KARL ABRAHAM
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Isabel Sanfeliu is a Ph.D. psychologist, a psychoanalyst member of Espace Analytique (Paris), the president of SEGPA (Spanish Society for the Development of Psychoanalysis and Group Psychotherapy), and the editor of Clínica y análisis grupal.

Among all those who followed me along the dark paths of psychoanalytic research, he won so pre-eminent a place that only one name could be placed beside his.

—Freud, Karl Abraham, 1926

This is an excerpt taken from Sigmund Freud’s obituary to Karl Abraham who died prematurely at the age of forty-eight. Abraham grew up in a serene family environment and although he came from an orthodox Jewish background, he did not follow all of the Jewish restrictions:

He was—quoting Jones—the most normal member of the group. His father, a teacher of religion, was unusually broad minded for his time; when Karl Abraham, about to take a position as a psychiatrist informed him that he could no longer keep the Sabbath and other religious practices, the Elder Abraham told his son to obey his own conscience. (Gay, 1988, p. 180)

He began working at the Burghölzli clinic under the direction of Bleuler and with C. G. Jung as head physician. His psychiatric training met
the requirements of the day. His daily activity was far removed from the Viennese circle and he had to deal with the hostile atmosphere of Berlin where he began to practice as a psychoanalyst in 1907. In 1910 he founded Berlin’s Psychoanalytic Institute. His interest, however, was mainly drawn towards the theoretical side of his field, and it was his theoretical contributions that earned him his reputation among the psychoanalytic movement.

He always maintained a cordial relationship with Freud, free from tension to which the psychoanalytic circle was prone to at that time. Contrary to Jung, when he “discovered” psychoanalysis he was able to explore and research the field without too many setbacks due to his previous psychiatric training. This is evident in his article written in 1908: *The Psychosexual Differences between Hysteria and Dementia Praecox*.

It is interesting to contemplate the differences of his ideas with those of Bleuler and Jung regarding sexuality—in the psychoanalytic sense of the word and not in the limited sense of genital sexuality. For Bleuler, the condition, which would later be named schizophrenia, revealed very different autistic manifestations to the autoeroticism postulated by Freud. For Jung, the libido as sexual energy was substituted by an energy drawn from sexuality. These two differences would become another cause of the rupture within the psychoanalytic movement.

In a footnote in the afore-mentioned paper, Abraham writes: “In this paper many of the ideas which go some way beyond Freud’s published views I owe in the first instance to written and oral communications from Freud himself. And I have also been able to formulate many points more clearly through discussion with Prof. Bleuler and Dr Jung in the course of my work at Zurich Psychiatric Clinic.” (Abraham, 1908, pp. 64–65). Abraham does not go into the details of these discussions but it seems clear that he used the concepts of autoeroticism and the libido in the same sense as they were used by Freud.

Abraham was a faithful follower of Freud but he was in no way his hagiographer: he improved and developed his theories and made valuable contributions in a field where much was still to be done.

The psychopathology field of psychoanalysis began to emerge. It was an area that had not been researched in depth and Abraham’s refined approach was noteworthy.

This book constitutes an in-depth analysis of the major milestones in Abraham’s career. At the risk of making unnecessary repetitions, we can highlight his interest in mythology (*Dreams and Myths*, 1909) and
his permanent focus on the libido, a field in which he made original findings. Perhaps in this area his most important paper was *A Short Study of the Development of the Libido Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders*, one of his later contributions; but his interest in this concept can be seen much earlier in 1907 in *The Experiences of Sexual Traumas as a Form of Sexual Activity*. Abraham based his theories on Freud’s pregenital states: *The Development of the Libido and the Sexual Organization* and *The Libido Theory and Narcissism* (1916–1917). He suggested that Freud’s oral-cannibalistic stage of libidinal development had two parts: a sucking phase and a biting stage. He went on to develop two different forms of early object relations: incorporation and destruction. The destruction of the object that has been incorporated is a sign of ambivalence, which is at the very heart of melancholia.

The ambivalence of drives leads to a withdrawal of libidinal investment in the object which is transferred to the ego.

In his ongoing investigation into the destinations of the libido, Abraham made an important finding in *The Psycho-sexual Differences between Hysteria and Dementia Praecox*, in which he reported that the alterations of the function of the ego were secondary to libidinal disorders and opened the theoretical door to the libido in relation to dementia praecox.

He acquired extensive experience as a training analyst: Klein had been analysed by Ferenczi between 1914 and 1919. Abraham then analysed her in 1924 to 1925—Abraham died on 25 December 1925. He also analysed Boehm, Deutch, E. and J. Glover, Horney, Müller-Braunschweig, Radó, Reik and Simmel.

I personally believe that in developing her object relations theory, Klein was inspired more by Abraham than Ferenczi; although the latter’s work on pathoneuroses (1917) probably influenced her later conceptions. Her theory draws from *Introduction to Narcissism*—written three years previously—and refers to the transition between narcissism and object libido. In 1924, when Abraham was analysing Klein, he wrote *A Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders* in which he repeatedly mentions the “love-object” and addresses the relationship “with his love-object during his states of depression and mania and during his free interval”. (Abraham, 1924, p. 421).

I do not believe that it is by chance that Klein introduced the “depressive position” in her writings (1934) in *A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States*, before the “schizoid position”, which was not
addressed until 1946 in Notes on some Schizoid Mechanisms. I also believe that it was Abraham’s influence that led “depression” to play such an important role in Kleinian theory. It seems that Rank’s ideas on object relations after 1920 did not make any perceptible impact on Klein.

The vicissitudes of the libido are a prominent feature of Abraham’s work. The other field in which Abraham made valuable contributions was object relations.

Freud defined the object as where drives are discharged. In other words, he established the primacy of the drive on the object, from which we can deduce that there are many other potential objects provided that they satisfy the objectives of the discharge. Later in Mourning and Melancholia (1917), in which Abraham’s influence is evident, the status of the object changed: the drive object, from an economic perspective—undergoes a metamorphosis and becomes an historical object, that is, a unique object for each individual that forms part of his or her biography. The mother (love–object) becomes my mother (singular and historical object).

Mourning and Melancholia (1915 [1917]) reveals, like no other of Freud’s works, the mutual influence that existed between the master and the disciple. Their relationship showed no signs of rivalry. Freud acknowledges this from the outset when he wrote: Abraham (1912), to whom we owe the most important of the few analytic studies on this subject, also took this comparison (mourning and melancholy) as his starting point. Object libido and object relations are the central themes of this paper, as we can see from this well-known excerpt:

The object cathexis (investment) proved to have little power of resistance and was brought to an end. But the free libido was not displaced onto another object; it was withdrawn into the ego. There, however, it was not employed in any unspecified way, but served to establish an “identification” of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego … (Freud, 1917, p. 249)

Melancholia is an anti-cure that carries out a pathological redistribution of libidinal investments. The libido regresses. The investment in the object converts it into a historical object which has special characteristics—impregnated with narcissism—it is lost, recovered as a shadow and falls upon the ego; an ego altered by the identification with
this object, a damaged ego which suffers from an impairment known as a narcissistic injury.

All of these aspects, which we have merely touched upon here, are examined in depth in the book. In the serene way in which she expresses herself, Isabel Sanfeliu has carried out a profound and creative study of Abraham. She provides us with an historical perspective of the man and analyses the significance of his work, which is often forgotten or eclipsed by other authors.

Nicolás Caparrós
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I am one of those fortunate beings that react enthusiastically to being surprised by an excellent and original work. On these occasions I try to contain my initial enthusiasm and examine the work from a scientific standpoint. In my first reading of Isabel Sanfeliu’s book about Karl Abraham, which traces the origin of object relations theory to his work, I was impressed by her creativity. Subsequently, when I read the book again during the summer, I appreciated the psychoanalytic viewpoint from which it is written and how it constitutes a highly precise analysis of Karl Abraham’s clinical and theoretical contributions to psychoanalysis. It also contemplates the biographical and geopolitical dimensions of the psychoanalytic movement in such a way that it enables us to relive the vicissitudes of the life and psychoanalytic developments of Karl Abraham within the framework described.

Isabel Sanfeliu is a unique clinical psychologist with a solid psychoanalytic and psychiatric training. She has a profound knowledge of the work of Freud, Abraham, and Melanie Klein as well as of the history and founders of the psychoanalytic movement, which has enabled her to skilfully combine the scientific aspects with history and biography.
Karl Abraham, born in Bremen on 3 May 1877, was the younger of two children of a Jewish religious instructor who was married to his cousin. In 1901 he obtained his first psychiatric position in the Psychiatric Hospital of Berlin. Even then he had a clear desire to form part of Bleuler’s team whose work had impressed him. In 1904 he became Bleuler’s first assistant and also got married. In the Burghölzli clinic in Zurich he became familiar with Freud’s work and began to exchange letters with him. After Jung had created the “Freud Society” in 1907 he went to Vienna and was invited to attend the “Wednesday Meeting”. He moved to Berlin and in 1910 founded the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society. Later, he collaborated with Eitingon in the creation of the Polyclinic. In 1916, during the First World War, he was enlisted in the army and sent to a psychiatric department. He became the head of the psychiatric clinic of the twentieth Army Corps. Between 1922 and 1925 he was secretary and the president of the International Psychoanalytical Association. He died at the age of forty-eight on Christmas Day 1925 at the height of his creative development. Almost to the day of his death, he worked with the optimistic vitality that characterised his active and fruitful life. As Sanfeliu writes: “Abraham … died before finishing one of the most powerful concepts regarding the evolutionary process from a psychoanalytical point of view. His death also cut short, or at least slowed, the momentum of the clinical perspective. Additionally, his death also affected the joint psychological research activities, that crossroads where the laws of two so different yet so inseparable fields meet. Abraham’s life was cut short too soon.” (Sanfeliu, in press). And “All of the different references regarding Abraham describe him as a serene, enthusiastic and balanced person” (Sanfeliu, in press). We can unhesitatingly accept the words of Jones when he said that Abraham was divinely normal. He emphasised his normality because he believed, with Freud, and contrary to the psychoanalytic movement, which was predominantly reluctant to adopt rules, that it was still possible to distinguish neurotic misery from ordinary unhappiness although we know that the boundary that separates the two is fuzzy.

As I previously mentioned, Doctor Sanfeliu has fleshed out the outline of Abraham’s biography with meticulous detail which she has elegantly combined with the history of the psychoanalytic movement and also with the history of a relationship between two men in terms of their scientific exchanges and their personal friendship which, despite
the occasional difference of opinion, was based on trust and mutual respect.

Isabel Sanfeliu’s classification of his writings in accordance with their content and order of publication reveals that Abraham was, above all else, a clinical observer with a capacity for analytical listening in-line with his mental functions, that is, his capacity for empathy, his understanding, accessibility, tolerance to frustration … essential qualities in the analytical relationship both then and now. After 1908, he exhibited a clear interest in psychoneuroses: he contributed to determining their different etiological, symptomatic, and evolutionary aspects, giving detailed descriptions of the therapeutic difficulties, particularly unconscious resistance that arises in treatment. In the field of applied analysis, his first essay was *Dreams and Myths* published in 1909. Later, in 1911, he published a psychoanalytic essay on Segantini and a year later another on Amenhotep IV and the monotheistic cult of Aton. After 1917 he became increasingly interested in the influence of infantile sexuality on the mental development of the child, describing the factors that play a role in character formation and in the appearance of neuroses. Within this context, in 1923, he focussed his attention on specific clinical situations, such as premature ejaculation, impotence, and fetishism. In 1924, Abraham published what Isabel Sanfeliu believes could be considered to be his pinnacle work, *A Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders* in which he related the different phases of infantile development to characteristic mental disorders. In other words, it was a synthesis of historical development of the libido based on a study of mental disorders. The long, fruitful dialogue between Abraham and Freud on manic depression (today bi-polar disorder), which was uninterrupted until the former’s death, was initiated by Abraham with his article in 1911, *Notes on the Psycho-analytical Investigation and Treatment of Manic-Depressive Insanity and Allied Conditions*. When we look at the list of psychoanalysts of the pioneer period who were interested in manic depression, apart from Freud, Abraham, Jones, Deutsch, and later Melanie Klein, we can observe that manic depression became the specialisation of a particular section which could be called “Abraham’s school”. Freud’s monumental paper, *Mourning and Melancholia* completely dominated psychoanalytic literature and was subsequently completed with his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* which preceded the second topography of the psyche. As Bleuler pointed out, there was no doubt that Abraham was highly influenced by his reading
of *Mourning and Melancholia* but Abraham’s paper was more systematic and precise. It constitutes the first definitive paper to address the role played by drives in the formation of the mental apparatus. The theories on melancholia were based on the observation of ten cases, the majority of which were private patients of Abraham.

Isabel Sanfeliu’s reflections in the four parts that make up this book not only convincingly show us the structuring of object relations theory, but also contribute to the understanding of the complexity inherent in the functioning of the human psyche which has a high level of evolutionary organisation yet is subject to disorganised processes. She also helps us to understand the current developments in psychoanalytic theory.

This book is enormously useful for all professionals interested in the vicissitudes of infantile development and the problems of psychotic patients: psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, and psychologists will find it particularly valuable due to the richness of its content, the skilful combination of historical analysis and psychoanalytic theory and the creative psychoanalytic thought of the lucid mind that merged these two dimensions.

*Luis Fernando Crespo*

*Vice-President of the Madrid Psychoanalytical Association*
PART I

ABRAHAM, PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND HIS TIME
Karl Abraham redefined the status of the object in his new structural theory regarding the first relationships formed between infants and objects (or others); although in his papers the object still maintained its elementary condition as a place in which drives discharge. Object relations theory is becoming an increasingly significant aspect of psychoanalysis and continues to evolve. However, this shift in emphasis has meant that some schools desensitise the object by ignoring or undervaluing the notion of drive. The consolidation of any scientific theory requires an acknowledgement of its initial starting point and the process carried out from this point. In this respect, this book seeks to fill the gaps that may exist by reconstructing these bases for Abraham and his object relation’s theory.

