

whereas Greene's Pandosto ends negatively with the suicide of Pandosto and no return of the queen. Let us hope that the outcome of this current Eurozone crisis reflects Shakespeare rather than Greene.

A COMMENT ON GERALD WOOSTER'S PAPER: "TRANSGENERATIONAL METAMORPHOSIS IN SHAKESPEARE'S WINTER'S TALE - AND THE EUROZONE CRISIS"

Kurt Husemann

Dear Gerald,

For more than thirty years we have shared a common interest - the development of group analysis with a special emphasis on the investigation of intercultural influences.

The European Association for Transcultural Group Analysis (EATGA) has been a meeting place for us for many years.

The EATGA has developed a special, precious style over all these years, how to deal with interpersonal conflict which surface in our association.

We understand conflicts between individuals not only on the personal level, but we also try to understand these conflicts as an expression of unconscious processes between parts of the group .

The individual is also seen as a part of his culture and of which he is a product and a representative.

Both of us have been present, at this Palermo workshop, you as lecturer and participant, me as a leader of a small group and supervisor of the staff.

The organizers of the workshop have asked me to comment on your paper.

In your paper you describe Shakespeare's Winter's Tale. To come to a better understanding of this play, you introduce concepts of Melanie Klein, which allow new access to the human problems and group processes. Furthermore you relate this knowledge to the European history of the last century and include the Great Wars, particularly pointing out the role of Germany. Finally, you relate the current problems of the euro zone with that.

I hope that my comments will be understood as a statement of a European group analyst of German origin and not as a statement of a German who speaks exclusively for his native country.

The lecture has two main parts:

Firstly:

Contents and interpretation of Shakespeare's play.

This part explains in detail and using complex language the thinking of Shakespeare. The introduction into Kleinian patterns of thinking is very helpful in understanding Shakespeare.

Secondly:

Quite unconnected stands the first part with the second part. The second part is devoted to the role of Germany in the First and Second World Wars in conjunction with conclusions for the understanding of the dynamics of the current European development. This part is different in style, complexity of language, and sometimes loses the language of a scientific paper.

When reading the article for the first time, I had the impression that it had been written by two different people. You point out in the footnote on the first page that this article had been prepared together with the historian Stuart Holland. Unfortunately, his and your thoughts are not differentiated in the text. The text is published with your name so that I can only address myself to you in my comments.

Comment on the text:

The main hypothesis of your work is:

“...that the (actual) crisis the first time that Germany has been able to split from guilt (Schuld) - especially of the holocaust- ... and to project guilt for debt (also Schuld in German)..”
....”For the Germans debt (Schuld) also means guilt.”

This is incorrect; nobody who speaks the German language would mix up the two meanings as you state it.

How it is used in Austria or in the German-speaking part of Switzerland I do not know. .

Guilt has a clear moral connection while debts have a purely material character.

To make it very clear from the start: there exists a transgenerational transmission of guilt feelings as a psychological reality. But this is not Gerald's topic in his paper: he never speaks about guilt as a feeling, but he speaks about guilt only in the sense of a moral entity, a reality.

Going on, you try to protect a very unsafe hypothesis by the introduction of further hypothesis. You refer to a concept of Matte Blanco that in the unconscious several meanings remain related to each other on different levels, but also can be replaced. Guilt therefore represents at the same time: debt und guilt.

To legitimise one hypothesis by the introduction of another is scientifically not very correct. You can try to do so if you use this strategy in sequence and consistently throughout the whole project. If this does not happen, it can be understood as an example of circular thinking, which is used for concealing something else.

As a result you also use a completely different way of interpretation for the genesis of the word “guilt” in your text:

“While the British, with typical pragmatism, and unobsessed by guilt, dropped the ‘u’ from it and called the bonds ‘gilts’.”

Thus the British unconscious is cleansed, free from guilt. By the way this is a wonderful example of a projective identification, if we see the different use of dealing with guilt by the Germans and the British.

With the help of Nietzsche you attempt to make a connection between guilt and debt on to the German Protestants, the Lutherans. In my opinion, this is historically incorrect.

The central marketing concept of the Roman Catholic Church and the basis for its immense wealth was the trade in the equation of moral guilt and material debt.

It is of great historical importance that Luther opened the fight against this unutterable trade from moral guilt to material debt. As a consequence this connection between guilt and debt belongs to our common European Christian culture.

Gerald Wooster tries in his paper to establish an inner connection for the beginning of the First and Second World Wars and the current European situation. Historical facts are handled quite generously.

There is no comparable area of science today, which has been investigated so thoroughly as the period between First World War and the end of the Second World War. This immense research is also the expression of the highly complex nature of the subject so it requires an approach from many angles.

Gerald Wooster makes the choice of two historical works out of the multitude of scientific approaches available.

These have been published post-war: Bullock (1952) and Fischer (1961), papers which are now at least 40 and 50 years old, added to which Fischer was a historian with a Nazi background and like other academics with Nazi backgrounds wrote books in order to try to absolve their own guilt.

