

Fantasies, myths and dreams as witnesses of family psychic groupality

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Abstract

“Fantasies, myths and dreams as witnesses of family psychic groupality”. The author presents how fantasies, myths and dreams are psychic formations which belong to the individual unconscious as well as to the family psychic groupality, particularly because of their universality and reference to origins. They work as family organisers, which circulate through the family links, and indicate the nature, strength and development of the latter. Rended specific by the mutual changes they induce within the unconscious of two or more individuals, including babies, the links show various modes of intersubjective functioning. The concept of intersubjectivity is relatively recent in psychoanalysis and appears to be of value to enlighten the family psychic groupality. Some clinical examples are given from psychoanalytic family therapies, in order to illustrate how the group resonance of fantasies, myths and dreams allows them to be put in common and shared, so that they help to build the family self and its psychic envelopes. Thanks to transference and counter-transference movements, the family psychic group gains enrichment of its metaphoric, mythopoietic and creative skills while playing with these psychic formations.

Key words: Intersubjectivity; family myths; family psychic groupality; original fantasies; psychoanalytic family therapy

Fantasies, myths and dreams: from the individual to the family

Fantasies, myths and dreams constitute a pool of psychic contents which, once revealed within the groupal framework of psychoanalytic family therapy, are used as markers on several levels: on one hand, their nature and quantity give precious indications for diagnosis at the onset of therapy, on the other hand, the way they emerge and mutate more or less easily indicate the degree of flexibility in the psychic family functioning put in play, and finally, any eventual therapeutic result can be appreciated thanks to them. Amongst them, dreams and fantasies assume without a doubt an intrapsychic individual polarity and are rather unconscious whereas myths emerge as a more or less extensive narration transmitted for group use and which cannot survive with individual yet shared beliefs. The conscious part dominates without being exclusive. We will see how these formations show the psychic groupality and work as organisers of the family psyche on an intersubjective level

A few decades ago, the *fantasy* was still firmly entrenched in the medical language

where it represented an illusion, a kind of hallucination. With Freud and psychoanalysis, it acquired a scientific status and a capital calibre. Because of its ample and lasting success, no other psychoanalytic concept has been more overused. The simple little sentence "It's a fantasy!" in any everyday conversation is enough to invalidate whatever remark. In fact, the nub of its definition keeps the notion of an imaginary formation *where the subject is there* and through which he makes a desire come true; its status is conscious or unconscious, the defensive warps it is subjected to enabling him to go forth hidden. Whatever the importance of its emergence into the conscious, the fantasy remains linked to its unconscious and even original roots. It can be considered as an organising psychic unit which at the same time creates a bridge and a screen between anxiety and thoughts, while introducing a metaphorising function in the psyche. Like an atom of psychic reality, the fantasy joins and moves in unison with other similar types of formations to orientate in an underhand manner, the mental universe of each and every one of us. Their smallest common denominator would be the original fantasy (that is to say still linked with the origins) which can take four simplified forms (intra-uterine life, seduction, primal scene, castration). It is the universality of these fantasies which, as we will see later, will confer to them the function of family organiser (Eiguer, 1987).

Cultural organiser of the group, *the myth* benefits from a slightly different psychic status which surfs the interface of the conscious and the unconscious, the social and the individual, the private and the public, the intimate and the exhibited.

If myths have occupied a prominent place in psychoanalysis theoretical research and development, that's because they offer an abundant material where the psychic productions common to all humans can be found and examined. Vehicules of shared fantasies organised in beliefs, they particularly lend themselves to interpretation because of their closeness with dreams and fantasies (Green, 1992). Necessarily conscious in their formal expression, they keep their anchor in the unconscious where they find their origin and lead to deep knowledge of the cultural, social, groupal and family aspects of psychic functioning.

Coming from the beginning of times, they explain the world to us, its origin and that of humanity. At the interface of collective creation and individual psychic productions, they rest on the past and the dimension of the sacred to give rise to representations which are useful to all, they take part in the constitution and the maintenance of the links between individuals from the same group. Objects of more or less strong beliefs, their function does not work as soon as we don't credit them anymore. Oral tradition never ceases to transform and improve on them; written tradition becomes their echo as can be seen in literature and theatre.

