part à Alberto de son désir d'adopter le bébé, celui-ci réagit de manière extrêmement négative. L'impasse va durer un mois, elle allant voir l'enfant tous les jours et se renseignant sur la possibilité juridique de l'adoption. Finalement, elle obtient la garde provisoire de l'enfant.

Albert dit que, dès que l'enfant a surgi dans sa vie, Beatriz a été perturbée et, le jour où le bébé est arrivé, il a senti ceci : « le matin,

J'ai pris congé de ma femme pour retrouver le soir une mère. Elle n'est jamais redevenue ce qu'elle était avant ». Beatriz raconte que ce n'est qu'au bout de très longtemps que son mari a fini par accepter le bébé, il disait qu'on ne connaissait pas ses antécédents. Ces propos l'avaient blessée et elle s'était attachée encore davantage à son bébé. « Nous étions toutes les deux contre lui ». Alberto, de son côté, dit : « Je ne pensais pas du tout à avoir un enfant, ma femme était en traitement, c'était quelque chose pour plus tard ». Beatriz ajoute que Luciana régurgitait beaucoup, qu'elle lui faisait passer des nuits blanches, alors que justement elle essayait de maintenir ses activités professionnelles dans la journée et, par ailleurs, elle avait pris pour garder son enfant une femme qui se faisait passer pour la mère de l'enfant, ce qui la mettait dans une colère folle. Et il lui fallait encore faire face à l'attitude de rejet de son mari à l'égard de l'enfant.

En entendant cela, Alberto se fait tout petit, se sent coupable. Il est livide. Il dit « Ça a dû être horrible pour elle ». Je lui dis qu'il lui a fallu de son côté avaler des couleuvres de bonne taille ». « Ah ! oui, vous l'avez bien dit, » répond-il un peu soulagé. Je lui demande à elle si elle sentait combien elle avait peu tenu compte de son désir à lui. Elle me regarde, un peu surprise, répond que l'enfant était très mignonne, qu'elle s'est prise d'affection pour elle immédiatement, que c'était un véritable songe, un « présent du ciel ». Comment aurait-elle pu ne pas la garder ? Je lui demande si c'était qu'elle craignait de ne pas pouvoir avoir d'enfants. Elle me dit que non, que jamais son médecin ne lui a dit qu'elle ne pourrait pas en avoir. Je lui demande à lui pourquoi alors ils n'en ont pas eu. Alberto répond : « Impossible ! On n'arrivait déjà pas à élever une fille, une seule ! Imaginez un peu s'il y en avait eu d'autres ! Payer l'école, les cours d'informatique, d'anglais... Pas question ». J'ajoute « Si une fille vous avait déjà fait perdre votre femme, qu'en aurait-il été si vous en aviez eu plusieurs, n'est-ce pas ? ». Il rit beaucoup.

On perçoit que la relation de Beatriz avec Luciana est beaucoup indifférenciée et, qu'il devait déjà s'être produit au début de ses rapports avec Alberto quelque chose qui ne la satisfaisait pas, sans que toutefois elle en ait eu conscience ; peut-être ce à quoi j'ai donné le nom de « faible raffinement émotionnel » de sa part à lui, et qui, s'ajoutant au lien qu'Alberto avait avec sa mère, reléguait Beatriz à la position de tiers exclu. D'un autre côté, Alberto lui-même dit que, avec l'arrivée du bébé, il a perdu sa femme et qu'il était donc devenu le tiers exclu de ces rapports entre Beatriz et Luciana, une situation à

laquelle quelques années plus tard, il a, inconsciemment, voulu donner une réponse à la hauteur en prenant une maîtresse. Il semble bien que, aussitôt après leur mariage, Alberto ait adopté envers sa femme l'attitude dominatrice de sa mère envers son père, en inversant les rôles. Beatriz essaiera bien de le contenir dans certaines limites mais ce ne sera pas suffisant, pour des motifs que nous verrons plus loin.

Lors de l'une des séances, Beatriz dit mieux comprendre le pourquoi de tout ce qui est arrivé, mais qu'elle n'accepte pas d'avoir été trompée de la sorte ni la manière arrogante dont il l'a traitée ; c'est une chose qu'elle n'arrive pas à lui pardonner, pas plus qu'elle n'arrive à se pardonner à elle même d'avoir supporté cette situation. Lui se fait tout petit sur sa chaise et change de couleur, elle module le ton de l'accusation pour l'épargner. Je signale cette caractéristique qui est la leur, qu'ils ont le souci de se ménager l'un l'autre dans leur relation. Elle dit qu'elle est furieuse et qu'elle sent qu'elle ne peut pas tout déverser sur lui.

Lors d'une autre séance, elle arrive tout en colère, contant qu'ils étaient allés chez sa belle-mère, que celle-ci avait fait des remarques cruelles sur son compte et qu'Alberto, comme toujours, n'avait pas ouvert la bouche. Elle dit qu'il n'avait rien retenu de ce que nous étions en train de discuter pendant les séances et qu'elle ne voyait aucune solution pour améliorer leurs rapports. Alberto admet que l'attitude de sa mère a été injuste mais qu'il n'a pas eu la présence d'esprit de « mettre des limites ». Il se montre abattu en raison de cette « faiblesse ».

Beatriz met alors à plat toute cette histoire triangulaire ; elle explique que sa belle-mère se posait en propriétaire de son fils et de la maison du couple, et que, sous prétexte d'aider, elle envahissait tout et imposait son propre style. Elle ne cessait de répéter que son « pauvre » fils était obligé de travailler très dur pour assurer la vie du couple « quelle perle, le mari que je t'ai donné » ; une fois, elle lui a dit qu'il n'était pas question qu'elle se mette en tête de faire un enfant tout de suite. Beatriz a senti cette phrase comme une intrusion dans leur vie sexuelle. Quand on le lui demandait, elle (sa belle-mère) s'occupait de sa petite fille mais ne manquait pas de faire remarquer qu'elle leur faisait une grande faveur. Au moment de la crise du couple, elle a dit à son fils que, pour commencer une liaison avec une autre femme, il devait rompre avec la première, comme si elle n'avait aucune considération pour Beatriz. Alberto confirme cet épisode et, au

rappel de cette passivité d'Alberto face à sa mère, Beatriz devient de plus en plus furieuse.

Je signale à Alberto qu'il est maintenant en train de prendre conscience de ces aspects de sa relation avec sa mère et qu'il n'aura pas de réponse toute prête à opposer aux invasions de celle-ci, parce que son père ne lui a pas montré comment réagir d'une autre manière. Mettre des limites à sa mère, à la différence de ce qui arrivait dans l'aliénation antérieure, est une habileté qu'il lui faudra désormais acquérir.

Je signale également que nous passons de la situation triangulaire avec la maîtresse à une situation triangulaire avec la mère. Beatriz énumère alors diverses occasions où, leur liaison déjà terminée, l'ex-maîtresse de son mari continuait à lui téléphoner et lui ne lui imposait aucune limite claire, et, la dernière fois, elle lui avait pris des mains le portable et avait dit elle-même son fait à cette femme ; et comment l'attitude qu'elle avait dû prendre l'avait frustrée. Lui se défend « Je me suis aperçu peu à peu que cette femme était complètement folle et j'ai eu peur qu'elle fasse une bêtise ». Moi, plaisantant « Et oui ! dire non à des femmes folles et envahissantes, ce n'est pas sa spécialité ! » Elle, en colère : « Et pourquoi avec moi a-t-il toujours été autoritaire et exigeant ? » Moi, sur le même ton que précédemment : « Il semble que pour vivre ensemble, il avait choisi une femme plus douce, non ? » Je me dis que, probablement, dans son mariage il a trouvé que la meilleure solution était de s'identifier à la mère autoritaire et envahissante plutôt qu'au père, passif face à la mère, mais je n'ai pas trouvé prudent de faire cette interprétation à ce moment-là. Je me suis également demandé pourquoi il avait choisi une maîtresse folle et envahissante ou si c'était seulement parce qu'il était en quête d'une relation fusionnelle exclusive.

Plus tard, à l'anniversaire de sa belle-soeur, Beatriz, bien qu'elle ait encouragé sa fille à accompagner son père, refuse d'y aller elle-même. Elle entend rester à distance de sa belle-mère. Sa mère le lui reproche alors fortement, et elle de son côté impose des limites à sa mère « Ne t'occupe pas de ça, ces choses-là, je les résous moi-même ».

À la séance suivante, Beatriz se dit très angoissée. Elle demande une séance de couple extra, dit qu'elle se sent de plus en plus loin d'Alberto, qu'elle a perdu le goût de se pomponner pour l'attendre et d'être à sa disposition comme elle l'avait toujours été. Les souvenirs

de l'époque de la relation extraconjugale la poursuivent, voilà un an que tout cela est arrivé et elle croit qu'elle ne va jamais arriver à surmonter le traumatisme de cet épisode. Au début de notre travail ensemble elle se sentait plus proche de lui qu'elle ne l'est maintenant. Je lui demande quand elle a commencé à s'éloigner de lui. Elle conte que cet éloignement remonte à l'incident avec sa belle-mère, lors duquel il ne l'a pas défendue et qu'elle n'a aucun espoir qu'il change. Il se montre assez angoissée.

Je sens que la complémentation névrotique des deux est déjà évidente et peut être signalée. Cela signifie qu'elle passera de la condition d'accusatrice à celle d'impliquée dans la situation conjugale dans laquelle ils vivent.

Je lui signale que, comme fille unique, très aimée par ses parents, elle a adopté l'attitude de la bonne fille qui cherche à leur faire plaisir, à correspondre à leurs attentes à son égard, de celle qui fait tout impeccablement comme sa mère le lui a appris, et qui se sent coupable dès qu'elle s'écarte de ce modèle. Elle se met à pleurer et dit qu'Alberto lui fait des reproches à tout propos, rejette sur elle la responsabilité des dépenses du couple alors qu'en fait tout est décidé en commun et qu'elle ne fait qu'exécuter. Et pourtant, quand ils sont à court d'argent, il l'accuse d'être dépensière. Elle se trouvait complètement nulle, se faisait un tas de reproches, oubliait les responsabilités à lui sur cette question. M'adressant alors à lui, je lui dit qu'arrivant à la maison la tête pleine de problèmes de travail il est possible qu'il décharge sur elle sa mauvaise humeur, il a pu se faire qu'elle ait interprété son irritation comme une accusation. Elle crie presque « Mais cela arrive sans arrêt ». Je lui fais remarquer que sa dépression peut avoir été provoquée par cet emmurement où elle se trouve prise entre les auto-exigences qu'elle s'impose, parce que fille des attentes de ses parents, et les accusations dues à la mauvaise humeur d'Alberto, ce qui fait d'elle une coupable au carré. Elle confirme, très révoltée. Il est tout intimidé sur sa chaise et se met à pleurer. Elle, prévenante, lui passe un mouchoir. Il dit : « C'est arrivé souvent. Comme tout cela est difficile, je ne vais jamais comprendre comment ces choses-là fonctionnent ». Je lui dit qu'il est actuellement dans une phase de grandes modifications, qu'il est en train d'apprendre à se familiariser avec une plus grande complexité émotionnelle.

