INTRODUCTION



The texts in this issue bring us face to face with a question we often encounter in our work and in our lives: what helps us stay connected to ourselves and to others when we struggle to express what we feel, when a relationship causes pain, when a loss leaves us without answers? And how do we respond as therapists when these same difficulties also touch us, the groups we belong to, and the world in which we live?

In the times we are living through, events around us are very much present in the therapy room. War, displacement, violence, and insecurity intersect with people's personal histories, touch earlier losses, and shake their confidence in the future. We hear these anxieties in our clients' accounts and recognise some of them in our own lives. How can we make room for them and listen to psychological pain within this reality? What can we offer when the conditions that hurt people persist?

One possibility that emerges from these texts is the creation of a space for dialogue, where even what is difficult to say can be heard. Every traumatic experience has its own history. Yet the course it takes is also shaped by the people who were close at hand, the circumstances in which it occurred, and the response it received. It matters whether the violence was acknowledged, whether responsibility was assigned, whether someone was there to listen and protect; whether the person found care and a space where they could speak without fear of being disbelieved or left alone.

The personal and the collective meet in these experiences. When fear is connected to a real threat, or exhaustion to circumstances that exceed a person's capacity to cope, recognising this connection has an essential place in therapy. Violence, inequalities, and social injustice affect how we live and relate to one another. Bringing the political and social dimensions of pain into view validates the client's experience and can help them understand it without blaming themselves, as they seek their own ways forward. At the

same time, it invites us to consider how we can support connection and keep a space for change open.

More specifically, **Nicoletta Citterio** and **Valentina Iori** open the issue with **"FA.G.E. Family Genogram of Emotions: Developing a Tool for Working with Emotions in Systemic Therapy".** It is our great pleasure that our Journal republishes the article published in the Italian magazine Quaderni SIRTS, with which we have a cooperation for the mutual publication of articles. Their starting point is a moment many of us will recognise as therapists: "There is certainly something I am missing, something I am failing to see." This sense of impasse prompts a discussion between the therapists and the development of a tool that helps emotions acquire form, names, and connections. The invitation for therapists "not to fall in love with their own hypothesis" reminds us how necessary it is to leave room for what has not yet been understood.

The collective article "**Who Cares for the Therapist? The Impact of Loss on a Systemic Psychotherapy Training Group**", by the **Family Therapy Department of the University Mental Health Research Institute (EPIPSI**), conveys the experience of a grieving group. Following the loss of one of its members, writing becomes a way for people to share their feelings, remember, and seek meaning, even when many questions remain unanswered. The statement that "vulnerability is not a deviation from professional identity, but an integral part of it" touches on something we often struggle to acknowledge: that those who care for others also need people they can turn to for support.

In "**From Gorgo to Medusa. The Course of Abuse: Reflections on a Timeless Story", Christina Konstantina Kalyva and Thaleia Trakaki** return to myth to discuss abuse, the betrayal of trust, and the gaze of others. They write: "The trauma remains mute, closed, sealed; it is shared with no one, entrusted to no one, heard by no one." Within this isolation, the presence of someone who can listen takes on particular significance. The therapist is described as the person "who can bear to see the trauma rather than the monster", making room for the person and for what the traumatic experience has hidden from the gaze of others.

In "**Couple Triangulation as a Central Element of Therapy", Katia Charalabaki** takes us into the couple's relationship and the therapist's position between the partners. The alliances and exclusions that strain the relationship may also emerge within therapy. The aim is to create "a triad capable of discussing, understanding, and 'detriangulating' itself". Revisiting a difficult experience from her practice, the author acknowledges that, on one occasion, "... the triangle never became truly therapeutic, as it was unable to introduce

'metacommunication'." This admission also makes room for our own difficulties, for those moments when we need to revisit what happened and reflect on our participation.

In "**Moving from Synthesis to Differentiation", Ioanna Papaioannou** continues the discussion of couples, closeness, and the difficulty of retaining a separate sense of self within a relationship. The question of "how to exist as two subjects within and outside the relationship" concerns the partners' efforts to recognise their desires, fears, and boundaries. It also touches the therapist, who needs "to be simultaneously inside and outside the couple": to feel alongside the partners while also preserving the space needed to think about what is happening. Ultimately, the author invites us to consider what can change when difference finds a place within the relationship.

With **"Conflict as the Language of the Unspoken: Mythological Couples and Clinical Readings", Eirini Segredou** invites us to listen to what partners find difficult to express. As she writes, "the subject of the disagreement may be specific; the meaning it acquires within the relationship, however, is relational". Mythological stories help us approach the fear, shame, and need for recognition that may lie within a conflict. They thus open up "the possibility for the unspoken to be recognised and named, so that the relationship itself can be transformed".

In "**A tribute to Paolo Gritti**", Valeria Pomini bids farewell to a man whose work was closely bound up with human connection and collaboration. His approach reminds us that "family systems cannot be understood independently of the cultural contexts that create them", inviting us to listen to people's stories alongside their cultural legacies. His "inspiring words", his enthusiasm and the ties he forged with the Greek systemic community keep open the possibility of continuing what they began together.

The issue concludes with **Dimitris Kokkalis's** review of C**hristos Georgalas's "Gaza Diary"**. This testimony brings us close to collective suffering and to the people who persist in offering care amid violence and destruction. At the same time, it raises questions that concern our own position: "To what extent can psychotherapy contribute without the parallel involvement of collective sociopolitical processes?" Reflection also turns to our encounters with others, particularly when their values and beliefs differ from our own: "How much difference can we tolerate, though?" These questions remain open and stay with us beyond our reading, shaping how we listen, relate to one another, and respond to what is happening around us.

Perhaps reading this issue will offer an opportunity to pause a little longer over what we hear and what we struggle to say. To share thoughts and doubts, seek support, and make

room for a different perspective. In the hope that this conversation will continue in our encounters, where care takes on its own particular form each time.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue.

On behalf of the Editorial Committee
Athanasia Kati