

## **The creation of the European Section EFPP for Psychoanalytic Couple and Family Therapy : PFCP**

Since 1991, the European Federation for Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy (EFPP) has been comprised of three sections representing three theoretical and clinical objects (Adults, Children and Adolescents, and Groups). The EFPP is a federation not of individual members but of associations. In 1997 I proposed a plan for creating a section for psychoanalytic Couple and Family Psychotherapy to the president of the EFPP, Serge Frisch, at a general assembly of delegates where I represented the French Society for Group Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy in the group psychoanalytical psychotherapy section in Luxembourg. Ten years passed between this initiative and its effective implementation through the ratification of the EFPP's new statutes in 2009, which made four distinct sections – adult, child and adolescent and group psychoanalytical psychotherapy, and what was called the “fourth section”, for couple and family psychoanalytic psychotherapy. These years bear witness to a long process, symptomatic of the importance of what was at stake, of the rigorous organization of the EFPP, and of the care taken to gain a large consensus; but it also attests to the emergence of a specific field of psychoanalytic couple and family psychotherapy, as well as the resistances it met with.

For the specific object of psychoanalytical couple and family therapy to be perceived, and for specific training standards to be clearly defined, consistent with the standard of other sections of the EFPP, the different executive committees had to listen attentively, supported by the series of Chairs of the EFPP who succeeded Serge Frisch - Siv Balt Boëthius, Luc Moyson and the current chair, Anne Marie Schloesser, many meetings since 1997, in Luxembourg, Oxford, Paris, Lisbon, London, Basel, Berlin, Dresden, Copenhagen, and Hyères, bringing together section members and therapists already engaged in psychoanalytic couples and family therapy in Europe.

We carried out this work of connection in tandem with Rudolf Balmer, member-delegate to the executive committee. We organized the working group, also with Daniela Lucarelli, Peter Möhring, Gisela Zeller-Steinbrich. I was invited to Athens in 2004 to finalize the project at a special executive committee meeting. Many other therapists participated in these work meetings for the creation of the European Section EFPP for Psychoanalytic Couple and Family Therapy, among them Anna Maria Nicòlo, Antonio Brignone, Jean Georges Lemaire, Philippe Robert, Rosa Jaitin, Claude Bigot, Gabriela Tavazza, Lucie Lucka, Manuela Porto, Marion Bower, Lynne Cudmore, Jeannie Milligan, Peter Dott, Gérard Mevel, Nastasia Nakov, Alberto Eiguier, Gérard Decherf, Elisabeth and Thomas von Salis, Rick Berke, Maia Eugenia Cid Rodriguez, Thames Cornette-Borges, Graca Galamba, Montserrat Garcia Milà, Montserrat Martinez del Pozo, Jörgen Nässèn ...

In March 2005, at the meeting of the European Federation Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in Stockholm, Rudolf Balmer summed up this work in his report of the EFPP working party on Psychoanalytic Couple and Family Psychotherapy, EFPP Delegates meeting, Stockholm, 2005)

In this report based on the previous reports to EFPP Delegates Meetings 2001 and 2003, PFCP is defined “as a specific field of application and adaptation of psychoanalytic theory, theory of technique and technique. PFCP has developed a framework of specific concepts which form the base for specialisation.

Corresponding to different psychoanalytic traditions in various countries, we observe different approaches in PCFP as well. In some countries PCFP has developed from child psychoanalysis, in others the development is centred around an interactive or a group analytic approach. The working party therefore defined PCFP in a comprehensive sense in order to establish a common ground for the development of PCFP within the EFPP.

“Psychoanalytic Couple and Family Psychotherapy is applied psychoanalysis characterized by the analysis of family and couple relationships through the use of transference and counter-transference, and by the work on unconscious conflicts, wishes and anxieties and defenses in the family group or in the couple.”

At this general assembly of delegates in Stockholm, I was asked by the executive committee to give the introductory conference on the history of Psychoanalytic Couple and Family Psychotherapy. Here are a few extracts from that talk:

“Confrontations both in Europe and abroad (have enabled us to get a better perception of the creativity developed according to the context, the history and the psychoanalytic culture of each country.)

The process of family therapy became necessary because of experience in clinical practice, particularly with psychosis, addictive behaviour and in trauma clinics. Psychoanalytical couple and family psychotherapy is still in development. The specificity of psychoanalytical orientation was built progressively.

Many different movements have sustained an epistemological Copernican revolution in psychopathology. The individual exists as a member in conscious and unconscious psychical interaction within the group psychical constellation of the family. The symptom-carrying patient appears to have inherited a family psychical material which could not be elaborated by the previous generation. Thus specific arrangements are established, enabling a psychoanalytical approach to the family group, but also to the couple as a new set with specific properties, a functioning, an unconscious economy and defense mechanisms. We become open to listening to the suffering of the family group.

Clinical practice emphasizes the importance of genealogical psychic transmission and particularly the necessity of a specific training cursus consistent with psychoanalytical reference.

To sum up very broadly, there are two major perspectives that can be distinguished in the field of psychoanalytical family therapy: those referring to clinical work on the relation, and those which are founded on psychoanalytical group theory. There is a converging orientation with the notion of object as the family group and the psychoanalytical perspective of the link. For my part, I have developed at the conceptual modeling : “Meshing the genealogical containers, de-meshing, and re-meshing the filiation and affiliation links.”