J'ajoute que de la même manière une grande modification est en train de s'opérer en elle, aussi bien quand elle refuse d'aller à l'anniversaire de sa belle-soeur que lorsqu'elle ne laisse pas sa mère lui faire de reproches à ce sujet. Et qu'avant tout, il lui faut veiller à ne plus donner dans le piège de la femme parfaite, répondant ainsi aux attentes de ses propres parents et reconsidérer sa passivité face aux accusations injustifiées de son mari. Elle dit qu'il y a longtemps qu'elle savait que leur vie de couple ne la satisfaisait pas, mais qu'il n'écoutait pas ses plaintes, qu'elle cherchait à faire des efforts pour que ça marche bien et qu'elle se jugeait coupable de ce qui n'était pas bon.

Je lui dis que c'est peut-être de là qu'a surgi l'envie compulsive de l'adoption, Luciana apparaissant comme le salut pour la carence affective qu'elle vivait dans la relation avec Alberto, le rôle de mère suppléant aux lacunes du mariage. De même que, dans le passé, l'arrivée de Luciana était venue combler un vide, l'insatisfaction à elle, la relation extraconjugale était venue, quelques années après, combler un autre vide : les insatisfactions à lui, et spécialement son ressentiment devant l'entrée du bébé au milieu de leur couple.

A la session suivante, il commence à se dire très impressionné par ce qu'il a appelé son côté macabre, la manière dont il décharge sur elle ses insatisfactions de toute sorte, spécialement ses insatisfactions professionnelles, sa difficulté à percevoir le côté émotionnel, ce qui le fait passer à côté de ce que Beatriz sentait. Elle en profite pour relater, en colère, qu'il l'avait offert un très beau cabinet de travail et qu'ensuite, quand la situation financière était devenue critique, il s'était mis à l'accuser d'avoir un cabinet bien meilleur que le sien, ce qui l'avait fortement culpabilisée. Beatriz manifeste déjà son ressentiment de manière plus directe et, devant cette attaque, Alberto, comme il l'a toujours fait, s'enfonce dans son fauteuil, livide.

Je sens qu'il me faut équilibrer la situation et je me tourne du côté de Beatriz pour la sonder, sans avoir aucune idée de ce que j'allais rencontrer. Je lui demande comment il pouvait se faire qu'une femme moderne comme elle ait pu se laisser prendre dans un tel engrenage : être accusée injustement, se sentir culpabilisée, rester muette au point de connaître deux dépressions sérieuses. Beatriz hésite, conte quelques faits épars. Subitement, elle se souvient et raconte d'une seule traite, par phrases entrecoupées, que l'aîné des beaux-frères de sa mère avait abusé sexuellement d'elle (sa mère), que celle-ci s'en était plainte à sa propre mère (la grand-mère de Beatriz) et qu'elle se

serait entendu dire qu'on ne pouvait rien faire, sans quoi sa soeur serait obligée de se séparer de son mari. Son père, le grand-père de Beatriz, mis au courant, n'avait pas agi davantage. Dans l'enfance et l'adolescence de Beatriz, ce même oncle avait, à plusieurs reprises, pratiqué sur elle des attouchements. Elle s'en était plainte à sa mère, qui lui avait répondu que ce qui lui arrivait n'était rien auprès de ce qui lui était arrivé à elle-même dans le passé. Du coup, subitement, Beatriz, hors d'elle-même, déclare toute furieuse : « Si un homme s'avise de toucher à ma fille, je lui saute à la gorge et je le tue ». Alberto lui aussi est perturbé et dit qu'il n'avait jamais entendu parler de cette histoire, qu'il ne s'attendait pas à ça. Il pensait qu'elle allait plutôt conter combien elle était bouleversée quand ses parents se querellaient. Une fois il l'avait trouvée, accroupie à même le sol et en pleurs, dans la chambre voisine de celle où ses parents se disputaient.

Tous les deux ont été secoués par tout ce qui a surgi. Je dis que maintenant on peut comprendre pourquoi Béatrice se taisait quand elle se sentait injustement attaquée par Alberto, étant donné que c'est ce qu'elle avait appris auprès de sa mère, que les problèmes à l'intérieur de la famille devaient être passés sous silence pour qu'il n'y ait pas de séparation.

Je commence à mieux comprendre les dépressions de Beatriz, son attitude réservée en face de la trahison de son mari, sa retenue quand elle exprime sa colère et surtout son angoisse dans les dernières séances. Beatriz se trouve, sans en avoir conscience, prisonnière de normes familiales peu explicites et non remises en question, qui se réfèrent à l'attitude de la femme en face de l'homme et sa jouissance. J'utilise à dessein le terme jouissance et non désir parce que c'est de cela qu'il s'agit ici : la jouissance sexuelle non-castrée du beau-frère de la mère, la jouissance agressive des déplacements verbaux du mari de mauvaise humeur (« Mon côté macabre » comme il dit). Beatriz a reçu comme héritage de sa famille une norme inconsciente, à savoir que pour conserver le désir qu'éprouve l'homme pour elle, et donc maintenir la famille unie, la femme doit s'offrir à sa jouissance. C'est le prix à payer. On réprime sa rage pour le bien de la famille et c'est la dépression qui surgit pour la remplacer. Dans le travail thérapeutique, la répression de la colère s'affaiblit et, avant d'avoir pu symboliser la norme, elle dit, furieuse, « si un homme s'avise de toucher à ma fille, je le tue ». Probablement que l'amertume de Beatriz vient surtout du fait qu'Alberto n'est pas capable de sauter à la

gorge de ses agresseurs (dans le cas, sa belle-mère) pour la défendre et la sauver de la prison que constitue son héritage familial.

Le concept de transmission psychique transgénérationnelle est fondamental pour comprendre le fonctionnement de la famille aussi bien que celui de l'individu. Freud l'avait déjà mentionné d'innombrables fois et dans des sens différents (*voir Inglès – Mazzarela, 2006, p.39*). Ce concept est très utilisé aujourd'hui spécialement comme transmission des non-dits, des tabous réprimés par la famille, qui demeurent comme un héritage et qui surgiront comme symptômes, en général à la troisième génération (*voir Inglès – Mazzarela, 2006, p. 110*). Lacan (1938, p.49) affirme clairement que la transmission transgénérationnelle se produit de manière très ample, sous une forme consciente et inconsciente, et entraîne la transmission de complexes, d'imagos, de sentiments et de croyances, ce qui implique que la construction de la subjectivité se produit non seulement à partir d'élaborations intrasubjectives mais aussi du relationnel ou de l'intersubjectif.

Quelques considérations finales

Bien que l'oedipe soit l'organisateur principal de la famille, d'autres organisateurs y sont également impliqués. Dans son travail de 1938, Lacan parle déjà de trois complexes familiaux : les complexes maternel, fraternel et oedipien, qui fonctionnent ensemble, aussi bien dans la constitution de l'individu que dans celle de la famille. Nous dirons toutefois, à la suite de Lacan, que c'« est le complexe d'Oedipe qui définit la forme spécifique de la famille humaine et de toutes ses variations ». Les individus s'unissent, inconsciemment en quête d'une nouvelle rencontre avec les bonnes parties des objets primordiaux auxquels ils ont renoncé dans le passé. Les diverses manières dont ils réagissent aux frustrations inhérentes au brisement de cette illusion constituent le symptôme du couple.

C'est ainsi que, victime d'une illusion fusionnelle, Alberto ne supporte pas que Beatriz s'écarte du rôle de mère idéalisée et inconditionnellement sienne et qu'elle interpose sa fille entre eux deux. D'un autre côté, il ne réussit pas à se rapprocher d'elle affectivement ni à prêter l'oreille à ses plaintes concernant leur relation. En effet, l'isolement affectif qu'il a dû construire entre lui et sa mère l'empêche

de se sentir proche de sa femme et de ses besoins. Elle dit "Il ne m'écoute pas". Avoir une maîtresse pour être découvert (dans son propre milieu de travail) est l'expression d'un désir, celui que Beatriz se sente exclu, comme lui-même s'est senti exclu par l'arrivée du bébé. Beatriz, de son côté, rêve d'une relation idyllique, sans les heurts qui marquent celle de ses parents et, pour cette raison, réprime la colère découlant des frustrations de sa relation, en s'identifiant selon le mode oedipien avec sa mère « surtout pas de vagues » ; elle s'efforce de remplir le rôle de mère « adéquate », conjointement avec une relation « adéquate », au prix de deux dépressions importantes. Quand on réussit à écarter le refoulement qui cachait le réel de l'abus sexuel, elle peut entrer en contact avec sa colère, sortir du rôle de fille du désir de sa mère et agir pour son propre compte. Du même coup, elle cesse de compléter de manière masochiste la jouissance sadique d'Alberto et ses déchargements vindicatifs à son égard. Lui, craignant de la perdre, fait un gros effort pour échapper à son enfermement narcissique, de sorte qu'il puisse mieux la distinguer de lui-même, revoir ses nécessités fusionnelles et accepter de la partager avec sa fille.

Quand le symptôme de l'un des partenaires « s'imbrique » dans le symptôme de l'autre, se forme le symptôme du couple ; le cercle vicieux de la répétition s'installe, rendant impossible la solution créative des problèmes qui surgissent dans la relation. Dans le cas ici rapporté, le démontage de cette imbrication de symptômes se produit par la prise de conscience des intertransferts conjugaux. J'appelle intertransferts conjugaux les transferts réciproques que les partenaires effectuent entre eux, en projetant sur l'autre les affects, les attentes et les conflits originaires oedipiens aussi bien que pré-oedipiens. La vigueur et la clarté avec lesquelles surgissent ces intertransferts semblent bien confirmer l'importance des vécus primordiaux dans le choix amoureux adult (citation de Eigner à la page 1 de ce texte).

Les symptômes du couple sont donc compris comme un entrelacement de symptômes individuels qui, lorsqu'ils se fixent de manière complémentaire, provoquent la stagnation de la relation, dans un cercle répétitif et sans issue. À mesure que les symptômes individuels et leurs origines antérieures à la relation sont compris par les deux partenaires, peut surgir une complicité affective et s'établir un cercle vertueux dans la relation.

Il est également important de souligner que, lorsque nous parlons d'organisateur oedipien, nous suivons la pensée lacanienne sur l'oedipe structurel (Bleichmar, H.1980, 1^e partie). Nous nous référons donc à une **fonction symbolique** à exercer à l'égard de l'enfant, ce qui lui permettra en quelque sorte, si tout marche bien, de renoncer à son premier objet, une étape dont, tout au long de sa vie, il portera inévitablement les marques. Nous ne parlons pas de la personne du père en elle-même mais de celui ou de ce qui remplit cette fonction. Ce peut être le père biologique, le beau-père, le père intérieur de la mère, son travail, sa religion. Quelqu'un qui puisse capturer le désir de la mère et qui fasse en sorte qu'elle transmette à son bébé que celui-ci ne la complète pas. C'est cette fonction interdisant la jouissance de la complétude primordiale du bébé avec sa mère que nous appelons fonction du père et qui permet le surgissement du sujet du désir. Il se peut que cette fonction ne soit pas remplie ou le soit seulement partiellement, qu'il y ait ou non présence physique du père.

Dans ce sens, il ne convient pas de dire que le paradigme oedipien établi par Freud, à partir de la famille bourgeoise du XIX^e siècle, ne sert pas à comprendre la famille contemporaine, si différente dans sa forme de celle-là. Comme le dit Mezan (2007, p.37), « l'oedipe est l'oedipe : le sujet, l'objet de son désir, la puissance qui l'interdit. Et la figure empirique qui occupe l'une des pointes du triangle ne se réduit pas obligatoirement au père biologique ». Quand donc nous nous référons aux familles contemporaines « alternatives », nous pourrions aussi bien parler d'une famille où s'est produite la structuration oedipienne, qu'elle ait ou non un format différent du format traditionnel, que d'une famille qui a éludé l'oedipe ou l'a exclu (par forclusion), ce qui entraîne des conséquences très importantes pour le mode d'intervention de l'analyste.