On a family scale, we have been able to, through analogy, discover "myths" which work in a similar manner. They have the position of founders and this in two ways: not only they enlighten us on the origin of the family, the ancestors, the parents and their in-laws, but they also are founders of the current family in the way that they contribute in establishing the feeling of belonging and to promote the genesis of the

<<*family self*>> (Eiguer, 1987). In condensed or even misrepresented forms, family myths carry along what defines the lifestyles and thoughts that different members of a family can have in common. They are used as support and organisers for the thoughts and fantasies which circulate within the family group, they indicate the nature of the links and what maintains or destroys them. Precious transmission tools, they collect essential psychic contents from previous generations and welcome those produced by the current family unit so as to reformulate ideas on a pre-existent basis, or to create new ones. In both cases, what is at work there is a transformation process, a mythopoietic one, as it happens.

Even though different systemic authors were able to emphasize their function as a defence mechanism aiming at maintaining the family homeostasy, family myths appear to us first and foremost as protection factors which help constitute family identity, and as such, the own identity of the subject.

Through our experience of family psychoanalysis, we were able to observe the weakness of myths, how difficult it is to pinpoint them, and even their absence, when the intrafamilial links are established and frozen in pathological modes. Thus, myths give much information on the importance of family dysfunctions. If they grow or resurface, we can see this as positive signs of progress during therapy.

Because of the increased flexibility of the contemporary family, where widowhood is not any more, and by far, the main cause of a couple's separation, it is to be feared that the strength and persistence of traditional family myths shall greatly suffer. Their function as the psychic organiser of the family groupality can be damaged and thus not be able to serve as a narcissising resource against destructive environmental factors. It is true that the representations coming from a world outside the ego or the family group, feed and stimulate psychic activity, but they also sometimes invade it and can substitute themselves for family myths until they produce a depersonalisation or a more or less marked emptying of the family self.

Whatever the seriousness of the family psychic state, the reconstruction work has to go through an increase of the family fantasmatic life, the interfantasizing being played out within the group during therapy, and particularly around the *dreams*.

When sleeping and dreaming, we all dive into our own singularity, in our own unconscious, where we can test at the same time its unfathomable characteristics and its repetitiveness. The interpretation of dream's stories, traditionally the privilege of shamans and soothsayers in every civilisation, has radically changed since the birth of psychoanalysis. From that point onward, the dream does not echo the myth anymore, the past becomes more important than the future, and the dreamer plays an active role in it, first during the dream's elaboration of the story itself, then in a second step when the freely produced associations will be used to support the dream's interpretation, by the dreamer himself as well as the analyst. According to Anzieu (1985) and Missenard (1987), the dream's envelope fulfills three functions: those of bag, barrier and active membrane. In this latter role, the dream will facilitate communication between the various parts of the psychic apparatus and thus will help

maintain the narcissic envelope in good condition, working towards its renovation after a trauma.

Daydreaming is not far from dreaming, offering, however, more elaborate scripts and a more obvious secundarisation. It is the very state of dreaming more than the contents of the dream, which will enable us to go over to the family group level, and also to light up the place occupied by the dream within family narcissism and with a psychoanalytic therapeutic viewpoint. The intervention of maternal daydream within the first moments of a child's life is now well identified and acknowledged. It has been shown to be irreplaceable for the establishment of the alpha function (Bion, 1962) and starts off creativity in a bilateral (with the mother and the child), reciprocal (the reaction of one is necessary for the creativity of the other) and mutual fashion (the benefits are shared and reinvested). This example of a basic intersubjective functioning gives an idea of what can this psychic group family functioning be, where dreams, myths and fantasies will meet.

Being in essence individual, the dream told in PFT, when it sees light of day, will take on therapeutic properties which are not the same as in individual therapy. The psychic contents hidden within and their organisation are subjected to anybody's analysis, the therapist, being attentive only to the group effect they produce. In order to incite the dreamer to tell their dream's story, they must feel sure of the dreamwise attention of the whole group. The feeling of a sufficiently strong internal safety is provided by the framework and the containing capacity of the analysts. When the dream creates an echo in the groupal psyche (Ruffiot's groupal psychic apparel), associations are produced, the family "playing" with the fantasies scattered in the dream by taking them up again in a circulation of fantasies which could, for example, open the way towards the generational. About this group process, it can be said that the dream is the object of a tertiary elaboration (Missenard, 1987). The family group dynamic will see its strengths or weaknesses measured according to the importance of the interfantasizing put into play.