Fischer found evidence in the Imperial archives that Germany had already planned the First World War in detail before 1914. This is undisputed. But to use it as an only and sufficient reason to cover the war guilt of Germany is quite adventurous. It is important to see what has been left out to give support for the hypothesis.

No word is given about the general geopolitical and historical situation in Europe at that time, nothing on the imperialism and the results of all the colonization. Without this, the beginning of the First World War is not comprehensible.

I will return later to how I understand the reduction of highly complex historical and psychological conditions in Gerald's analysis.

Dear Gerald, from where do you take the assertion on page six, that:

“Successive German Chancellors since Helmut Schmidt have declared that it is time to “bury” the past “:

This sentence surely has been mentioned in many German pubs but not from a German Chancellor. Chancellor Kohl has always used the linguistic pattern that National Socialism came “over” the Germans and not out of the Germans. But it is not correct to attribute such thinking to Gerhard Schröder or Angela Merkel.

In the same part on page six, again without a piece of evidence you claim:

“A majority of the German public deem that Greece should be exiled from The Euro zone „In the period you refer to, , no German representative of a democratic party has demanded anything like this nor have such thoughts been published in the public media.

I would point out that we are not in a crisis of Europe as a political idea nor of the Euro as currency. This is a crisis of European institutions and European nations who have to realise that in these times of globalization they cannot maintain the illusion of a single state which acts completely autonomously.

In the following text on page six Gerald Wooster slips more and more into the language of the British popular press:

“Germany ...that is ‘eine Feste Burg’ in the sense of Luther, .. risks a ‘Bunker mentality’, facing another ‘Untergang’ or going under...”

Dear Gerald, from which sources do you derive your picture of Germany?

Obviously primarily from the British popular press and in a week before a soccer match between Germany and England.

Please, have a look on the homepages of the “Süddeutsche Zeitung” (Sueddeutsche.de) or the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” (FAZ.de), “Die Zeit”(Zeit.de) and use the button “Google translate”. You may not get a perfect translation of the original texts but let me know, if you find any pieces of evidence for your thesis.

In the following, you address yourself to Chancellor Angela Merkel.

...”Brought up in the German Democratic Republic, Merkel saw too much state and too little market, which has influenced her to look for market solutions in the Euro zone crisis...”

I think that the position which Merkel takes can be seen worldwide rather differently.

If you want to deepen your hypothesis about the effects of Angela Merkel's DDR past onto today's politics, I can recommend a book from the Polish candidate for the presidency: Jaruslaw Kaczynski, the survivor of the Kaczynski twins.

Here the assertion is put forward that Angela Merkel has come to power only with the help of parts of the Stasi, the secret state police of communist Germany, which still exist. She plans the restoration of a Pan-German country (Großdeutschland) in alliance with Russia with the aim of having Poland disappear from the map.

On page 7 you put forward the assertion that Germany has never settled its debts from the Versailles contract. This is correct, the National Socialists suspended the payments. After end of the war, in 1945, the question of the payments was raised again. Chancellor Adenauer did his best to obtain a reduction of the debt just like is being discussed at the moment in the case of Greece. In the fifties the economic situation of the Federal Republic of Germany was so tight, that when Germany was divided into two, the complete debt could not be repaid. East Germany perceived themselves as the real winners against the Nazis and declined to pay their share, whilst West Germany was unable to pay the whole debt. A reduction was granted in the fifties. It was also decided, that in the case of a possible reunification, the question of the payments would be raised again.

After the fall of the Berlin wall, the Federal Republic raised the question of the payments again. The payments were finally fulfilled in the year 2010, not more than a year ago.

You further claim on page seven:

... There was, therefore, no subsequent punishment of Germany after the Second World War...Germany as a nation was absolved and also redeemed by the Marshall plan...”

It seems to have fallen into oblivion that a great part of Germany until 1990 was occupied by the Soviet army, that is one year after the fall of the wall.

17 million Germans have been prisoners locked in their own country from 1945 to 1989; they did not have permission to travel, no democratic elections, no free choice of profession or where they could live..

Furthermore I would like to question the `collective guilt` as a valid model of thought which is not named directly but appears repeatedly in the text.

I assume that nobody of German nationality or of all subsequent generations can be dismissed from responsibility of facing the fact that Germany was the cause of the most terrible period in European life, the collapse of an entire culture...

A human being can only become guilty as an individual, if he was the perpetrator, or has done nothing to prevent what happened or only let things happen by doing nothing. The generations of descendants are not guilty but responsible for the consequences.

,Germany now consists mostly of people born after the end of the war and fortunately today every fifth person is of foreign origin.

Germans, who were 15 years old at the end of the war, and perhaps spared service in the Volkssturm, are by now 82 years old.

Conclusion

It could be very simply said, that:

1: The article in its historical aspects has some weaknesses .

2: The central hypothesis is quite unsafe and can hardly be confirmed either by methodology or by actual facts.

3: The author appears connected to a strong negative emotion related to the object of his examination,

and to go over to the next point in the agenda.

No, it is not that way.

I attach a great importance to a contribution being part of the process of our workshop.

