

Original Italian edition: La psicoanalisi e l'istituzione psicoanalitica in Italia.

Carlo Viganò intervista Pier Francesco Galli.

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Edited by Pier Francesco Galli and Alberto Merini

*In this section of the journal *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane* we present previously published or unpublished material in an attempt to retrace a sort of history of psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy, at times with the emotional power of anecdotes that usually do not appear in academic historiographies. The analysis is developed along three fronts. The first is an analysis of the various psychoanalytic stereotypes in their declinations and the manner in which theory of technique was passed down; the second is a reconstruction of parts of the history of our field in Italy, within the framework that has always characterized the group of *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane* [“Psychotherapy, Humanities, and Social Sciences”]; the third is a reprint of “vintage” articles relevant to the current debate. At the web site <http://www.psicoterapiaescienzeumane.it/traces.htm> there is the list of all material published in this section.*

Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Institution in Italy in the 1950s and 1960s.

Carlo Viganò interviews Pier Francesco Galli

*Pier Francesco Galli**

EDITOR’S NOTE: This interview conducted by Carlo Viganò in the early 1980s was originally published in Italian with the title “La psicoanalisi in Italia. Conversazione con Pier Francesco Galli. Parte I: L’istituzione psicoanalitica” in the journal *Freudiana*, 1984, Vol. 4, pp. 109-116 (Parma, Italy: Pratiche Editrice). At the end there is an added bibliography for further in-depth analyses. We are grateful for the permission to publish it here.

FOREWORD BY CARLO VIGANÒ. *Intending to gather data and process the criteria from which to compose an historical narrative of the psychoanalytic movement in Italy, the editorial board of *Freudiana* met with the psychoanalyst Pier Francesco Galli of Bologna (Italy), founder of the quarterly journal *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane* (www.psicoterapiaescienzeumane.it/english.htm), of the Feltrinelli book series “Biblioteca di psichiatria e di psicologia clinica” [“Library of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology”, 87 volumes] and of the Boringhieri book series “Programma di psicologia, psichiatria, psicoterapia” [“Program of Psychology, Psychiatry, and Psychotherapy”, about 350 volumes]. In this issue we are running the introductory section of this long conversation, one with a prevalently documentary character. In the next issue, we will transcribe the second part, mainly focusing on theoretical questions. [The second part was never published – Editor’s note.]. In this recollection of the 1950s and 1960s, we can sift out the major problems that the interest in psychoanalysis gave rise to, every time this new research perspective tended to reflect upon itself, once the process was set into motion. It should be remembered that in France, in the same time period, the movement associated with the journal *L’Evolution Psychiatrique* was active and that, thanks to the initiatives of Henri Ey, it involved the principal exponents of French philosophy in the debate on the epistemological statute of the unconscious.*

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1. The Early Stages of Interest in Psychoanalysis

Carlo Viganò: *Let us begin by asking Pier Francesco Galli about the origins: what induced you to establish a group and a journal, Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane?*

Pier Francesco Galli: I will speak off the cuff. If you wish, you may interrupt with questions. Up until now, I have never had a desire to write about the history of the organizational aspect of the subject and the rationale behind it: we do not yet have the necessary historical distance to be able to do it. I have lived many of the experiences directly, personally, and as a protagonist, in those years when we were few and certain problems arose as a result of personal conflicts. Up until the end of the 1950s there was no movement. Even the first half of the 1960s was a period characterized by the establishment of the psychoanalytic discourse in Italy. So this is the first time that I have set out to provide an overall answer to your question, rather than speak of single issues.

Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane [“Psychotherapy, Humanities, and Social Sciences”] is a quarterly journal that was initiated in 1967. For me, and for those who collaborated with me at the time, it was one of those things that was just meant to be done. The story begins earlier. It is not about things born out of external motives or urgencies. Once something is done, a need for it arises, and subsequently reasons are found to keep it going, and as such it also becomes an explanation for the why of today.

