



International Review of Couple and Family Psychoanalysis
ISSN 2105-1038

N° 34-1/2026
Tribute to René Kaës

Introduction to the issue “Tribute to René Kaës”

René Kaës, a pioneer in paradigm research, a master of the human condition

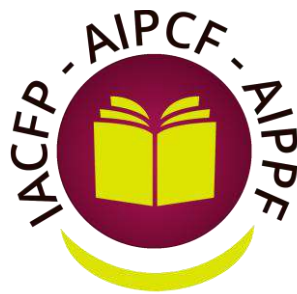
Irma Morosini*

As he described himself, he was a “frontier-dweller” who dared to explore both the external and the internal, forging his identity as a researcher who dares to go further. He applied this ability to his rigorous and robust thinking, as demonstrated by the consistency of his arguments. He never lost his temper, but he held his ground with patience and firmness, perhaps inherited from those persevering farming grandparents waiting for the seed to flourish in the earth.

His love of cinema – as he expresses it in his autobiography – shows us both the importance he attached to art alongside science, and the value that images and their significance in representations held for him. This is evident in his interest in psychodrama, where he was struck by the “creative force emanating from those experiences”.

He experienced them as a participant, and this allowed him to appreciate their application and usefulness, revealing another level of understanding from a body

* Graduate in Psychology (UBA). Psychodrama director. Specialist in Family and Couple Psychoanalysis. Lecturer at Universidad de Buenos Aires and Universidad Católica Argentina (undergraduate and postgraduate). Member of IAGP; AIPPF; AAPFyP. Member of the Editorial Committee and Editorial Secretariat of the *Revue Psychanalyse & Intersubjectivité*. Director of the *Revue de l'Association Internationale de Psychanalyse de Couple et de Famille*. Former member of the Board of Directors and Vice-President of the AIPPF (Spanish language). Author of the book *Clínica de la Terapéutica Familiar*, EAE, 2020. irmamorosini@hotmail.com; ilmorosini@gmail.com



engaged in revisiting what had been lived and its meanings.

For Kaës, ‘social representations’ held a place of particular interest, as well as in relation to the study of group dynamics.

He pressed on, seeking to understand and delve deeper, and although his observations did not always coincide with what was “politically accepted” by the prevailing psychoanalytic school of thought—which was hierarchically established—he remained true to the observations he recorded in his *Chronicles*.

Confrontational, yet not obstinate, his capacity for listening and open dialogue made his scientific debates a fertile ground for thought and fruitful learning.

His conception of intersubjectivity as a distinct space redefined the bond in a different light; occupying more ground than previously realised, with multiple connotations, and particularly within the groups that concern us: the couple and the family, emphasising the importance of unconscious alliances and how, within and through them, inter- and transgenerational transmission operates.

Kaës taught us the undeniable value of transformation as an indispensable psychic work operating within the intimacy of intersubjective bonds—a capacity that psychoanalytic work can and deserves to harness in order to generate its effects and open up its possibilities, to achieve the sought-after psychic change towards a better way of being with others and with oneself.

He opened up the field of intersubjective complexity with his metapsychology, conceiving the interweaving of spaces in such a way that he works on boundaries from the perspective of their permeability.

With these lines, I introduce issue 34 of our journal, dedicated to the work of René Kaës. In this issue, the reader will find articles originally published on the Kaës website, such as “Filiation and Affiliation”, and others contributed by partner journals, as well as reissues of works we have chosen to republish, as it was Kaës himself who sent them to us for publication:

- «**Le problème psychanalytique de la transmission de la vie et de la mort psychique entre les générations**»
- «**Notes sur les espaces de la réalité mentale et le malaise en temps de pandémie**».
- «**La pluralité des espaces et des temporalités psychiques**».
- «**Quelques effets dans la fratrie à la suite du décès d’un parent. Le travail de l’héritage**».
- «**La realidad psíquica del vínculo**»
- «**Polyphonie et polytopie du rêve**»
- «**Filiation and affiliation. Some aspects of the reworking of the family romance in adoptive families, groups, and institutions**»



– «La diffraction des groupes internes»

In addition to these articles, which have already been published in previous issues of our journal, there are new articles such as the one by Rosa Jaitin entitled: «**A Journey through the Life and Work of René Kaës**», in which she speaks of a close emotional bond forged during years of training under his supervision, which developed into a solid friendship. Rosa traces parts of her history and highlights some experiences from the period they spent together. She speaks to us not only of the professional but also of the human being within him, whilst providing a detailed account of the evolution of his thinking through his works, scientific contributions and debates. Her presentation follows the themes that have interested Kaës and on which he has focused his research: the specific dynamics of groups and their contexts; issues of methodology and the positioning of psychoanalytic psychodrama; the importance of the family group as a place of emergence and formation of subjectivity; the importance of psychic reality as a distinct and determining reality in intersubjectivity; the knotting of bonds; the weight and importance of unconscious alliances and social contracts, and the mechanisms operating in the process of inter- and transgenerational transmission. In her article on «**Unconscious alliances in the couple's bond**», she highlights their importance in sustaining the network of bonds, as they are producers of the unconscious; from this network, they are linked by obligations of mutual response in their intersubjective relationship, paving the way for the creation of a community of denial as a defence mechanism amongst those sustaining the bond, and in this functioning, the metapsychic and metasocial guarantors act as protectors. He goes on to explain the role played by transmission in this process.