In many ways, Abraham was the true pioneer of the concept of object in psychoanalysis due to his division of the libidinal organisation into stages in accordance with the evolution of object-love. The active and passive currents in his theories allow us to address the issue from a double perspective: that of appropriating the object and that of identifying with the object.

His earliest studies were carried out in the field of psychosis, simultaneously analysing the most intimate and the most external dimensions,
namely narcissism and the reality principle. Abraham conducted his psychoanalytical study of psychosis based on an in-depth and detailed examination of the phases of libidinal development. The concept of object relations arose with full force in his comparison of hysteria and dementia praecox.

The way in which he approached psychoanalysis, completely rethinking psychopathology and “forgetting” what he had been taught, was something that Bleuler or Jung, his superiors in the Burghölzli clinic, were unable to achieve. He adopted this research method throughout the whole of his life, scrutinising the origins that lead to the most dysfunctional cases.

As we shall see, the precocity and profoundness with which Abraham addressed object relations paved the way for Melanie Klein in developing her formulations regarding the internal object.

There is very little biographical information about Abraham in the literature on the history of psychoanalysis. His whole existence was dedicated to the creative process. All of the different references regarding Abraham describe him as a serene, enthusiastic, and balanced person. It is possible that his austerity and the absence of scandals or a defined pathology could have rendered him uninteresting for journalistically-inclined researchers. However, I believe that conclusions cannot be drawn without contemplating history. Therefore a comparative analysis of his works with those of other pioneers within the framework of the decisive events of the Europe in which he lived, will provide a backdrop for a review of his psychoanalytic elaborations. His profound studies of language and medicine (of Freud’s earliest disciples, few had such a solid psychiatric training), would later give rise to a fruitful consolidation of these two branches of psychoanalysis in which he continued to exercise his great ability as a clinical observer, while also making incursions into the fields of history, anthropology, and mythology.

It is also necessary, in my opinion, to describe the historical context within which he developed his theories; therefore we will examine the economic, political, and social aspects of the period.

Regarding the object

Since Kant, the object has been defined as reality set against the subject, which in turn is the object for the other. There are several conceptions of object; Freud’s initial approach to this concept coincides on the whole with the Kantian view. However, the internal object is related to
structure, giving it a new dimension, which is very different from the
philosophical theories. Nevertheless, object theory in Freud’s works is
not systematically defined; although the initial emphasis on drive in
his early writings and the relative subordination of the object do the
job. Therefore, in his *Three Essays* (1905), we can see how the object
is an integral element of the drive concept; but it is not a secondary
actor with respect to drive. Accordingly, we can affirm that they are
two inseparable elements, which in a broad sense, constitute the links
which, after successive internalisations, give rise to the different types
of object relations.

Object relations theory has been modified to such an extent by differ-
ent authors that this generic term is too vague to cover all of the resulting
hypotheses and developments. Although this theory enriches the pre-
oedipal aspects of development and minimises biologistic temptations,
at the same time it runs the risk of eliminating the bonds with biology:
Fairbairn, for example, said that the drive concept may be eliminated
from consideration, creating a transitional space in the social realm. If
the theory were to work in this way it would have the advantage of
eliminating the nineteenth century mechanistic straightjacket, but at the
same time it ran the risk of converting the psychological fact into some-
thing intangible and speculative; disconnected from the links that on
one way or another relate it to biology.

Melanie Klein’s “world of internal objects” was initially composed
of a series of brilliant insights, however, it was characterised by the
Viennese consistency that was typical of Freud and the majority of his
first-generation disciples. The most probable source of this weakness
was Klein’s pre-analytical training, as, from an epistemological point of
view; her theories lack the close interlocking which is required by the
complexity of object relations.

In his seminar of 30 September 1975, Lacan pointed out that object
relations continuously refer to a lost object, whereby the gratifying object
is the re-found object of desire, which, however, is never found. This
initial gap, which is also mentioned in the *Three Essays*, always persists,
preventing repetition from leading to satisfaction, whereby the latter
eclipses and eliminates the former which is rendered superfluous.

It is not surprising that the object has undergone so many meta-
morphoses in the hands of different psychoanalysts. The difficulties in
determining its function and the role that it plays in the structuring of
the psychic apparatus are numerous.

Let’s start at the beginning.
How can we begin to tell a story, or indeed recount an historical period that will later focus on one specific man? This beginning may comprise of a variety of ideological and epistemological alternatives. Classic history’s use of events such as battles, weddings, and births is correct to the extent that they constitute violent alterations in the course of events, mainly deaths, and abrupt changes in the order or the latter part of the order of a specific period. The great battles are condensations of everyday occurrences, which should then be combined with other non-bellical dimensions. Battles in classic history are intersections which threaten the prevailing structures, critical points from which it is possible to chart a before and after, although this before and after are not linear. The modern perception of history is far from simple.

The term “Mitteleuropa” refers to the sum of many events dating back to when Tiberius was unsuccessful in Romanising Germania in the same way as Caesar had done with France and, later, Claudio with Britannia. The barbarians withstood their ground through successive and overlapping assaults, the details of which are not relevant to our case. Throughout the centuries they created a place of permanent
instability dating back so far that its origins have been buried in time and the consequences of which re-emerge over and over again in different forms.

Now we will turn our attention to Prussia; and to illustrate how it influenced an event which would trigger the series of successive latent incidents, we will refer to one battle. The battle of Sadowa took place on 3 July 1866, eleven years before Karl Abraham was born. Previously, the Prussians had invaded Saxony. Initially, the imperial artillery had the upper hand in the skirmish, but the Prussian infantry, with their breech-loading needle guns and resulting firepower, executed an encirclement manoeuvre, obliging Benedeck to withdraw, incurring losses of 20,000 men. Vienna was only a three-week march away.

This momentous defeat had many repercussions. Firstly, cracks appeared in the solidity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and it also opened the door for Napoleon III’s projects. At first, this was favourable for Prussia, although it was very surprised by the swift victory of Napoleon’s armies. The French emperor faced opposing pressures: firstly, the closeness of Prussia raised fears that a disproportionate increase of its power would pose a threat to France. Moreover, Prussia’s left wing was hostile to Austria. Additionally, the Italians, who had been attacked by the Empire, were not sympathetic towards the French.

In view of the circumstances, Franz Joseph accelerated the cession of Venice, which, for all intents and purposes, had been lost. By doing this he tried to liberate his Italian flank and at the same time attempted to save the Rhineland, which was a territory that France had set its sights on. The limited political stature of Napoleon III was more evident now than ever. His European objective would have led him to a logical and immediate conflict with Prussia. However, he decided not to take this course of action. The Austrian Metternich saw the dilemma clearly: they could let Prussia continue its path and accept immediate peace which would avoid confrontations with the Germans and Italians, or they could join forces with Austria and accept a head-on conflict with the Prussians and Italians. The first alternative would delay the Franco-Prussian war. When it took place the conditions would be worse for the French.

Napoleon III chose to pressure Austria to accept the armistice, paving the way, to his regret, for the Prussian Empire. The outcome was that Prussia annexed four million inhabitants in the so-called North German confederation under the auspices of Berlin; Bavaria became
the South German Confederation and constituted the pretext for the ensuing Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire a hornet’s nest of nationalities remained, including Ukrainians and Polish in the north, Czechs, Slovaks, Serb-Croats, Slovenians, Romanians, and Magyars. Upper and Lower Austria were occupied by Germans, and the south and Venice by Italians and Ladinos. Only twenty-four per cent of the total population were German speakers.

Pan-Germanism can be defined as the desire for the political and cultural unification of all the German-speaking people dispersed across many states. Before the creation of the German Empire in 1871, it was a synonym of German nationalism. After the emergence of the Empire, the concept diversified: in the Reich it meant the protection of German rights overseas and an aggressive foreign policy with racist and anti-Semitic connotations; it could be said that it was more befitting of the expansion and imperialist policy of Prussia than a nationalist ideology. Until the First World War, this policy had very few disputes with the declining Austro-Hungarian Empire.

During the time remaining for the House of Hapsburg before the Great War, Franz Joseph sought to maintain the strength of the two nations from which his empire took its name, Austria and Hungary. He did not engage in any type of belligerent or extremist policy either beyond the borders, as Prussia was doing, or within the social movements of the Empire: namely social democracy, liberal bourgeoisie, and nationalism. The emancipated Jews constituted a source of support for Germanism, which neither the Reich nor Austria which emerged after the war were capable of using to their own benefit; on the contrary, this emancipation gave rise to intense anti-Semitic currents.

In 1914, Franz Joseph, pressured by a group of warmongers in his government, sent Serbia an ultimatum after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This would lead to the end of Austria-Hungary, which at that time saw a unique opportunity to settle scores with Serbia. Germany found it impossible to refuse support to its only reliable ally and endorsed the declaration of war against Serbia; its role was to ensure that the Russians did not intervene, but it failed, and on 1 August 1914 Germany was forced to declare war against Russia and, consequently, its ally France. The British were reluctant to enter war and did not declare war against Germany until 4 August 1914. At the end of 1915, Poland and Lithuania were in the hands of Germany and
after the victories of the East, they moved their troops to Verdun, the site of one of the most devastating battles. In 1917, “the people had lost all enthusiasm for that bloody war” (Asimov, 1991, p. 758) and the British fleet controlled the seas; despite this, the victories of the East encouraged them to embark on the “great German Spring offensive of 1918” which depleted their armies.

The situation got out of hand and on 9 November 1918 Wilhelm II abdicated: the socialist Ebert became the chancellor of the new German Republic. Shortly after the end of the war, a national assembly met in Weimar to draw up the constitution, which came into force on 31 July 1919.

It has often been said that the Weimar republic—the incarnation of German humanism—was a republic without republicans, or, according to the right wing parties, a Jewish republic. With the fall of the imperial regime, two rival powers emerged: a social republic and a socialist republic. They arose from an unnatural alliance: “between the different influential social strata under Wilhelm II’s reign, a Group of antidemocratic forces and social-democrat leaders. This paradox of a republican state highly influenced by an anti-republican spirit became even more prominent after the death of Ebert” (Fine, 1979, p. 29). From the point of view of a historian of psychoanalysis, this instability can be explained by the irreconcilable contrasts, which gave rise to the conflict.

Historical breakthroughs are made in small steps; one event paves the way for the next. Anti-Semitic agitation constituted an important part of the political objective of the two conservative parties of the day: the Christian Social Party (led by Karl Lueger who greatly influenced the young Hitler) and the Pan-Germanic Party. Adolf Hitler, born in Austria, had led a life full of resentment and poverty until he found his place as a soldier in the Great War. After the conflict, he proposed to avenge the defeat by spreading the idea that it had been caused by a conspiracy from within: the Jews were the enemy.

Although anti-Semitism was fairly widespread, it had limited repercussions as the centre of political power still revolved around the Emperor who was openly hostile to this discrimination.

Laín Entralgo (1954, p. 499) divides this period in history into three parts:

- The years between the Revolution of 1848 and the Franco-Prussian war of 1870; Romanticism, which had been on the decline since 1830, came to an end.
• The period between 1870 and the end of the century; the golden age of naturalistic mentality and the bourgeoisie. The German Empire was created in 1871; Abraham was born in 1877.

• The period between the beginning of the century and the First World War (1914). Life opposed reason; synthesis opposed analytical disaggregation; imagination opposed consciousness ... and so the current era was born, in which “the European soldiers began digging the grave of the modern man between the Seine and the Rhine” (Entralgo, 1954, p. 499).

**Social and cultural aspects**

Let us explore this period from a different angle. Berlin was founded in 1237, but it was years before a true city emerged. Decimated by the plague and the Thirty Years War, it began to flourish when Friedrich Wilhelm Brandenburg began his rule in 1640. Later, during the Imperial Germany of Friedrich II (Friedrich the Great), the King of Prussia and under Wilhelm II, defined by Sigmund Freud as “the incurable romantic”, it began taking shape in terms of population, buildings, and monuments. In 1887, Berlin had the most highly developed railway network in Europe and the prestige of its universities attracted ambitious professors. However, after 1871, with the unification of Germany orchestrated by Bismarck, the splendour of the city waned. Then, after the abdication of Wilhelm II, artists and creators began to regard the new Republic as an unprecedented opportunity for renewal.

In the mid 1920s, Germany was, without a doubt, the most cultured country in the world; there was no other place where trade was as frenzied as Berlin. Tempelhof Airport was opened in 1924. Together with Paris, it was the European city with the richest and most diverse artistic life, although in the 1920s it was also regarded as a place of perdition and had a reputation of being morally depraved.

The intellectual class of Berlin—its University, was completely independent. However, on 26 August 1920, The *Die Weltbühne* magazine commented:

> The spirit of the University of Berlin is scandalous for the whole of Germany. Racial hatred, class hatred, chauvinism, anti-Semitism, violence against the most cultured professors. And the government tolerates this and does nothing. […] The people of the right enjoy
The powerful association of classical language teachers was equally hostile to the regime. The German University constituted a mirror of the contradictions and impotence of this republic.

The devastating effects of the Great War on the complex Weimar Republic did not darken the cultural panorama; this was a brief and tragic period which was made worse by the economic depression. The humanism, which emerged in Germany at the end of the previous century, a romantic exaltation of the irrational and unique, which was imitated by small groups of poets, artists, and philosophers throughout Europe, was followed by a vigorous realism. Science, which had been excessively partitioned into specialist fields by positivism, now suffered limitations; gradually two currents emerged; a mechanistic current and an evolutionist movement which did not take hold until the publication, in 1859, of The Origin of Species by Charles Darwin.

While encyclopaedists placed man at the centre of the universe, romantics revered nature and its hidden side. Sociology advanced independently in Germany in the nineteenth century determinedly defining itself as a science.