The relationship between fantasies, myths and dreams

Combined in the family psychical life, these formations show themselves intermingled in the clinical context of PFT. They are "groupal" as much as they are individual, in the way that not only they find themselves accrued in the midst of psyche, but they are also reinforced by an effect of metaphoric multiplication rather than juxtaposition, and receive a new coherence. They come under universality as experiences common to us all, and furthermore they unfailingly reach back to the origins, either through the original fantasy, myth, or even dream with its unreachable "navel". If the universality of the dream experience predisposes to sharing, its fantasy's motives are capable of resonating in each of us so as to feed the associations, and this, more particularly when it is a matter of elementary original fantasies: we go straight into a certain familiarity with them, we can consider them as

the prototypes of what can be immediately shared (Eiguer, 1987). The family myth also holds an optimal “groupal” sharing capacity because of its genesis and its function. Indeed, on one hand it can be defined as Roland Barthes does as “a word chosen by history”), in other words, an ancestral word, repeated, updated and made to fit the present, and on the other hand, its true duty is to seal the feeling of belonging to the family. Therefore the question of the phylogenetic origins of these related psychic formations, fantasy, myth and dream, are asked *ipso facto*, beyond their ontogenesis. After Freud, this question deserves to be thought on again, regarding these tools of family work which are so familiar to us. The inheritance of these abilities and psychic formations would no longer have to resort to what Freud had fantasised, guessed and more or less theorised about phylogenetic transmission to justify its ghostly persistence as operational mnemonic traces through the generations. Contrary to the phylogenetic hypothesis formulated by Freud, which can be considered now as a transmission fantasy (Benhaïm, 2007), the current transgenerational transmission theory is enough to explain at the same time the ancestral anchorage of such psychic contents and their accommodation in the filiation and alliance links, amongst others (Eiguer, 1987, 1997, 2001, 2006). It is important to see how these different psychic parameters join together and take place in the midst of the psychic groupal family life as organisers.

Unconscious psychic groupality and family links

Various studies and theoretical researches have contributed to support the hypothesis claiming that the psychic groupal productions characterising psychic family life can be found in the archaic psychic functioning. To summarize these various but converging thoughts, more often coming from psychoanalysts interested in the baby and its development, André Ruffiot's sentence stating that <<*the primary psychic ego can be considered as a psyche vocationally open to others*>> (Ruffiot, 1981) is a paradigm. Its survival and its resurgence in group and family situations as well as its conjunction with other primary egos in the family would allow the psychic sharing to take place in its midst, notably on an unconscious level.

It is thus a particular side of the unconscious which is at work in the groupal process, which does not mean, for all that, that the others sources and unconscious manifestations run dry and disappear within the psychoanalytic family work. Quite simply, they don't characterize it and the family structure is not the condition for their emergence. We can also underline that through the play of identifications, self-representations and that of others, of the imagos development, the unconscious is par excellence a place of groupality. The object-group-family that we all carry inside ourselves, is woven with representations of the family group from each of the family members. This object-group (Ruffiot, 1981) will be more or less affected by structural changes in the family, particularly when they happen within the first years of life and over determine any eventual weaknesses coming from previous

generations.

The family psychic and archaic space is the very place where myths are registered, where fantasies take place, notably in their original phrasing, and where dreams dive into. This is the place where psychic links meet, links born in the intersubjectivity from the very beginning, charged with changing investments and inhabited by affects, fantasies and moving representations.

The link, if we define it as Alberto Eiguer does, as a result of mutual investment between two people, frees itself from the concept of object relation. The economic part of the link is coloured by the nature of the affects running through it; in the same way, the movements, changeability and quality of the link all help to define it. Between two subjects, the link can be preferably narcissic or objectal and swings between these two poles depending on when it started moving. It creates an internal and often unconscious trace of past events to enrich the internal objects which often are "holding on", it enhances the integration of potential new things and deigns to let itself be rearranged depending on what happens next. It is doubly vectorised: from the subject to the object and vice-versa, in a ceaseless development when it is activated, be it in internal mode or current mode in the presence of the other, maintaining the intersubjective functioning. Nevertheless, the links theory does not seem to be of the kind which would renounce the topical metaphor referred to a different subject enjoying his own psyche; it gives a more complex and complete account of the continuous transformation process which changes the internal space of each of the psyches involved, colerratively to investments, themselves subjected to variations. Enhancing understanding and mutual exchanges, the link is established and works well only if the investments remain without collapsing in spite of their fluctuations. Once in place, they offer a stable support which differentiates itself more or less on the basis of its archaic sources. The more the psyche is marked by individuation, then by subjectivation, the more balanced will the revision of the established links be. These might have a life long evolution: the existence of the link postulates a constant relation with the internal pole of each of its subject. The link presently brought into play, shall always be likely to be replaced by a revival which can be sometimes surprising depending on what has happended and taken place in each person's experience.