Dans le cas présenté ici, j'ai cherché à montrer comment, en donnant la priorité dans notre travail aux transferts réciproques d'un partenaire sur l'autre, s'était mis en marche un processus de changement.

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FREUD : ON VIOLENCE

DAVID BENHAIM

A dense, rich, rigorous and deep analysis of *Kultur* which allows to define the phenomenon of violence in its essence runs through the freudian writings. No need to call upon philosophers nor upon sociologists to analyse the relationship between violence and society or to establish a diagnosis on the state of civilization which is ours. From *Totem and taboo* to *Moses and monotheism* passing through *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, *Group Psychology and the analysis of the ego*, *Civilization and its discontents*, *Why war?*, Freud never stops reconsidering the question of man's violence not only in its social dimension, but in its cultural and anthropological one.

The word violence is not part of the psychoanalytic lexicon. It is a term of the common language which is semantically charged: it has connotations of aggression, excessive use of power, rape. In ordinary language, violence is the brute force someone uses to subject somebody. We call violent any action which someone exerts over somebody against his will to subject or dominate him. In his answer to Einstein, in 1933, who affirms as *a fact with which we have to reckon that law and might inevitably go hand to hand* (*Why war?* , p.200), Freud uses the term *violence* in preference to that of *might*: « *But may*

I replace the word "might" by the balder and harsher word "violence"?
» (*Why war?* p.70).

Freud always asserted the idea of an antagonism between *Kultur* and instinctual life; in his intellectual concerns, it goes back up as far as *Letters to Fliess*. In a manuscript of May 31st, 1897, he wrote him that *incest is antisocial - civilization consists in his progressive renunciation* (*The complete letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, p.252). He always supported without retracting that neurosis is a symptom of *Kultur*. In his article, *Civilized sexual morality and modern nervous illness*, he writes: *I must insist upon the view that neuroses, whatever their extent and wherever they occur, always succeed in frustrating the purposes of civilization, and in that way actually perform the work of the suppressed mental forces that are hostile to civilization* (p.202-203). If we take a look at his last writings, we can note that a work as *Civilization and its discontents* rests on the idea that the destiny of the individual and that of the community are inseparable, each one being played through the other one. Writings on war will be illustrating this idea.

In 1915, in *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, Freud called to mind the collapse of an illusion caused by war. The illusion which collapses is that of the belief in the idea of progress in morals, politeness, ethics, all in all in the relationship between men.

He questions the ideals of culture from the point of view of psychic economy; he will speak later of *discontent* reacting in this way to the fact of the collapse of the ideals of the western man and *the web of European Community* [...] *Disenchantment is inflicted by culture*, as Laurence Kahn underlines it (*Faire parler le destin*, p.191). This discontent will not die down, but will be growing until achieving a *relapse into almost prehistoric barbarism* (*Moses and the monotheism*, p. 54).

In 1921, in *Group Psychology and analysis of the ego*, work forerunner at the same time of the investigation of an internal psychic « groupality » and what will become the psychoanalytic approach of

group, Freud maintains that the social does not dissociate itself from the individual to constitute a separate layer of the psyche. It is constituting of the psyche. The opposition between the individual psychology and the social psychology is questioned: *In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent ; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the word, is at the same time social psychology as well* (p.69). The social psychology starts from the individual and asks about what takes place in its psyche when he is immersed in a mass, *which types of forces this crowd is going to make weigh on its psychic functioning, and which modifications this one will be constrained to operate in front of the pressure of those forces* (Laval Guy, *Bourreaux ordinaires* p.24). Freud develops at the same time a reflection on the nature of the mass, the formation of groups and the leader. In his analysis of hypnosis, it provides some essential elements of reflection. Hypnotic relation is a mass relation with two members. The structure of the mass is complex; hypnosis holds back an element which it isolates: *the behaviour of the individual to the leader* (p.115). Comparing hypnosis with the loving state, Freud writes: *there is the same humble subjection, the same compliance, the same absence of criticism, towards the hypnotist as towards the loved object. There is the same sapping of the subject's own initiative ; no one can doubt that the hypnotist has stepped into the place of the ego ideal* (p.114) This last proposition takes back the expression which sums up the loving state: *the object has been put in the place of the ego ideal* (p.113). *The hypnotist is the sole object, and no attention is paid to any but him*, he adds. *The hypnotic relation is the unlimited devotion of someone in love, but with sexual satisfaction excluded* (p.115). What the hypnotist asserts and asks is lived dreamlike by the hypnotized. It is important to underline, first, that *the mass situations do not define themselves so much by the number of persons who appear in them than by fact of being controlled by the ideal's function* (Scarfone Dominique, *Oublier Freud?* p.173); then, that inhibited sexual impulses manage to create very lasting ties between human beings as much as they are not capable of complete satisfaction, contrary to the uninhibited sexual

impulses which, through discharge, extinguish when they are satisfied. To last, they must be mixed with inhibited elements, that is to say, purely affectionate components. This analysis allows Freud to explain at the same time the tie which joins the individuals in the mass and the one which joins them with the leader; a mass or a *primary group of this kind*, it concludes, *is a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego* (p.116). What Freud is speaking about to us is the dissolution of the individual in the mass which will occur in the years of the rise of Nazism, a true massification of the individual who disappears as such, through this identification to the leader, erected as an ideal. It will be a totalitarian massification.

I recalled above the preference granted by Freud in *Why war?* to the term of violence which it substitutes for that of might. Why this substitution? I would think that Freud has in mind the violence of the impulses: impulse attacks from inside. This violence is as much that of the sexual as that of the impulse of aggression or destruction which will continually worry him, after the war of 1914 and the turn of 1920. In the myth of the primal horde dominated by the powerful father, in *Totem and taboo*, the incest, the murder and the cannibalism appear as fundamental wishes which emerge from the impulse. This violence is not exerted solely against other people, but against oneself, if one remembers that *every civilization must be built up on coercion and renunciation of instinct* (Freud, *The future of an illusion*, p.7).

I won't finish this quick analysis on violence without considering a key-work: *Civilization and its discontents*. In this work, we find the same idea: the inseparable tie between the individual and the community. The question of the relationship of right and violence recalled in *Why war?* concerns mainly the adjustment of mutual relations of men (*Civilization and its discontents*, p.89). It is one of two purposes which characterizes *Kultur*, the other being the protection of men against nature, which presupposes the domination of the forces of nature. Analysing characteristic traits of a culture in *Civilisation and its discontents*, Freud writes: *perhaps we may begin by explaining that*

the element of civilization enters on the scene with the first attempt to regulate these social relationships [...] which affect a person as neighbour, as a source of help, as another person's sexual object, as a member of a family and of a State (p.95). The future of an illusion had already underlined that of these two purposes, it is the last which causes the deepest and the most bitter dissatisfaction faced with the slowness of its "progress", while the domination of nature experiences constant progress. In *Why war?* Freud maintains, in a terse way to my mind, that the cohesion of the community depends on two factors: the pressure of violence and emotional ties, communal feelings – identifications – between the members of the community. If one of the factors is lacking, the other one can possibly maintain the community. *Group Psychology and analysis of the ego* and *Civilization and its discontents* shed light on mechanisms at work by analysing the constitution of a community. What does Freud understand by community? The union of a majority of weak individuals which come together against the strongest individual, making prevail their violence against his. *Human life in common*, affirms Freud, *is only made possible when a majority comes together which is stronger than any separate individual and which remains united against all separate individuals (p.95)*. This collective violence of which the community claims the monopoly against the individual who would like to or could attack it, is what we call right. *The power of this community*, Freud goes on, *is then set up as 'right' in opposition to the power of the individual, which is condemned as 'brute force'*. He adds: *This replacement of the power of the individual by the power of a community constitutes the decisive step of civilization (p.95)*. The essence of this replacement consists in the restriction of the possibilities of satisfaction of the members of the community, while the power of the separate individual, in the state of nature, was limitless.

Violence in society is the theme of the articles which compose this second part. The first one of Anna and Roberto Losso proposes to us dense and rich theoretical reflexions in their contents. After having defined violence, they set it forth in a transgenerational perspective: the families create myths whose objective is, as they underline it, to

make a story of suffered abuses. "Condemned to transmit" all that could not be worked through, these families delegate to the following generations a mission: "to carry out impossible demands, which are really the demands of the mythical characters, remaining so attached to invisible loyalties. " It is a matter of transpsychic transmission which is carried out through the subjects. The elements which are transmitted are rough, dumb elements, which are not modified from one generation to the other. Insofar as they are imposed on the new generation like a mandate to achieve a mission in conformity with the family myths, they constitute a transgenerational family violence that the authors describe as "active". Nicholas Abraham, Maria Torok, Alberto Eiguer, Yolanda Gampel highlighted these contents and forged the conceptual tools which make it possible to identify and to analyze them. But there exists another form of transgenerational family violence that Anna and Robert Losso describe as "passive" and which is characterized by the absence of models. They highlight a quality of the transmission that one of them called trophic and which takes its origin in the family group as intergenerational transmission. It is a structuring transmission. An essential characteristic of the contemporary society, according to the authors, would be the deficit of the trophic transmission. An example particularly striking is the culture of the instantaneous, the perishable, the transient – what the sociologist Bauman calls « liquidity » - , whose result is that imitation prevails as a model over identification. This confronts us with a crisis of the transmission. The Losso take up concepts such as state of exception of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, metasocial guarantors of Touraine, individual producer or consumer of Judith Revel and Toni Negri to analyze social violence and to highlight the complex and difficult processes of subjectivation in our globalized society. What happens when one does not arrive to make a story? *The splitted and not thought contents*, write the authors, *may take the shape of body marks, which we called body reminiscences; this will make that traumatic violence suffered and not worked through by the other generations appear through psychosomatic affections*. Without developing what the authors understand by body reminiscences, I will retain the concept of unconscious body and the idea that affections

transmitted by transpsychic way can be constituted like registers in the body. In these cases, there has no more mental memory, but a body memory; the experience is acted out in the body as Gaddini says. The paper ends with the narrative of the case of the family C. which illustrates all this reflexion on violence.

The second paper, *Society without limits: families and subjects borderlines* of Graciela Consoli, Susana Guerchicoff, Ezequiel Jaroslavsky, Irma Morosini, Maria Gabriela Ruiz, gives us the picture of a society without links where individuals and families are afflicted with evils which seem to consume them. To characterize them, the authors use the sociologist Bauman and his concept of "liquidity": we live on "liquid" times. This contrasts with what Bowlby calls figures of attachment, those which can bring us constancy, stability and confidence. Such is the paradox on which the authors build their reflexion. What emerges from the pathological point of view is the pathology of the borders, the borderlines, which are one of the biggest challenges of the contemporary clinic. The authors set forth their reflexion from the point of view of the ties and the transgenerational. The borderline patient unsettles the analyst with his symptoms and his requests. Fragility of the networks of links, deficit of symbolization, facility to actig out, characterize also the family members. From the perspective of the experience of the ties, the authors highlight symptoms like the regression of psychic functioning or the difficulty of being different, which they consider as the result of the intensification of the transsubjective processes. These considerations match up with the freudian phenomenon of the masses and the individual's massification. Let us add the question of unconscious alliances in their pathological side such as Kaës analyses them. *The deficit in the psychic constitution and in narcissism, of which the borderlines are a paradigmatic example, make them prone to dissubjectification processes.* This leads them to analyze the process of subjectivation which consists in becoming a peculiar subject, without forgetting however that the subject is held in and by ties which support him and in which he is inserted. Follows a fine analysis of how violence arises when identity is threatened. I will finish with two quotations related

with our time and that seem to me to translate a reality we often face in our work with our patients; these quotations reflect work against the current we do in our offices. The first one: The risk of our time is to offer a character of immediacy to the pleasure, which can paralyse the long term projects. It is the sign of the greatest violence. The second one: We face up the following paradox: we have a big space of freedom, result of the expanse of the offer of the market, but in parallel we can observe an impoverishment of the internal world, thought, learning from experience, which complicates the exercise of the capacity of understanding applied to a complex, heterogeneous reality, but so confused for lack of identificatory marks.