The cultural sphere generated a considerable amount of employment. Between 1919 and 1932, 400 family-planning offices were opened throughout Germany and 2,450 women appeared before the courts charged with abortion in 1920. Sexuality sought new formulations; Helene Stoecker founded the league for the protection of mothers and sexual reform in Berlin in 1905 during the Empire in order to distinguish sexuality from procreation.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, German psychiatry represented, in the words of Laín Entralgo (1954, p. 612), a positivation of the philosophical-natural psychiatry of the Romantic period; the “mythology of the soul” [translated for this edition] according to idealist speculation was replaced by a “mythology of the brain” which, while appearing to be empirical was no less speculative (for example Griesinger, Meynert and Wernicke). Other branches emerged, including practical and custodial psychiatry (Jessen), descriptive psychiatry (Kahlbaum, Kraepelin, Bleuler), or what Laín Entralgo defines as descriptive psychopathological analysis, pioneered by the Frenchman Pierre Janet and Karl Jaspers, which gives priority to the psychological
structure of mental illness. Finally, this period witnessed the emergence of the field in which psychoanalysis is rooted: psychotherapy and psychopathological analysis from a genetic and operational perspective, developed by Charcot and Breuer.

In the Germany of Griesinger’s time, many concepts were developed which were later incorporated into psychoanalysis. Freud, and therefore Abraham were indebted to Griessinger, Meynert, Fechner, Breuer, Kraft-Ebing, Herbart and, of course, philosophers such as Schopenhauer, Kant and Nietzsche. Many concepts, including unconsciousness, repression, and representation were derived from these powerful sources and represented Central European culture at the end of the century.

The empirical psychology of the nineteenth century gave way to a whole series of different notions: the concept of the psyche, Wundt’s psychic relation principle (considered by Laín Entralgo, 1954, p. 690—as the need to acknowledge a system of relations in order to understand the meaning of each psychic element), introspective experiments, the conquest of the psychological unconscious and the contemplation of the higher psychism as the final stage of an evolutive process in early childhood. With respect to Berlin, Lionel Richard comments: “Psychoanalysis has different groups of affiliation, but the Freudian tradition is solidly implanted throughout the International Psychoanalytical Association presided by Karl Abraham” (Richard, 1991, p. 41) [Translated for this edition].

Psychoanalysis, which was becoming increasingly more prominent, certainly contributed to this cultural remodelling. Although the latest postulations regarding sexuality clearly represented a step forward with respect to the preceding rigid morality, the medical circles were still very reticent. Psychoanalysis spontaneously leads to metapsychology and this is what Kraepelin, Moll, or Löwenfeld among others, flatly rejected (Freud’s correspondence extensively illustrates this extreme).

Harsh criticism was made of, for example, the audacity of Abraham in his analysis of Segantini; in Psychiatry Monthly, Otto Schütz-Hartheck made a scathing review, summarised by Le Rider:

> It seems superfluous to go into the details of this essay. However, one would not know how to object to the project whose author will only end up being ridiculed. For those who look for erotic themes in art, that art is no longer art. I hope that Freud is dismayed by this latest product of his school. (Le Rider, 1982, p. 126)
This was simply applied psychoanalysis; Abraham persevered and the group of German psychoanalysts became increasingly influential in the movement.

We can see this German influence in the places chosen for the first international congresses: after Salzburg in 1908, the venue selected in 1910 was Nuremberg, followed by Weimar in 1911 and Munich in 1913. Furthermore, the planned venue for the 1914 congress was Dresden but it never took place due to the war. Years later, the Second World War also held up the development of psychoanalysis; Jones’ biography of Freud reflects the liquidation of this theory in Germany whose Democratic Republic officially condemned it.

The horror of the Hitler period cast a shadow on the extraordinary cultural achievements of the preceding Weimar Republic, which incidentally had also promoted the advent of Hitler in 1933. Prominent figures in the field of psychoanalysis appear in the records of alumni and teachers of Germany’s psychoanalytical institute; for Reuben Fine (1979, p. 95), it was by far the most distinguished institute of that period, even though Freud presided the Vienna branch. The education and training system created in Berlin still exists today without any fundamental changes: personal analysis, didactic instruction, and supervised analysis.

The Institute was considered by Peter Gay as the most vital of the 1920s: “By the first years of the Weimar Republic, Berlin had established itself as the nerve centre of world psychoanalysis, despite the precarious political health of the young republic, threatened by runaway inflation, political assassinations, sporadic foreign occupation and at times virtual civil war.” (Gay, 1988, p. 460) The city offered the best training system; Paul Roazen does not hesitate to affirm that “The Institute in Vienna never had the success of the Berlin Institute: in terms of the number of candidates, the quality of its work or its financial resources.” (Roazen, 1936, p. 355) Eitingon was a cultured person, although he was not a particularly outstanding teacher or speaker (he had a stammer) and hardly wrote anything. He financed the founding of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Polyclinic and Institute in 1920.

As was the case in so many other fields, the dramatic events of the war temporarily paralysed the progress of psychoanalysis in Germany; in Jones’ biography of Freud we can read: “This year saw the flight of the remaining Jewish analysts from Germany and the liquidation of psychoanalysis in this country. It was one of Hitler’s few
successful achievements” (Jones, 1953–1957, T.III, p. 199). In the German Democratic Republic, psychoanalysis was officially condemned; even within intellectual and university circles, ignorance and indifference prevailed.

Let us digress from the events of the Institute for a moment to examine the historical context. At that time, decisive progress was being made in the understanding of the elementary morphological constitution of living organisms. The healthcare situation of the time is summarised by Jones: “The fatigued atmosphere and narrow mindedness which characterised Vienna, was a sad contrast with the vibrant and progressive spirit of Germany.” (Jones, 1953–1957, T.I, p. 304). Diphtheria was possibly the most dangerous illness before the discovery of the anti-diphtheria serum by Roux in 1894. In those times there was no serological treatment for diseases such as scarlet fever, smallpox, and measles. Emile Roux (1853–1933), a disciple of Pasteur, also researched anthrax, cholera, rabies, and tetanus. However, we cannot refer to him without mentioning Robert Koch (1843–1910), who played a decisive role with the development of his postulates of infectious diseases. Based in Berlin in 1880, he discovered the bacterium that causes tuberculosis, introduced technical innovations, and invented a series of prophylactic measures and tests for therapeutic procedures.

One of the most influential researchers of the day was the eminent pathologist Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), who lost his university position in Berlin for participating in the revolutionary movement of 1848 and was not able to return to this university until 1856. From this year, his activity in the German capital (where he founded and directed the Pathologisches Institut), was extraordinary; he declared that the cell was “the elementary form of all living things” and it was Ramón y Cajal (1852–1934), “the founder and paladin of neuron theory” (Lain, 1954, p. 510), who applied this theory to the nervous system. With this notable exception, it was mostly German scientists who led the way in conventional cytology.

In another field of science, Albert Einstein (1879–1955) devised an equation that enabled the size of atoms to be calculated. He also presented his relativity theory and determined that the speed of light in vacuum is the fastest speed possible. These are just a few of his better-known investigations.

When the speculative ardour of romantic “Naturphilosophie” turned into a passion to see and measure what, in the words of Lain
Entralgo in the afore-mentioned text, constitutes “the nerve of the Naturwissenschaft”, the most notable German scientific contribution focussed most directly on physiological research. Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894), one of Freud’s idols, which he acknowledged himself in 1883, was as prominent in this field as he was in physics, which was his main vocation and the subject for which he obtained a professorship at the University of Berlin. Furthermore, the origins of the modern physio-pathological orientation of universal medicine can be found in the reformers of German medicine who also influenced Karl Abraham.

Economic uncertainty

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Germany was, without a doubt, the leading European power in terms of its military, its technology, and its economy. It continued the policy introduced by Bismarck to prevent the left wing party from coming to power, granting social benefits such as increased pensions, extended medical insurance and reduced working hours, etc. These measures did not stop the socialists from gaining popularity, receiving the most votes in the Reichstag elections of January 1912.

It was not until long after 1918 when the country was able to enjoy the relative wellbeing that had existed before 1914. The devaluation of the mark and the economic consequences of the war, together with the draconian peace conditions established by the Treaty of Versailles, gave rise to a galloping inflation, which had a huge impact on everyday life for the majority of the German population between 1919 and 1923. By the end of 1918, the mark had lost forty per cent of its value; Berlin became a paradise for foreigners who could change their money and earn a huge profit. However, for the Germans, it became the most expensive city in the country where corruption and the black market were predominant forces. The misery and undernourishment of the children was terrible; in November 1923, a pound of bread cost a thousand million marks in Berlin and an underground ticket cost one hundred thousand million.

Bourel describes how the everyday life of Berlin at that time was characterised “most of all, at least in its most popular districts, by desperation, oppression and bitterness” (Bourel, 1991, p. 51). At the end of 1919, food, housing, and coal were rationed and Germany was
still denied access to international markets. In the Weimar constitution, one of the articles refers to the right of all German citizens to a “decent home”, but the construction sector could not be developed until after 1924, after the monetary reform and the Dawes plan. Until then, the rents were so high that the lower classes could not afford them.

In August 1923, the Reichstag withdrew its confidence from Chancellor Cuno and the Populist Party leader, Gustav Stresemann formed a coalition government. The situation was catastrophic and a monetary reform was implemented in order to stabilise the mark. National reconstruction was the order of the day and the Weimar republic achieved equilibrium at the beginning of 1925 although the shadow of inflation was looming.

The president of the republic, Ebert, died on 19 March 1925. This was also the year of Abraham’s death.
Dr Karl Abraham, President of the Berlin group, of which he was the founder, and President at the time of the International Psycho-Analytical Association, died in Berlin on December 25 [1925]. He had not reached the age of fifty when he succumbed to an internal complaint against which his powerful physique had had to contend ever since the spring. At the Homburg Congress he had seemed, to the great joy of us all, to have recovered; but a relapse brought us painful disappointment.

We bury with him—*integer vitae scelerisque purus* (he that is unstained in life and pure from guilt. Horace, Odes. I, XXII, 1)—one of the firmest hopes of our science, young as it is and still so bitterly assailed, and part of its future that is now, perhaps, unrealizable. Among all those who followed me along the dark paths of psycho-analytic research, he won so pre-eminent a place that only one other name could be set beside his. It is likely that the boundless trust of his colleagues and pupils would have called him to the leadership; and he would without doubt have been a model leader in the pursuit of truth, led astray neither by the praise or blame of the many nor by the seductive illusion of his own phantasies.
I write these lines for friends and fellow-workers who knew and valued Abraham as I did. They will find it easy to understand what the loss of this friend, so much younger than I am, means to me; and they will forgive me if I make no further attempt to express what it is so hard to put into words. An account of Abraham’s scientific personality and an appreciation of his work will be undertaken for our journal by another hand. (Freud, 1926, Vol. XX, p. 277)

Karl Abraham died on 25 December 1925 when he was the president of the International Psychoanalytical Association. There are biographies which should start at the beginning: birth, childhood, adolescence and so on. This would be the case of a biography recounting the life of Freud or Goethe or Nietzsche. Lives that have been fully lived from which we always hope for a little more, something more, still more, squeezing to achieve what against all hopes is no longer possible. With Abraham it is different: he died before finishing one of the most powerful concepts regarding the evolutionary process from a psychoanalytical point of view. His death also cut short, or at least slowed, the momentum of the clinical perspective. Additionally, his death affected the joint psychobiological research activities, that crossroads where the laws of two so different yet so inseparable fields meet. Abraham’s life was cut short too soon.

Childhood and family environment (1877–1903)

Karl Abraham was born in the port city of Bremen on 3 May 1877 into a wealthy, respectable Jewish family from Hamburg. He was the younger of two children. The family tree drawn up by Karl dates the family’s presence in Germany back to the seventeenth century. The genealogical chart provides general information of the family in which intermarriage was frequent; in fact, his own parents were cousins.

His father, Nathan was born in Hannover in 1842. He was an intelligent, erudite and attractive man and was unusually liberal for his time. He was the youngest of six siblings of which only five lived to be adults. He studied religion and Jewish law and at the age of nineteen he was appointed as professor in Bremen, which was a small community without a rabbi at that time. When he was thirty he resigned from his position in order to be accepted by the family of his future wife, Ida; they were married in 1873. His father-in-law introduced him to the trading sector.
He opened a wholesale business in order to ensure the maintenance of his future children. The family lived in a large three-storey house together with Nathan’s two unmarried sisters and a housemaid.

They formed a patriarchal community that functioned in perfect harmony. Nathan, affectionately respected as the head of the family and the small Jewish community, was very close to his wife and he always displayed a keen interest in his son’s work.

Ida also came from a family of traders. Her father Samson, who was widowed twice, had four children (she was the eldest) during his third marriage with Julie, a cultured and beautiful woman. The death of Samson coincided with the miscarriage suffered by Ida after a fall when she attended a call from her parents in the night. It was a difficult time for the family and Karl was two years old at the time.

Karl’s mother is described by her granddaughter as warm, generous, with a great sense of humour, although sometimes Ida seemed to personify the prototype of the Jewish mother; anxious and possessive. Her eldest son suffered from asthma attacks from a very early age, and,
despite his intelligence the difficulties that he experienced during his development caused him to become neurotic and he displayed obsessive traits. Max’s physical problems led his mother to restrict sports for the two brothers to walks on Saturdays and Sundays as a recreational activity. Karl enjoyed hiking and mountaineering. He had very few friends because he had to take care of his brother and the Jewish community of Bremen was very small, so he developed a solitary character. With Max he formed an intelligent and fun team within the adult family environment. During their adolescence they revealed their different characteristics; Max became absorbed by the Jewish rituals and followed, as the eldest son, the family tradition in retail trading.

As a baby Karl was little trouble, which can be inferred from the poem written by his mother on a photograph of him when he was four months old. He is described by his mother as a powder-keg, with rare but violent outbursts of rage; he must have learnt how to control this aspect of his character over time, because in Jones’ description of him, “he could be relatively assertive, but he never got angry, he was very perspective and observed things objectively” (Jones, 1953–1957, T.II, p. 210).

The descriptions of him by other analysts (Deutsch, Ferenczi, Klein ...) all highlight his modesty, courage, enthusiasm, sense of humour, and optimism. He had a great personal charm. Jones pointed out that Abraham could fight but not hate, and therefore he did not awaken feelings of hatred towards him.