The range of topics addressed by Kaës is vast, and the authors who write about him take various approaches to presenting them.

In another new article, we read the reflections and tribute by Anna María Nicoló, who has titled her piece: «**The Master**», in which she explores his works, concepts and developments, and in each of these, the contributions he makes to a deeper understanding of relationships within various groups, and particularly within the family, with its relational complexities, specific characteristics and the variations found in each individual story. For us, psychoanalysts interested in the relational processes of the family and the couple, his research, concepts and discoveries shed clearer light on understanding the intricate path of each story, of the meanings and senses, of the repetitions and circuits traversed, where unconscious contents express their fabric and offer glimpses of certain keys to understanding and working with them.

Denis Mellier titles his work «**René Kaës, por un psicoanálisis resueltamente intersubjetivo**», in which he offers an engaged account that reviews Kaës's history,



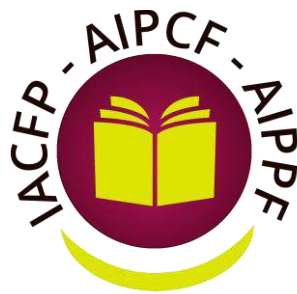
writings and theoretical contributions; by narrating them, he allows us to see the mark they leave on his own thinking. He explores the contributions regarding the Group Psychic Apparatus, the group object, its processes, and the devices formulated by Kaës with great and efficient creativity. The work with institutions and their analysis arouses great interest in following the path of his thought, working with boundaries that may well require knowledge from related sciences, yet without straying from the core of psychoanalysis. Finally, Mellier cites in Kaës “a keen awareness of our times”, expressing an understanding of the constant and inexorable workings of the culture of each era, its impact on us, the interdependencies in reciprocity and their effects, and the paradigms that take shape as the defining features of the times.

Christiane Joubert writes about René in a book reviewed in this very issue of the journal by Edith Lecourt, *Les apports de René Kaës à la psychanalyse de couple et de famille*. There she also discusses her personal relationship with him, whether in the university setting, at conferences and congresses, or in his role as a Christiane Joubert assessment panel member. In this chapter, Christiane addresses Kaës’s theorisation of bonds, concerning the dream productions of the family group, unconscious alliances, and narcissistic contracts and pacts, and she presents these through her clinical work with families, offering a testimony of what she has learnt from Kaës’s contributions.

In the «**Lectures**» section of this issue, we present four topics developed by René Kaës on various occasions; the first three correspond to the lectures delivered on 16, 18 and 20 April 2007 at the Argentine Association of Group Psychology and Psychotherapy (AAPPG) in Buenos Aires on the following topics:

- «**El malestar en el mundo moderno y trastornos psíquicos: un interrogante del psicoanálisis**»
- «**El duelo de los fundadores de las instituciones. Trabajo de lo originario y traspaso de generación**».
- «**Estructura, función y transformación de las alianzas inconscientes**»

In these presentations, Kaës had the courage to link the malaise of the present day to an epistemological deficit, and in the hope of encouraging us to think, validating the place of certainties even in the face of the premises of new paradigms, to open ourselves up to a plurisubjective polyphony. In the lecture on unconscious alliances, he asserts that what provides structure is the relationship with a law that generates symbolic order. It is a structure that clarifies, not confuses. In line with this, the clinical presentation always interrogates and allows conditions to be organised. In that presentation, he focused on the concept of underpinning, including it among the conditions for the formation of the unconscious, and in that sense it is a constituent of how intersubjectivity plays out. Regarding the theme of mourning the founders, he developed ideas about the need to transform what has been inherited into



something current and living, and how adherence to the figures who were able to found and, from there, raise new questions operates; being able to go beyond those people and continue the sowing. This is happening to us today with the figure of René Kaës. We are trying to follow the path he laid out for us.

The following lecture «**La réalité psychique inconsciente du lien intersubjectif**» was delivered by René Kaës as part of an Interregional Seminar of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) organised by COFAP on 26 November 2021, and the COFAP authorities, through Elizabeth Palacios, have granted it to our journal for this issue paying tribute to René Kaës. In it, he discusses the unconscious psychic reality that is inherent to and constitutes the intersubjective bond, offering his ideas to formulate his psychoanalytic theory of the bond. Kaës discusses the formations of engagement (fantasies, dreams, symptoms) that express the pleasure-displeasure drives, desires and defences, as manifestations of the psychic reality that is so real and yet so different from material reality. He outlines the three spaces of psychic reality that will shape his metapsychology.

The four lectures included in this tribute issue are selected in accordance with the themes addressed in the issue.

In the « **Dictionary** » section, we present two key terms for Kaës: “**Crise**”, on which Rosa Jaitin writes, and “**Porte-parole**”, developed by Raffaele Fischetti.

