**Congress Report**

***Psychoanalysis in the world. Crosses Between Cultures***

The conference, held at the Luiss Guido Carli University in Rome on the 3th of October, 2015, represented an important moment of encounter and reflection on the current developments of psychoanalysis in many non-Western countries, in Eastern Europe and in the Middle and Far East. The successes, starting from the first mention in the issue of *'Psiche'* of *'Geographies of psychoanalysis'*, growing through initiatives like that of Pavia in 2012, Rome in April 2014, and in Tehran in October 2014, highlight the strong need to study the terms in which psychoanalysts see themselves and their clinical experience in different cultures.

Psychoanalysis today finds itself needing to respond to the sign of the times, to a modern actuality that imposes itself upon it, by way of its complexity and the elements of crisis that it expresses in various fields of human existence; financial-economic, ethical, political, religious, relevant to a change in the nature of cross cultural and human relations in general.

These issues emerged immediately in the introductory addresses given at the conference by the Rector of Luiss University Massimo Egidi, the philosopher and Luiss professor Sebastiano Maffettone, IPA president Stefano Bolognini, and by Tiziana Bastianini, Scientific Secretary of SPI. Each of them, from their individual points of view, highlighted the need to deal with this complexity through a dialogue involving different forms of knowledge, with the awareness that we are living a crucial moment of global change.

In her introduction Lorena Preta, who has overseen and coordinated all of the initiatives in her role as Director of the International Research Group, *Georgaphies of Psychoanalysis*, stressed the need to provide detailed and clear responses, especially on the subjects of in-depth cultural analysis and clinical theory, since psychoanalysis in its current expansion towards other cultures is going to progress towards new frontiers. It is not by chance that she in her vision of *Geographies of psychoanalysis*, once again affirms its sense through passion for finding renewed configurations of the psychoanalytic method which pass through a review of our own theories and clinical principles. It is necessary that these meetings between cultures are not marked by forms of proselytism that may be looked upon as a form of a colonialism but, on the contrary, constitute an opportunity for mutual exchange of the ways in which psychoanalysis takes shape in different contexts. Lorena Preta, in these terms, proposes the central theme of considering the universality of some basic principles of psychoanalysis when these come in contact with situations and cultural contexts that express different family forms, identification processes, mythologies and values. The question is open and forms the heart of the problem that the conference and the whole *Geographies project* have examined and are facing.

The morning session featured presentations by the Indian psychoanalyst and writer Sudhir Kakar, the Moroccan psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Jalil Benanni, coordinated by Andrea Baldassarro, Scientific Secretary of the Psychoanalytic Center of Rome.

Sudhir Kakar in his paper entitled *'When Psychoanalysis Travels’*, explored his role as Indian psychoanalyst through the experience of his analysis training in Germany and the problems of 'translation' that he faced there with his analyst, not only in terms of language, but also in the unconscious cultural factors seen as significant elements of the shared analytical field. The body of his work, however, focused on a thorough analysis of the mythological narratives in the culture of India. His research brought to light the ambivalent and conflicting relationships between the male and female figure in the pantheon of Hindu deities in relation to the cultural nuclei expressing the primary identifications related to the psychic reality in that specific context. Cultural forms characterized by family relationships and kinship establishing a pre-eminence of the maternal figure over the father correspond to these types of unconscious configurations. Kakar also expressed very clearly his more general views on the relationship between culture and the unconscious that are in a close co-determinate relationship.

In the second presentation *'Reinventing, Transmitting Psychoanalysis'*, Jalil Benanni dealt with the theme of the diffusion and transmission of psychoanalysis in Morocco starting with some historical references. Morocco presents itself as a country of the Maghreb which, although characterized by strong contradictions, has expressed great sensitivity towards psychoanalysis. Moroccan psychoanalysts have evaluated themselves both with the need to 'deconstruct' the 'colonialism’ as a 'way of knowledge', and with its interfacing of the Arab-Muslim tradition and magic. In terms of social strategies of care, the figure of the marabout or holy local healer and the role of the *Jinn* demons have had, in the genesis of both physical and mental disease, a prominent function in the traditional culture. Following the inspiration of the thought of Lacan, Benanni argues that the word in psychoanalysis constitutes itself as an element that is embedded inside the language as an expression of a culture. In the moment that the analyst interrogates the patient in their cultural truth they allow the birth of a new subject which brings into play its complex and multilingual nature.