As a son he was always protective and affectionate; after the death of Nathan he wrote to his mother every week. He inherited, as did his brother, Ida’s love for writing poetry and at university, free from maternal prohibitions, by playing sports (tennis, swimming, climbing ...) he was able to give a free reign to his fiery personality despite his fragile constitution (Gay, 1988, p. 180). Hilda describes him as a playful father, full of love and delicacy, although he was sometimes strict with his children; however if he became too angry, the guilt that he felt would quickly dampen his rage (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 20).

**The student**

At the age of six he began to attend a small private school, which was struck hard by the cold winters (the teacher was so kind as to allow them to sit on their hands in order to keep them warm). We know that when he was seven he was top of the class. At the age of nine he began
attending the Gymnasium in Bremen where his passion for linguistics rapidly became clear: obtaining excellent results in Greek and Latin, he went on to learn French, English, and on Sundays he attended Hebrew courses which were compulsory in his religion. He became able to express himself without any difficulty in Danish, Dutch, Spanish, and Italian. Years later, he enormously enjoyed researching the comparative study of languages as his daughter proudly relates in the aforementioned biography.

The Gymnasium at that time encouraged curiosity and rigorousness in a wide variety of disciplines. The subjects taught there included prehistory, the classics, mythology, early phenomenological studies, and process philosophy. This is where Abraham acquired the base for developing his fascinating capacity to unravel deeply hidden yet latent issues through symbols.

However, the family income could not encourage and maintain this vocation for philology. Furthermore, university places for this discipline were inaccessible to Jews. The family therefore decided that he should be trained as a dentist, which would be funded by his paternal uncle, Adolf. And so he began studying dentistry at the University of Würzburg in 1895, but when he returned home after the first term, he decided that he would prefer to study medicine. He began his medical degree when he was nineteen, studying the first two years in Würzburg and the rest in Freiburg which he chose because of its reputation as an important cultural centre and its winter resort. The separation from his family was not easy for him, as he confessed to Freud, describing a symptomatic act that he was self-analysing.

Naturally, he became interested in the trends of the time: embryology and histology, always searching the origins, going back to the source … there is no doubt that these two fields and linguistics would later be consolidated in psychoanalysis. Supported by Doctor Keibel, who was then assistant professor and later the dean at Berlin, he maintained this interest throughout his studies and based his early research on these fields. Keibel would later recommend him to H. Liepmann who was highly specialised in pathological anatomy of the brain, with whom Karl wished to work.

He was also attracted to the fields of diagnosis and surgery, but his doctoral thesis, published in 1901, was written on: The Developmental History of the Budgerigar (Beiträge zur Entwicklungs geschichte des Wellensittichs). This was not at all surprising in an environment
in which curiosity and seeking the same thing in a permanent metaphorical displacement was the norm; finding the key in diversity without being fully aware of doing so. Similarly, years beforehand Freud had researched eel testicles and later went on to conceive and refine the gold chloride method.

In January of the same year he passed his last exam. When he was awarded his diploma on the 14 June 1901 he was twenty-four years old. Military service did not interrupt his studies, as he was exempt due to his emphysema, which was a development of his childhood asthma. He also had a congenital weakness in his right eye, although this was compensated for by very sharp vision in his left eye.

After completing his studies, he underwent six years of intensive training in psychiatric hospitals, informing his father that in his new situation he could not respect Jewish law regarding diet and observing the Sabbath. Once again, the tolerance and understanding that Nathan had always shown prevailed over his beliefs, reinforcing even more the mutual respect and admiration that they shared all their lives.

On the 17 May he was recruited in his first assistant position with Professor Liepman in the Dalldorf Municipal Mental Hospital; first as a “Voluntär” (with accommodation and expenses but no salary), and a little later as “assistant” with a salary.

He lived and worked there for almost four years, developing a profound interest in psychiatry but had become aware, with disappointment, after this time, that there was not a lot more that he could do there; years later he justified his knowledge of Berlin colleagues to Freud, “I was a physician at the Berlin mental hospital Dalldorf for more than three years, until I could bear it no longer.” (Letter to Freud on 13 October 1907, p. 10).

In his own way, Abraham experienced the dissatisfaction of following paths in psychiatry which were based on pathological anatomy. Continuing with similarities between Freud and Abraham, which correspond more to the spirit of an era rather than the peculiar idiosyncrasy between the two, the clash between Meynert and Charcot, which had been revealing for Freud, continued but with different players. Although in Germany, Griesinger (1817–1868) and representatives from the so-called Romanticism movement considered mental illness as an affliction of the soul corresponding to a moralist attitude, there were also somaticists, permanent seekers of organic substrates who were no less speculative than the former.
Griesinger tried to establish a balance between pathological anatomy and the psychogenetic connotations. This author, who created the concept of unitary psychosis, was influenced by two significant trends to which to some extent he was indebted and in which Karl Abraham was immersed: the strong trend towards “psychiatry of the brain”, with renowned supporters such as Meynert, and the “clinical school” which, in some way opposed the therapeutic nihilism of the former (in its beginnings, psychoanalysis emerged as a clinical method and only in a second step did it acquire the consideration as a general theory of psychosis). This school of thought was supported mostly by Kahlbaum and Hecker, and later by Kraepelin (1856–1926). The academic influence of Kraepelin coincided with the psychiatric training period of Abraham.

However, his closest friend in Berlin was Salomon Altmann, an enterprising student and member, like Karl, of the Social Science Students Association. This group of men and women (unheard of at that time!) was presided by Elisabeth Gottheiner. Abraham recounted the five dreams that she had on a day that she stayed at his house to Freud (see, for example, the letter from Abraham of 8 March 1908).

Karl found refuge here from his job in Dalldorf which he found increasingly tedious (except for his collaboration with Liepmann). Hans Bürgner was highly involved in the Association, although neither he nor his sister, the future Mrs Abraham, were members. Hedwig was a good listener. She was interested mostly in German philology studies and carrying out secretarial duties. She would have liked to attend university, but the death of her mother when she was only seventeen, meant that she had to renounce this dream to care for her family, although she continued to attend courses and conferences until she trained to become an English and French teacher. The Bürgners enjoyed a good social position and practiced the Jewish religion in a very permissive way. Hedwig’s sister, Else, although very attractive and with artistic talent, from a very young age suffered a deformity of her spine due to rickets which left her with a serious cardiac illness; it also seems that she suffered from anorexia and at some point was diagnosed as psychotic, all of which contributed to making Hedwig feel responsible for her, although she never sacrificed her new family for her.

In one of the Association’s courses on sociology, Hans, with whom Karl shared a taste for the classics and with whom he formed a close friendship in which Karl adopted a role as elder brother, introduced him to Hedwig. Abraham had only had one other short relationship
with a girl, and this time, he was faced with an educated, intelligent, and informal woman with progressive ideas who was opposed to religious practices and rites. Later, Hilda would highlight (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 25) how it was easier to find divergences rather than similarities between Hedwig and Karl’s mother.

The constancy of his love from that moment was never questioned. Karl always considered her to be on the same intellectual plane, which was not commonplace in those days, and found in her a great collaborator in terms of ideas and tastes.

Although he did write some articles during this period, he considered them to be coarse; the result of monotonous research projects which he had to undertake in order to be assigned courses in the University of Berlin. Finally, the city council of Dusseldorf awarded him a certificate which stated that he had worked there since the 17 May 1901 and that his conduct with doctors, patients, and administrative staff had been highly regarded. It is assumed that he needed this certificate, dated the 14 April 1904, in order to embark on new ventures.
He was soon attracted to the fame of the Burghölzli Clinic, a mental hospital close to Zurich that offered considerable opportunities for researching and completing his clinical training. Bleuler was the Dean of Psychiatry and Jung was a houseman. After securing a position there, he left Dalldorf in the spring and got engaged to Hedwig. It was a time of frequent meetings and separations which always proved difficult. Karl left for Zurich while Hedwig enrolled in a college annexed to the University of Cambridge. They spent the summer of 1905 together in Elm (Switzerland) with Hans and other friends where they did a fair amount of climbing. More than once, Karl’s determination to find new and better paths or shortcuts took them through difficult terrain that, of course, were much longer than the usual routes.

A small note in Alpina, the daily newspaper of the Swiss alpine clubs, comments that on 29 July 1905, Doctor Abraham with a guide, had climbed and crossed for the first time the Daelli Point, and from there had reached the other unnamed peak. Writing about the same trip, Hilda Abraham recounts the incident that amused Freud and from which they drew the phrase of encouragement that they interchanged.
in difficult situations: “Coraggio Casimiro!” (Casimiro courage!) On that occasion the phrase was said by one guide to another when they were about to eat fresh meat (which had already gone off after the long hike) that they had taken with them on a particularly hot day; more prudently, Karl had taken a large amount of tinned food.

The new clinic was an intellectual observation tower. Between 1878 and 1989, Forel, who was one of its principal driving forces, had directed it. Followers such as Adolf Meyer and Bleuler had joined him there. Forel had already contemplated the problem of hypnosis and introduced this concept in Zurich.

Bleuler was his successor in 1898. He had therefore been the director for six years when Karl Abraham arrived and continued to direct the clinic until 1927. At the beginning of the century Jung and Binswanger practiced there and the clinic was also generationally linked to the Bellevue clinic and Minkowski.

Without a doubt, the Burghölzli clinic constituted the ideal breeding ground to channel interests of someone who was committed to psychiatric academicism. The years that Abraham spent at the clinic prepared him so that he became receptive and sensitive to psychoanalytical ideas.

Marriage

He was appointed as second assistant at Burghölzli in December 1904 (with a wage of 2300 F per year, with accommodation and expenses paid for at an estimated value of 1000 F, according to the biography of his daughter, p. 27), and in May he was promoted to first assistant. Although at first this represented a slight reduction in income (his wage fell to 2,200 F.), it was to improve considerably, and so the marriage was officially announced. Karl’s parents travelled to Berlin to meet the bride’s family; Hedwig was warmly received by Ida and they would maintain an affectionate relationship in the coming years. Abraham was not given a similar reception by his future sister-in-law, Else, due to a misunderstanding regarding the Jewish diet and rituals.

The couple’s idyll continued. One occasion that was particularly memorable during this time was a birthday of Karl’s celebrated on the Banks of the Wallensee, which he referred to in a verse that he wrote for Hedwig on his last anniversary twenty years later. In the biography written by his daughter there are continuous comments made about the
brief and tender messages or poems that Abraham wrote for his wife, children, and Ida, sometimes given with flowers or chocolates; Hilda admits that as a teenager, she was embarrassed by what she then considered as the childish behaviour of her father.

Abraham was married in Switzerland on 23 June, one year after beginning his employment at the clinic in Zurich. They were married by a rabbi, and after a short honeymoon, they moved into an apartment on Forchstrasse, close to the Burghölzli. It would be a happy, harmonious, and perfect marriage. Karl had to work hard; neither of their families could provide any financial assistance (although they did give them generous wedding gifts). Furthermore, Hedwig’s father insisted that she should have a life insurance policy, a demand that initially caused more than one headache.

At first, moving to Zurich was not easy for Hedwig who, on the contrary to Abraham, did not adapt well to the frank and coarse character of the Swiss. Karl worked long hours and she felt the separation from her friends and family acutely (due to the excellent relationship that she had with her parents). Jung’s mother and sister lived in the same building but the warm welcome that they extended to her was short-lived. The only explanation that Karl and Hedwig found for this change in attitude was that it coincided with the ambivalence that Jung began to show towards Abraham in the winter of 1906–1907.

Hedwig, who always showed a keen interest in her husband’s work, was highly interested in Freud’s theories and attended conferences on psychiatry and discussion groups on psychoanalysis in which she participated actively and where, sometimes, she would recount her own dreams. Max Eitingon, who was then a medical student and later founded the Psychoanalytic Institute in Jerusalem, also joined the ambitious team at the Burghölzli in 1907.

The childhoods of both Hedwig and Karl were characterised by affection and a sense of security; ingredients that were also present in their marriage. The impulsively enterprising Karl wrote many passionate notes that referred to the past, present and future. Hedwig, who was more reserved, wrote tender verses, putting her words in the mouth of the baby that she was carrying. This pregnancy filled them with joy; Abraham wished for a girl—Hilda (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 71) insinuated that, possibly to replace the sister that he had lost and whose death may have produced feelings of guilt in him, or perhaps to offer his mother a girl to repair the loss that she had suffered—and Hedwig hoped that it
would be born on the same day as her brother. It is almost impossible to compare the early years of their marriage with Freud’s marriage: his relationship with Fliess and the creative vertigo consumed all of his attention; the love letters during his courtship gave way to an equally impetuous love for science.

Hilda was born on 18 November 1907 (only one day after her uncle) after a long and painful labour. Hedwig had difficulties with breastfeeding and although it was not an easy decision, an ear infection and signs of rickets in the baby, led them to adopt the practice, which was common in those days, of hiring a wet nurse. Hedwig’s father also contributed to solving these problems by lending them his own servant for a while, which was of great assistance to them. Hilda went on to study medicine and became a distinguished analyst and a full member of the London Psychoanalytical Society, as well as compiling and translating her father’s works.

Burghölzli: contact with psychoanalysis

The contrast between the sterile atmosphere of Dalldorf and the innovative work carried out at Burghölzli, where Bleuler, already interested in Freud’s work, brought order to the chaos of psychiatric concepts, fascinated Abraham. He always tried to preserve the image of Bleuler, in who he saw a highly lucid innovator, forgiving the weakness that he observed in him later when faced with pressures. His work on dementia praecox, which he called schizophrenia, identifying its principal symptom as pathological ambivalence, constituted a starting point for Abraham’s work. The field covering dementia praecox is not the same as that covering schizophrenia; the former is a consequence that Kraepelin extracts from the postulates of Koch applied to the problem of “mental illness”. Bleuler, however, grouped together those conditions that manifested disassociation and autism. Freud meanwhile differentiated between them, using the term paraphrenia.