Our original group went through a series of crises, of vicissitudes, of moments of decision-making about what to do, whether to persevere or not, and of periods of reflection. We hadn’t started from the urge to establish an association, but from the desire to create stimuli that would give stability to the character of the movement around the experience, rather than ensuring the continuity of the structure as such. For this reason, for instance, in periods of major numerical success, we made the choice to close down rather than to become managers of a school with so many people: at a certain point there were about three hundred who endorsed various training, supervision, and study groups towards the end of the 1960s....

C.V.: *Close down, in what sense?*

P.F.G.: We closed down the “*Centro*” [Center], established in Milan at Piazza S. Ambrogio 1, in order to follow a different sort of path. But let’s go back even further: to the psychoanalytical and psychiatric framework of the 1950s.

Initially our name was *Gruppo Milanese per lo Sviluppo della Psicoterapia* [“Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy”]. It was all about establishing a space that would respond to a series of questions: on psychotherapy, and on the psychoanalysis/psychiatry relationship.

The Italian context was characterized by the organizational exclusion of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis carried no weight within the various structures, especially the psychiatric ones, but had a greater cultural influence within the literary rather than the professional sphere. In these years, the Catholic opposition of the preceding period had reinforced a lack of interest in psychoanalysis. It seems impossible that only a few years ago, for example, a projective test like the *Thematic Apperception Test* (TAT) or the *Rorschach* would have been considered obscene, and yet there were accusations of “acts of obscenity” against a well-known psychiatrist, who worked in a facility for disturbed children, for having employed the *Rorschach* test.

This is an example of the superficial within the psychiatric historical context. However we must not forget that at that time, through a more open conduit, in no-man’s land, so to speak, and therefore in an area more receptive to new material, an organization was being set up, one that was linked to psychological thought and sensitive to the psychoanalytical discourse. I am talking about

the sectors of social assistance and minors, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice. In Italy a clear-cut choice was made in these sectors (by the persons in charge of the social work schools, by Judge Uberto Radaelli, the then supervisor of the Ministry's sector for minors): that of allowing psychology and psychoanalysis to play a huge role in this area. Many well-known psychoanalysts today gained experience in these departments (juvenile courts, psycho-pedagogical centers). These colleagues began to leave behind the stereotype of analytical treatment and to create a system of intervention closely connected to all the different possibilities that they identified within the analytical method for tackling problems. Of course, they did not yet possess a complete ability to theorize, but they were gathering experience, which led to exchanges and interactions on the various solutions to the problems.

Thus was created the base from which everything afterwards sprang: the interest in psychotherapy as a consequence of the psychoanalytic discourse. I personally believe that the separateness of psychoanalysis stems more from the tendency to maintain the distinctiveness of roles, and to rigidly maintain this distinctiveness without question. With the reverberations from the controversies encountered in the United States in relation to the debates on Alexander's (1946) "corrective emotional experience", on short-term therapy, and on active treatments in relation to this condensing of the therapeutic time period and its success, psychoanalysis was faced with the necessity of maintaining a unified front and a sense of coherence, interpreted as psychoanalytic distinctiveness. I believe that this consistency had more to do with social phenomena vis-à-vis a defensive position, rather than as a result of analytic theory. In my opinion, today we have at our disposal many theoretical mechanisms that allow us to bring together and arrange into an overall framework the experiences gleaned from those years in the areas at which I have already hinted, as well as in another sector, which I believe must be remembered: that of the treatment of serious pathology, above all of psychotics, as experiences from other countries began to infiltrate into Italy. It is also possible to build an overall framework of reference today in terms of these experiences. However, in my view, the groundwork for this type of thought was already there at the time, but there was a lag in the use of the theoretical premises to define this "something" that had to be put aside and considered "non-psychoanalysis" so that it could be done. As far as I'm concerned, the term "psychoanalytic psychotherapy" is used to authorize all those things, those types of treatment, with respect to which psychoanalysis is regarded as something else.

C.V.: Who required this authorization? If I have understood your meaning, you are saying that there was a defensive stance on the part of organized psychoanalysis in relation to this expansion of the field of practice. Was it only this that motivated the mediation of psychotherapy or was there also a theoretical reason at work?