The four levels of link as defined by Eiguer (archaic, onirical, mythical and legislating, 2001) confirm the link's functions acknowledged by us as vectors for the shared fantasmatic activity, including the original fantasies, which support the vigilance of the myth, promotes daydreams and dreams, the whole being under the aegis of the commanding fourth level: the links being ruled by prescriptions and bans specific to each of them, according to the author quoted.

The group as an excercise field for the intersubjectivity puts into play a particular level of the link's activation and elaboration, mobilising the more undistinguished aspects as well as the more finished ones, simultaneously or successively, playing

then in a space rendered more complex where mutuality (reciprocity) and mutualisation (putting in common) are at work.

The contributing play of fantasies, myths and dreams for the benefit (or the detriment) of psychic groupality, through the links animating it, leads us to introduce the notion of intersubjectivity: the link appears *in fine* as the witness of the transition from actual interpersonal to intersubjective, that is to say that it works towards the building of the internal world, which is also his, and therefore to subjectivation.

From sharing to family intersubjectivity

The various acceptances of the concept of intersubjectivity are very confusing. More often, this term is being used without being defined, unless it is in an exclusive or tangent way. For American authors, of which Stolorow is the figurehead, intersubjectivity aims first and foremost at fighting the notion of subjectivity and the spacial metaphor which defines it as a separate entity, for a new theorisation where intersubjective “systems” are taking place; these are strongly contextualised and their model would be what brings together analyst and analysing. Some talk about “intersubjective dialogue”, others consider that the psyche, reduced to relational configurations, is structured through interactions (Mitchell). For Aron, the psyche is in essence dyadic, social, in interaction and interpersonal. We can see that within these perspectives, interpersonal or interactive are given as an equivalent to intersubjective and the notion of unconscious is watered down or disappears from the psychic scene.

By denying the image of a spacial location of the psyche, these authors bring about the weakening of its counterpart: temporality. Space and time are replaced by the sole notion of context. Thus, the influence of one on the other cannot receive any topical allocation and the long-term ability of the intersubjective effects is not taken into account as a parameter. Keeping these references to think about intersubjectivity can lead to considering this concept as “heterogenous” to psychoanalytic thought (Bydlowski, 2004). For Roussillon, on the contrary, the concept of intersubjectivity has its place within the psychoanalytic corpus as long as it refers to <<*the existence of a dimension unconscious of subjectivity which mixes the question of pulsion and sexuality*>> (Roussillon, 2004).

This integration can be done with good results to designate what happens in the psyche of two or several subjects who create mutual interaction, exchange of affects, fantasies, representations or thoughts. The preliminary pooling is followed by an active moment where the internal acquisitions and transformations of the psyches involved are working on an unconscious level, according to processes which are neither instantaneous nor final. From the very origin, the intersubjectivity governs the establishment and the evolution of the links, feeding thus the psychical family groupality. Between the subjects of the link, there is no balance nor symmetry implied as to the weight of the subjectivity of one or the other as is illustrated by the

burgeoning intersubjective link between a new-born and his mother or father. It is the link which makes at the same time a little human being rooted in his lineage of one and parents of the others.

Relatively new notion in the theoretical field of “general” psychoanalysis where it is the subject of intense debates, intersubjectivity finds a particular relevance in the field of family psychoanalysis. It finds it can express itself more specifically through play, either by the means of psychodramas, drawings, symbolic play, or through humour and playful spirits which stretches in the transferent-counter-transferent space.