Freud studied psychosis from the point of view of paranoia, while Abraham approached it from the world of schizophrenia, whereby, unlike the former dementia praecox which it partly substituted, the guiding principles were splitting (Spaltung) and “autoeroticism-autism” rather than a process leading to a rapid deterioration (Verbledung). There is a higher therapeutic optimism and it can cover a number of conditions and accommodate dynamic concepts more easily.
In 1907 the Freudian Association of Zurich was founded which was, like Burghölzli, at the forefront of progress. No doubt there was a degree of rivalry with Jung to attract the attention of the master. At that time Jung, who was second to Bleuler, was not yet immersed in the ambivalences that would come later, being open and accommodating to new ideas. An experienced psychiatrist—he began working at Burghölzli as soon as he had completed his medical studies in 1900—he welcomed the young, ambitious and intelligent Karl with open arms and gave a reception in honour of Ida on her arrival to Zurich.

When Freud asked Abraham when he had first become interested in psychoanalysis in Bleuler’s clinic, in his letter of 12 January 1914, in order to complete his history of the psychoanalytic movement, Abraham responded:

When I came to the Burghölzli in December 1904, interest in psychoanalysis already existed. The following years saw a rapid increase in this interest. The following events definitely preceded this:

(I) Jung’s “Occult Phenomena” (1902), in which your *Interpretation of Dreams* is quoted (p. 102). (II) Jung’s attempt at an analysis of the patient B. St., published in the appendix to the Psychology of Dementia Praecox. (III) Several of the studies on association had already been published. (IV) A case of hysteria (Spielrein) had been analysed by Jung. (Abraham, letter 15 January 1904, p. 216)

We should not forget that this was before the “Three essays”, and therefore the “sexual aspect” had still not been brought into the limelight. In March 1907 Abraham published “Beiträge zur Kenntnis der motorischen Apraxie auf Grund eines Falles von eneitiger Apraxie” (“Contribution to the knowledge of motor apraxia based on some cases of sensory apraxia”) in *Zentralblatt*. This work is a contribution to motor apraxia, which I have only been able to find in German.

On 27 April 1907, he read his first article of relevance to the German Association for Psychiatry in Frankfurt, which contained many examples of clinical cases which he had analysed and which reflected the influence of *The Interpretation of Dreams* and the *Three Essays: On the significance of Sexual Trauma in Childhood for the Symptomatology of Dementia Praecox* (Abraham, 1907b, pp. 13–20). In this article he highlights how psychotic patients recall and relate their sexual experiences without resistance, a highly important observation which was rejected for some time.
In 1902, the Wednesday Psychological Society was formed: Freud sent postcards to four relatively unknown people (Adler, Kahane, Reitler and Stekel), to invite them to form a small discussion group on psychoanalysis once a week at his home. In 1908, the group had twenty-two members, although there were not usually more than ten present at the meetings (Brome, 1967, p. 29). This was the dawn of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. At first, the meetings were not very well organised, the members arrived after dinner and sat around a table in the waiting room. Much later, Jung participated in the group, but as a guest of Freud, not as a member. The Vienna Psychoanalytic Society employed a paid secretary: Otto Rank, who had been Freud’s personal secretary since 1906.

Through his close collaboration with Jung in those days, Abraham grew to know the intelligent and skilful man who was also incapable of controlling the ambivalences—which were on the whole unconscious—caused by the clash between his strict Puritanism and ideas proposed by his Jewish colleagues. Years later, Abraham would judge Jung more harshly than Freud who, having only met him briefly and by chance, did not want to renounce this important non-Jewish link which promised a wider extension and recognition of the psychoanalytic movement. Only in 1913 did Freud refer to him as “sanctimonious” and as an “Aryan god”.

During this year Abraham and Freud began their correspondence, although the first letters have not been preserved. As it is well-known, the correspondence between the two men was censored and it is not completely clear which paragraphs were omitted; this is why I believe the fragments rescued by Peter Gay in The Papers of Karl Abraham, are so valuable. It is curious how Freud wrote alternately to Jung and Abraham, and maintained hardly any other correspondence with others. For example, he wrote to Jung on 1 July, then to Abraham on 5 July, on the 10 July to Jung, on the 26 July to Abraham, on the 18 August to Jung. It is obvious that he had a closer relationship with Jung at that time, commenting on personal and political matters with him. On 10 July he asks him: “What is [Abraham] really like? His letter and his work have aroused my sympathies towards him…” And in August: “Abraham has earned my sympathy by addressing the sexual problem directly” (27 July). [Translated for this edition]. The letter of 25 June 1907 to Abraham read as follows:

I already knew about your paper, which I have now read with great interest. The complete analogy in the pre-history of these
neuroses is really very peculiar. I have the impression that there is less difficulty in uncovering these experiences in the case of dementia praecox than there is in hysteria, just as paranoia in general is the more transparent so far as the first part of the correlation is concerned. I eagerly await your communications. If I can offer you something of use through my remarks on your new findings, I shall gladly do so. I particularly like that you have tackled the sexual side of the problem, the side that hardly anybody is willing to approach. Collegially and respectfully yours, Dr Freud. (Letter to Abraham, 25 June 1907)

He did not have to wait very long for a reply, as on 5 July Freud wrote to him once again, referring to the object:

There is one consideration that I must not withhold from you that is certainly valid in the case of hysteria. I do not know whether it also applies to dementia praecox. The hysteric later moves very far away from infantile auto-erotism, he exaggerates his object-cathexis (in this he is the counterpart of the fully demented case, who, in our assumption, reverts to auto-eroticism). He accordingly fantasizes his need of objects back into his childhood and clothes his auto-erotic childhood in phantasies of love and seduction … The question why children do not report sexual traumas has forced itself on our attention here too, and has been answered by us just as it has been by you: children keep silent when they have experienced a pleasure gain … Your remark about the displacement of the sense of guilt is unquestionably absolutely correct … In any case, you have tackled the problem at the right end and, moreover, at the point where most people are unwilling to touch it. Also I am particularly glad that the approach to dementia praecox by way of auto-eroticism seems hopeful to you—and I think that your view, in all its stringency, is valid even for a number of infantile personalities—this should be modified to the extent that the dividing line between consciousness and unconsciousness has not yet been established in early childhood … In spite of these reservations, or rather uncertainties, of mine, I can grant you that whole large parts of your exposition make a fascinating, even convincing impression; I am thinking in particular of what refers to traumas experienced at a somewhat later age … In any case, you have
tackled the problem at the right end and, moreover, at the point where most people are unwilling to touch it. Also I am particularly glad that the approach to dementia praecox by way of autoeroticism seems hopeful to you. (Letter to Abraham, 5 July 1907)

Abraham soon acknowledged the importance of autoeroticism as a key element, an aspect that Bleuler did not fully incorporate. His rapid comprehension of the libidinal problem enabled Freud to explain the contradiction in the normal development of the libido. The economic theory of the first era has and will receive much criticism, including that it was rather mechanistic and impregnated with a physics-like rationalism. However, through this theory we are able to visualise the untameable nature of the unconscious and its unlikelihood to have a definitive and stable relationship with culture. Abraham approached his psychoanalytic research from a libidinal point of view.

A few days later (26 July 1907), he replied to another lost letter:

Your letter ... again bears witness to the advance of knowledge in the matter of dementia praecox and revives the prospect of the realization of long-restrained hopes. I reply to your rich offerings with only two remarks, which I have had in store for a long time, and which coincide so perfectly with what you say that I can let them merge with them.

1) It has struck me that patients, when they finally turn towards dementia and lose the resemblance to hysteria, hand over their (sexually infantile) phantasies without resistance ... as if these had now lost their value ... The context in which I should like to place this behaviour also is that the essence of this turn [to dementia] lies in the withdrawal of the libido from the sexual object.

2) I have always assumed that in ... paranoia, the necessary development from auto-eroticism to object-love has only inadequately been achieved. With a proportion of cases of dementia this factor would supply the looked-for predisposition for the later illness, and that would fit in admirably with the general pathological view that illness always means regression in development.

This is nearly the same as what you report ... (Letter, 26 July 1907).
From the outset, the clinical concern was important because Abraham had a tendency to embark on projects without any delay. His interests vaguely expressed in a negative way during his early years of training in Germany were now given specific scope to be developed productively. Abraham did not need to be asked twice and the third of his letters to Freud that have been preserved clearly shows the seriousness of his research. This is illustrated in a small paragraph which we will expand on later:

In connection with the second point in your letter, I would like to try to substitute another term for that of dementia in cases of chronic mental illness. Apparently, the insufficient development towards object-love is due to an inhibition in the unfolding of the personality. (Abraham, 9 August 1907)

Zurich was not a good environment within which to continue developing his ideas and in a letter on 6 October, impatient (without waiting for a reply to the former letter), he informs Freud of the small crisis that drove him to move to Berlin. The reasons are clear:

As a Jew in Germany and as a foreigner in Switzerland, I have not advanced beyond a junior position in the past seven years. I shall therefore try to set up in practice in Berlin as a specialist for nervous and mental diseases …

To be sure, there is no shortage of neurologists in Berlin, but I am building my hopes on two factors: first, the use of psychoanalysis; and, second, my psychiatric training, which all Berlin doctors lack completely. (Abraham, 6 October 1907)

In the same letter he requested Freud for his support (recommendations, referring patients …), and in return received encouragement and advice.

The die had been cast.
CHAPTER FIVE

Transfer to Berlin (1908–1915)

The decision to leave Switzerland was not easy for Abraham; the Burghölzli offered him the opportunity for scientific enrichment and provided him with stability to form a family. On the other hand, he enjoyed his life in Zurich. He felt comfortable with the people and loved its lakes and mountains where he often went on long hikes. He always wanted to return; in fact, the plans for the summer house which he was going to build in Sils Maria (Engadine), arrived shortly before his death (they had negotiated the purchase of a plot of land close to the village during the holiday that they spent there in 1925, when he was recovering from a second bronchopneumonia and was preparing for his presidency in the Congress of Hamburg).

However, despite the important articles that he published, he was unable to secure a promotion in the Swiss hospitals. He was aware that he should continue to progress forward with his career and resigned from his position at the Burghölzli in November. This break with Switzerland marks the point of his full commitment to psychoanalysis and he was proud to be called a disciple of who he considered his master. (Letter to Freud, 13 October 1907).
These events did not hold back his research. In his condemnation of the incorrect use of the term dementia (to Freud, 18 October, 1907), he compares patients who suffer from dementia praecox, who lose their object libido but are able to control their mental faculties with epileptics and other cases of organic dementia who, conserving their object libido, are truly insane. A lucid distinction between the deterioration of a specific structure (dementia) and what, at the end of the day, is a different structure (psychotic): dementia praecox and schizophrenias. The transformations of the libido gave him an important key for his research. Abraham displayed an obstinate desire to define concepts in the light of his clinical experience.

Freud fully agreed with his opinions, although due to the very few cases that existed, he commented (21 October 1907) that there was not enough clinical material to confirm his theories.

It is important to highlight the clinical vision that Abraham had throughout his analysis of object relations. Considered from this point of view, dementia praecox and dementia are different. His proposal to refrain from using the word dementia, when referring to Kraepelin’s concept when not essential, was not trivial. He attempted to introduce a new concept, which years later, was successfully done by Jung regarding autoeroticism, namely introversion. The term “inhibition” suggested by Abraham could be misleading and therefore Freud was right to reject it, but at the same time it indicates, although clumsily, that this libido does not invest in the object, whereas the cathexis is preserved in other cases where there is deterioration.

In October 1907, he created the Freudian Society in Berlin, the second meeting of which was attended by “no less than twenty doctors”. For the third meeting, Abraham presented the report *The Experiencing of Sexual Traumas as a Form of Sexual Activity in Children* (1907c), supported by clinical material which confirms how, in certain cases, these experiences were desired and unconsciously provoked by the subject. Freud commented:

I have read your excellent paper with satisfaction, and, having already previously acknowledged the justification of your basic idea, I can now praise the clarity with which you describe the differences in the concepts of infantile traumas. (Freud, 26 November 1907)
The first meeting

On Freud’s suggestion, the two men first met on 15 November 1907 when Abraham was leaving Zurich and was about to begin in Berlin. Abraham visited Freud. He felt very welcome and was grateful for the two Egyptian figures that Freud gave him from his collection, “Maybe I shall be able to pay off, step by step, a part of this debt by scientific collaboration”, he wrote (21 December 1907). A few weeks later he left Zurich. Grosskurth (quoted by Hilda Abraham, 1974. p. 34) believes that Abraham and Freud became good friends, although not intimate, from the beginning. We can learn some of the details of this meeting through a letter written on 1 January 1908 from Abraham to Eitingon, one of his principal confidants:

He himself, his wife, sister-in-law and daughter took me all over Vienna, to art galleries, the theatre, cafes, to Heller’s bookshop, to an antique dealer, etc. They were delightful days. They were also fruitful in other ways. I profited greatly from the daily discussions, often continued until late at night. Most of all I have been enriched by the personal acquaintance with a man of his stature. We talked about his various interests. I have come to know every object in his collection of antiquities, to which he added several precious pieces during my visit … .

Freud has come to divide his followers into three grades: those in the lowest have understood no more than The Psychopathology of Everyday Life; those in the second the theories on dreams and neuroses; and those in the third follow him into the theory of sexuality and accept his extension of the libido concept …

There is no need for me to describe Freud’s personality to you. I now admire him even more than before. Unfortunately, he seems to be worried by his old age complex. He is very pleased with any collaboration; the formerly suppressed wish for recognition is now clearly apparent. I am all the more pleased that we shall probably soon have a journal (you may have heard of Jung’s preparatory work) and even a congress of our own in Salzburg at Easter. If the practice makes it financially possible I shall go there and my wife would accompany me. Would you come too?