P.F.G.: I have to say that on the part of those that we may consider the forerunners of psychoanalysis in Italy – and there were four of them¹ – this defensive attitude did not exist, since they were people extremely open to all types of experience. They were driven by a sense of curiosity and an interest in research. The shutdown came later and it was not only an Italian phenomenon. There existed elements of fragmentation: whoever found a particular field of interest or opened up a new avenue, created a school, instead of trying to fit it into a more general theoretical context. There was a failure of comparison. Today it is less so and we have to ask ourselves why.

¹ These four training analysts were Cesare Musatti, Claudio Modigliani, Nicola Perrotti and Emilio Servadio (a fifth training analyst – Alessandra Tomasi Wolff-Stomersee, Princess of Lampedusa – played a peripheral role). See footnote 3 on p. 89. [Editor's note]

2. The Absence of a Psychiatric Tradition

P.F.G.: I am still talking about the 1950s, which for Italy were fundamental years because there was no psychiatric tradition then. The psychiatric tradition of the early twentieth century had been interrupted, and was going in the direction of neurology or towards studies with a more organicistic orientation. At the Universities, there was no stimulus towards competitive intelligence: whoever decided to do a psychiatry major was someone who couldn't make a career in neurology. The Psychiatric Hospital was relegated to second choice and you could count on the fingers of one hand those who had a prevailing interest in psychiatry. These students had to have a reference point from abroad, and they operated in isolation. Think of someone like Danilo Cargnello. And then again doing psychiatry presupposed, first of all, a knowledge of German: it was more a study placement based on personal curiosity, disconnected from any working prospect. So it was for a group of young men from Rome at the time: Giancarlo Reda, Luigi Frighi, Isidoro Tolentino. These were people who spent time in psychiatric facilities, who possessed a special curiosity, and began to associate with each other, have meetings.... Franco Basaglia was part of this group. In Milan, for many, there were two focal points: the private hospitals of *Villa Fiorita* and *Ville Turro*, two facilities very open-minded in terms of psychoanalysis. For instance, at the *Villa Fiorita*, Professor Virginio Porta, a neurologist, welcomed Dr. Berta Neumann who was beginning her exploration into the therapy of psychotics under the supervision of Gaetano Benedetti, and Professor Cesare Musatti – a non-medical practitioner – who was exploring the use of *Pentothal* (narcoanalysis). At the *Ville Turro*, we find doctors like Franco Fornari and later Elvio Fachinelli, who were beginning to talk about clinical cases using their psychoanalytic training.

There was also the field of early psychological techniques in which psychoanalysis was circulating, even though on the basis of the American issues, there was a tendency to do things that were not theoretically tenable, such as separating the issue of the ego from that of the id, to limit interventions at the first opportunity. There were also the industrial psychological services where people like Tommaso Senise, and Mirella Guarnieri worked, people with a psychoanalytical background. In short, there were many small groups where an interest in psychoanalysis was beginning to develop. At the time, ours was also a small group. This was the era of what could be termed small-group culture in other fields, as well. The figure of the isolated intellectual was beginning to disappear to give way to a movement composed of small groups.

Let us call this the moment of pre-establishment: that which precedes proliferation. The growth comes with the surge of the psychoanalytic experience into realms and contexts of practice from which it was once excluded.

C.V.: It seems to me that the typical nature of this surge, this exploration set in motion by the new psychoanalytic hypothesis, that the distinguishing characteristic of this outward expansion might be the void that preceded it, what you have termed as the absence of a psychiatric tradition, a psychiatric space without cultural references. Do you not believe that another fact could be the relatively minor significance of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) in Italy, which caused the absence of a unifying focus in the debate?

P.F.G.: Certainly this is also true, but I would add this clarification: that the psychiatric void meant not having extensive cultural references supporting it. In relation to the university study of psychiatry, which had at its disposal textbooks like the “*gozzanino*” [“small Gozzano”], namely a book on the main psychiatric syndromes by Mario Gozzano, author of a treatise on neurology, the 1960s brought with it a true psychological-psychoanalytical whirlwind.