Play and intersubjectivity

Play, free from any real risk because of the make believe governing it, appears to cost very little to the psychic economy. Floating between reality and fantasmatic life, which is interwoven through reciprocal inclusions, they show how the spirit of play can endure and that it is not the privilege of childhood. In PTF it remains an essential support offering large avenues to creativity and constitutes an ideal terrain for free associations: play can emerge at any time during the session, under various guises, with adults as with children; its possible presence or its absence are precious indications on the intersubjective functioning at work in the family.

Winnicott’s discovery of a potential space where the patient’s play and the therapist’s can meet was the beginning of a theorisation on intersubjectivity. But in family psychoanalysis, we can’t anymore just resort to what this author says, an author for whom play establishes itself in the transitional area situated <<*in the overlap of two play areas, that of the patient and that of the therapist*>> (Winnicott, 1971). The dimension of intersubjectivity feels cramped in this concept, even if we acknowledge its relevance to theorize the effects of play in individual therapy. The confusion of all the potential play areas within the family would situate theses on the same level where the three- dimensional implied by the fundamental differentiations would be missing: separation of psyches, difference of sexes and generations. This is nevertheless what can occasionally happen in family crisis where there is regression, or even with a structural continuity when the family psychic functioning is severely and chronically damaged, reduced to the primary indifferenciation which is at the same time the basis and the fallback position of the family psychic groupality.

The effective presence of at least two generations in therapy, introduced as an third dimension intrinsically linked to the proceedings: the generational gap amplifies the complexity by inducing a depth where the absents, dead or alive, are inevitably included. To try to understand better this complexity, we could link it to a wide and flexible understanding of intersubjectivity, backdrop we cannot do without. Intersubjectivity, consequence and condition of play in family psychoanalysis enables us to understand that it is an important determining factor for the therapist just as much as for the patient group and that it rests for one and the other on

analogous psychic qualities.

We find here an asymmetry between analyst and family-patient which is close to the one we observe in early relationships between new-born and mother (or maternal environment) and in the same way: it not just a matter of “playing with“ but more to facilitate play by us playing too psychically in a register characterised by receptivity and flexibility. These qualities are properties demanded by our practice; they enable us to conceive points of view far from ours and to consider them in a mobile and progressive mode, inasmuch as they spread their wing in the relative security provided by a strong framework: for the adult that we are, play is first and foremost time and space to think, away from pressure from reality.

Within a family psychoanalytical framework, the fact that it is done in a group gives play an intention which is not without effect on its contents and its dynamic, play introduces a scene where fantasies and representations floating around looking for an anchorage and even sometimes an author, can throw themselves in. The generation gap, rendered tangible by the proceedings will particularly help the psychic productions tied to the original fantasy and the framework will facilitate their circulation in the intersubjective links.

Scenes of shared family psychical life

The original fantasy

On a family level as on an individual level, the original fantasy holds a major function: anchored in pulsional life, the original fantasy allows not only to activate thoughts on the origin of the subject, but also to promote sexualisation. By its resurgence at key moments of the subject’s development (adolescence, first love, parenthood, mourning) it facilitates access to differentiated and evolutive places in the family organisation. As is underlined by Alberto Eiguer, <<*The original fantasy allows us to play at being somebody else*>> (Eiguer, 1987) and the multiplicity of the positions it offers the subject (observer, participant, active, passive) gives it a universal status. Thus, it is the typical support of fantasmatic sharing, because of the unmissable echo which it meets in every member of the family. The representations of ones linked to that of others will be the matrix of the kind of narcissic illusion which has been described by Didier Anzieu in the groups.

In the B. family, it is Jacques, 9, the second of three boys, who was the reason for the initial consultation because of a glaring lack of thirst for knowledge. After a short series of preliminary consultations, a PTF is proposed because of the conjunction of several somatic and psychosomatic factors within the family and the notion of the mother suffering from chronic depression. From the very first session, it is the youngest who will lead his brothers into a series of associations where an intra-

uterine life fantasy places itself at the forefront of the scene, broaching implicitly the quality of the intra-uterine relationship with the mother.

- Jules, 6: it's rubbish to be the last one.
- Jacques, 9: it's because there were no more space in mummy's tummy.
- Jules: I wanted to get out of mummy's tummy quickly.
- Everybody???
- Jules: because I was hungry

Jacques tries to create a diversion and to disqualify what his brother is saying but the latter resists, he then contradicts Jules in a more direct fashion:

- Jacques: you can eat in the tummy.

The three brothers expose their theory on how the foetus can feed.