I am not too enthusiastic about the Viennese followers. I attended the Wednesday Meeting. He is too far in advance of the others.
Sadger is like a Talmudic scholar; he interprets and observes every rule of the master with orthodox Jewish strictness. The best impression among the medical members was made by Dr Federn. Stekel is superficial, Adler one-sided, Wittels too verbose, the others insignificant. Young Rank seems very intelligent as also Dr Graf, editor of the Freie Presse. (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 34)

Jones agreed, and Freud wrote to Abraham on 14 March 1911: “Nothing is going to come out of all my Viennese, with the exception of little Rank”. The text of this letter (to Eitingon, 1 January) is valuable in terms of what it illustrates; Freud is anxious to make contacts and talks at length to his avid disciples. The homemade classification with which Freud summarises the different levels of understanding psychoanalysis was engraved on Abraham’s memory. The first level constitutes The Psychopathology of Everyday Life, which almost likens psychoanalytical science to ingenious armchair entertainment. This level of understanding comprises anecdotes, innocent slip-ups and everything that the preconscious wishes to reveal without too much effort. The Interpretation of Dreams constitutes the second level. Accepting the dream as the royal road to the unconscious requires a more radical stance, although the study of this phenomenon was by no means new. The description of the unconscious was more difficult to understand, but this and the concept of dreams was relatively acceptable by not excessively rigid minds. The third level, on the other hand, encompasses the results of overcoming the Freudian crisis which made him exclaim to Fliess: “I no longer believe in my neurotica”. It includes the acceptance of childhood sexuality, the child as an act, and also an actor of fantasies, as a perverse polymorph, intense representations which are object of the original repression and the discovery of the (quite appropriately) deepest layers of the unconscious.

It is not by chance that Abraham committed to memory this triple difference that Freud established between his believers and supporters. This was the key differentiating element with Bleuler, who with his autism, was limited to providing a description, whereas Freud established a process-based structure, autoeroticism, which would displace his restless forces in post object-love phases.

The Wednesday meeting to which he refers was the thirty-fourth and took place in Berggasse 19, on 18 December, attended by: Freud, Adler, Graf, Federn, Hitschmann, Hollerung, Sadger, Schwerdner, Steiner, Stekel, Wittels, Reitler, Rank, and Abraham as a guest.
Abraham painted an accurate and true image of the figures at that meeting: Federn, the solid psychoanalyst whose field of preference was psychosis, most attracted his attention. The “superficial” Stekel was a doctor who was always led by his intuition and perhaps even some fabrications when presenting his clinical cases. His research in the field of dreams starkly contrasted with that of Freud due to its chaotic style; this did not prevent Freud from acknowledging that Stekel had a good nose for detecting the unconscious. “The one-sided Adler”, was a collaborator of Freud who never regarded himself as a disciple. He proposed and analysed the aggressive drive, but was incapable of doing the same with the sexual drive. The verbose Wittels was Freud’s first biographer. Freud did not like these works about his person and repeatedly revealed his displeasure at the results of the efforts made. The others were insignificant, except for the intelligent Rank, one of the future dissidents of psychoanalysis, then restless and perhaps perplexed, and Max Graf, the sensitive Max, father of Hans, the musicologist with an interest in psychoanalysis, the co-author with his wife of a family analysis, which was very common in that day.

Abraham was, without a doubt, wiser than the master when formulating a first assessment of his colleagues. Freud found it difficult to see past the wall of denial before his eyes.

If, in this first meeting, Freud expressed the three levels of psychoanalytic intelligence of the future practitioners of this science, now it would be fitting to add a fourth, in which Abraham would be equally lucid. I am referring to his understanding of the intricacies of trauma.

Once again we must go back to Fliess’ era: after the first euphoria with the trauma theory in its primitive form, *Studies on Hysteria* and, as indicated by Masson (1984, p. 51), his experience in Paris. There he observed the forensic activities of Brouardel, becoming aware of the importance of sexual abuse. The theory of fantasy, as it was known, was the prelude to what we know today as the discovery of child sexuality, and according to Fliess’ letters, was a momentarily disturbing finding but which shortly afterwards represented a consolidated advance in what could be called psychoanalytic space. Until then, in one-way or another, the medical model prevailed: the external element, in this case trauma, and the organism’s adaptive reaction, in this case the psyche, to the event. The theory lost its linear nature when sexual drive was incorporated. Since then, there is no root cause and neither is the reaction the final occurrence. From this moment psychoanalysis adopted its true complexity.
In its infancy, trauma theory was concerned with prevention and education; this was precisely the first trend in North American psychoanalysis at the hands of Putnam, Hall, and their earliest supporters, after the conferences at Clark University. “Predisposition to trauma” is very different to simple and linear educational information. What could be the key element that breaks the smooth rationalist causation that seemed to prevail? Abraham would repeat this throughout his works: the tenderness of the mother, the first object: the object again. Interaction with the object initiates the reciprocal game of fantasies.

The psychoanalyst: the Committee

On 21 December 1907 Abraham moved to Berlin, the city of the “Freudian meetings with Fliess”. He became the first German doctor to have a private psychoanalytic practice. From this moment he committed himself more intensely to the study and teaching of this science. For Le Rider “Abraham’s moving to Berlin marked the beginning of a new era for psychoanalysis in Germany” (Le Rider, 1982, p. 120) [Translated for this edition]. In Freudian style, he began a frenetic activity within an environment described by his master as hostile and held meetings in his home. He tried to introduce psychoanalysis in the university—at that time, the Dean at Berlin was Karl Bonhoeffer—but he was unsuccessful, despite receiving no flat rejection. If Freud was obstinate in claiming that psychoanalysis had not become the “servant of psychiatry”, it is also true that the university was equally firm in its reticence to acknowledge this.

Now it was Hedwig’s turn to feel at home. She was reunited with her family environment and circle of friends when they moved to the vibrant Berlin. For three years, they lived in an apartment on Schoeneburger Ufer, on the border of a tree-lined canal that possibly evoked a landscape from Karl’s past on the banks of the Weser in Bremen. Although this new chapter was difficult for Abraham who had to support his family and prove that he could work independently, things set off to a good start: the first patient arrived even before moving to Berlin and, although it is true that neither he nor the subsequent patients were seeking analysis, at least they contributed to overcoming the uncertain beginnings. This first patient was a neurological case; although he rarely used it, Abraham kept the “electrical machine” in his consulting room until the First World War. It formed part of every nerve specialist’s
equipment at that time. On 29 January, he wrote of the good progress in building his clientele: “Better than that of most beginners. I often attend Oppenheim’s polyclinic. Unfortunately there is no understanding of the psychological there.” (Letter to Freud, 29 January 1908).

Like all Jews before the First World War, Oppenheim, an exceptional neurologist, could not access the university, and limited his activity to practising in a private polyclinic. Abraham was aware of how much he could learn from him in terms of nervous disorders, but he used an approach that was more in tune with his concerns and interests at that time.

We can learn about his initial explorations into obsessive neurosis from a long letter that he wrote to Freud on 8 January 1908. It is based on the material of two clinical cases, one of which was particularly recalcitrant and after all other methods had failed as a last resort he was referred by Oppenheim to try psychoanalysis. In the same letter he questioned some of the aspects of Irma’s dream and offered his own dreams and those of his wife as “dreams of healthy people” so that the master would not be obliged to recur to self-analysis in the new edition of *The Interpretation*:

> I should like to know whether the interpretation of the paradigm dream in *The Interpretation of Dreams* is incomplete on purpose (“Irma’s injection”). I think that trimethylamin leads to the most important part, to sexual allusions that become more and more distinct in the last lines. Surely everything does point to the suspicion of syphilitic infection in the patient? (Abraham, 8 January 1908)

In response to his avalanche of questions Freud swiftly replies:

> I gladly accept your offer of your own dreams. Your optimistic view of the situation cheers me greatly. We must still expect to have hard work before us. My opinion of your wife is based on a so-called instinctive knowledge of mankind. (Letter to Abraham, 9 January 1908)

Hedwig was offered an exceptional opportunity to collaborate with her husband in a new project in which her knowledge of philology was to be very useful (letter to Freud, 23 February 1908): “I want to deal with the symbolism of language and of the myth, and especially with the numerous analogies between dreams and myths.”
The same can be seen in the letter to Eitingon in March in the full throes of the first psychoanalytic Congress …

Freud agrees with the subject of Dreams and Myths and is glad to accept it for his series. Riklin will soon appear in print, then Jung, The Content of Psychoses, then Rank, The Birth of Heroes, i.e. the myths of the births of Moses, Cyrus, etc. My opus will therefore be volume 5 … Then I must prepare for Salzburg … Jones will soon come here from London (he will also speak in Salzburg). I am now building my hopes on him. The practice continues quietly and is satisfying as a beginning, also as far as therapeutic successes go …

(quoted in the biography by H. Abraham, 1974, p. 37)

Abraham diversified his interests in an explosive way: he was attracted to the intricacies of obsessive neurosis, myths and dreams and, of course, psychosis. The clinic was generating good results, probably due to his solid psychiatric training, which he knew how to combine with his psychoanalytic ambitions.

The couple adapted quickly to Berlin, and Hedwig also intellectually and affectionately supported “the cause”—with an uncharacteristic fighting spirit—which is revealed in a letter written by her husband to Freud on the day that he finished Dreams and Myths (4 April):

There was a lively discussion about Freud the other day at a party at Professor Liepmann’s. Only doctors and their wives were present. In the course of the battle it so happened that two groups formed in two different rooms. While I defended the wish-fulfilment theory of dementia praecox in one room, my wife had to defend the theory of repression in the other. Otherwise there is little opportunity for propaganda. I am planning before very long to arrange a course for physicians in order to discuss the theory of neuroses and the dream. What do you think about this? (Letter to Freud, 4 April 1908)

Martha Freud made a brief visit to the Abrahams. In a letter written on 29 May 1908 Freud expressed his gratitude: “My wife has told me a great deal about the cordial welcome she received at your house”, not surprised by their hospitality which he had previously diagnosed.
In June 1908, Albert Moll, a criminologist from Berlin who specialised in nervous disorders, invited Abraham to collaborate with a new journal; he accepted. Maybe it was through this project that a considerable amount of judicial appraisals came his way. Later, in February 1909, a Russian journal invited him to send a brief article on psychoanalysis. At that time most of his time was spent on long-term treatments (to Freud on the 16 February 1909).

The exchange of photographs was a new and gratifying custom between our pioneers. Freud usually sent them as a token of welcome and affection. Eitingon passed one of Freud onto Abraham which “most faithfully mirrors your appearance seven weeks ago. It now stands on my working desk in a frame that accentuates it very well and surveys the coming into being of the *Dream States* with a critical eye” (24 November 1909). This custom did not wane with the years and on 2 January 1914 the North American psychologist, Stanley Hall, president of Clark University, asked him for a photograph “to adorn our Seminary walls” (Worcester. Papers of Karl Abraham quoted by Gay, 1988, p. 181) Abraham sent a copy of the photograph to Freud who framed it and put it in Jung’s place: “It does not quite do you justice, but I thank you very much for it. Deuticke has developed a very healthy respect for your work as editor.” (From Freud, on 16 March, 1914).

Through Le Rider we know that in 1909 Eitingon, “another defector of Burghölzli” (Le Rider, 1982, p. 125), met with Abraham in Berlin. He would become one of his most faithful and efficient collaborators. Karl always displayed a clinical and didactic orientation. In 1910, several colleagues requested a new course. He was excited about this and informed Freud of how he had worded the notification.

Fleiss contacted Abraham regarding a mild case of circular psychosis. At first, Abraham was a little wary due to the incident that had occurred between Fleiss and Freud. However, he had sufficient independence of judgement so as to remain faithful to Freud while maintaining occasional contact with Fliess after the war (from 1919) until his last months of life.

I find myself in a dilemma … I would not like to be discourteous; on the other, I find it unpleasant to have to force myself to adopt as much reserve as is necessary in this case. (To Freud, 11 February 1911)
Freud replied with irony:

I cannot see why you should not call on him ... you will meet a highly remarkable, indeed fascinating man ... you will perhaps have an opportunity of coming scientifically closer to the grain of truth that is surely contained in the theory of periodicity ... he will certainly try to sidetrack you from psychoanalysis ... but I am sure you will not betray both of us to him. (Freud, 13 February 1911)

Abraham, “Freud’s loyal follower, a sober observer” (Gay, 1988, p. 56), found in Fliess a friendly person who abstained from any attack on Vienna. “I did not get the fascinating impression that you predicted ... penetrating and original thinker. I have heard many interesting things from him and am very glad to have made his acquaintance.” (Gay, 1988, p. 56).

Abraham enjoyed the company of this paternal and intelligent figure; Fliess is described as a man of extensive scientific erudition, vast ambition, and an impressive cultured nature. He was the confidant that Freud needed: “you are the only Other, the alter”, he idealised him beyond measure. Karl tried to ease the tension created between the former friends; he admired the clinical and diagnostic capacity of Fliess from whom he received the most carefully chosen patients to continue analytical treatment. However, in this case, his conciliatory efforts were unsuccessful.

In February, he wrote to Freud that his practice had “been intense for some time”, and in a later letter (9 March 1911), he was more explicit: he was doing eight analytical hours each day, which in May 1912 would become “no less than ten”. But he perceived all this activity as an ambiguous blessing; it gave him, he observed regretfully in characteristic Freudians accents, “little time for science” (Abraham’s papers, quoted by Gay, 1988, p. 181). Before the Weimar congress, the Berlin Society received the visit of Lou Andreas-Salomé.

Freud’s support of this group which was a solid spearhead of the cause was constant; in his Christmas greeting to Abraham we can read:

Shared interests and personal liking have tied us so intimately together that we have no need to doubt the genuineness of our good wishes for each other. I know how difficult is the position you have in Berlin and always admire you for your unruffled spirits and tenacious confidence. (Freud, 2 January 1912)
The rhythm of work continued into the New Year, no less than ten hours a day which at last enabled him to become independent from Oppenheim to whom he always remained grateful. Freud, advised him to raise his fees, and did so on subsequent occasions. Abraham acted on his advice, but always reluctantly. His feverish activity is a faithful reflection of the increased interest in psychoanalysis in Berlin. He also expressed (to Freud, 25 February 1912) his need for a collaborator, although he did not know where to find one; on the other hand, “I am also very pleased with the material of patients: almost all of them intelligent people with very individual forms of neurosis, so that the work is never monotonous.”