C.V.: *We seem now to be able to formulate an initial element that for the history of Italian psychoanalysis could be crucial: in a framework of shoddy positivism characterizing university education, where, for example, in the Institute of the “Clinica delle malattie nervose e mentali” [Hospital for Nervous and Mental Diseases] a professor had the word “mental” removed, the importance of Freudianism and phenomenology came to be added to the American importation of psychology. These acquisitions didn’t exactly create a controversy between psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, but they did cause an intrusion of the psychological into the medical-psychiatric field (which had already occurred in the German culture at the end of the nineteenth century).*

P.F.G.: I agree with this reconstruction: There is no implementation of an interdisciplinary research program, only the phenomenon of cultural aggregation to fill the void. Therefore, there certainly wasn’t a defensive attitude on the part of psychoanalysis, but simply a movement characterized by a psychoanalytic distinctiveness: the *Società Psicoanalitica Italiana* (SPI) (the IPA-affiliated Italian Psychoanalytic Association) was then formed around four people (Cesare Musatti, Claudio Modigliani, Nicola Perrotti, and Emilio Servadio) and among them, there existed many internal conflicts. From a professional standpoint, it did not yet represent an autonomous activity. It had the characteristics of a second job: I would say, psychoanalysis, as a profession came into being later on, almost unexpectedly. One has to also keep in mind that there was an important training centre – Switzerland – where a psychiatric tradition with a psychoanalytic perspective was highly-developed. For instance, one of the first therapeutic European communities was established by Fabrizio Napolitani (brother of Diego), at Kreuzlingen.

3. Italian Psychoanalysis Confronted with the Problem of the Institution

C.V.: *It seems possible to pinpoint a contradiction at this point: psychoanalysis had the effect of suturing the fissures in the psychiatric field, by stimulating this very receptive type of research, but it was not able to heal itself, to create a unifying corpus for itself, to open the way for a psychoanalytical type of study. It did not know how to meet the challenge in its own field.*

P.F.G.: I agree, but allow me to clarify: it did not represent a phenomenon of integration in psychiatry, but a phenomenon of expansion within psychoanalysis. Of course, and we see it afterwards, when analyzing subsequent periods, what was missing was the effect of self-reflection. Thus the phenomenon of the application of the known prevailed, of recognized knowledge, rather than a reflection capable of becoming an avenue of research. A great big market opened up, while the research aspect was again strictly relegated to the isolated activity and the curiosity of an individual. It was what could be termed “psychoanalysm”.

I risk being overwhelmed here with a flood of memories, but again, in order to talk about my own experience I have to go back in time. I have to go back to that cultural repository that was the *Istituto di Psicologia* of the *Università Cattolica di Milano* [the Psychology Institute of the Catholic University of Milan] with, for example, its weekly meetings: in 1954, Gaetano Benedetti was invited for the first time. He was a psychiatrist from Burghölzli, an Italian who had emigrated from Sicily, who had trained there as a psychiatrist and who was interested in the discussion around the psychoanalysis of psychosis, together with Christian Müller, who was the director of the *Hôpital de Céry* in Lausanne. The center of this entire development is an extremely important city in the history of psychoanalysis: Zurich. In this city, also important for the Jungian movement, an important psychotherapeutic offshoot was formed, stemming from the psychiatric approach of *Daseinsanalyse* around the figure of Medard Boss (who has always been a member of the psychoanalytic society), and this led in 1954 to the establishment of the *International Federation for Medical Psychotherapy* (non-doctors could only be participant-associates). In Zurich, Benedetti

was able to combine various types of approaches, which he tied into that interest that was the growing wave of psychoanalysis: the therapy of psychosis, which also compelled him to go to America and seek out Frieda Fromm-Reichmann as well as Harry Stack Sullivan (the Washington School of Psychiatry). All these were trained in psychoanalysis and emerged from the psychoanalytic society, and had in common their engagement with serious pathology (in the U.S. those members of the *American Psychoanalytic Association* worked exclusively with outpatient neurotics).