I shall neither sum up nor analyse the third paper whose title is: *The bomb that exploded me continues to blow up my family* of Hanni Shalvi Mann. It would lead me to write a new article as comment, in the style of talmudic commentaries. I shall take back only some of the ideas which remained in my mind after its reading. We can set this paper, as the precedents, in the perspective of the links and in that of the transgenerational. His background is that of the numerous terrorist attacks whose victims are the Israeli civilians, children as adults. The title expresses a sort of fantasy where the dead becomes the witness of what happens after his death. From the beginning, the author defines clearly the subject of his article: the study of *the unique unconscious processes that take place in families and couples who experienced loss from terror attacks*. She stresses the character *unique* of these unconscious processes. But what are they and what is *unique* in them? She worked during numerous years with families victims of these attacks, what brings her to the conclusion *that **latent and overt aggression were the main emotional components that endangered the family members as individuals and as a family unit by accumulating continuous destructive energy in new, various, and different emotional patterns.***

She takes up the explanation of Freud who considers aggression to be an attempt of the subject to control a traumatic situation, by transforming the passive role, which he must have played in the course of traumatic event, into active role: aggression is consequently

the answer to traumatism. Psychoanalysis considers that the impact of traumatic events in the psyche can be treated only by the working through a deeper knowledge and its peculiar signification for the subject, what will allow its integration in his conscience existence. Traumatism, says the author, affects and disturbs the core of individual identity and is able to harm the capacity of symbolization of the individual. Since the survivor will never be able to restore the pre-traumatic state, mourning is part of therapeutic process, to what is added the mourning of the loved member. The need to face up the range of the human destructiveness makes the task of therapy very difficult. The bomb is a material artefact, but once it explodes, it becomes a metaphorical bomb, "fireball", as the author calls it, whose destructive and lethal energy seeks a lodging in a family member who will be his container. To contain an extreme aggression means endanger intrapsychic equilibrium and ties which tie up us to others. Consequently it is as though the family members "played" to get rid of this "fireball", by throwing it to one another. To be the container of this ball is something unbearable. The more the aggression intensifies, the more the risk of breaking the primary defensive organizations, what can arouse pathological reactions as psychotic decompensation, suicide, divorce, and that, even in the families who have never suffered emotional disturbances. The remainder of the paper describes the therapeutic process with these families and the stages which must be followed. Finally the narrative of the case illustrates the theoretical developments exposed before.

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VIOLENCE D'ÉTAT ET VIOLENCE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE EN ARGENTINE. TRANSMISSION TRANSGÉNÉRATIONELLE DU TRAUMA MIGRATOIRE. CONSÉQUENCES DANS LA CLINIQUE

*ROBERTO LOSSO, CRISTINA BUCETA, PEDRO HORVAT, SUSANA LEIVE DE BONFIGLIO, IRMA MOROSINI, ANA PACKCIARZ LOSSO, OLGA SCHAPIRO **

Introduction

Une grande partie des migrations se produit à partir de situations traumatiques, lorsque la société pousse des populations à quitter le pays pour des raisons religieuses, économiques et/ou politiques : la terre d'origine est devenue hostile. C'est le cas de la majorité des familles qui ont émigré d'Europe en Argentine à la fin du XIXe siècle et au début du XXe.

En Argentine, on peut distinguer deux grands courants d'immigration : le premier, entre la fin du XIXe siècle et le début du XXe, justifié par la nécessité de sortir de la pauvreté ; le deuxième est marqué par les deux premières guerres mondiales et la guerre civile espagnole, à l'origine d'un trauma de nature différente. Cela a fait, entre autres choses, que dans la plupart des cas ces immigrants n'ont pas pu parler

de leur expérience. Dans la mesure où les premiers ont pu raconter leur histoire et parler de leurs origines, ils ont pu faire le deuil de la terre d'où ils venaient. Les seconds ont eu tendance à ne pas parler, à refouler le traumatique, et, bien souvent, à rejouer la situation traumatique vécue.

Cette première génération traumatisée a fait un gros effort pour s'adapter et la génération qui en est issue a formé la plus grande partie de la classe moyenne argentine. Quant à la troisième génération, elle a constitué les protagonistes des événements des années 70 avec leur cortège de violence, de violence armée (violence d'État et violence révolutionnaire).

Pour analyser ces faits et situations vécus, il importe de tourner notre regard vers eux après qu'un délai suffisamment long s'est écoulé depuis leur survenue.

Nous-mêmes, les auteurs de ce travail, nous avons fait partie de cette jeune génération des années 70 et nous sommes les fils et petits-fils de ces parents et grands-parents arrivés avec leurs valises pleines de rêves, mais le cœur dévasté. Pris entre les exigences de deux pôles, celui du temps et celui de leur inscription spatiale, ceux qui allaient de l'avant devaient se construire une nouvelle identité, un travail régi par l'urgence de réussir une adaptation rapide à un contexte nouveau.

De ces histoires de familles séparées, de terres et de traditions, seuls des récits entre parents et enfants, des berceuses chantées dans des langues mal connues, quelques photos abîmées emportées comme soutien dans le voyage rendront compte de cette autre réalité à laquelle les ancêtres ont renoncé. Ils ont à payer le prix du sens de tant de nostalgie et de douleur, sentiments qui sèment l'idée de solitude et font surgir l'appel de la rébellion ; un appel dont il sera difficile de faire taire la voix, aussi ténue qu'impossible à éviter. A cette voix répondront les générations suivantes, celle des petits-fils, celle de ceux qui se sont établis, celle de ceux qui sont nés argentins.

La famille de María et Edmundo

Nous essaierons d'établir, à partir de la famille de María et Edmundo, une relation entre la violence que les familles de migrants ont souffert aussi bien dans le pays d'origine que dans le pays d'adoption, et

d'observer les phénomènes de violence en Argentine à l'époque de la troisième génération. S'y ajoute parfois, dans ces familles, l'apparition de pathologies mentales et organiques.

Quatre générations dans la famille de María

L'histoire de María commence deux générations auparavant, avec une famille démembrée par la Guerre Civile Espagnole. Durant cette guerre, son grand-père maternel et les deux fils de celui-ci ont lutté et sont morts. Sa mère et sa grand-mère ont trouvé refuge dans une grotte où elles sont parvenues à survivre. Une fois la guerre terminée, elles ont réussi à embarquer pour le Chili, laissant derrière elles les dépouilles des êtres chers auxquels elles n'ont pu donner de sépulture.

Arrivées au Chili, elles travaillent comme domestiques dans la même maison et avec le même patron. A l'âge de 16 ans, la mère de María est envoyée dans une ferme que le même patron possède dans le sud du pays. Là, dans la cave de la maison, le patron la viole à plusieurs reprises, la bâillant pour étouffer ses cris. La jeune fille est rapidement enceinte et elle est renvoyée en raison de sa grossesse. Sur le chemin du retour à Santiago, où elle va rejoindre sa mère, elle fait un avortement spontané. Les deux femmes se retrouvent et, quelque temps plus tard, partent pour l'Argentine. Une étape plus paisible commence alors : la jeune fille se marie et a deux filles dont l'une est María, sujet central d'une partie de notre récit.

Quatre générations dans la famille d'Edmundo

Les grands-parents d'Edmundo, eux aussi espagnols, sont arrivés avant ceux de María en Argentine. Ils ont travaillé comme agriculteurs et ont eu dix enfants.

Les deux jumeaux nés après l'aîné, Juan, au sein d'une fratrie des dix enfants, sont partis pour se battre en Espagne quand la guerre civile a éclaté, malgré l'opposition familiale. Ils y sont morts tous les deux. La perte des corps sans sépulture des fils se retrouve dans cette famille. L'un des jumeaux s'appelait Edmundo, prénom qui sera réutilisé dans les générations suivantes.

Juan se sentira toujours coupable, en tant qu'aîné, de n'avoir pas pu retenir ses frères pour éviter leur mort.

Il se marie et a six enfants. Il prénomme l'aîné Edmundo, en mémoire de son frère mort, mais cet enfant meurt à son tour peu après sa naissance. Il prénomme aussi son second fils Edmundo. C'est celui que nous connaissons aujourd'hui, marié avec María. Edmundo porte donc le poids du prénom de morts dans deux générations.

Le couple de María et Edmundo

María et Edmundo se sont connus à la faculté dans les années 70 en tant que militants politiques, tous deux dans un groupe de gauche. María est arrêtée et torturée. Elle passe une longue période avec les yeux bandés, supporte la souffrance sans jamais dénoncer ses camarades, parmi lesquels Edmundo qui, grâce au silence de María, réussit par la suite à s'échapper.

Quelque temps plus tard, elle est libérée, d'après son récit, « *pour une crise d'asthme... pour que je ne crève pas là* ».

María et Edmundo se marient et ont trois enfants. Ces enfants (quatrième génération) souffrent aujourd'hui de graves troubles psychosomatiques, raison des premières consultations. José a souffert d'une tumeur de la mandibule, pour laquelle il a subi quatre opérations, et dernièrement la greffe osseuse qu'il avait reçue a dû être retirée à la suite d'une infection. Mimí souffrait d'une douleur persistante dans l'articulation temporale-maxillaire avec perte de densité osseuse et un début d'arthrose dans cette articulation. Elle souffrait aussi de phobies diverses, ne voulait pas se séparer de sa mère et au collège « elle ne supportait pas de rester en cours d'histoire » (c'était l'histoire de l'Europe) : elle se sentait mal et demandait l'autorisation de sortir de la classe.

Transmission transgénérationnelle du trauma et violence sociale

Nous posons l'hypothèse d'un lien entre les situations traumatiques des générations qui ont migré en Argentine et le phénomène social qui y a été vécu dans les années 70.

Nous considérons que la génération des années 70 peut avoir déplacé sur le plan de lutte politique ce qui était resté scindé, encapsulé dans la mémoire en relation avec l'événement réel traumatique et les affects qui y étaient liés, le tout transmis par leurs ancêtres immigrants qui furent soumis et disqualifiés. Ce processus met en évidence la puissance que ces affects ont acquise pour passer du fantasme inconscient à l'acte.

En ce sens, nous pensons que, outre la transmission transgénérationnelle des situations traumatiques, il y a eu une transmission collective du trauma dans les groupes sociaux. Il s'agirait d'une transmission qui transcende celle qui s'effectue à l'intérieur des groupes familiaux.

Deux circonstances rendent ce type de trauma particulier : la survenue de la catastrophe et l'absence absolue de défense des victimes. Cela a pour conséquence l'incapacité totale du moi d'organiser les défenses. La combinaison de ces facteurs permet à la situation d'engendrer une expérience vécue catastrophique.