A few lines later, he commented on how impressed he had been with the meeting with Lou Andreas-Salomé, who he met at the Weimar Congress. He also praised “Dr Horney” and her talk on sexual instruction in early childhood given at one of the Berlin group’s meetings: “showed, for once, a real comprehension of the subject; unfortunately something rather infrequent in the talks in our circle” (Letter to Freud, 25 February 1912).

At that time, Freud (3 July 1912) encouraged him to find time to rest. Abraham took his advice and he spent that summer in the Hotel Stooss in Switzerland on the banks of Lake Lucerne, although it rained for almost the whole of his stay and Karl came down with bronchitis. A colleague from Hamburg travelled to where he was staying in order to continue his sessions, which was customary practice during the summer months.

With respect to his children, the two-year-old Grant began to compete with his sister for their father’s attention.

In July 1912 he had ten patients in psychoanalysis and his practice had become more lucrative. During the first six months of the year he earned 11,000 Marks, a very respectable amount, and he planned to raise his fees. “You see, even in Berlin it is no longer a martyrdom to be your follower” (24 July 1912). More details about his activity as an analyst can be drawn from Leopold-Löwental (Revue International d’Histoire de la Psychanalyse, 1990, 3, pp. 57–69) who, when researching Theodor Reik’s process of profane analysis, commented on how Abraham analysed Reik free of charge in 1914 and 1915.

For the first time, although, “the anti-Semitism of the Faculty does, naturally, remain an obstacle”, he wrote to Freud on 1st December 1912 requesting him to send a recommendation about him to support his
application as a guest lecturer at the university, in order to “awaken interest in our cause among the students”. He hoped that the retirement of Ziehen, who was succeeded by Bonhoeffer, would be positive for him and that Kraus, who was the Chair of medicine, would act in his favour. At the end of the month, after a favourable interview, Kraus advised him to present his thesis on Habilitation (he chose a research topic on associations in senile dementia; a topic that was not compromising). Bonhoeffer had the last word, and the political issues prevented Abraham’s objective from being achieved; in fact before 1945, psychoanalysis could not be taught in German universities.

Tension with Jung raised the alarm over possible future disagreements, and the idea of preserving the purity of psychoanalytic theory was born. Freud liked Jones’ suggestion of creating a secret committee which was consolidated in June 1912. The master maintained regular and personal correspondence with all its members, keeping them up to date with the progress made in their papers which they interchanged before publishing them.

A year later, Freud sent an antique Greek intaglio set in a ring to the five members; Ferenczi (whose creativity and hypochondria were remarkable), Jones, Rank (the youngest member, born in 1885) and Sachs, who together gave an international dimension to psychoanalysis. The president of the Committee of the seven rings was Jones, elected in the first assembly on 15 May 1913 and was joined by Eitingon who replaced Anton von Freund who was seriously ill and died shortly afterwards.

The Committee operated through these diverse personalities, expanding psychoanalytic theory—their strong uniting bond—for around ten years.

The first internal tension arose through disagreements between Rank and Jones (from Austria and England respectively). Later, the collaboration between Ferenczi and Rank (The Development of Psychoanalysis), labelled as being “not very honest” by Freud, would give rise to more friction. Rank’s theory on birth trauma was unanimously rejected by the members of the Committee, but it was Freud who tried to maintain the peace by sending a memo (15 February 1924). Rank definitively broke his ties with the Committee in 1926. For a while, it seemed that the unity between the remaining members became stronger after the death of Abraham (1925) and the exile of Sachs (1932) and Eitingon (1934), before dissolving in 1934.
Grant Allan, Abraham’s youngest son, inspired him in his precise observation on the aetiology of exhibitionism which Freud fully supported. Abraham commented (to Freud, 7 January 1914): “exhibitionism is certainly originally directed towards the mother. An attempt to compete with the father.”

Abraham considered the inaugural address of the Leyden psychiatrist, Jelgersma, on the unconscious (in the letter to Freud on 11 February 1914) to be highly important as it represented the acceptance of all aspects of dream theory and neurosis by the most distinguished psychiatrist in Holland. This is how Freud understood it when in his reply (15th February), he exclaimed: “So here is an official psychiatrist who swallows psychoanalysis hook, line, and sinker! The things one experiences!”

After reading the manuscript of On Narcissism: An Introduction, Abraham was particularly impressed by the perfectly achieved analysis of delirium of the subject, conducted by Freud. He also considered his reflections on the ego-ideal …

These expositions had been in my mind for a long time already, and with every sentence I read I was able to guess what was coming next. In particular, the distinction between ego ideal and true sublimation is something that I have always explained to my patients, but without putting it in so precise a form. Might I add a suggestion here? I think this is where the contrast between Jung’s therapy and psychoanalysis can be most pointedly stressed. (Abraham, 2 April 1914)

In 1914 Freud announced to Abraham (7 May): “You are now our President … I know what to expect of your energy, correctness, and devotion to duty.” Furthermore, he proposed that he prepare a news bulletin of the affiliates of the International Psychoanalytical Association (Korrespondenzblatt), which he suggested was included in the fourth issue of Zeitschrift. In the same letter he complained about the waning subscription list of both journals and ended with “I hope your children have now fully recovered, and that you and your wife are as well, as is appropriate to your youth and harmony.”

When Freud flatly refused to accept the position, Abraham had proposed Jones for the post; then he insisted that the master should at least accept a permanent honorary president title, but this suggestion was never accepted by Freud.
We know that at this time Abraham was preparing a paper for *Imago* (a journal for applying psychoanalysis to Human Sciences) on greetings formulas, but it seems that it was never published. This was not the case neither the *Examination of the Earliest Pregenital Phase of the Libido*, an essay on the relationships between the nutritional and sexual instincts, nor the conference that he gave on 3 July 1914d: *Some Peculiarities in Choosing a Spouse: Incest, Marriage Among Relatives and Exogamy* (Edited in the *Gesellschaft für Sexual Wissenschaft*). He mentioned to Freud how he had met with more understanding and appreciation than he had anticipated. Maybe this encouraged him to think about the possibility of presenting something on castration to the upcoming Congress and was wondering about the appropriateness of the subject that he was researching: ejaulatio praecox back to the earliest roots in the first two years of life. In the same letter he explained how …

I should have to go into castration anxiety in some detail, and what you told me at Christmas on the journey to Berlin, has not yet been published! The most pleasant solution would be, naturally, if you yourself would speak about these matters in Dresden, and if I could then demonstrate their application, so to speak, to a specific problem. This derivation from castration anxiety is, incidentally, only one of the results obtained. (Abraham, 5 July 1914)

Freud replied generously on 10 July:

Deal with the castration question just in so far as it has been useful to you. For me the time for publication has not yet come. The question has grown more complicated and magnified, and thus the solution has receded, so that I must also ask you for restraint in the interest of prudence. (Freud, 10 July 1914)

*Foundation of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society*

In August 1908 Abraham founded the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society with five members: Juliusburger, Hirschfeld, Iwan Bloch, Heinrich Körber and himself.

Hirschfeld (1868–1935) was a passionate and not impartial advocate of the rights of homosexuals and did not arouse much sympathy; Freud however appreciated him and encouraged him to liberate the prejudices against him. He was a member of the Society until 1911.
Abraham had transplanted the model of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society to Berlin, arranging regular meetings for discussion and reading papers; these meetings were held in his apartment and became the nucleus of Berlin’s wing of the International Psychoanalytical Association founded at the Nuremberg Congress (1910).

In his talk on neurosis and marriage between close relatives to the Berlin Society for Psychiatry and Nervous Illnesses, Abraham proved to be a good strategist, avoiding excessively provocative issues. The event, which was branded as a success, is recounted in detail in a letter to Freud on 10 November 1908:

I chose a few remarks of Oppenheim’s as a starting point and stressed the correspondence between his and your views concerning certain observations on neurotic children. I avoided mentioning several important … because these would have aroused unnecessary opposition, but stood very firm on all my references to sexual theory …

The audience remained attentive to the end, and, in spite of the late hour, a discussion followed. First Oppenheim: very appreciative in several respects. He would be quite convinced on some new points. It was only against the Freudian view of infantile sexuality that he could not but take a “most brusque and resolute stand”. Then, Ziehen rode his academic high horse … Then two speakers … made factual contributions. And now the star turn: a very pushy colleague, Braatz … assumed a moralizing tone that would have been more suited to a public platform … the German ideals would be at stake … I avoided all acrimony in my final summing up in order not to damage our cause. I only hit out at Ziehen, because he had been so very rude. I stood in lonely opposition to the well-attended gathering. Juliusburger, who would certainly have seconded me, was prevented from coming at the last moment. After the meeting, quite a number of colleagues told me that they had enjoyed hearing something new … I have the impression that quite a few of them went home at least half convinced. At any rate, the ground has been prepared, and perhaps … winter with heavier artillery. (Abraham, 10 November 1908)

From the same letter we know how pleased he was with his psychoanalytic meetings that were held every two to three weeks. Freud expressed his satisfaction with what had happened and answered on 12 November
with praise for him. He criticised his adversaries with bitter comments: “Someday, Z. [iehen] will pay dearly for the nonsense”; he also praised the technique that he had used, “treating those people like patients in psychoanalysis, ignoring their no with superior calmness, continuing to develop one’s view … no one can accuse you, of all persons, of making concessions.” (Freud, 12 November 1908).

Oppenheim had published an article in which he affirmed that the fast spreading psychoanalytic theories should be fought urgently. The family environment of this famous neurologist described by Brome (1967, p. 117), can explain his position; his wife suffered from hysterical seizures and he could not accept that her illness had sexual causes; furthermore, Freud’s friends knew the family well. We should also remember that Switzerland was one of the most puritan countries in the world.

Moll, a respected Berlin sexologist, published a book on the sexual life of children that contradicted everything that Freud had been saying on the subject for almost a decade. Freud dismissed him as being inconsequential. He told Abraham on 23 May 1909: “he is not a physician but a shyster” [Quoted by Gay, 1988, p. 195—from the Papers of Abraham L. C. to which he had access]. Abraham did not see eye to eye with Oppenheim either, which paralysed his study of traumatic neurosis. He commented: “I simply cannot involve patients in O.’s polyclinic in discussions of their sexual life just now. So I will probably have a go at Segantini first.” (To Freud, 5 March 1909). This news was well-received by Freud who felt that he was ridding himself of competitors: “I am highly delighted at your good news, not least at your independence of O., who is a hopeless proposition in any case.” (Freud, 23 May 1909).

In April 1910 he participated in establishing the first Psychoanalytic Society in Vienna and a few months later he created the Society and the Psychoanalytic Institute; he was president of them both until his death. One year later, he expressed his pride in his small Society in an unpublished letter of 11 January 1911: “In February Stegmann, who regularly comes over from Dresden, will speak on Asthma … My ambition as chairman of our Society is to extend it to Scandinavia very soon.” (Quoted by H. Abraham, 1974, p. 46).

The Master was delighted (letter of 3 July 1910): “Many thanks for the good news from your circle, which is small but perhaps particularly distinguished by reason of its homogeneity and unity.” He was
not wrong and in 1911 Abraham organised four-week beginners and advanced courses in his Institute starting with his field.

Although opposition did not take long to appear … “I have started four new treatments in rapid succession … Official resistance in Berlin is stronger than ever” (to Freud, 28 April 1910). In the spring he received the printing proofs of Freud’s *Leonardo*; after reading it carefully he offered his opinion: “The analysis is so delicate and so perfect in form that I do not know anything quite like it.” (Letter to Freud, 6 June 1910).

Any time was a good time for disseminating psychoanalysis and meeting with his Berlin group. He took a short holiday (1911) with his family in Schandau, close to Dresden in order to establish contact with the members of the region. This break enabled him to recover a little from the fatigue accumulated over the previous year when they did not leave Berlin. Freud used to go on short trips with Alexander, Minna, or Ferenczi, or travelled with Fleiss to his famous congresses … maybe this is why he understood Abraham’s need for a break (although Karl’s trips were usually made with his family).

Jones offered him his brotherly support after the “careful and attentive” reading of the “charming study of Segantini” in a letter in 1911: “You must be having a hard fight of it in Berlin …” (18 June 1911. *Papers of Karl Abraham, LC*, quoted by Gay, 1988, p. 180). On another occasion (letter of 29 October 1911; censored part recovered by Gay, p. 182). Abraham corroborated this feeling: he considered Berlin to be a sterile soil for a psychoanalyst interested in theory; to which Gay adds: “No matter, his relative intellectual solitude gave Abraham all the more incentive to do his own work” (Gay, 1988, p. 182).

In May 1914, the Berlin Group debated the oedipal phenomena in childhood, as requested by the professor, in order to complete the collective research project that he was carrying out in Vienna. The communication between the two groups was very fluent. In 1933, when Hitler came to power, many prominent members of the Society and the Psychoanalytic Institute had to leave the country. In 1936, the Institute was converted into a special independent section of the new German Institute for Psychological Research and Psychotherapy, and in this form it continued to develop its scientific and teaching activities. (Hendrick, 1939, p. 287)

It was not until 1924 that The Psychoanalytic Institute of London was founded, promoted by Strachey, Glover, and Joan Rivière.