- Jean, the oldest: it goes through the umbilical cord
- Jacques: there is a tube which goes to the hole in the tummy.
- Jules: the baby opens its mouth and eats like fishes in an aquarium.

It's in a house, in the tummy of ours, in a mummy's tummy.

The parents are all admiring in front of the wealth of these comments, to which they participated very little but that they have backed. The interfantasizing has indeed led them all towards a group illusion around "the house, tummy of ours". A few months later, the father takes up the same original fantasy and associates it to the fantasy of seduction spreading between mother and the boys: "If only they could all go back in there ! he exclaims". Would everybody be happy?

The family myth

In the S. family, it is the myth of an anti-hero, the father, which organises the family's life, in spite of the mother's denials, blocking access to a functional family romance. The family consists of the mother and her twins, born from a union which broke down even before their birth. The children, two boys, have not been acknowledged by their father. It is them who, from the first moment of the first session show the trouble they have with their filiation, to the surprise of the mother who had come because they are difficult to bring up and one of them is not "school orientated".

After a phase of therapy where the maternal defence system comes strongly into play, a gap of roughly a year happens before starting up PTF again. The two boys seek again and together an explanation of their paternal filiation. The family group playing along with it and through the help of play, begins the review of the affiliation to lineage process, interrogating a paternity which remained imaginary and which operates as an organising myth, strained by the weight of a paternal reality made up of failures and in some way confirmed by the strong lines of maternal psychopathology.

In the midst of an abundant production, let's look a while at one of Mathieu's

drawings. On that particular day, he chose to represent a story inspired by Genesis. It is not Adam and Eve who are driven away from paradise, but “two guys”. Mathieu expresses himself in a very rough manner. “God, he’s blown the two guys... he disintegrated them from the planet.” In his drawing, the planet has only one tree which shelters a snake and whose roots plunge deeply into an earth which cannot provide for its needs: the roots come out into nothingness on the other side of the planet. God is represented by a devilish looking sun. The “two guys” are just like the twins, driven out of the family paradise by the father, of whom Hugo said, two sessions earlier: “He spoilt our family for us”. Almost as a confirmation of this dissimulating inclusion of this myth within a myth, Hugo drew at the same time a Christmas tree, which he slowly covered in decorations until it disappeared; Mme S. has quite exceptionally taken up a sheet of paper and as if lost in a personal daydream, doodled a devil’s mask and a sun next to each other. The official story never made this father out to be a devil, on the contrary, Mme S. tells us she has always wanted to “keep a good image of the father”. This has not stopped the children developing an apocalyptic vision of these origins, the echo of which can be seen in every drawing. Some time further, the mother mentions the conditions of the parental couple’s split, unsaid until then: when, at the fourth month of pregnancy, the scanner revealed to the couple that not only they were not going to have a girl, but also that they were twins, the partner of madame S., having already fathered a boy asked her to have an abortion, which she could not bring herself to do, hoping he would change his mind; he didn’t and brutally said: “Piss off, you and your bastards”.

The interfantasizing work, notably through the drawings allowed the family to identify this harmful myth, thus giving the boys the opportunity to turn to more positively structuring family, in spite of their almost exclusive leaning on the maternal lineage.

The family dream

In therapy, the dream is the object of a story while the fantasies and myths can be discovered in the midst of exchanges or monologues sheltering them. They put the attention on the dreamer and patients seem to expect an individual interpretation. But, what is the most important, is how the family members will use the dreams together. If calling a dream is sometimes recommended (Ruffiot, 1981), it is better to let them happen with associations or the implicit calls which silences constitute.

The Martin family has two parents and two 7 ½ years old girls at the time of the beginning of therapy which lasted a little over 7 years. PFT was started because of Delphine’s severe eating disorders, one of the twins who also had severe dyslexia. Sabine, the other twin shows more discreet but more disquieting troubles, linked with an identity issue. Their mother has a strong influence on the family members, including the father who, bit by bit, escapes it to exercise his paternal functions with more confidence. From the very beginning, the mother values the stories told by

dreams, her own dreams, but also other's. The father is the only one not to dream. But he takes part in conversations about the dreams during the sessions.