Dans les cas que nous commentons, la situation de violence subie par la première génération n'est pas due à des catastrophes naturelles ou à des événements accidentels, mais à l'action concrète de groupes humains ayant des caractéristiques particulières et organisés pour l'action violente. Cela produit l'internalisation d'un autre réel, à la fois semblable et persécuteur.

Le rôle de l'État

Nous nous demandons quelle est la place de l'État dans le psychisme de l'individu et de la famille. L'État a souvent (ou devrait avoir) un rôle cohérent de soutien de la Loi, et, en tant que tel, le sens, dans le psychisme des individus, de représentant d'une instance vigilante, une espèce de surmoi bienveillant. Dans les cas que nous étudions, nous

considérons que dans la première génération – et dans certains cas, comme celui que nous présentons, dans la seconde génération aussi – l'État ne protège pas, au contraire il poursuit et tue, et dans la troisième génération il sera encore une fois traumatisant et persécuteur.

Les analystes et la violence transgénérationnelle

Nous autres, thérapeutes, nous faisons aussi partie de cette société et de cette culture et, d'une certaine manière, nous sommes partie intégrante de cette situation traumatique : nous sommes en grande partie fils et petits-fils d'immigrants qui ont souffert de traumatismes dans leurs pays d'origine, ou les ancêtres y sont restés comme des corps sans sépultures ; c'est-à-dire que, de nos jours et de nos fonctions de thérapeutes, nous partageons avec nos patients une situation similaire. Nous avons nous-mêmes vécu et souffert les événements violents des années 70 en Argentine et nous sommes traversés par les valeurs de l'époque de la même façon que nos patients. Nous sommes les réceptacles de la transmission collective du trauma au niveau social.

Le fait d'avoir vécu des expériences plus ou moins communes peut nous aider à fonctionner comme ces « autres voix », la polyphonie de voix à laquelle se réfère Kaës et qu'il estime indispensable pour l'élaboration de ce type de situations. Cela peut nous permettre d'avancer dans la recherche de sens, d'un « sens perdu » selon P. Aulagnier (1971), dans une tentative d'éviter que, là où les mots font défaut, les actes ne surgissent, menaçants, dans le corps ou dans la réalité.

D'autre part, nous nous demandons jusqu'à quel point le partage d'une même problématique peut se transformer en obstacle à la cure, empêcher l'accès à l'historisation. Nous essayons de reconstruire le passé à partir de nos propres interrogations du présent, mais là aussi, nous pouvons nous trouver traversés par nos propres résistances. En effet, il peut arriver que nous ne puissions pas, si le fonctionnement de notre préconscient est lui aussi attaqué et paralysé, comme cela se produit dans les situations traumatiques, comme cela arrive à nos patients, fonctionner comme ces voix. Nous devons être attentifs à ces « points aveugles ». Il est bon de le savoir pour pouvoir continuer :

c'est notre but. Alors, nous autres, thérapeutes et compatriotes, dans l'espace comme dans le temps, nous pouvons, à partir de là, élargir cet aspect spécifique de notre fonction qui est d'être leurs « porte-paroles »

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"THE BOMB THAT EXPLODED ME CONTINUES TO BLOW UP MY FAMILY..."

*HANNI MANN – SHALVI**

This paper focuses on the unique unconscious processes that take place in families and couples who experienced loss from terror attacks.

Over the years Israel is exposed to different kinds of terror attacks that target civilian children and adults, in the most unexpected circumstances during everyday life.

Experience has taught me that in such circumstances unique unconscious processes take place.

Freud (1920) used the word "trauma" which means in Greek 'wound', to emphasize how the mind can be wounded by events which overwhelm mental processes by being too sudden or extreme to accommodate and process (1916).

Working for many years with families that experienced loss in terror attack I realize that **latent and overt aggression were the main emotional components** that endangered the family members as individuals and as a family unit by accumulating continuous destructive energy in new, various, and different emotional patterns.

Aggression is a known response to trauma. Freud, (1920) explained it as a person's attempt to control the traumatic situation by turning the passive role into an active role. Anna Freud (1936) explained it as a defense mechanism of identification with the aggressor.

The psychoanalytic view on trauma identifies that the impact of traumatic events upon the mind can only be treated through achieving a deeper knowledge of the particular meaning of those events for that individual, integrating it into the individual's conscious existence. The trauma touches and disrupts the core of the individual's identity, and may damage the individual's capacity to symbolize. Since the survivor can never be restored to a pre-trauma state, mourning is part of the therapeutic process, in addition to the mourning of the beloved dead family member. The need to face the extent of human destructiveness makes the task of therapy very difficult (Garland, 1998).

The "ball of fire" is uncontrollable in the family

According to Freud a "constancy principle" regulates the distribution of energy within an organism in order to keep the level of stimulation as close to zero as possible (1895:197, 1920:9).

When a bomb explodes and kills a family member, the deadly destructive energy penetrates the family system with its ongoing explosive quality and seeks a suitable container to absorb it, become its "host" and enable the release of its explosive material, 'freeing' the other family members.

Since containing excessive aggression means risking intra-psyche and interpersonal equilibrium the dreadful 'ball of fire' is thrown between the family members in their efforts to push it away. Severely traumatic event stirs up the unresolved pains and conflicts of childhood (Garland, 1998). In the case of terror attacks, it "magnetized" to existing undealt with - unconscious violent forces, hidden in the personality or in the relationships and 'uses' them as anchors.

The intensified aggression breaks former organizations of defenses, and can cause pathologic reactions like psychotic breakdown, suicide, divorce etc, even in families that had not suffered in the past from any emotional pathology. The symptomatic manifestations can be so removed from the origin that it can easily be misinterpreted as not being related to the death that had occurred earlier.

Thus, in addition to the difficult mourning processes, these families have to confront the intensified aggression that is locked-up within their family system, threatening to continue endless explosions from unexpected directions.

The therapeutic process

All the therapeutic functions that are relevant in object relations couple and family therapy can be applied to treatment of families that have experienced violent death of a family member:

- Opening the potential space for exploration
- holding relationships,
- And accepting individual and family projective identifications... feeding them back to the patient (Scharff and Scharff, 2000: 15).

In extreme family trauma the explosive nature of the aggression shapes all of the above emotional processes. If the process is not identified (by the therapist and then in the therapeutic process), therapy is conducted under ongoing threats of explosions from innumerable unexpected sources and directions, preventing the evolvment of a therapeutic safe space.

The therapeutic process demands:

- **Thorough family evaluation** of:
 - The patterns of relationships and how they have changed because of the trauma.
 - The emotional personality structure of the family members in order to identify unresolved repressed conflicts that might allow discharge of the explosive aggression.
 - Tracking the illusive path that the aggressive energy has taken in each family member and in the family dynamics.

- **Identifying vulnerable family members and relationship patterns** that are at risk to become the second-line 'absorbers,' once the first-line 'symptom presenters' will be treated (the 'weak vertebra', a 'scapegoat': etc);
- **Allowing a therapeutic process** that enables working-through of the identified undealt conflicts that put the certain person or relationship at risk;
- **Allowing space for the mourning process**, bearing in mind that the aggressive forces in the family are still striving to be released;
- **Containing the acute violent forces**. This makes it possible for family members to meet their extreme rage and work-it through;
- **Forming new patterns** of relationships and personality dynamics.

Treatment can never take away the pain of the violent death of a loved one. Nor will the family ever return to their past emotional dynamics. But treatment can safeguard the family from a chain-response of continuous intensive crises. And at the same time, allow them to experience a process of growth and development on their way to continuing their life in a new equilibrium.

The Buckle Family

Avi, 68 years old and Hadar 66 years old are the parents of two sons (Eran and Eli), a daughter (Mia) and grandparents of ten grandchildren. They have been married for 40 years in what can be described as a quite "good tense" relationship. Disputes were part of their normal relationship pattern, and centered most of the time on his frequent business travels abroad. Avi's father had left the family when Avi was four. Avi never forgave him but did not talk about it.

Hadar came from a strict patriarchal family. When she was 7 years old her mother was killed by an Arab sniper and she was raised by her father's second wife, whom she did not like. The Buckles appeared to be a mainstream family that led a rich economic, social and family life.

Hadar was the center of the extended family. The children fulfilled the parents' expectations; all were married to 'the right' spouses, held respectable jobs and lead 'decent lives.'

The idyllic picture was shattered when their first born son Eran was killed. "One morning" Hadar told me: "I heard on the news that a suicide bomber exploded himself in a commercial center in Tel-Aviv, I knew immediately that Eran was killed, I called Avi and shouted: let's go to the hospital... I arrived and screamed 'I am Eran's mother, I want to see him, but it was too late.'"

From this moment their lives changed, "the destructive energy" penetrated the family attacking interpersonal relationships and internal equilibrium.

The therapeutic climate was constantly changing because of the burst of new centers of aggression which provoked life-threatening crises in the family. As Scharff and Scharff (1979:170) describe: "in psychoanalytic couple and family therapy by providing the time, space the structure we offer "provision of frame" in which work can go on... the setups need to be adequate and appropriate to the job to be done..."

Thorough family evaluation

a) Patterns of relationship in the nuclear family

A closer look inside the 'perfect family façade' revealed a **passive - aggressive pattern between the parents** which pronounced itself through Hadar's ongoing accusations and Avi's complying, yet never satisfying, reaction pattern.

The mother-child relational pattern was controlled by the **mother's 'victim' position**. The children were always aware 'how not to upset mother' who had endless reasons to be upset. The only **exception was Hadar's relationship with her eldest son Eran**, whom she loved the most and felt that he, and everything he did, was **perfect**. This caused his siblings to feel **jealous** which was reverse to complying behavior by trying to be 'as good as Eran.'

Hadar said: "the minute he was born I looked into his big blue eyes and I knew that he is special. I love all my children but with him it was

always something else..." Only after his death, in one of the individual sessions, the secret origin of this special love started to unfold and with it the multi layers of the family jealousy ...

b) Identifying vulnerable family members and relationship patterns

The most vulnerable family member who was at-risk to absorb the aggressive energy was Hadar who as a young child lost her mother in a similar situation and since then has carried a burden of suppressed unconscious, undealt-with emotional conflicts. Probably her controlling relationship pattern with her family served as a defense against those feelings.

Indeed, shortly after Eran's death Hadar's relationship with her family deteriorated, she 'fired' destructive aggression in all directions. Like 'cards in a row,' aggressive conflicts were exploding among different family members.

- During the individual sessions Hadar told me that she married Avi as a replacement for a relationship with an ex - lover that her father objected to. It became clear that she transmitted her emotions for her ex-lover to her first born child Eran. The blocked love flooded her uncontrollably. The ex-lover heard in the news that her son was killed and called her. The love between them burst forth again. She considered marrying him. This libidinal energy served as a 'pain-killer' for her grief. But the combination of destructive aggression and unacceptable libidinal attraction was too much to handle at the same time.
- The tension between Avi and Hadar became more intense and aggressive.
- Being in a 'symbiotic' relationship with her children Hadar penetrated their individual and married space carrying with her destructive aggression.
- New and old conflicts in the young couples reactivated, especially between the daughter who was identifying with her mother and her husband. They were considering divorce.

