

Preface

It was at an international seminar at Leuven University in October 2009 when the very first research on the case of Victoria and Alfonso started. Some of us met for three days in an old thirteenth century abbey, watched the videotapes of the four sessions of the therapy, and talked about them. This group did not know at that time where they were going with this investigation, but the conversations were fascinating and all felt inspired, especially through the different views, different observations, different questions, and different interpretations. Everyone was impressed by the myriad of facets of the case and by the touching aliveness of the interactions between both the partners and the therapists. This was the beginning of the idea to search for ways of doing systematic research in which this richness would be respected. Already during this first encounter, it was obvious that this was going to be a challenge because of the complexity of multi-actor dialogues.

One year later, the *European Family Therapy Research Group* (EFTRG) was founded at a meeting at Jyväskylä University (Finland). We were therapists/researchers from Finland, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and Greece. The decision to meet a few times a year in order to support and inspire each other in doing research in the field of marital and family therapy went along with the choice to start our joint work on the case of Victoria and Alfonso.

In the following years, EFTRG had meetings in Helsinki (2011), Thessaloniki, Nottingham, and Porto (2012), Istanbul (2013), Copenhagen, Heidelberg, and Crete (2014). We presented papers on our research of Alfonso's and Victoria's therapy at different conferences (1st International Conference on Dialogical Practices Helsinki 2011; QRMH4 Nottingham 2012; SPR Porto 2012; EFTA Conference Istanbul 2013; SPR Copenhagen 2014; 1st European Systemic Research Conference Heidelberg 2014; QRMH5 Crete 2014) and, more and more, the idea took shape that we should accumulate a written report about the different approaches we had developed in doing discursive research on this couple therapy. This book is the result.

Our gratitude goes to the clients, who we named Victoria and Alfonso, as well as their therapists. First and foremost, it was them who gave us the opportunity to have a close look at one therapeutic system from different angles.

Furthermore, we thank the organizers as well as the scientific committees of the diverse conferences where we presented, as they encouraged our project by providing us with time and space to discuss the ongoing work with different audiences.

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Nordhausen, Germany
Leuven, Belgium

Maria Borcsa
Peter Rober

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