

## BOOK REVIEW

Buchholz MB, Götde G (Eds.). *Das Unbewusste – Ein Projekt in drei Bänden* [The unconscious – A project in three volumes]. Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2005–2006.

As reviewer of the three volumes edited by Michael Buchholz and Günter Götde, a Faustian achievement of more than 2300 pages, I will not only explain to our readers what the single volumes are about and what themes they deal with, but will also have the chance to introduce to them a whole series of German colleagues, whom the editors chose for their specific competence and whose names and work deserve to be internationally known. For this reason – and having already introduced Michael Buchholz in my editorial – I start with his co-editor, Günter Götde (Berlin).

Well known in Germany as the author of a book on the philosophical background of psychoanalysis (Götde, 1999) and of a book on Freud's daughter Mathilde, Götde's commitment to the intellectual tradition of psychoanalysis in terms of research and teaching well complements Buchholz's rich professional experience and wide-ranging interdisciplinary interests. As the editors write in their presentation of the three volumes, what they share is what they call *Mehrperspektivität* (a multiplicity of perspectives) and a three-dimensional view of psychoanalysis, as *Beziehungpsychologie* (relational psychology), as *Psychotherapie*, and as *Hilfswissenschaft* (auxiliary discipline) for a whole range of other disciplines.

Under the title *Macht und Dynamik des Unbewussten. Auseinandersetzungen in Philosophie, Medizin und Psychoanalyse* [Power and dynamics of the unconscious. Its articulations in philosophy, medicine and psychoanalysis], and with an extent of 718 pages, the first volume presents us with five sections (each with a specific introduction by the editors) including a total of 24 chapters. Of the first two sections, dealing with the philosophical roots of psychoanalysis in the works of Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, the Romantic Movement, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, let me mention Götde's chapter on Nietzsche as philosopher of the unconscious.

The third section, dealing with the further development of the concept of the unconscious in medicine, psychology, and psychotherapy, consists of a chapter by Mai Wegener (Berlin) on G.T. Fechner (1801–1887); a chapter by our Berlin colleague Johannes Reicheneder (see his 1990 volume on Freud's work) on magnetism and hypno-

tism; and a chapter by two German colleagues (Karl-Ernst Bühler and Gerhard Heim), who have been promoting an overdue revisitation of the work of Pierre Janet (1859–1947). The fourth section, centered around the unconscious as the central concept of the pioneer phase of psychoanalysis, is articulated into a chapter by Götde on the *Mehrdeutigkeit* (multiple levels of meaning) of Freud's successive definitions of the concept, and into four chapters revisiting the contributions of Adler and Jung on the one hand, and Ferenczi and Rank on the other.

Of the eight chapters of the fifth and largest section, "Unity and contradictions of the unconscious in contemporary psychoanalysis," I would like to mention the following: the chapter on the evolution and limitations of Freud's drive theory by Siegfried Zepf (Saarbrücken); the chapter by Karla Hoven-Buchholz on Christopher Bollas; and the chapter by Michael Buchholz on Stephen Mitchell (whom he had been able to invite to Germany in 1998) and intersubjectivity. The other five chapters deal with the work of Lacan, Kohut, M. Klein, and Bion, and with the "relational unconscious," with whose various specifications Martin Altmeyer deals (he, together with Helmut Thomä, having edited a rich anthology on the subject in 2006). In the concluding chapter, "The unconscious and its metaphors," the editors present to us the concept of metaphor as a thread running through the whole volume.

Also highly fascinating is the second volume, *Das Unbewusste in aktuellen Diskursen. Anschlüsse* [The unconscious in contemporary discourse. Connections], whose 812 pages, five sections and 27 chapters cover an even larger territory. A German pioneer of the psychology of the foetus (and of the re-evaluation of the work of Otto Rank), Ludwig Janus (Heidelberg) opens the first section, on the new frontiers of developmental psychology, with a chapter (the first of four) on the unconscious before and around birth (see, for example, Janus, 2004). The most interesting chapters of the second section, dealing with the connections between psychoanalysis and social sciences, are the two very refreshing chapters written by Michael Buchholz on the role and function of metaphors and the very informative chapter that our colleague Munich, Wolfgang Mertens (Munich), himself a very creative and well-known author in Germany, (see, for example, Mertens & Waldvogel, 2000), dedicated to the re-evaluation of the concept of unconscious by cognitive psychology.