The stories themselves are subjected to sharing. When the mother asks the daughters, they hesitate a bit, thus underlining the mother's implication. One day Sabine pretended not to remember one of her dreams and said to her mother: "you can talk about my dream, since I've told you the story". The story, fed by one or the other, is already shared property. Because breakfast time is the opportunity for the family to be together in the morning and also the initial theatre of the dream's storytelling, which thus reach therapy having already been through family elaboration.

One of Delphine's dreams is soon helping to make the family realise the function of dreams within therapy. The theme of the session is around how others see you, which is something so very important for Delphine that it still stops her from expressing herself during lessons and more than that, to read, by fear of people mocking her, even though she has become very good at reading and does not encounter any technical difficulties when she does it. Apparently she decided that the following story of her dream should be told first at therapy during the session: She arrives at the school dining room (a self service) at meal time, but the self service looks now like huge toilets and Delphine doesn't know what to do to get her lunch. In the end, she grabs a sausage and quickly goes into the school yard towards her friends. They are very surprised and say: "what are you doing with a sausage in your hand!"

Immediately, her mother associates: the meaning of this dream is obvious, it really shows what food means to Delphine, that it's shit. This interpretation does not receive any echo. Madame M. carries on and talks about her disappointment to see that eating is not a pleasure for her daughter, when eating must first and foremost provide a pleasure, and that's what she wanted to do with her family and she cannot conceive that anybody should feel otherwise. She interjects to her husband that in his childhood, his parents did not get him used to think of food in this way. Monsieur M. mentions then the strict supervision his older brother used at meal times, the brother having become a real substitute for the father after his death. Sometimes, the mother full of pity for him, when watching him struggle with a plate he had difficulties finishing, would throw away the contents, behind the brother's back. Monsieur M. justifies nevertheless the rigid attitude of the brother by the financial situation they were in. He answers his wife back by saying that things were not exactly rosy in her home either: "And the stones soup?" Madame M., a bit taken aback, remembers the paternal threats: that if she didn't finish her meal she would have to eat a stones soup. When he would say that, she'd imagine how horrid it would be to eat such a soup, she imagined the hard stones in her mouth...and finished her meal.

The fantasmatic circulation, which puts to work the psychic family groupality, enables the use of dreams for its benefit, but only if we move away from a restrictive individual interpretation (here, the mother's, but the dream can bring about several associations). The work on ideals and myths becomes richer, and the access to ancestors too.

At the end of this session, madame M. says to me: “In fact, what seems to be important for you with dreams, is what they provoke for the whole family.”

These three short clinical examples aim to illustrate certain aspects of the psychic group functioning of families happening at different times along the way during therapy. They tend to show how interactive and interpersonal exchanges of various psychic contents enable us to access effects of transformation which are really intersubjective, on the basis of the support of the whole group they receive in PTF. In this respect, it must be mentioned that the group considered includes the therapist or therapists and that these effects rest also and primarily on the existence and strength of the movements of transference and counter-transference that we haven't here put at the forefront. The therapeutic work will consist of, to start with, supporting the group resonance between the psychic apparels of each person, a work for which individual approach doesn't prepare.

According to Kaës, <<*the group gets rid of individual event, it uses it for its own end by making it common and anonymous, it confronts each person to all that is universal and impersonal in the unconscious*>> (Kaës, 2005). In the family, it's the groupal economy which is fed by the original fantasy, myths and dreams, amplified, sent back and charged with new meanings through their circulation during therapy. The universal is not here at the service of the anonymous, but at the service of the family identity. These formations will support the strong narcissic lines, the family self, the feeling of belonging as well as the object-links within the current family and the links to ancestors, and transgenerational objects (Eiguer, 1987, 2006).

In therapy, the trajectory of psychic formations, which circulate and resound, puts them through a common tank in which each person can dip, in order to share them. In the end, in these travels from the individual to the group and from the group to the individual, a resurgence of the metaphorical productions can be counted on and with them the development of the family's capacity to feed its own myths so that they become supports and protections.

But we frequently meet in clinical circumstances the collapse or effraction of the family envelope, of the intimate sphere, which induces a deadly imbalance with an invasion by the outside world detrimental to the linking and creation process inside the family. And if the psychoanalytic clinic of families very often shows weak mythopoietic abilities in their maintenance, renovation and creation roles, the pathology indicates also *a contrario* the grounds to prepare for an open and at the same time solid personal and group functioning, which would facilitate thoughts and creativity.

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