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EDITORIAL*

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In this issue the journal will look at a crucial idea which is studied in many parts of the world, and we could say that it defines the identity of clinical work with both families and couples. In psychoanalyzing a family or couple, means working on their links, on their inter-personal, inter-generational and trans-generational links, everything that makes up that "extra" in a family which is more than just a simple aggregation of the family members.

This naturally assumes a radical change of point of view, a radical rethinking on the ideas of subjectivity and the Other. We have to make a necessary distinction (and we can say so in order to define the field decisively) between one theory that works on objectual relationships and thus, on projections of the subject onto the object of his projection and on the other, a theory where the other is another subject, different from ourselves who constructs a new relationship which we call a "link."

The real discovery is in this novelty, in this neo-construction because it re-positions many concepts which we were previously accustomed to. We could begin to speak (as Kaës suggests) about inclusion or exclusion of links, about the conjunction and disjunction and about unconscious alliances as specific formations at this level (Kaës).

Naturally, the concepts on pathology may also be revised; and why not also speak about pathology of links, and at other levels, of trans-personal pathologies?

Many authors have tried to expand upon this third area and have characterized it differently according to the various orientations. Some are naturally genial pioneers who have extraordinarily fore-trodden these concepts, as for example, Bion who states, remembering Martin Buber, "When one speaks about Me-You, the significant thing is not the two correlated objects, but the

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relationship that exists between them. That is, an open reality that has no end" (*Cogitations* cit., p. 367). Bion speaks about links when he talks of L, H, K, emotive experiences in which two people or two parts of a person have a reciprocal relationship, he also adds that you can't say that A loves B, but only that there is a loving relationship between them. And if we arrive at our present time, Stern, too, in his own way, speaks about links when he says that a baby, who with his first experiences, internalizes the "to be with" experiences.

Of course, one could raise the objection that family and couple psychoanalysts give different acceptance to the term "link." And this is true, it is possible to observe it in this issue of the journal.

This concept, which started from the first pieces of work carried out by Pichon Rivière in Argentina, and arrived at the most recent elaborations which can be attributed to Kaës, Berenstein, Granjon, Aubertel, Eiguer, Losso, Puget and many others, is still, in the most part, a huge unexplored continent.

However, are we speaking about the discovery of a new paradigm or, rather, of a new level of observation and an expansion of the point of view?

If this is not a new paradigm that has the pretentiousness of obscuring other more well-known and well used models, it is also true that we cannot accept the position of those who believe that psychoanalysis has to focus only upon the level of fantasmatic relationships, only upon an internal world, that, like a primitive god is self-referencing, is self-generating and self-perpetuating!

We are convinced that the answer is to consider this perspective, that we will discuss in this issue, like a complex and articulated antithesis, which is, above all else, multidimensional. It acquires meaning only in the dimension in which it confronts and articulates almost two levels, one which is represented by the interpersonal, by links, the third party object that is new and constructed, and the other that is of a fantasmatic relationship.

Many of the authors who are present in this issue share this hypothesis even though they may express it by using different words.

In this regard, Kaës' words are valid for everyone when he defines the existence of a third topic and states that, "the duty of a third topic is to describe and render intelligible complex relationships that articulate, distinguish and, in certain ways, oppose the intra-psychic space, that of a singular subject and those of his plural spaces which are organized by processes and specific psychic formations. Such are the epistemological stakes" (Kaës, « La réalité psychique du lien », *Le divan familial*, 22, pp. 109-125).

Many precious pieces of work go to make up this issue, some have been republished from other journals as they are prestigious or particularly significant. Others are the current fronts of significant research, others, such as those of Scharff and the colleagues who he presents, were presented in reduced versions at the International Psychoanalytic Association conference in Chicago, on the panel of "The Concept of the Link in Couple and Family Psychoanalysis starting from a clinical session that was presented by David Scharff." Richard Zeitner, Isidoro Berenstein, Anna Maria Nicolò, Roberto Losso, Timothy Keogh and Hugo Bleichmar commented upon the theme of the link and an interesting debate followed.

Thus, we are sure that such debate will continue even thanks in part to this issue of the journal.