**James Gammill (1925-2017)**

Physician, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst for children, adolescents and adults, James Gammill was associate member of the British Psychoanalytical Society and Full training member of the Paris Psychoanalytical Society. He introduced in France the thinking of Melanie Klein and of Kleinian and Post-Kleinian authors, and was a major contributor to the training of several generations of French psychoanalysts. With James Gammill’s passing, psychoanalysis today loses an exceptional clinician and a major transmitter of psychoanalytical art and science.

American citizen, James Gammill was, at eighteen years old, navigator in the U.S. Air Force during the Second World War and participated to the liberation of France in 1944. Sent after only a few weeks of training to the furnace of Ardennes, he there had to take care of the wounded with psychological disorders.

Having been a teenager immersed in war – as had been W.R. Bion before him during the first World War – shaped all his life of a double belonging and of a never ending swing between Europe and his “Old South” of the United States:

With the good taste by which he distinguished himself, he decorates a modest country house in Tennessee, but also in Loir-et-Cher, mid-distance between Châteaudun, which was his military base upon his arrival in France, and Vendôme, where was born the Earl of Rochambeau, companion of Lafayette and hero of the United States war of independence (1781). To him, Lafayette would always be an example of freethinking and of a connection between his country of origin and his country of adoption. During the demolition of the chapel of the Rochambeau family in Vendôme, he even acquires its pulpit, which he places in his small farmhouse. At the end of his life, he returns to spend yet some more time in Châteaudun to live near members of a family who were his friends.

After his medical studies in the United States, James Gammill comes back to Europe to train during ten years in London, from 1950 to 1960. He follows a psychoanalysis with Paula Heimann and undertakes his training curriculum at the British Psychoanalytical Society. Among his prominent trainers, he benefited from a long supervision with Melanie Klein and also works with prestigious analysts such as D. W. Winnicott – who welcomed him for his curriculum –, R. Money-Kyrle, W. R. Bion, H. Rosenfeld, Hanna Segal and Esther Bick.

He then returns to Nashville (Tennessee), where he holds a position as Assistant Professor in psychiatry.

However, in 1966, he decides to come back to Europe and chooses Paris to settle. From then on, James Gammill never ceases to promote fruitful interactions between different psychoanalytical cultures, whilst dedicating himself body and soul at setting up training groups all over the country.

It is him that makes Donald Meltzer come to Paris three time a year during twenty years, thereby making generations of practitioners benefit from this genius clinician and theoretician. Created with the support of James Gammill in the context of such gatherings, the GERPEN (*Groupe d’Étude et de Recherches Psychanalytiques pour le développement de l’Enfant et du Nourrisson*) pursues its task until today, in inviting other foreign figures, in the continuity of Martha Harris and Frances Tustin.

Conscious of difficulties faced by psychoanalytical practitioners to institute in France an official training for the psychoanalysis of children, James Gammill strongly supports the project undertaken by Annie Anzieu and Florence Guignard to create an association for the training in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy of children and adolescents. This is how, in 1984, the APE (*Association pour la Psychanalyse de l’Enfant*) was born, and then, in 1994, the SEPEA (*Société Européenne pour la Psychanalyse de l’Enfant et de l’Adolescent*), successor of the APE in an arena of practice and exchanges that had become European.

Always preoccupied by world affairs, moved by an unshakable resolution to contribute to the victory of life over destructiveness, approaching trauma-related despair with always high standards, James Gammill also contributed at consolidating the relations between authors of psychoanalytical past – notably those of Eastern Europe, fleeing Nazism – with those of the present.

In parallel, once having become Full training member of the SPP (Paris Psychoanalytical Society), James Gammill uses his accreditation to train young analysts in many different places in France. He thus contributed to the foundation of working Groups in Toulouse, Rouen, Bordeaux, Caen, Aix-en-Provence, Brest, Marseille… but also Paris – Rue de Rennes, Rue de Berri – le Moulin de Bully, Lyon, Nice… and many more places, small and large, where James Gammill has put his art and his science to the benefit of the full range of psychoanalysis – children, adolescents, adults – in order to develop the skills of new generations in the spirit of the pioneers of psychoanalysis. One had, so he said, to leave the Court of Versailles and work democratically, all the way into the most modest places, so that one no longer forgets that children are the fathers of humanity.

Florence Guignard

Bianca Lechevalier

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