For Kaës, a crisis is also an opportunity arising from the rupture of an apparent equilibrium that can call into question repeated patterns; it is a possibility for putting into action other ways of regulating and regulating oneself. It is very interesting to read how Jaitin describes Kaës’s articulation of this concept with others that pertain to clinical practice.

Kaës includes the concept of the ‘spokesperson’ within what he terms ‘phoretic functions’, which encompass intermediate dimensions. We have chosen to include these two concepts as they are related. The group member who takes on the role of porta-palabra emerges when a rupture occurs due to a crisis situation. In such a situation, someone takes it upon themselves to articulate, denounce or point out something that is happening. This can manifest in different ways. Later on, Fischetti explains further developments of the concept that are worth reviewing.

In the «**Interviews**» section, we have included the interview conducted by Ezequiel Jaroslavsky, published in the journal *Psicoanálisis & Intersubjetividad*, which he edits and has kindly made available to us, and the interview published in the Italian journal *Gruppoanalisi*, conducted by Adele Nunziante Cesaro. Both trace the life and professional career of René Kaës, although they address different aspects which, for the reader, complement the information—which is why we have chosen them. We thank our colleagues for their respective contributions and recognise that, through

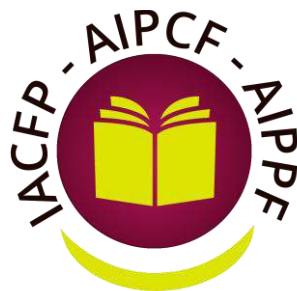


their collaboration, they are all present in this tribute to René Kaës.

Finally, we conclude this issue with **three book reviews**. On the one hand, these are two books written by Kaës and reviewed by other colleagues. The other is a book written by several colleagues on topics extensively developed by René Kaës. This latter book, entitled *Les apports de René Kaës à la psychanalyse de couple et de famille*, was conceived and organised by Rosa Jaitin, who is the author of the article I mentioned earlier on “The Life and Work of René Kaës”. Jaitin invited 13 colleagues to write an article on a specific concept of Kaës’s, not merely one they were familiar with but one they actually work with. She thus invited Pierre Benghozi, Jean-Louis Dorey, María Inés Assumpção Fernández, Evelyn Granjon, Rosa Jaitin, Ezequiel Jaroslavsky, Christiane Joubert, Roberto and Ana Losso, Irma Morosini, Anna María Nicoló, Françoise Payen and Massimiliano Sommantico. The book was authorised and reviewed by René Kaës, and this was also a tribute that he was able to witness during his lifetime. The review was written by Edith Lecourt and has already been published in our journal in Volume 2 of 2022

The other books reviewed here are *L’extension de la psychanalyse. Pour une métapsychologie du troisième type*, written by Kaës and reviewed in this instance by Massimiliano Sommantico, who highlights the psychic work provided by associative chains, which give rise to the representations of each subject and among a group of them, which Kaës terms polyphonic interdiscursivity and which must be listened to by the group analyst, focusing on the bond that integrates the subjects of the bond and the chains between their unconscious minds, and on the correlations of subjectivity in their mutual subjectivities. This conception forms the basis of his metapsychology, as it maintains that unconscious alliances unfold across various psychic spaces (intra-, inter- and extra-psychic), giving rise to multiple scenarios and involving a process of drive economy.

The other book by Kaës reviewed in this issue is *Le malêtre*, reviewed by our colleague David Benhaïm, who highlights Kaës’s reference to Morin’s complexity paradigm, which organises the meta-levels. He examines the changes brought about by culture across various historical periods, asserting that post-modern psychoanalysis confronts, in clinical practice, the manifestation of other pathologies requiring new therapeutic approaches, whilst in hyper-modernity it is the culture of excess and hypertrophy that sweeps away boundaries. He cites the writings of Norbert Elias and the Italian political scientist R. Espósito in describing the society of individualism as a negation of community, and mentions the situations that should prompt vigilance against the signs that reveal it. Kaës writes about processes without a subject and the lack of response—processes that attack the social, intersubjective bonds, and the possibility of subjectivation, which is the essence of contemporary malaise. We hope this review will spark an interest in seeking out and reading the book in which Kaës attempts to answer the following questions: What is the impact



of socio-historical changes on the psychological malaise of our time and the forms of subjectivity it gives rise to? How does cultural work interpret these changes and conceive the signs of this malaise?...

I shall conclude this introduction to the issue by stating that all the contributions we received to help us co-construct this issue, all the goodwill that came together, are a way of saying “present” in the numerous names of colleagues, journals and associations from various countries, united in a profound respect and recognition for the work of a master who opened up his thinking, bequeathing his ideas to us but, fundamentally, teaching us through his humility to pass them on—and that today, many of us probably recall just how significant his work becomes when he speaks of the ‘mourning of the founders and the passing of the torch’.

Let the reader listen to René through the measured tone of his words. Thank you, Master!

This issue of the journal will offer the opportunity to explore a large part of this thematic diversity, with contributions from the theoretical and clinical work of family and couple psychoanalysts.

I would like to thank Rosa Jaitin for her help in coordinating this issue—A Tribute to Kaës.