- The hidden conflict between Eran's 'two wives': Naomi the widow and Hadar deteriorated to a point where Naomi did not allow Hadar to see her grandchildren anymore.
- The destructive aggression moved to the third generation, making them the next vulnerable candidates. The process was escalating to a point of suicidal thoughts in Eran's eldest son, who, in addition to the loss of his father, lost the connection to his father's family.
- Hadar's aggression which did not fully explode yet, was targeted towards herself and she became weaker, sicker, thinner and angrier almost to a point where her life was in danger.
- Avi's undealt anger towards his disappearing father was reactivated; flooding him and serving at the same time as a distraction from his son's death.
- Eli's anger toward his father who was not there for him throughout his childhood was reactivated. A tense gap opened between them, manifesting itself in sarcastic remarks from Eli toward his father on family occasions and with long periods of detached silence.
- Avi became more and more isolated within his own family and therefore a good candidate to become the next vulnerable distractive – aggression - absorber.
- Avi became involved in Mia's life. Mia's marriage crisis served as diversion from his grief and a solution for his emotional isolation in the family, since he 'was called upon' to help his daughter and could not 'indulge' himself in his own undealt-with emotional crisis.

c) Unfolding, differentiating and working through

It was clear that the whole family was at risk, with the aggressive energy moving from one generation to the other. The next disaster 'was written on the wall.' Since the multiple crises were chain reactions to the terror attack, not all the crises needed to be treated. I choose to treat four centers which I thought would stop the dangerous distractive process:

- Hadar's emotional dynamics;
- Avi's emotional dynamics;
- Hadar and Avi's marriage;
- Mia and Uri's marriage.

Since the suicide threats were situated in the third generation, I felt that stopping the process in the first and second generation would 'free' the grandchildren. In order to allow Hadar to work on her relationship with her ex-lover, I met Hadar and Avi separately and as a couple. I met Mia and Uri in couple therapy. The therapeutic process continued for three years.

Treatment process

- In Hadar's individual psychotherapy she **became aware that her love for her ex-lover was the origin of her special love towards Eran**. Her ex-lover's return into her life made it possible to **confront her genuine feelings**, rather than fantasized feelings, towards him.
- She **re-lived the mourning for her mother including her anger** towards her. This made it easier for her to go through a **separation-individuation process from her mother and from her children** as well.
- Avi **worked on his undealt-with anger** towards his father. A new space opened in him. He could face his emotional difficulty in engaging in meaningful warm relationships with his sons. Consequently his relationship with Eli improved.
- The above processes unchained Hadar and Avi's present relationships from the pull of past unconscious conflicts, and paved the road in couple therapy to be able to discuss old conflicts while allowing for different points of view and emotional needs. Towards the end of therapy, Avi's new intimacy with his son Eli began to raise new tensions in Hadar's and Eli's relationship, pushing them back to their 'good, but sometimes tense' familiar relationship pattern.

- Mia and Uri's couple therapy **was centered on boundaries** at the different levels of family relations.
- **New norms of relationship:** legitimating: emotions, needs and wishes' expressions, and boundaries around personal and shared space started to penetrate the family unit through the family members in therapy.

d) Making space for the mourning process and containing the acute violent forces

During the therapeutic mourning process, the released destructive aggression meshed with their grief, especially with the anger. Bursts of extreme pain, torturous feelings, violent anger, grief and much more flooded the family members shaking them and leaving them helpless to these extreme uncontrollable forces.

In these stages I needed to function as a reliance container who could absorb the extreme intensity, and not be destroyed by it and also to be able to allow feelings to be expressed in words and thus legitimate 'digestible' expressions. Understanding the underlying dynamics helped me to be able to do this. Once the destructive – aggression could be released in the therapeutic safe space, a working-through process became possible. Stage by stage the grip of the explosive energy loosened and the family formed new equilibrium patterns.

Forming new patterns

Hadar decided not to leave her husband and they went back to their "normal-tense" relationship. Boundaries and personal space replaced the symbiotic relationship between Hadar and her children, making it possible for Mia and Uri to build their marriage. For the first time, Hadar permitted herself to tell her children when she was too tired to invite them for the weekend meals and when she did not want to baby-sit for her grandchildren. Hadar now, calmer, made peace with her daughter-in-law and gained healthier relationships with her dead son's children. Her grandchild no longer had suicidal thoughts. With the widow's cooperation Hadar took upon herself the role of telling

Eran's children stories about Eran's childhood, a role that gave her a new constructive status in their family. All the family members formed new patterns of more satisfying relationships.

Towards the end of the therapy the entire family engaged in Eran's memorial project.

Conclusion

Time did not allow for more detailed description of the therapeutic process, nor for detailing aspects of transference and counter-transference which in family and couple therapy is a tool for influencing more directly the several focused transferences and are the major organizers of the therapist's understanding (Scharff and Scharff, 1979).

I have tried to show special aspects of family and couple therapy under extreme trauma. The family, and with them the therapist, faced extreme levels of destructive aggression that expanded, flowed and overwhelmed all the intra-psychic and inter-relational levels, crossing-over generations and in inner internalized emotional relationships, in its flow to continue to explode.

These conditions create unpredicted strenuous crises. The therapist is required to perform complex therapeutic functions: throughout therapy an ongoing 'diagnostic eye' must be open to individuals and to the family as a unit, including those who are outside the therapeutic circle; with attentiveness to the route that the destructive energy takes once its current hosts were treated, identify the focal points of life risks and intervene. At the same time a safe space for the therapist and the family, which enables undisturbed therapeutic work to take place, needs to be created.

Serving as a container in both functions simultaneously, with the awareness to transference and counter-transference processes places high emotional demand on the therapist, who is required not to fall into an omnipotent stance in order to cope.

Further identification for treatment of the different characteristics of families in extreme trauma needs to be done.

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SOCIEDAD SIN LÍMITES: FAMILIAS Y SUJETOS EN ESTADO LÍMITE

*GRACIELA CONSOLI, SUSANA GUERCHICOFF, EZEQUIEL JAROSLAVSKY, IRMA MOROSINI, MARÍA GABRIELA RUIZ**

Los tiempos actuales (Lyotard, 1995) (Giddens, 1990) se caracterizan como tiempos del vacío (Lipovetsky, 1996) donde el ritmo vertiginoso dado por el pasar de objeto a objeto de deseo, muestra la falta de sentido del mismo. Así desfilan no sólo por la consulta analítica sino por los escenarios de la vida cotidiana las figuras del niño aburrido o medicado, el adolescente desmotivado, el adulto abrumado, el anciano abandonado, y las familias disgregadas.

Se llamó a esos tiempos: "líquidos" (Bauman) por sus cualidades de fluidez cambiante de una realidad que estando hoy, perdía su sentido mañana.

Pero la gran contradicción o paradoja es que los seres humanos necesitamos desde el inicio de nuestras vidas, figuras de "apego" seguro (Bowlby) que nos aporten estabilidad y confianza con su constancia, con la certeza del afecto que abre ese "espacio al que podamos advenir" (P. Aulagnier).

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La paradoja planteada entre la necesidad afectiva y estable y lo pasajero de los encuentros con constantes re-cambios de parejas, hace que esta seguridad se desdibuje y caigan las certezas primarias confrontadas con la incertidumbre que generan valores, códigos, lenguajes, los que ni bien se acceden a ellos, ya variaron.

Vemos emerger, entonces, los estados límites que son uno de los grandes desafíos de la clínica en la actualidad. Estos pacientes nos convocan y nos perturban como analistas tanto por sus síntomas (adicciones, trastornos de la alimentación, ataques de pánico, depresiones, sentimientos de vacuidad psíquica y pasajes al acto) como también por sus demandas. Al consultarnos nos encontramos con redes vinculares familiares de un alto grado de fragilidad, déficit de simbolización y facilidad para actuaciones diversas; pero esto no sólo sucede con el paciente que es objeto de consulta, sino también con los otros miembros de la familia que sufren y hacen sufrir a los demás integrantes. Y ¿por qué no? a los analistas individuales, a los de familia, a los integrantes de los equipos institucionales.

Sabemos por la experiencia en la clínica individual, pero mucho más en la vincular (a través de la observación en los dispositivos de pareja, familia, grupos, instituciones). que en las personas se pueden producir regresiones en su funcionamiento psíquico, las que determinan dificultades en sus capacidades de diferenciación, discriminación y el pensar respecto de sí mismos (reflectividad) como consecuencia del incremento de procesos transubjetivos que los condicionan y los determinan dando lugar a las formas psicopatológicas del sufrimiento de los vínculos instituidos (Kaës, 1996).

El camino transitado desde el lema del mayo francés de 1968 "prohibido – prohibir" hasta el "todo bien" de nuestros días, muestra senderos de banderas levantadas en pro de ideales que avanzaron hacia una confusión donde se extraviaron las banderas junto con los ideales.

Ya Sigmund Freud en Psicología de las Masas y Análisis del Yo nos enseñó acerca de ciertos procesos que hacían perder a los sujetos su singularidad y su capacidad de pensar. Los fenómenos de masa y su influencia des-diferenciadora en la psiquis de sus integrantes, la hipnosis y la sugestión como así también los fenómenos de la identificación histórica cualifican fenómenos que Freud estudió muy

atinadamente y que ocurren habitualmente con más frecuencia de lo que suponemos.

La influencia que tiene en los sujetos las alianzas inconscientes (los pactos narcisistas y pactos renegativos) en su vertiente patológica, los acoplamientos psíquicos grupales que potencian transmisiones transpsíquicas (el APG a predominio isomórfico) pueden favorecer procesos de desobjetivación y de pérdida de la singularidad de cada uno.

También sabemos que la producción de estos procesos desobjetivantes depende de que los miembros que participan en los vínculos, sean proclives a dichas influencias. Es decir que tengan en la conformación de su aparato psíquico y de su narcisismo, un déficit en el desarrollo de su propia subjetividad y de su capacidad de pensar, significar e historizar y de un pensamiento reflexivo (pensar acerca de sí mismo) presentando fallas en la constitución de su narcisismo primario, con prevalencia de una angustia depresiva (Jean Bergeret, 1974), (Green A., 1980), lo cual los vuelve muy necesitados de un vínculo con funciones anaclíticas de sostén y continencia que es lo que no tuvieron en las condiciones de origen de su constitución psíquica, en sus vínculos primarios familiares.

La confusión es una cualidad que se ha extendido en el ejercicio de la parentalidad, en el ejercicio de la ley familiar, en los lugares de autoridad, respeto, solidez afectiva, compromiso recíproco con reconocimiento. La falta de reconocimiento opera en la intersubjetividad como un ruido que perturba las posibilidades del vínculo resintiéndolo las respectivas posibilidades de subjetivación.

La subjetividad está atravesada por modos de organización familiar cuyos pilares son la diferencia sexual y la diferencia generacional, ya que apuntaladas en ambas, se perfilan las identidades y se ajustan los vínculos.

Las patologías de déficit en la constitución psíquica y en el narcisismo, del cual los estados límites son un ejemplo paradigmático, son proclives a generar procesos desobjetivantes.

Entendemos la subjetivación como el proceso de construcción de la subjetividad. Es el proceso de devenir sujeto singular en la intersubjetividad" (Kaës, 2006). Implica que el Yo disponga de sus procesos secundarios, (las representaciones del preconsciente) que le

permiten poder pensar los pensamientos, posibilitan la historización y los proyectos identificatorios.

El Sujeto, es un sujeto sujetado a los vínculos en los cuales está inserto (familiares, grupales e institucionales etc.) y a las formaciones vinculares (las alianzas inconscientes y el aparato psíquico vincular) y todos dependemos, querámoslo ó no, de los vínculos en los cuales nos sostenemos, nos proveemos y en su origen nos constituimos como individuos.