Very stimulating too are the four chapters of the third section, "Looking for the traces of the cultural and social unconscious," starting with the internationally prominent Egyptologist Jan Assmann (Heidelberg) dealing with the relationship between cultural memory and the unconscious (see, for example, Assmann, 1999). The slippery theme of how the unconscious manifests itself in political life is dealt with by a German expert on the subject, Hans-Jürgen Wirth (see Wirth, 2002). Last but not least, Johannes Reichmayr (Vienna) also deals with a theme (psychoanalysis and ethnology) about which he has written extensively (e.g. Reichmayr, 2003). The topic of the relationships between philosophy and psychoanalysis is covered by the six chapters of the fourth section, that is, relating to Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Foucault, plus the topics of power and ethics.

The four contributions in the fifth and last section are very interesting and original, being centered around the dialogue between psychoanalysis and neurosciences, and featuring a chapter by the Göttingen neurobiologist Gerald Hüther, who draws a clear line between the biological foundations and the cultural conditions of human development, and two chapters by Thomas and Brigitte Görnitz (Munich) on the image of man and on the unconscious in the light of quantum theory.

Given the extraordinary openness and curiosity of the editors, it is no surprise that also their third volume, *Das Unbewusste in der Praxis. Erfahrungen verschiedener Professionen* [The unconscious in our work. Different professional experiences], is so extensive that it totals 814 pages (containing six sections and 27 chapters). The best chapter of the first section, on how to deal with the unconscious in psychodynamic work, is "Three doors to the unconscious in the analytic situation" by Herbert Will (Munich), the author of a very good book on the evolution of psychoanalytic technique (Will, 2003).

After the second section – dealing with the unconscious in pedagogy, in child and adolescent psychotherapy, and in family therapy – we come to a third section, centered around the unconscious dynamics in psychic and psychosomatic diseases, in which we find not only a very good chapter by Mertens on depression, but also a very original contribution on psychosis by the Greek-born Stavros Mentzos (Frankfurt), one of the major German experts in the field and a source of inspiration for various generations of German colleagues (see, for example, Mentzos, 2000). Section four, also very useful for the practicing psychoanalyst, is "Dealing with the unconscious in self-analysis, supervision, organizational work and group projects," in which Hilde Kronberg-Gödde, Michael Buchholz, Mathias Lohmer and Heidi Mül-

ler, and Günter Gödde and Edith Püschel specifically treat each one of the four topics.

Among the five chapters of section five, I found Wirth's chapter on "Unconscious motives of genocide" particularly important, since it also deals with the whole literature on the Holocaust – and its historical, social, and subjective causes. Having had to forgo dealing with all the chapters of this third volume (as I also had to do, for reasons of space, with the first and second volumes), I will conclude this review by mentioning what I found to be the most inspiring chapter of the sixth section "The unconscious in the arts and in the art of living," which is Michael Buchholz's "The birth of language out of the spirit of music," whose starting point is represented by exactly the same theme which Mauro Mancina deals with in the opening paper of this issue of *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*.

As the reader can imagine, I strongly agree with the editors and the collaborators of the three volumes under review that the future of psychoanalysis is best assured when we keep cultivating and proposing it not only as a unique form of therapy, but also (or especially) as a very sophisticated and complex intellectual discipline, which can not only constructively illuminate and complement a whole series of other disciplines, but also guide mankind's never-ending search for meanings and values. In this same spirit I introduce to psychoanalysis the students of philosophy of the University of Trent (Italy), bringing them in touch with the peculiar history and the fascinating intellectual structure of psychoanalysis – and also making them familiar with it in terms of a potentially important key to their own psychic life. From this point of view, the three volumes under review represent a unique bibliographical source and instrument for all the colleagues involved in the task of keeping psychoanalysis alive in the wider academic and intellectual community. Not to mention the fact that the historical, philosophical and interdisciplinary dimensions which *Das Unbewusste – Ein Projekt in drei Bänden* deals with should of course receive much more attention in our own psychoanalytic training institutes and societies. Fortunately, both levels of discourse are felt as important not only in Germany, but also in the United States and in Italy, where they motivated Daniel Burston and Roger Frie to edit the volume *Psychotherapy and human science* (2006), and Francesco Barale, Mauro Bertani, Vittorio Gallese, Stefano Mistura and Adriano Zamperini to edit *Psiche* (2006–2007), a very carefully researched historical and interdisciplinary dictionary in two volumes.

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