Sullivan's book (*Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry*, 1940) published in 1961 by Feltrinelli publisher as *La moderna concezione della psichiatria* was the result of work begun in the 1930s. The circulation of this book can be connected to the activity I mentioned earlier in the children's sector. Today one would call it child psychoanalysis. Then we couldn't even say it. Thus was developed what I continue to still call the intrinsic unexpressed potential of psychoanalysis, rather than something else, and which for various reasons remained repressed.

And so, Benedetti, when he came to Milan, spoke about something unprecedented: delirium, and how one goes into delirium, and we treated it as a serious subject. There and then I decided to transfer to Basel so I could study with him. These were years in which it was possible to absorb the contributions of different approaches and experiences within one's work teams: we worked according to the specific case, to what was being done, in an attempt to justify the why of what we were engaged in. We did not consider the issue of belonging to a certain group.

From September 11-15, 1960, we organized a meeting for Italian psychiatrists at the *Centro di Cultura "Maria Immacolata"* [Maria Immacolata Cultural Centre] of *Passo della Mendola* (Mendel Pass, halfway between the Italian cities of Trento and Bolzano) as the Psychology Institute of the Catholic University of Milan, to which I was still attached. It was a gathering of all the representatives of Italian psychiatry and exclusively psychological and psychoanalytical papers were delivered here (see the proceedings in: Ancona, 1960). It marked the fall of the cultural barrier set up by the Catholics and the introduction of a new work-style, for instance, for the first time there was talk of teamwork in psychiatry. These innovations led me to establish a group together with three others: Dr. Berta Neumann, Dr. Mara Selvini (we met through Benedetti) and Prof. Enzo Spaltro.

You have to also keep in mind one other thing: at that time the study of social psychology was totally overlooked in Italy, while some of us were aware of it. This knowledge allowed us to make certain hypotheses about social phenomena, and therefore to intercede with specific scientific techniques. Therefore, while we witnessed in those years the collapse of the publication of psychoanalytic literature, for example of the excellent work of Astrolabio publisher of Rome, I planned, with the help of Benedetti, the book series "*Biblioteca di Psichiatria e di Psicologia Clinica*" ["Library of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology"] to be published by Feltrinelli, and begun in 1958. The first book was *Storia della psichiatria* [A History of Medical Psychiatry] by Zilboorg (1941). It was an organic project, proposing a whole host of cogent and compelling readings: the first proposal was for thirty titles, which then became the first thirty volumes, published over seven years (this book series had a total 87 volumes). It was Feltrinelli's publishing as well as cultural challenge.

C.V.: *In your opinion how was the relationship with the official structures of psychoanalysis formulated?*

P.F.G.: It wasn't. In 1958, I saw Balint's *The Doctor, his Patient, and the Illness* of 1956 in Basel, and immediately I thought of proposing it for the Feltrinelli book series in 1961, and I wrote an introduction for it: in fact, it responded to the cultural plan of bringing the contribution of psychoanalysis into the larger context of medical and social practices. It met with Musatti's

opposition. He spoke about the risks involved: it was the same opposition with which Balint met in England, where he had to set the condition that the method would be exclusively used for doctors and not among psychiatrists².

We were the first, with the “Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy” and the participation of Silvano Arieti and Gaetano Benedetti, to dare to use the Balint method in the education of groups of psychiatrists.

C.V.: And thus began the conflicts with the Italian Psychoanalytic Association (SPI)...

P.F.G.: Yes, but it practically didn't exist. It was composed of four people in conflict with each other: two against two. It wasn't even autonomous in the training of analysts (at least three were needed: an analyst and two supervisors). Therefore despite the surge in interest in psychoanalysis and the fact that there were several people already analyzed, the SPI was not able to add new members. So the *International Psychoanalytic Association* had to intervene later, with a “loan” of three analysts³ from the Swiss Psychoanalytic Association that kept the SPI under guardianship from 1962 to 1967.

C.V.: Why was there no rapprochement, a co-opting on the part of the SPI of those who in the meantime had been trained abroad?