La sociedad, la cultura y la historia proveen al Yo el contenido mismo de las representaciones a partir de las cuales puede oficiarse el saber de sí y para sí, la temporalidad y la posibilidad de identificarse elaborando un proyecto.

Cuando la identidad se siente amenazada (violencia fundamental, Bergeret) las descargas requieren de formas violentas. Desde esa violencia hay una búsqueda desesperada de apuntalamiento en vínculos con algunos otros considerados semejantes por el sólo hecho de atravesar las mismas condiciones de exclusión. Esta violencia que gesta códigos, produce formas de desubjetivación. La exclusión pone el acento en el estado de estar por fuera del orden social, el expulsado es resultado de una operación social.

Este estado se parece a la angustia catastrófica (Winnicott) que experimenta el ser humano al perder las bases de sustentación dadas por el afecto seguro, la confianza, el reconocimiento y ante la amenaza de pérdida se produce una movilización de recursos extraordinarios para superar los peligros de este arrasamiento.

Si se vuelve a fracasar el camino es el marasmo.

El resquebrajamiento de los "garantes metasociales" (Kaës) conjuntamente con los "garantes metapsíquicos" (Kaës) contribuye a la desubjetivación como forma de violencia silente ya que el hombre, fue visto más como objeto consumidor o productor que como persona. El mercado se dirige a un sujeto que solo tiene derechos de consumidor, y no los derechos y obligaciones conferidos al ciudadano.

Afirma Kaës que la "inestabilidad de los zócalos" produce estos cuadros tan frecuentes debido a la fragilización de las alianzas inconscientes como el *pacto de renuncia* que instala la descarga

inmediata de las pulsiones, entronizando deseos cambiantes y anulando impedimentos pautados por la cultura.

El riesgo de nuestro tiempo es que ofrece una inmediatez en el resultado placentero que puede paralizar los proyectos con tiempos mediatos. Esa es la mayor violencia.

El otro como espejo, límite, lugar de diferenciación y de deseo se opaca. El otro es prescindible.

La modificación de los bordes entre lo interno y externo en la familia y en lo social, corrió a quiénes trataban de advenir a un espacio con límites confusos. La incertidumbre ocupó el lugar de ciertas verdades, las que aunque a veces eran certezas impuestas protegían de la inermidad. Enfrentamos entonces la paradoja de contar con un gran espacio de libertad dado por la amplitud de ofertas de mercado, pero con un paralelo empobrecimiento del mundo interno, del pensamiento, del aprendizaje por la experiencia, dificultando el discernir entre la heterogeneidad compleja de una realidad que ostenta confusión por ausencia de marcas identificatorias.

La patología social de la época exhibe problemas de borde, que expresan dificultades para diferenciar el adentro y el afuera, manejando la violencia contra sí y/o contra el mundo.

Cuando atendemos pacientes en estado límite, nos encontramos con la necesidad de visualizar quién es el paciente a diferencia de las familias de organización neurótica.

Trabajar con grupos de familias nos enfrenta cotidianamente con sus problemáticas y con las nuestras, ya que no sólo abordamos la transferencia sino la contratransferencia y la intertransferencia.

La condición básica de trabajo es la de ofrecer un marco suficientemente estable para contener la violencia que emerge bajo diversas formas proponiendo escenificaciones que movilicen las cargas libidinales estancadas.

En las patologías de borde que se manifiestan en familias con trastornos de subjetivación, el funcionamiento es aglutinado – sincrético (Bleger) denegando con la palabra, lo que expresa el cuerpo y/o los actos (desmentida).

Generalmente este modo de relación que circula entre el grupo de familia los lleva a enfrentarse con la violencia de sus cuerpos. 'Ni juntos ni separados' es una forma de luchar por recortarse pero sosteniendo la base común a lo que no acceden por el pensamiento sino por la acción, que es lo que en TFP tratamos de simbolizar para facilitar el despeje. Los choques violentos entre sí intentan desmentir el sufrimiento en el que están embarcados sin alcanzar la representación de ese dolor. -

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JAITIN R. (2006). CLINIQUE DE L'INCESTE FRATERNEL. PARIS: DUNOD.

Rosa JAITIN est psychanalyste, thérapeute de famille et de groupe, et intervient dans de nombreuses institutions comme superviseur et analyste de la pratique clinique. Ajoutons que l'auteur est d'origine Argentine, où elle a exercé comme thérapeute de groupes d'enfants et a enseigné la psychologie de l'Éducation à l'Université de Buenos Aires : elle a été amenée à réfléchir sur les événements liés à la dictature Argentine, et sur leurs conséquences traumatiques. Si son ouvrage se nourrit donc d'une très riche expérience individuelle, groupale et familiale, il ne se limite pas à une réflexion, certes approfondie sur la théorie et la clinique : il ouvre aussi des perspectives plus larges sur certains modèles de compréhension de phénomènes politiques et sociaux. Le fraternel n'est, en ce sens, pas seulement à comprendre dans son acception de lien familial, mais plus généralement, comme un mode de lien social relationnel dont il est en quelque sorte un prototype.

Le travail de R. JAITIN se présente avec une grande rigueur. L'auteur s'appuie sur sa connaissance et sa pratique de la thérapie familiale psychanalytique à la fois dans l'École Argentine (E. PICHON-RIVIERE) et dans l'École française (selon les propositions mises en place par A. RUFFIOT). Cherchant les points de convergence entre les deux écoles, R. JAITIN, propose le concept d'*appareil psychique fraternel*, (prolongement de l'appareil psychique groupal de R. KAËS, et de l'appareil psychique familial, selon A. RUFFIOT). Cette

conceptualisation permet de mettre en lumière les spécificités du groupe interne fraternel, tel qu'il se tisse et s'articule dans la trame du tissu psychique familial. L'organisation psychique du lien fraternel peut alors devenir vecteur de transmission psychique spécifique au sein du familial, transmission des archives familiales et du discours des ancêtres sur ce que représente le fait d'être frère et sœur dans telle famille.

L'auteur définit ensuite deux aspects des organisateurs du lien fraternel : la catégorie du *spatial* et celle du *temporel*. La catégorie du spatial reprend la notion de l'enveloppe, construite à partir des idéaux familiaux dont la fratrie se fait le porte voix : reprenant identité et représentation idéalisées, les « frères » se tissent un contenant protecteur et différencié générationnellement des parents, prenant en compte par ailleurs le contexte historique et social. La catégorie du temporel se construit à partir de l'expérience des rythmes d'accordage dans les échanges entre les enfants, sur des modes qui évoluent progressivement d'une rencontre corporelle-sensorielle vers une différenciation intégrant passé, présent et futur.

S'intéressant à l'expérience culturelle (au sens de D.W. WINNICOTT), R. JAÏTIN montre que le frère et la sœur, comme objets réels, sont les premiers jouets. Ils placent l'enfant devant la nécessité de renoncer à être objet exclusif de la mère, et à organiser des stratégies qui aident à la différenciation entre objet interne et objet externe, entre réalité psychique et réalité groupale. Cette rencontre n'est évidemment pas exempte de violence, et amène inévitablement la question de la prise de pouvoir, de la rivalité et du choc avec celui qui constitue alors « l'ennemi » ou « l'ami-allié ». C'est en ce sens que le lien fraternel est une ouverture primaire à la dimension politique.

La question de l'inceste fraternel vient prendre place dans l'élaboration théorique comme une potentialité intrinsèque du lien fraternel. L'auteur définit les conditions de dysfonctionnement familial qui en amènent le risque, à savoir une indifférenciation générationnelle, une défaillance de l'enveloppe familiale, et une non reconnaissance du frère comme tiers et de soi-même comme un sujet identifié et référé à une loi organisant l'ensemble familial et social. Si une union sexuelle entre frère et sœur de même génération constitue *un inceste primaire*, il existe aussi *un inceste secondaire* qui serait perpétré dans un groupe dans lequel le lien est symboliquement un lien fraternel (familles recomposées ou enfants placés en institutions). La réflexion de R.

JAITIN doit rendre les cliniciens sensibles et attentifs à certaines situations rencontrées dans les institutions, qu'il convient d'aborder avec une extrême prudence : en effet, si la question de la transgression de la loi de l'interdit de l'inceste doit être traitée dans son versant judiciaire en cas de passage à l'acte, il ne faut pas pour autant négliger *la dimension défensive* de modalités de liens « incestuels » pouvant parfois constituer des étayages vitaux pour des groupes familiaux en situation traumatique.

Le grand intérêt de cet ouvrage est qu'il associe étroitement théorie et clinique. Si la théorie est parfois dense, elle s'éclaire dans l'analyse clinique que fait l'auteur dans des protocoles rigoureux qui permettent un travail de réflexion approfondi. La variété des situations présentées (thérapies familiales menées par l'auteur, mais aussi travail institutionnel en foyer pour enfants et adolescents), permet une grande ouverture, d'autant que R. JAITIN met toujours sa clinique à l'épreuve des échanges avec d'autres cliniciens. Il en découle une pensée nerveuse et humaine, qui ne cherche pas à enfermer le sujet dans une théorie, mais au contraire à affiner et ouvrir vers une saisie plus juste, même si elle se complexifie.

Enfin, le thème même de cet ouvrage, le lien fraternel, renvoie chacun de nous à une dimension et des expériences qui font écho, que ce soit dans notre histoire familiale, dans nos histoires institutionnelles, ou dans des vécus plus politiques ou citoyens.

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**MANZANO J., PALACIO ESPASA F., ZILKHA N. (1999).
LES SCENARIOS NARCISSIQUES DE LA PARENTALITE.
PARIS: PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRES DE FRANCE.**

“Charlie weeps his mother’s sadness”. Charlie is a five-year-old boy who is lately showing symptoms of maniacal hyperactivity, disturbed relationships, and problems in separating from his mother. His mother believes his difficulties have begun when she lost her grandmother, who had offered her unbounded love and comprehension since childhood, thus compensating the lack of attention she felt was receiving from her parents. A three-session consultation with the presence of parents and their child brings to light the mother’s identification with the lost and idealized object, and her subsequent submission to her son, without ever imposing him any limit. Charlie experiences all the attentions he is given as the realization of his phantasies of incest and parricide, which also emerge through the transference, whereby the therapist becomes the rival that he must attack and destroy.

Daniel’s case is about a very opposite nine-year-old boy with an aggressive behaviour, which can already be described as antisocial. Family counselling reveals how his mother projects on him her very authoritative father, whereas his father experiences him both as his own violent father and the unfairly treated boy that he always felt to be. Therefore, while the parents are thus able to recover their libidinal link with their own father images, the boy identifies himself with the

aggressive and omnipotent aspects of these collusive parental projections: he then organizes, as by proxy, an antisocial personality.

These are only two of the several clinical cases analyzed in this book illustrating how often parents, in order to ward off their phantoms, don't just repress their memories, but are led to use projection or projective identification. In the first example, the mother identifies herself with the ideal parents she had wished to have; in the second case, the parents identify themselves with the child who fears to lose his parents' affection. These phantasmatic scenarios are in most instances preconscious, and can therefore be often transformed into a satisfying condition for family members by means of a careful interpretative working-through of transference and countertransference, focused on anaclitical and edipical issues. This is the case for the first clinical illustration, but not always, unfortunately, these techniques are successful. In the second clinical picture, both the parents and the son had a substantially positive pre-transference; nonetheless, the sole work on the projected paternal persecutory imago of the parents on the child proved to be insufficient. An individual psychotherapy is therefore advisable for the boy.