Paolo Fonda, currently member of the Board of the European Institute IPA-EFF and European Co-chair of the International Committee of New Groups, coordinated the interventions in the afternoon and read a paper by Maria Teresa Savio Hooke, European Co-chair of the IPA Committee on Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Ageing, and Chair of the IPA New International Groups, who could not be present. Fakhry Davids, psychoanalyst, of South African origin from the British Psychoanalytic Society and Lin Tao, a psychiatrist and Chinese psychoanalyst and member of the IPA were the presenters.

In her contribution *'Unknown Steps: expanding the map of psychoanalysis. The work of the new international groups'* Maria Teresa Savio Hooke describes a map of the current situation of the development of psychoanalysis in the world in relation to the activities of the International Committee of New Groups (ING) of the IPA. She underlines the dynamism and transformation processes related to the spread of psychoanalysis in non-Western countries considering the elements of freedom that inspires the work of psychoanalysis as correlated to the needs from the countries, themselves in the process of cultural and political change. She highlights the complexity of the new processes of globalization, the opening of many local situations to psychoanalysis, but also the difficulties encountered in mutual exchange in situations where, in addition to cultural difference, factors of power in totalitarian contexts weigh heavily. Referring to a suggestion by Paolo Fonda, she underlines the importance of the emergence of an individual subject more strongly recognized against the conditions of oppression by powerful strong and exclusive groups.

Fakhry Davids in his work *'Living in Two Worlds: a clinical exploration* ' proposed the clinical case of a patient in analysis in London of Arab-Muslim origins. He highlighted some crucial moments of her personal story starting with a first traumatic childhood experience in a Catholic boarding school. During the analysis, in the transference-countertransference relationship, a defense system emerged based on the split between parts of the non-integrated Self relative to the experience of immigrant women to the West and to the identification with an identity of an observant Muslim Arab. These difficulties, which were expressed in a deficiency in emotional contact, proved to be closely related to a difficulty in mourning the childhood separation experience and to the analytic situation. Davids also stressed problems caused by a multiplicity of factors owing to his identity as a psychoanalyst who has lived the experience of emigration. The analysis of the aggressive and hateful experiences of the patient allowed contact with underlying racist feelings allowing their processing; dynamics, of a projective-introjective type, which can be extended to a wider social field.

The Chinese psychoanalyst Lin Tao in his paper entitled *'The Language Learning of Psychoanalysis: a barrier or a bridge?'* returned to the theme of the integration of different experiences of the self on the cultural level, deepening the problem of translation. His anaylsis evidenced the complexity and the difficulty of translating from English to Chinese and vice versa, in both the meanings of expressions and in related experiences both in personal experience and on a more properly psychoanalytic level. Beginning from his own training path as a Chinese person who learned psychoanalysis after his move to London, Lin Tao stresses the importance of recognizing the linguistic and cultural diversities, not denying the underlying difficulties but making the gap that inevitably occurs in the translation process productive. The immersion in the English way of life and in the work of a psychoanalyst becomes an opportunity to take on, in the relationship between the two languages, the dimension of a creative coupling.

The meeting, not only for the excellent level of the papers, was characterized by numerous discussions with the audience which participated with questions and interventions that enriched the debates on the spread of psychoanalysis in the world. The relationship between culture-the unconscious, the problem of traumatic suffering related to the experience of migration, the connection between the psychological and cultural aspects and the serious economic and financial crisis at both local and global levels, were source of reflection toward an interdisciplinary discourse open to new and original developments.

Alfredo Lombardozzi