

# Preface

Anna Maria Nicoló

President of SPI (Società Psicoanalitica Italiana) during the years when the documentary project was realised

Selma Freiberg was a caring professional and a psychologist. She was well known for her studies on mother-child relationship and her article “Ghosts in the nursery” where she underlined the importance of transgenerational ghosts on growing and nurturing children even in very early stages. Few people know, however, that she had developed an original technique, called “Kitchen table therapy”. It involved three different approaches: the first one was an intervention on the crisis, the second one supported parenting, the third one regarded parent-child psychotherapy.

Each one of these phases was used in a different situation.

Kitchen Therapy included a home visit and was used in particular for those parents who especially needed support. This technique combined psychoanalytic orientation with caring professional help and showed that psychoanalysis can be useful even in settings that may appear far from the rituals taking place in the analyst’s room. Yet that was a very effective technique which showed the vitality and the flexibility of the model even if it could be perplexing for a lot of people.

Lots of other analysts, especially the first generation ones, such as Anna Freud, Winnicott and those who had worked in the psychoanalytic hospital in Berlin, were very attentive to the social side of psychoanalysis. This approach has been partly neglected, little by little, since psychoanalysts have deepened their work in a dual setting.

I myself believe that working in institutions or with institutional operators, working in extended settings such as the group, the couple and the family proves to be an important stimulus to transform psychoanalysis itself. Actually this way of working challenges different models by putting them in contact with reality, compelling the psychoanalyst to deal with difficult situations, with patients tending to act rather than think. It also imposes a simplification of the language that psychoanalysis really need.

Obviously these settings, these contests could easily be sources of misunderstanding and their spreading could even be dangerous if made without the needed care, making complex concepts progressively more superficial and banal. It will generate a science that is source of confusion, approximate and far from its identity.

However lots of therapists work and supervise in various institutions, from therapeutic communities up to foster homes, not to mention working with adolescents with violent or delinquent behavioural disorders or with women coming from slave-trading or from prisons. It is often a meritorious work, sometimes free or underpaid, that psychoanalysts carry on with passion, by leaving their protected studies and affording the gaze and criticism they are often looked at by either external and internal environment by people who are afraid of the gold of psychoanalysis being corrupted.

The most fascinating and interesting work, however, is the one taking place in contact with young operators, especially where we can show a simple and direct psychoanalysis talking to the heart of people. Sometimes, in order to reach this goal, you have to walk along confused and complicated ways but it is worth because you can help young operators, defending them from burning out which often hurts people affording these contests without any protection, any containment, any group support, without the paternal gaze of a more prepared person. Yet, these young operators are the future of psychoanalysis and this work is an opportunity to show the nature of this discipline, whose purpose is taking care of the patients , of their future and of every person trusting psychoanalysis.

Taking care is a very complex concept, not connected with the cure of the diseases, but rather linked to an evolutionary point of view, supporting the patient, activating his own self therapeutic transformative potentialities and stimulating his own resilience abilities.

This is why I have accepted Tito Baldini's invitation to care for the preface of his work, made together with a lot of collaborators. The documentary "Freud and the helping professions" is an original project in its idea and development. Here Tito Baldini talks about his own psychoanalysis in very simple words, addressing himself to an audience of

not-psychoanalysts engaged in the extreme boundaries of psyche and society.

Two years of free seminars offered to citizens, filmed shots, two groups working in parallel:

the former one composed by psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, psychoanalysts. I would like to add that the professionals for whom the work was conceived are women and men in contact with patients classically considered irrecoverable. However they have acted as sounding boxes to words that try to explain the existence of unconscious starting from Freud.

So we can define this work as a borderline one, with operators working with borderline patients, with seminars that can be defined borderline and full of passions, including the one for psychoanalysis and its extraordinary possibilities “to be used ... in mixed or borderline situations”(Freud 1926).

### **Bibliographical references**

Fraiberg S., Edelson E., Shapiro V. (1975). Ghosts in the Nursery: A Psychoanalytic Approach to the Problems of Impaired Infant-Mother Relationships. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, XIV, 1975, pp. 387-421;

Freud S. (1926). Prefazione. In: Aichhorn A. *Gioventù traviata*. Roma: Bompiani, 1950.