After their previous extensive writings on the subject, Manzano, Palacio Espasa and Zilkha propose in this book further clinical work and theoretic elaboration on therapeutic interventions designed for parents and children, with a specific focus on the area of relationships.

Following Fraiberg's pioneering therapeutic experiments, based on the conceptualization of the *ghosts in the nursery*, Palacio Espasa himself and Cramer developed the technique of short psychotherapy with young children and their mothers. Their elaboration started from the notions of *phantasmatic interaction* and *symptomatic interactive sequence*, a composed structure at the junction between intra-psychic and interacted dynamics. Palacio Espasa and Manzano further extended this approach, even applying it to adolescents.

The subject of parent-child counselling for a large range of ages is developed and theorized throughout this book, on the assumption that there are a few core elements, which can hamper evolution processes at different stages of development. The specific significance of this book is in designing and illustrating a counselling model, which is soundly rooted in a psychoanalytic methodology and conceptualization. Just as in Freud's formulation of psychoanalysis, here we find an

“investigation method”, a “treatment method” and a very clear and articulated theoretical framework; all this is supported and detailed through exhaustive and convincing clinical examples, which together offer a complete picture of the range of clinical situations addressed by the proposed theorization.

Narcissism is the key concept in this book, stemming from Freud's definition in 1914, when he stated that parent's love for their children is nothing but their own revived narcissism. Moreover, setting the narcissistic against the anaclytic libidinal object choice, Freud described the different constellations where the individual loves in the other “either what he is, or what he was, what he would like to be, the person that was a part of himself.”

Using in their counselling work a shifting perspective from parents' and children's psychic world to the relational field, Manzano, Palacio Espasa, and Zilkha point out that relational configurations similar to those which Freud caught in adults' narcissistic love relationships can be found in different proportions and forms in all parents-children relationships. Specifically, they are speaking of secondary narcissism, viewed as the presence of an object representation of the other who becomes one's own self through the phantoms of introjective and projective identification, which can partially or totally dissolve the boundaries between oneself and the object.

Moving from this assumptions, the Authors define the “narcissistic scenarios in parenthood”, which can be identified through a series of elements that are constantly present and detectable. The core mechanism is surely the projection or, more exactly, the projective identification of parents towards their child: what is projected is a self-representation, therefore invested by narcissistic libido, both directly and indirectly - through the image of an inner object with whom an identification was established. The parents' projection towards their child corresponds to their *complementary identification* or counter-identification with another inner representation: the result is a picture always involving a relationship between “self” and “self”. Creating this scene is always aimed to realize a fulfilment of a narcissistic nature; other goals can be achieved at the same time, mostly defensive or useful to realize object libidinal satisfactions. These projections and identifications result in the *acted interaction* which, by means of its realistic quality, transforms the scenario in something that goes

beyond a pure imaginative essence, and converts it to a symptom allowing masked substitute satisfactions.

Two different dynamic courses can be detected in these interactions. In one case, a scene is “fixed”, with the aim of convincing oneself that it will be unalterable: a father, for example, recognizes his son as the ideal and omnipotent child that he would have liked to be, identifying himself in the ideal father he had always longed for. In the other case, what has been experienced as an unacceptable past is “repeated” in a mended form, which corresponds to one’s own unsatisfied wishes; it occurs, for example, when a parent projects onto his/her child the image of the sad and deserted child he felt he was, and, identifying himself in a parent that does not abandon, retroactively restores his own story and becomes the son that never underwent separation.

Phantoms and unconscious imaginary roles are therefore determinant for parents’ representations of themselves as well as for their behaviour with their children. This process encourages children to develop particular forms of expression, which become part of the specific communication system between them and their parents. Children will respond to the phantasmatic pressures expressed by their parents’ communicative behaviour according both to their drives and defences and to their needs of attachment and holding. Either if a child identifies himself, totally or partially, with the representations projected onto him, or if he projects back or rejects the role his parents gave him, his developmental processes might be disturbed and symptoms might occur.

It should be emphasized that a narcissistic relationships between parents and children always accompanies, in variable proportions, an object relationship where the child is recognized and loved as an individualized subject. When problems arise during early development, the narcissistic relationship becomes overriding and hinders the move to the prevalence of an object relationship. A balance between the different forces can be maintained as long as the child adapts to the projective pressures exerted by his parents and plays the role he has been assigned. Counselling is usually required when the child does not adapt anymore to these projections and manifests his individual needs, which do not match with his parents’ projections, thus upsetting the family balance; however, also the child’s compliance with these projections might drive him to developmental problems as well as to troubled relationships with the external world.

In clinical practice of counselling, different sources are available to outline the narcissistic scenarios and the relational dynamics that are to be used in interpretative interventions. Among these, specifically important are parents' and, if possible, children's verbal communications, parents' pre-transference towards the therapist, the therapist's counter-reactions, and evidences from the observation of interactive parents-child behaviour.

Clinical illustrations, which take up a very large part of this book, develop on the basis of a conceptual framework that is composed of these key elements:

- parents' predominant projection;
- parents' counteridentification;
- aim of the projection;
- child's reaction to the projection;
- signification/understanding of the symptoms (based on the diagnostic evaluation of child and parents);
- factors that originated the decompensation which led to the consultation;
- parents' pre-transference;
- child's pre-transference;
- therapist's counter-reactions;
- therapist's interventions;
- evolution of the situation.

As far as technique is concerned, Cramer and Palacio Espasa had already stressed (Cramer, 1974; Cramer, Palacio Espasa, 1993) the peculiar sensitivity to therapeutic interventions and the natural availability to change characterizing post-partum period. In this book they demonstrate how a short psychotherapy approach can be applied to counselling for parents and children of all ages, including adolescents. When adolescents are involved, as well as children beyond infancy, the interpretations will be simultaneously addressed to the parents and to the child or adolescent, and they shall consider that

the Oedipus conflict will be added the narcissistic scenario. Moreover, fathers are more often included, whereas in the past literature they were rather marginal characters, due to the fact that the focus was mainly on the mother-child relationship. This counselling methodology is dated back to Winnicott, who introduced a technique of child psychotherapeutic intervention consisting in sporadic sessions instead of regular and methodical ones as in the traditional setting.

The interpretation addressed to the parents in a family setting allows the child to become aware of the suffered conflictual overload resulting from his parents' projections. On the other hand, the direct interpretation to the child in the presence of his parents permits both parts to grasp the conflict they mutually arouse in each other, in a self-feeding vicious circle. A pivotal concept for this model of understanding is the so called "phantasmatic interaction", which Cramer introduced in 1982: it attaches parents' phantoms a fundamental role in the creation of the child's psychic world and in the parents' reaction towards the child's phantoms.

In all cases, the background for the appearance of troubles in parents-child relationship is made of the whole of psychological processes that usually take place in parents at their children's birth. First of all, there is the *developmental mourning* that is the reactivation of the experience of loss of original objects: insofar as it hasn't undergone enough working through, it can show up in the parent-child relationship as a narcissistic scenario. An other widespread process is the *forced re-identification* with the image of one's own parents', which revives conflicts with the sexual images of one's parents, by then repressed since latency and adolescence.

Projective identification or, in other words, the projection of aspects of the parent's self onto the child, is nearly always the projection of an inner object that contains these self-aspects which were projected onto it: this is a normal phantom that performs fundamental functions for development and communication, but it can become pathological for defensive reasons, especially related to separation and object loss anxieties. In such cases, the *intensity* of projection is discriminating, and can be assessed through the degree of aggression, violence and splitting of the parental phantom, the quality of the resulting omnipotent control and fusion, the quantity of Ego lost by the parent due to projection, and the obstacles to communication and awareness:

all this is in contrast with the normal projective identification, that is at the service of empathy.

The missing of the status of child that is involved in the shift to the adult condition intensifies as the parents make a request of help, thus fostering a pre-transference towards the analyst; if it is positive, a short therapy is indicated, whereas if it is negative, a short course is not recommended. The importance of pre-transference and of the related countertransference as therapeutic instruments results from the fact that the projections towards the therapist are the same or closely related to those that the parents address towards their children.

One of the key elements in the therapeutic approach presented in this book is the fundamental use of the interpretative tool, as long as the pre-transference is predominantly positive. *Interpretation* is not addressed to the transference from the parent to the therapist, but to the transference from the parent towards the child, thus giving priority to anaclytical projections, and not to the edipic ones (the first one taking over and including edipic images and then generating less resistance). By means of this work, a parent can take back his own projections towards his child and start an intrapsychic working-through of the conflict. The authors suggest to avoid, when possible, to interpret negative transference, which would need a much longer long psychotherapeutic process.

Interpretation is essential in order to establish new preconscious links and to transform both the projections onto the child and the parent's identifications, thus avoiding that repetition mechanism resettle in after ephemeral "transference recoveries". Provided that the therapist has the function of a container of the parents', and possibly the child's, projective identifications, which he modifies through his own *insight* and related psychic activity, interpretation is still necessary in order to project back the modified projections to patients. This helps them reintroject their own inner objects and transformed parts, as well as the therapeutic function that generates understanding and becomes therefore a new inner resource.

The *clinical configurations* of the most typical and frequent narcissistic scenarios can be classified according to the dominant type of projective identification of parents towards their child. Between the two main pictures to be considered, the first one shows a prevalent

projection onto the child of the parents' childish images of themselves; in the second one, the dominant projection involves the image of a significant inner object in the parents' past. Projections of infantile self-images and objects of the past that are experienced as persecutory or very harmed are considered unsuitable to short interventions.

Short interventions are fit when parental projections involve *self-images* experienced as *deprived or abandoned, idealized, or damaged*, or when parents' inner objects are *damaged, idealized, or marked by hostile or negative features*. In the most favourable situations, when parental images projected onto the child stand out for their mostly negative features, the parent strives for restoring, through projective identification, a bond with the significant missed object of his past; then the analyst can use this libidic potential to free the child from negative projections. In cases where a short therapeutic approach is not suggested, as when parents project persecutory or very damaged self-images or inner object representations onto the child, we are dealing with projective identifications of a basically expulsive kind: the parent evacuates negative representations either of the child he was or of significant objects experienced as aggressive or damaged by himself. The Authors propose the definition of "dissociated narcissism" when speaking about the mechanism by which parents oppose a strong resistance to acknowledge the basic tie between their actual condition as parents and their past experience as children with their own parents. In that case, parental idealization is massive and entirely unconscious, so that it is very difficult to single out the narcissistic aspects in parents.

In the *theoretical conclusions* developed at the end of the book, the Authors stress the extension that the "anaclytic phantasmal representations" have in parental narcissistic scenarios. In contrast with Freud's formulations, which apparently dropped the notion of a self-preserving drive while introducing the concept of narcissism, the Authors start from Kleinian theory to suggest that libidinal drives, in elaborating the depressive position and the struggle against the death drive, include both aspects of self-preservation and sexual features.

The specific significance of this theoretic elaboration lies therefore in identifying a double phantasmal value, both anaclytical and sexual, in the phantoms that characterize parent-children relationships: therefore, it definitely departs from theories stemming from Bowlby's

formulations, which assign a key role to the notion of attachment. Moreover, it emphasizes how anaclytical phantoms often work as a sound preconscious defense to edipical and incestuous phantoms.

The other distinguishing aspect in this book is the wealth of clinical material that is offered as a support to the proposed theories and to illustrate the suggested technique: it results in a very clear and terse exposition, which sometimes might even seem excessive. This, though, might be a risk worth taking when the aim is to generously conveying so many ideas in a clear manner and describing intervention techniques suitable even to other clinical contexts.