

# COMMENTS ON JAAK LE ROY PAPER

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The paper that Jaak Le Roy offers to us today to our Study Day 2011 at Bilbao, continues the subject of last year Study Day in Berlin where we have heard Ernestine Wolhfart's paper about group processes with African immigrants. It enters in the sequence of papers about « belonging and prejudice » in a globalized world, which values we will go on thinking together at Palermo workshop

I find that Jaak's paper « Group belonging and transculturality : through exclusion to transformation » an important source of information and alarm on the « state of humanity » in today's globalized society because it refers to children that actually live in the street, partially or totally excluded from their families .

He refers in his paper to his own experience in Kinshasa , Republic of Congo, as mediator in a non-governmental association which offers collaboration in the solution of important socio-political situations. The title of the paper, from exclusion (of children) to transformation ( of family dynamics and community collaboration) has at the same time a « wide scope » (ambition) and a humble scope, because it faces the difficulties and limits of transcultural exchanges. He applies in his work a transcultural conception which takes its sources on group analytical and psychoanalytic knowledge. As a first step on this collaboration each promoter and operator from abroad needs to be able to structure an attitude of confidence in the transformational capacity of those who are helped, and have to question his own prejudices with the intention to avoid imposing one's own European ways of thinking, beliefs, convictions and models,

His paper widens our horizon and curiosity and many questions appear, about the traditional Congo society and its actual changes and possibilities of transformation.

At first sight the globalized world, (considering in a most simplified way in its economical, and communicational changes), imposes somehow a new colonization to this fragile new Popular Republic. What is called traditional context, which is already the result of the people's adaptation to the late European colonization is changed today by new technological factors and new poverty, (lack of work) There is a loss in the transsubjective need of security and sense of belonging in the community which is expressed by the flourishing of superstition, and accentuation of ways of thought that offer inadequate or paradoxical solutions to actual family problems. It is as if Congolese fathers and children live in different cultural contexts.

Jaak's hypothesis is that the « virtual » input of television and other communication techniques have introduced this generational difference where fathers have lost authority or express inadequate fatherhood.

But what makes that fathers can no more transmit to young people positive ways of thinking. ?? Is it the children's « different » cultural background, ( somehow as immigrant children

in our countries , that are more adapted to the new conditions of language and schooling, while their parents had not this opportunity?) It seems that a regressive superstitious common background is used as justification to rejective actions that send children out of their families .

A large group of children get acquainted with the violent culture of the street while the parents seem to have lost the possibility to give them some security(holding). It is not only about not being able to feed them( which is , perhaps, a good metaphore for the whole situation) but it is as if the parents are « inexistent »,they seem to think or feel that they are themselves excluded , they have lost either the concrete and the simbolic power of parenthood What about mothers ,how is it that they accept to abandon their kids ? In fact it is a psychosocial situation where (using Kaes words ) « metasocial incertainties » provoke a » meta psychic disorders » . family life ??)

It seems that even if Congo became a free state, the people do not value freedom positively and do not take advantage of having a State that protect the national future ; because of corruption or other difficulties the existing laws protecting families and education are not applied ( A primitive superstitious way of maintaining some tribal power instead of the adapted family life patterns )

In this sense the importance of a magic third world and the importance of Churches(Eglise duReveil) has to be considered : perhaps a mixture of magic and virtual worlds ??

The adaptation of children to the street is a survival situation( resilience ?) that destroys a country and cannot last longtime, or else a degrading evolution may provoke new perverse context situations . Jaak tells us that children give value to their « liberty »which give them a » new belonging « but in fact does not give them any security of a normal future in society.

I consider that a most impressive point is that many children believe in their witchery and in their own magic powers , they believe they can decide about life and death , and regress to cannibalistic and « autogenerative »fantasies that eliminate the differences between generations,

In these conditions the adult's superstition about children's witchery acquires an « ideological « significance of pedophobia and fear of the future , and the children's own fantasies of power (cannibalism) may correspond and express the « predation » of the resourses of the community by the globalized organisation of society .

The fact is that children believe and assume the witchery intentions and the fantasies of destruction ,omnipotence and endless power that are projected by the community on them. Can we consider these fantasies as an « identification with the agressors » ( at the same time the virtual aggressor !! and the traditional aggressor ??) an unconscious understanding of the plundering « values » of a globalized,financial and industrial civilization. I read that UNICEF considers that globalization tends to transform people in merchancy and to »consume « and to « rob »( to predate) countries resourses .

But what about the fantasmatic avoidance of the human taboo of cannibalism ?

a)my first question to Jaak . : can we think that in those countries as Congo an ethnological

–psychoanalytic understanding of globalization makes some sense for your work. ?

The programme and propositions that Jaak has realized in Congo , consist in the organisation of a series of mediations and transcultural –transitional spaces, using local organisations for active teaching ,and learning experiences with the scope to enlarge the group of persons that can be able to mediate between the child( boy or girl) in the street and their family. A great importance is given to the child's sense of belonging and the subjective need to be positively recognized by others(caring others) This supposes that the caretaker must also be recognized as such by his family and assume this position

On the whole this implies a complex group mouvement to recuperate from family immobility. Jaak's description of Jasmina's case shows how a family change depends on the capacity of this woman(sister of a child in the street ) to discover the existence of an « intrasubjective space »in herself where she could think by herself and understand the pattern of her family group and « choose ! » her behaviour . In fact she became able to share with her family her new experience of autonomy of thought ; she moved from a conformist adaptation to circumstances to a behaviour in accordance with her desire to save her brother from living in the street.

b)my second question to Jaak concerns the work with operators as Jasmina, because he shows that any community's wide scope by an ONG passes through very complex psychological circumstances in relation to each family case and through several humble results . But what he shows is that every modification of a family may be in relation with a subjective modification of the agent himself (herself) : a widening of her understanding of herself and the others . I ask him to tell us more about this aspect of his Congo experience with working groups and thank him very much for bringing his reflections to our Study Day