Among the many theoretical authors who have served as a basis, particularly the important research conducted in France, I would cite D. Anzieu’s and R. Kaës’s works on group psychoanalysis.

According to D. Anzieu, “The group psychical apparatus” ensures the integrity of the “group and family Ego-skin”. In 1976, R. Kaës defined the “group psychical apparatus” as “the shared construction of group members in order to constitute a group”. It carries out work of

binding, transformation, elaboration, mediation between an internal psychical reality and external reality.

According to W. Winnicott, the family link presupposes a primary state of non-integration between psyche and soma during the first year of the infant's life, which would thus be the foundation of the most primal form of unconscious communication in the family.

A. Ruffiot applies R. Kaës's notion of group organizer to the family. In 1979, he hypothesizes that there is a "family psychical apparatus". "It contains the individual psychical apparatuses; it has an alpha group function composed of the sum of everyone's alpha group functions." As a container, its function is to metabolize the different individual imaginings. It ensures the continuity and unity of the family psyche." "It should contain the psychical components that are outside the subject, which are not integrated into the Ego but which nevertheless make up the psyche, and are stored away in the group. These cannot be introjected, but all individuals carry them: drive components which cannot be represented and genealogical components inherited from preceding generations."

In 1979, he writes: "Analytical family therapy is a therapy accomplished through the language of the family group as a whole; it is based on the general theory of systems and, above all, on psychoanalytical theory of groups. Through re-actualization, and thanks to the transference of the psyche's most primitive form of communication, by re-establishing the fantasy circulation of the family group psychical apparatus, this therapy aims to autonomize the individual psyche of each member of the family." J. G. Lemaire thinks that the "Us" comes before the "I or the Ego". According to S. Lebovici, the subject has been given a "genealogical mandate." These "de-linking" attacks at the intra-psychic level reveal a blocking of the family inter-fantasmatisation. Here the patient is not so much the one who "has" the symptom, as the one who "is" the symptom of family suffering.

The object of the therapy, therefore is not an individual in a group but involves the intersubjective link, and the family groupality, a specific psychic entity with a "psychic family group apparatus," its "mythopoietic" capacity to produce its organizing and structuring myths, its inter-fantasmatisation.

Thanks to its "containing" (in the Bionian sense) function, the family group psychical apparatus the group psychical apparatus ensures the transformative processes of the family psychical material. Psychoanalytic family and couple therapy is indicated in pathologies of family containers..."

At the Delegates Meeting 2005 in Stockholm the section of PCFP was officially created. The delegates accepted the revised training standards/bylaws. A working party consisting of three members of the existing EFPP sections (Frank Castrillon, Adult Section, Maria Gemma Rocco Child Section, Rudolf Balmer, Group Section) and three members of the previous working party on PCFP (Peter Möhring, Germany, Daniela Lucarelli, Italy). I was co-opted by the Executive of EFPP, and given a mandate to organise the new section, in order to provide it with a closer link to the Executive and to underline the official status of the new section.

Two meetings of the PCFP working party took place in 2007 and 2009 at the Congress in Hyères; these were carried out in partnership with the EFPP, and the president of the EFPP, Luc Moyson, was present. After the Stockholm vote, long work, essentially by members of the executive committee of the EFPP, led to a complete remoulding of EPFF statutes, so that

the PCFP was fully included in it. In 2009, at the delegates' meeting in Kortenberg, the change of statutes of the EFPP making the section official unanimously passed in a single round of voting.

With their vote, the delegates from different sections expressed the great importance that the EFPP places upon psychoanalytic couple and family psychotherapy as a specific field of the application of psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

Applications will be read by the two PCFP section representatives of the board and, if no further details are required, will be taken to the board for acceptance. There are three types of national membership in the section : Full membership (at least 6 members in the association who have reached the minimal training standards), Associate membership' (the association has not yet reached the training standards of the PCFP section), Observer status (at the first stage of developing psychoanalytic couple and family psychotherapy).

While several of us have since taken the initiative of creating the International Association of Psychoanalytic Couple and Family Therapy (ACFP), only the EFPP enables psychoanalytic couple and family psychotherapists to belong to a recognized space, shared by members of other psychoanalytic psychotherapy sections, in which they can develop their field at the European level.

The choice of a symbolic founding congress organized solely under the aegis of the new PCFP section took place in May 2010 in Florence, Italy, with the theme "Families in Transformation: a challenge for psychoanalytic psychotherapy. "

The PCFP section is actually made up of the associations from the principle European countries where psychoanalytic couple and family psychotherapy has developed : Italy (Daniela Lucarelli, Gemma Trapanese), France (Pierre Benghozi, Philippe Robert), Germany (Michael Stasch), Spain (Pere Llovet), Portugal (Manuela Porto, ), Czech Republic (Lucie Lucka, Slavoj Titl), Romania (Cristina Calarasanu), Greece (Nikos Stathopoulos, Anastasia Tsampareli), Russia (Konstantin Yagniuk), Serbia(Jasna Veljkovic), then Finland and UK . I became the chair of the PCFP section.

The making of this book, published by Karnac as part of its EFPP collection, and containing some of the principle papers presented at this Congress, fits naturally into the perspectives of the project of creating the PCFP section within the EFPP.

In these times, when psychoanalysis is being attacked on many fronts, the creation of the sections shows the EFPP's commitment to promoting fully (in the public sector) the different facets of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and its dynamic character in both theory and clinical practice.

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