

EDITORIAL

German themes in psychoanalysis. Part two

In this issue, I am once more taking up the discourse on German psychoanalysis that I began in Issue 4/2013, whose aim is to familiarize readers with the complex and creative evolution of psychoanalysis in Germany after World War II – and with its specific contributions to the international analytic community. To help realize this project, I asked Werner Bohleber to write a paper on the foundation (in 1947) and evolution of the journal *Psyche*, which contributed so much toward helping our German colleagues elaborate the *Nazizeit* (1933–1945), and toward promoting the work of mourning that the second paper of Issue 4/2013 represents: “The fate of German-Jewish psychoanalyst-refugees in the Netherlands: An overview,” by our Dutch colleague Harry Stroeken. For the third paper of the issue, I chose Ulrike May’s revisitation of Freud’s “Beyond the pleasure principle,” aiming to document the close dialogue with Freud that the group of German colleagues who produce the journal *Luzifer-Amor* contribute to the international community. Hans-Jürgen Wirth was the author of the fourth paper of Issue 4/2013, which centered around the abuse of nuclear energy, seen from the social-analytical viewpoint developed in Germany by Horst-Eberhard Richter. Last but not least, the issue contained the interview with Horst Kächele that Ingrid Erhardt and I had undertaken in the spring of 2013, in which he talked not only about his research work, but also about his whole personal and professional development.

In my previous Editorial (Conci, 2013), I referred to the reconstruction of the history of psychoanalysis in Germany that was articulated by the sociologist Edith Kurzweil in 1989, and now I can alert readers to the revisitation of this topic formulated by the historian Anthony Kauders in 2014. Particularly relevant to my presentation of the papers in this issue is Kauders’ division of his subject into a series of chapters associating a certain year with a certain topic, starting with “1913: Sexuality” and ending with “1985: The past.” Although, in my previous Editorial, I mentioned the crucial year 1985 as the year when Geoffrey Cocks’ book *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich* was published, I did not make it explicit that 1985 was also the year that the IPA met again

on German soil, in Hamburg, 53 years after the previous congress it had held in Germany, which had been in Wiesbaden in 1932. This not only was the major turning point in the relationship between the German and the international analytic communities, but also forms the frame of reference of some of the papers of this current issue. To this drama of course also belongs the split of the German analytic community into the DPG (the German Society, which contributed to the foundation of our Federation in 1962 after it had been left out of the IPA in 1949) and the DPV (the German Association, which was specifically founded as an alternative German branch of the IPA in contrast to the DPG).

Other important documents connected with this return to Germany are Regine Lockot’s 1985 book *Erimmern und Durcharbeiten*, the catalogue of the exhibition on the history of psychoanalysis in Germany, held in Hamburg, which was edited by Karen Brecht and her colleagues (Brecht, Friedrich, Hermanns, Kaminer, & Juelich, 1994), and the monographic issue on the Hamburg Congress edited by Norbert Friedman for the journal *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought* in 1988. And here is what a German colleague said in Hamburg to Robert Wallerstein: “We thank God that you have been willing to come; for forty years we have been living alone with our shame and wondering if you would ever come back” (Wallerstein, 1988, p. 352). If John Kafka centered his paper “On reestablishing contact” on “the list of unfinished tasks” connected to this key event, he concluded it formulating the “question” that “touches us all: Would we have been among the ‘resistors’?” (Kafka, 1988, p. 308).

One of these areas of “unfinished business” was brilliantly solved by Michael Ermann and Jürgen Körner through the foundation in 1985 of the journal *Forum der Psychoanalyse*, which aimed at “creating a constructive climate between the rivalrous groups and moderating the gaps between them, given the increasing recognition of the shared history of psychoanalysis in Germany that had started to take root in the 1980s” – as we can learn in the first paper of this issue. Michael Ermann himself had contributed to this change of climate through not only his work in the DPG, but also the papers he

published in 1996 in the book *Verstrickung und Einsicht*. Thirty years later, the journal occupies “a firm place in the German analytic world,” having greatly contributed to the establishment of the “normal pluralism” that also characterizes the present German analytic landscape. Indeed, the *Forum der Psychoanalyse* also represented an important model for Jan Stenstrom, our founding editor, in his original conception and plans for our own journal – Michael Ermann having closely collaborated as a Regional Editor since its first issue in 1992 up until 2014.