P.F.G.: There were some, but here each one had his own story and I prefer to speak about the general circumstances. I remember for instance an SPI document in which they wished to prevent their own members from attending or even teaching courses given at our Center. But the problem continued to be the huge rivalry between the founders, and the stalemate that endured all of the 1950s and into the early 1960s.

C.V.: This rigidity in the application of the rules and the difficulty in launching an operation (the three, the four, etc.) was an analytical problem, one to be psychoanalyzed...

P.F.G.: I don't agree. It was indeed a problem that was much psychoanalyzed. It became the source of an intense internal “psychoanalyism”. Even Lacan, to whom you refer, had tried to point out all the contradictions linked to the theme of training and accreditation: only he talked about it too late. The antecedents of what occurred were already there. A question: why did the formulations appear so late? What was our position? To us these seemed like strange phenomena. We didn't care about any of it. We weren't against an SPI, even if this is how it looked. It forced us into controversies and clashes.

C.V.: It seems to me that your position, a pragmatic one to free yourselves of these conflicts, might have been, in hindsight, a restoring of the issue to the sphere of psychoanalysis, not to what you denounced as “psychoanalyism”, but a return of the issue to its very own territory – the psychoanalytic “thing”. When, paradoxically, the operation had resulted in a schematism of self-sustenance, on the periphery of the sphere itself.

² For more on the “Balint groups”, see the “Traces” column of issue no. 3/2005 of *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, where you can also find the lecture given by Michael Balint on the Study Day of October 30, 1965, organized by the “Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy”. [Editor's note]

³ The committee appointed by the *International Psychoanalytic Association* (IPA) in order to unblock this situation was composed by Raymond De Saussure, Paul Parin, and Fritz Morgenthaler (Parin and Morgenthaler were strictly connected with the “Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy”), and the details of this experience were later recounted by Parin in an article published in the German journal *Psyche*, 1984, 38: 627-635. See also Bolko & Rothschild (2006, p. 13 of the English translation). [Editor's note]

Abstract. Carlo Viganò interviews Pier Francesco Galli on the history of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in Italy in the 1950s and 1960s. Pier Francesco Galli mentions the quarterly journal *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane* (“Psychotherapy, Humanities, and Social Sciences”) founded by him in 1967 within the “Milan Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy”, and the relationship with the Italian Psychoanalytic Association (SPI). One of the aims of this group was the fostering of psychoanalytic education in Italy, also because at the time the Universities were not equipped for this task. Among other things, since the early 1960s Pier Francesco Galli organized continuing education courses in Milan held by colleagues from the United States and Europe, and founded the book series of Feltrinelli publisher of Milan (87 volumes), and of Boringhieri publisher of Turin (about 350 volumes). [KEY WORDS: *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, history of psychotherapy in Italy, psychoanalytic institutions, history of psychoanalysis in Italy, psychoanalytic education]

Riassunto. In questa intervista, fatta da Carlo Viganò a Pier Francesco Galli nei primi anni 1980, vengono discussi alcuni aspetti dello sviluppo della psicoterapia e della psicoanalisi in Italia negli anni 1950-60. In particolare, Pier Francesco Galli accenna alla storia della rivista *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, da lui fondata nel 1967 all’interno del *Gruppo Milanese per lo Sviluppo della Psicoterapia*, e ai rapporti con le istituzioni psicoanalitiche. Oltre allo stesso Pier Francesco Galli, del gruppo fondatore facevano parte Berta Neumann, Mara Selvini Palazzoli ed Enzo Spaltro. Tra le iniziative di Pier Francesco Galli vi fu la fondazione di collane di libri presso gli editori Feltrinelli (87 volumi) e Bollati Boringhieri (circa 350 volumi), che servivano a introdurre la cultura psicoterapeutica in Italia in un momento in cui l’Università era ancora impreparata in questo settore. (Questa intervista è stata pubblicata nella rivista *Freudiana*, 1984, 4: 109-116). [PAROLE CHIAVE: *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, storia della psicoterapia in Italia, istituzioni psicoanalitiche, storia della psicoanalisi in Italia, formazione psicoanalitica]

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