I would like to remind you once more of the workshop's central question:

“Has the logic of economic exchange in our globalised world the power to destroy the culture of inner life?”

I have said that I want to understand the paper as an associated contribution to the process of the workshop, just like the contributions of the other participants, the dreams brought , the film clippings shown at the opening, the lecture given by the architectural historian etc...

We can approach the paper if we understand it like a nightmare, or a daydream. This way we come closer to the inherent meaning of the structure of the lecture, the omissions and slips.

The reported form of the lecture has to be equated with the manifest dream contents which are encoded and refer to the latent dream contents. The latent dream picks up the remains of our daily or past life to then construct the dream and give the unconscious conflict or wish,

its “gestalt”.. Like in “Social Dreaming”, the dream itself shall not be understood from the background of the individual biography of the dreamer, but as a part of the group process to the topic:

“Intersubjective links in The Globalised Economy”.

I have noticed that the paper deals with the high-level-complexity of wars and inter-war periods with a strange type of omission. Furthermore, the text is littered with oversimplification of complex phenomena of a perpetrator/victim schema. There appears a type of circular thinking structure which is self-explanatory, while covering up an underlying conflict .

The aspect of the narrowness and narrowing is central. The German word Angst (fear) comes from the Latin “angustia” and means nothing else but narrowness .

I postulate: the central topic of the second part of the text is the topic of the fear and the define of fear.

The current requirement of the emotional apparatus of the participants of this workshop was the actual situation of the crisis of the euro zone in the reaction to global and economic changes. The fear which becomes visible in the text is a central fear, the fear of physical and emotional annihilation, the exclusion. This fear dating from the past shows an inability to be able to take hold of and to understand the complexity of the process .

Another characteristic of the paper is the diminution of the aspects of guilt and punishment. Complex social, institutional and historical processes are reduced into archaic, simple patterns. The blockade of development and the taking-over of responsibility is the common element of guilt and punishment.

We know these mechanisms from our intercultural work with groups. In confrontation with alien structures we react similarly as in confrontation with over-complex difficulties.

The lack of common symbols and the lack of the metaphorical being put into action immediately lead to confusion, splitting, sexualisation as an instrument of power, pre-occupation with power struggles and with the humiliation of part of the group, projective identification.

In the reaction to the recent global banking crisis there has been a strange inability to learn from it on the part of the protagonists , or to create new regulations for global questions.

All of us will never forget the picture of President Bush in his pose as a Wild West Cowboy, when he reacted to the appearance of international terrorism. This is a terrible example of proceeding regressively in a very complex matter. When we look around , we will always disapprove of these mechanisms of regressive responses to highly complex social, political and social questions.

Another example can be seen in the use of conventional wars as a response to global and regional conflicts. Since the Vietnam war, it has been evident that conventional wars never lead to longer-term peace in any region of the world .

Once again I would like to remind you of a sentence in the workshop leaflet:

“The massive and unstoppable encounter between different cultures, different identities and subjectivitiesgives birth to a difficult and conflicting process of crossbreeding, and

here as yet we have inadequate symbolic competence.”

The question for the workshop was, whether the forces of destruction can influence the workshop dynamics or on the other hand, whether we can make attempts at culturally constructive answers.

Beside the regressive response to very complex events we can also describe the opposite, a type of manic defence of the central fear aroused by globalization. This manic defence shown by the protagonists of the banking crisis can be described, as the former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt put it, that investment bankers are often ‘highly intelligent idiots’.

This means that they have only one eye open which looks at personal profit. The eye, which could look into personal responsibility for social and human situations, remains closed.

Helmut Schmidt describes with his drastic expression the ‘intelligent idiots’ a central phenomenon concerning the reaction to very complex global processes: the impairment of the ability for empathy.

The Bankers must have known that they would push thousands of families to the economic precipice with their speculative behavior.

The assassin of Oslo, a man with a complex global family history. Is so alarming in his deeds,

because his behavior shows a complete lack of empathy.

Ernestine Wohlfart, who was unable to give her report on her work on the clinical phenomena of the globalization of welfare also points out the missing facility for empathy in her analysis.

There is still the question of why Shakespeare’s drama has such a central importance to our workshop. In his plays Shakespeare shows people in their dependency on fathers, mothers, twins, brothers and sisters and nations, gods and demons, .

It is surely not only the dramatic constellations which develop from this, that make Shakespeare seem so meaningful for us even today.

It is not the defence of the dependences or the regressive fight against dependence, but the knowledge and the acceptance of the dependence of one’s own, which opens an emotional space which makes the taking on of responsibility possible for us.

Once again I refer to the workshop leaflet :

“in order to be able to do so, (Group analysts) must recognize the anthropologic levels of the cultural transformation both in society and within themselves .”

The regressive diminution of very complex questions damages dialogue just like the manic defence, since the other as a respectively different one is excluded. The acceptance of dependence and the freedom arising from it for taking on responsibility restores communication.

The English word for ‘Verantwortung’ is: Responsibility. This word contains both the idea of ability and the answer (response): The ability to answer.

In this sense I have felt qualified to give a response to Gerald’s important contribution .