In addition, the 1985 IPA Congress in Hamburg represented a turning point in the life of our Israeli colleague Ilany Kogan. As a very young analyst at the time, she personally gave the paper she had written with Hillel Klein on the topic of the congress (identification and its vicissitudes), and this launched her brilliant scientific and professional career, both as one of the world’s experts on the transgenerational consequences of the Holocaust, and as an internationally renowned analyst and supervisor. In her paper “From psychic holes to psychic representations,” she revisits three cases that she had already presented in her ground-breaking book *The Cry of Mute Children* (1995) in terms of her own definition of the concept of “enactment”: that the transgenerational impact of the negation of traumas connected to the Holocaust gives rise to a “memory hole,” whose existence usually comes to the surface only through the series of enactments that the patients (up to the third generation) unconsciously produce. In the context of good analytic work, such enactments can represent the beginning of a painful but salutary journey of exposing and elaborating on the repressed traumatic events, whose mourning facilitates the eventual emergence of a better integrated self. This is how Ilany Kogan shows us that “the past is never dead, it lives in the mind, never to perish.”

In his fifth paper in this journal, “Some notes on Freud’s concept of conversion,” Siegfried Zepf articulates as close a dialogue with Freud as the one developed by Ulrike May in Issue 4/2013. A former university professor and the author of many books (see, for example, Zepf, 2006) centered around the project of defining the various dimensions of psychoanalysis (from the clinical to the sociopsychological) in terms of their common critical potential, Siegfried Zepf redefines conversion in terms of “the hallucinatory satisfaction of the desire to avoid unpleasure,” that is, in terms of a concept originally proposed by Freud himself.

As I showed in my review of *Das Unbewusste - Ein Projekt in drei Bänden* (Conci, 2008), the work of

Michael Buchholz and Günter Gösde is inspired not only by an extraordinary capacity of interdisciplinary dialogue, but even more by the project of defending and promoting our work and identity in terms of their very peculiar and sophisticated statute, that is, the result of the personal synthesis that each of us has to achieve in terms of psychoanalysis as a science, as an art, as a philosophy of life, and as a technique. If Michael Buchholz had already articulated this point of view in 1999, he has reaffirmed it together with Günter Gösde in their two-volume work (totaling more than 1300 pages) *Der Besen, mit dem die Hexe fliegt*, and – last but not least – also in the paper that he has contributed to this issue, “Growth: What reconciliation of conflicts could mean. A lesson from the history of psychoanalysis.” In this, he shows in detail how growth can be at best defined as the achievement of an “excentric positionality” (as described by Plessner), a concept not far from the dialectical position inherent in H. S. Sullivan’s principle of “participant observation” (see Conci, 2012).

Michael Buchholz is also a co-author, together with Horst Kächele, Ingrid Erhardt, and Carolina Seybert, of the paper “Countertransference as object of empirical research?,” through which we not only learn about the various approaches in terms of the relative stages of research, but also discover a series of instruments (questionnaire and interview studies, in the first place) that deserve to be taught at our training institutes and to be much more widely utilized. Indeed, working in this area allowed the authors to come to the following conclusion: “The lesson to be learned might be that it is helpful to look not only ‘behind’ what is said and done, but also *onto the surface*: what happens in the details of conversation and narration.”

Given the convergence between such a point of view – that the depth appears on the surface – and the clinical perspective pioneered by H. S. Sullivan, it is no wonder that Horst Kächele introduces the last paper of this issue, Helmut Thomä’s (1921–2013) “Remarks on the first century of the International Psychoanalytic Association and a utopian vision of its future,” by stating that their “two-volume Ulm textbook ... anticipated the American move to intersubjective and relational psychoanalytic thinking.” It is thanks to him and to Dieter Thomä (St. Gallen) that we have been able to publish what we can consider as Helmut Thomä’s “last will” to us – a paper that he had sent to us at the time of the 2010 IFPS Forum held in Athens, in which he argues for a more extensive collaboration between the IPA and the IFPS. After meeting him for the first time at the international workshop on the scientific

status of psychoanalysis organized in Bologna in June 1991 by the journal *Psicoterapia e scienze umane*, several meetings with him followed over the years – usually at the yearly conference on psychoanalytic research taking place in Ulm. I recollect hearing him talk about his work at the opening panel of the 2007 IPA Berlin Congress, together with Madeleine Baranger and Martin Bergmann. By the way, this was a very successful congress, taking place 85 years after the first IPA congress held in Berlin in 1922, and inaugurated by the then IPA president Claudio Eizirik (see Eizirik, 2008). I also remember meeting Helmut Thomä for the last time at the DPG annual congress held in Magdeburg in 2009, where – in the new climate of collaboration between DPG and DPV – he had come to present the anthology on “the intersubjective turn in psychoanalysis” which he had edited in 2006 with Martin Altmeyer.

Of course, I would love to write many more words about the unique paper by him on the past and the future of psychoanalysis published in this issue than would fit the space I have at my disposal here, but it is now time to let the authors of this issue speak for themselves.

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