

EDITORIAL

Serge Sulz

Austria: Home of the World's Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy in Europe: In view of history Vienna is the top address. Vienna is not only the capital of Austria. Vienna is not only the Austrians. Culture and science aggrandise her to an international level. But it would be unfair if Vienna did not give some of her brilliancy to her homeland. Therefore we name this special issue: Austria – Home of the World's Psychotherapy – even if most of the great psychotherapists lived in Vienna or their career began there. This special issue reaches far, not only geographically but concerning personalities, their biographies and also the dynamics which originate therefrom. Different also are the author's approaches and procedures in this issue. Sometimes the person and their origin, with others the personality and their relationships and sometimes the scientist and their work occupy centre stage. Just to name some at this point:

Axel Holitzki wrote about the first great psychotherapist SIGMUND FREUD. The subtitle names his date of birth and his date of death and reminds us that Freud was born in the middle of the 19th century and that he died even before most of us were born. Some critics talk about him as if he was still living today and they condemn him for not having properly taken into consideration our current scientific knowledge. This might be due to the fact that he did not consider his work to be science and a psychotherapeutic approach only, but instead he saw it as a movement. And these create emotions, in favour or disapproving.

Irma Schwartz wrote the article about MELANIE KLEIN and allows us to participate in her inner and outer struggles – a private and professional exceptionally eventful life, and work that engaged opponents and supporters in equal measure.

That MICHAEL BALINT, originally from Budapest, is admitted into this special issue Austria may be justified in retrospect because of the times when Hungary was part of the imperial monarchy. Balint stayed in Hungary intermittently until just before World War II. Few know that his beneficial Balint-group work with physicians is based on the intention he adopted from Ferenczi, to look more at love than at self-love.

WILHELM REICH became a renegade and himself father of the Humanistic Body-Therapies, especially Bioenergetic Analysis. His career also began in Vienna. He, too, started with Freudian Psychoanalysis and his views and language are very much analytically shaped. He was not the only one whose personality and work presented something unique, so much so, that he did not fit into the analytic community anymore, but created his own and then gained his own followers.

KOHUT was born when Freud was aged 57. He saw this old man leaving Vienna in 1938. For a long time he did not publish his Self Psychology, because he knew that many could not take it without contradiction.

Bernd Rieken described ALFRED ADLER as consistently going his own way with his Individual Psychology, from 1911 onwards, from social to socialist and how he found many supporters. Rapprochement only took place in the sixties of the past century, thirty years after his death.

Some articles in this special issue originate from the book "Wien, wo sonst! Die Entstehung der Psychoanalyse und ihrer Schulen" (Vienna, Böhlau 1994) published by Oskar Frischenschlager and reprinted here with his kind permission. In his book numerous other Vienna psychotherapists and psychoanalysts are described such as Paul Federn, Otto Rank, Helene Deutsch, Paul Ferdinand Schilder, Theodor Reik, Jacob Moreno, Heinz Hartmann, Anna Freud, Margert Mahler, Max Schur, Otto Fenichel, Bruno Bettelheim, Eugen Gendlin and Otto Kernberg. And there are also two other personalities from Budapest to be described: Sandor Ferenczi und Imre Hermann.

Even if VICTOR FRANKL enjoyed a psychoanalytical education, he went his own way and he did not mean much to the psychoanalysts. Alfried Längle allows us to understand his very special path.

PAUL WATZLAWICK also had a psychoanalytic education which took him to a totally different place in science and psychotherapy. Special here is that his niece, who is no psychotherapist, wrote the article about him, which promises the opening of a different and important perspective.

Just a single behaviour therapist must be mentioned here, FREDERIK KANFER, who in particular coined the German Behaviour Therapy during three decades, and thus had a similar influence on psychotherapy in Europe to other personalities introduced in this special issue. The interview, taken shortly before his death, shows how still full of scientific curiosity he tried to explore the future of psychotherapy.

This special issue as a whole leads us not only to Austria and Vienna, but also into the biographies of outstanding personalities and let us be a witness of the heyday of psychotherapy. It allows us to have a look at an approach to psychotherapy as it began initially from a biological-psychophysiological oriented direction, and ended with a hermeneutic method that used spirit and language in a dialogical relationship towards the goal of deeper understanding. Today the neurobiological knowledge-base is much broader but maybe the same step would be taken if we were now in the position of beginning this process anew – to the place where natural science is not sufficient.

Serge Sulz in December 2014