Now we will contemplate in more detail one of the more thorny parts of Abraham’s biography.
The conflict with Jung: disagreements

First, let us examine why they disagreed in terms of theory:

Jung thought that a toxin generated dementia praecox disorders. Abraham did not think in the same way; he would have liked to remain in contact with the team at Burghölzli because of the good memories that he had, but …

Jung’s behaviour to me is, after all a symptom … Jung seems to be reverting to his former spiritualistic inclinations. But please let us keep this between ourselves! However, if Jung gives up for this reason and for the sake of his career, then it is simply over at the Burhölzli. (Letter to Freud, 16 July 1908)

Freud became alarmed at this divergence and feared for Aryan psychoanalysis. On this occasion Abraham took heed of Freud’s warning, although the master did not back down:

I nurse a suspicion that the suppressed anti-Semitism of the Swiss that spares me is defected in reinforced form upon you. But I think that we as Jews, if we wish to join in anywhere, must develop a bit of masochism. (Letter to Abraham, 23 July 1908)

The connection between Freud and Jung was based on affective and political aspects while Freud’s relationship with Abraham was clearly based on psychoanalytic theory. On 18 December Freud informed him that he had finished his work on Schreber, commenting:

As you can imagine, I followed the path indicated by your paper on the psychosexual differences between hysteria and dementia praecox … In Vienna I found that you had already said the same thing very trenchantly. I have of course had to plagiarize you very extensively in this paper. (Freud, 18 December 1908)

In this paper, Abraham, in his customary clear and precise manner, uses abundant clinical material together with an in-depth study of the Three Essays, in which he found a fundamental basis on which to develop his ideas regarding the libido.

As previously mentioned, when it came to the psychoanalytic movement, Freud proved not to be very knowledgeable about people.
Undeniably, his analytical activities and the growing movement took all of his energy up. Therefore, he sacrificed men and even feelings. First, it was Breuer, later Fliess, then Adler, Stekel, and Jung, followed by Rank and many more less prominent figures who initially enjoyed his enthusiasm but later became the object of his rancour or contempt. In these cases, one of his defensive mechanisms was denial that prevented him from seeing the limitations of his colleagues or, subsequently, their qualities. There are a few rare cases such as Binswanger and Pfister where the discrepancies did not prevent him from maintaining a stable and long-lasting relationship. Abraham also showed that he was independent and was capable of having a relationship with Fliess, who said that he was still interested in psychoanalysis. Fleiss referred several patients to Karl who always treated him with consideration.

The case of Jung clearly illustrates the contrast in how Abraham and Freud operated. Much has been written about Freud with respect to this issue. Jung represented the hope for planting and spreading the seeds of psychoanalysis across the Gentile territory and to the new Land of Canaan, preventing psychoanalysis from becoming solely a Jewish concern. The developments that took place after the death of Freud and Jung show that the initial jubilant coincidences were only illusions. Independently of Jung’s personal attitude with respect to Nazism, there is no doubt that the developments of analytical psychology provided a breeding ground for the pseudo-scientific and pseudo-intellectual hotchpotch that amalgamated the Third Reich. In fact, many of the psychoanalysts who assembled at the Göring Institute during the Second World War were supporters of Jung’s theories, with the exception maybe of Schulz-Hencke and Ritteler. The free association of Freud has very little in common with Jungian associations.

For Jung, sexuality, in the precise sense that psychoanalysis gives to the term, was a concept that he grudgingly and only temporarily conceded to; the implicit philosophies of the two men were essentially different. Abraham mistrusted what he called the mystical tendencies of Jung although he finally gave in to the entire Zurich group and became open and tolerant: “My brief reference to Zurich in my last letter was not meant to refer to my personal disagreement with Jung, but to the whole present attitude adopted in Zurich.” (Abraham, 16 July 1908).

Despite everything, Freud attempted to repair what he could during his trip to Zurich. When he returned he told Abraham that the relations between Bleuler and Jung had reached a critical point; he believed that
he could expect nothing from the former but to have reconciled with the Swiss.

In one of the many confrontations, Karl responded nobly, without betraying or harming the cause: “That I did not mention Bl. and J. obviously means: ‘Since they turn aside from the theory of sexuality, I really will not cite them in connection with it’.” (Abraham, Letter, 11 May 1908) Freud acknowledged that Jung’s “respect for your scientific work” assisted him in his reconciliation task (Freud to Abraham, 29 September 1908).

Tensions were running high in the Vienna Society: “Adler and Stekel have resigned, and I shall probably have to take over the presidency.” (Freud to Abraham, 23 February 1911) Freud began to direct the group again in March and wrote of Adler’s behaviour: “Adler’s behaviour was no longer reconcilable with our psychoanalytic interests, he denies the role of the libido, and traces everything back to aggression.” (To Abraham, 3 March 1911) He also distanced himself from Stekel. Abraham was not sorry, as we can see in his reply:

I do not think, however, that I do him an injustice if I find the aggressive drive very one-sided. The giving up of the libido, the neglect of all we have learned about erotogenic zones, autoerotism, etc., appears to me as a retrograde step. The pleasure principle is lost entirely … he relapses into surface psychology … The fundamental fact of over determination is completely neglected … In spite of all these objections, one always finds something valuable, so that one tends to regret that it is all in such a sketchy, fragmentary, and insufficiently explained form. (Abraham, 9 March 1911)

Freud responded, expressing his agreement and put the confusion hidden behind his abstractions down to paranoid features. The master was first tolerant and then resolute; Abraham patiently collected data in order to conduct the most objective analysis as possible and adopt a clear stance. This attitude was valued by Freud, on 5 June 1914 he wrote: “I thought it’s very noble of you not to have attacked the Zurich slovenliness more specifically in your Korrespondenzblatt, and defended you for this against Rank. But at the Congress you need not mince your words.” (Freud, 1914).

The manifest cause of the discrepancy was, as we can observe, the different scope given to the role of sexuality in psychoanalytic theory,
but there were also other issues at that time that added to this rift: the expansion of psychoanalysis and the problems derived from the Jewish origin of its founder. *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* was a paper that already highlighted the rupture, but Freud had not yet become aware of the situation.

In March 1912 another incident arose which was extensively addressed in the correspondence: Binswanger’s operation. Freud visited his young colleague in Kreuzlingen in May and several misunderstandings between Freud and Jung arose, which were possibly due to a tense atmosphere. Jung complained that the letter informing him of Freud’s visit to Binswanger had arrived late. Freud insisted that he had given them both plenty of notice. That tiny incident exacerbated the relationship. There was an exchange of correspondence between Freud, Jung, Pfister, Jones, and Abraham addressing this matter, which was excessive on all fronts, although it illustrates the unpleasant situation. The theoretical divergences came to a head. In the afore-mentioned paper, Jung treated the libido as a general psychic energy from which the specific nature of sexuality and child sexuality were almost completely eliminated. While Freud had creatively accepted the imposition of psychoses, which was immediately visible in the *Schreber Case* and later in *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, he was not prepared to give in on the sexual issue.

**The growing family: Hilda—a brief analysis**

In a letter to Freud, Abraham complained about the flu that he had caught during the Christmas trip to see the family; in this way he justified his delay in writing. In his usual optimistic tone he also mentioned how he would soon be able to live from his private activity, with the assistance of Doctor Hirschfeld, a person “who altogether takes the kindest interest in me.” (To Freud, 12 and 13 January 1909).

In Freud’s reply, we can detect an element of jealousy when he defined Hirschfeld as “certainly an agreeable colleague because of his well-sublimated homosexuality”. (17 January 1909; he wrote to Jung, Binswanger, and Ferenczi on the same day). This homosexuality was publicly acknowledged. Freud later addressed (2 February 1909) clinical matters: “With the key of anal erotism, which is constitutionally reinforced in all homosexuals, you will be able to unlock the closed doors easily.” Twelve days later Abraham confirmed that this advice
was correct: “I was able with the help of anal erotism to explain my patient’s fear of eating and several of his other symptoms”.

In early October Freud paid a visit to Abraham while visiting his older brother who lived in Berlin: “very jealous and incredibly juvenile, from whom I will conceal my presence for half a day in order to converse with you and visit your loving home.” (Freud, 23 May 1909) Abraham and his wife were grateful for the hours that he spent with them, although: “My wife and I were very sorry that in the circumstances we could offer you so little hospitality.” (10 November 1909).

Hedwig was pregnant again, this time surrounded by her own family and friends and with greater financial stability; the arrival of the baby was awaited with as much excitement as the first and the labour was much more straightforward. Grant Allan was born on 25 August 1910 in Berlin. This time there were no problems with breastfeeding and Karl enjoyed a peaceful environment in which to work on his *Segantini*. Freud immediately sent his congratulations “on the completion of your fatherhood”. We know very little about the path that Grant followed as an adult: after emigrating to London he was obliged to change his profession: later he enlisted in the British army and distinguished himself in the war in India after which he settled in London.

After the birth of Grant Allan, but before leaving the clinic, Karl organised the family’s move to a more spacious home on 24 Rankestrasse; finally, on 18 October 1910 he commented: “We are established in the new apartment, and I can think again about things other than worries about how to furnish it … *Segantini* will therefore be late …”. The new accommodation had a clear separation between the consulting room, which was accessed from the street and the bedrooms, and the nursery. It was located close to the zoo, which had a large park often visited by the children with their nanny or their mother and grandfather … Hilda describes another two major attractions: the fire station and newly-weds emerging from the registry office next door. She also remembers how her father calmed their fear during thunderstorms by making them shout: “hurrah!” with each thunderclap.

During the long and hot summer of 1911 in Skagen (the highest point of Jutland in Denmark), the correspondence with Freud waned (they exchanged brief messages with directions for arranging to meet for a whole day in Weimar to directly exchange their ideas). The two children came down with chickenpox (Hedwig rocked them during the night in their hammocks …) and Karl taught a few words of Danish to
his daughter who enormously enjoyed the mountains of strawberries and cream. When they returned, Abraham took Hilda to Bremen to see her grandparents. She retained a fond memory of this trip:

So is my memory of a night spent uncomfortably hot between feather-beds and ending up on the bare mattress. What impressed me most was my father asking me not to mention it so as not to hurt my grandmother. It was one of many instances when he taught me to consider other people's feelings. (H. Abraham, 1967, p. 45)

The oedipal relationship was at its peak and utterings of the child and anecdotes of sibling rivalry are reflected in the “Children’s Corner” of the Zentralblatt, and were used later in the article published in the seventeenth edition on the emotional relationship of little girls towards their parents. Hilda remembers …

My father … worked until 8 p.m., he made a point of spending some time with me after luncheon. I remember him picking me up and carrying or leading me to his consulting-room, a place I never entered except on these occasions. He would put me down in the centre of the room on the carpet to play with his chessmen or draught pieces while he had a short nap, during which I kept very quiet until he awoke and joined me on the floor to play with me. (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 40)

When Grant Allan was two years old, his sister’s governess complained of how much she daydreamed and was distracted in class; her father decided to try to analyse her. This small document, which is highly interesting as it was the first attempt to unite the observation of children with analytical reflection, includes the three talks held, with a report of the symptoms, dreams and their analysis. At that time, Abraham held two different stances with respect to masturbation; the one he expressed in the Medical Society for the Study of Sexuality and the one with respect to his daughter …

I told her at the time that she should not go on doing it, as she would then always lie in bed at night and stay awake, and would be tired the next morning and not be as fresh and lively as the other children …
The unpleasant things that always come to Hilda’s imagination are a monkey, flames and giants; the child is hesitant but not distressed. Whilst telling me the story of the thief her behaviour changed in a strange way. She took my arm, kissed the sleeve of my overcoat, snuggled her head close to me, and was so loving and tender, in words and looks, that I got the impression that there were positive aspects of her anxiety about the wicked men. I assumed that I myself must be one of them …

When I touched on the theme of the flame, she showed an obstinate determination to adhere to her belief that there could be a flame in her room. In addition she insisted that the flame could take her away. (Like the thief.) … Thief and Bad Man are therefore already identified. The talion concept leads me to the conclusion that she herself has the hand that wants to do bad things. Perhaps to her mother, against whom she had intensive death-wishes about six months ago, or to her little brother to whom she showed hostility from the beginning (she asked the nurse to drown him in the bath) …

I told her that I knew children sometimes thought that they had done something wicked. Did she think that? She immediately assured me with great alacrity of the opposite. I now took up the theme of children’s self-reproaches and explained their connexion with masturbation, which she again confessed to. She then went on say, “Well, actually, I have felt a little guilty about it”. (K. Abraham, 1974, p. 13)

Years later, as a teenager, Hilda was analysed by Ophuijsen in Holland in an attempt to resolve the difficulties that she had with concentration. In a subsequent session with Hilde Maas, with whom she had a close friendship, she gave her this document to see whether her symptom could be traced back to her childhood. Unfortunately, Hilda did not finish her work as she died prematurely like her father after a very active professional life.

In 1912 Philipp Bürgner, the cheerful playmate of his grandchildren who had a solid and happy marriage to his wife and in who Abraham always found a sociable and sensitive father-in-law, died on 1 October after suffering a stroke which left him unconscious for nine days. Hilda had started school and she thought it was absurd to take the pen box that her grandfather had given her. She adds nostalgically that this was the first time that she had seen her mother cry and that Karl told her to
comfort her. In contrast, here is an anecdote of that time which reflects the permissiveness of the family: “For at the end of my first scripture lesson I volunteered the information that my mother said there was no God.” (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 46).

Just before Christmas, Karl spent three days in Vienna. In a letter dated 27 December 1912, he thanked Freud for the hospitality that he had shown him during his visit. On occasions he had criticised Freud for treating his followers as patients and in this letter he reproached him for making the grave technical error of spoiling his patient by loading him with presents. He also met Jones during this trip.

Family life continued placidly to the pleasure of Freud: “I enjoy the thought that your marriage shows that psychoanalysis does not necessarily lead to divorce.” (To Abraham, 1 June 1913, alluding to the marital difficulties of Jung and others.) He worked from eight o’clock in the morning and after lunch—he ate very quickly!—and after a short nap, he had coffee in an almost ritualistic way:

My father would put a lump of sugar on his teaspoon and then close his eyes, announcing how much he looked forward to having it when he had had a nap. We would in turn creep up and steal it amid much giggling and when my father “awoke” he would call for the help of the police or of the famous fireman from across the road to find the thief. (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 58)

Sundays were spent leisurely with fun gatherings with maternal uncles and aunts and free time for play. Visitors were always welcome provided they joined in with the family’s activities. Abraham also found time during these moments for reading; we know that in May he was reading Schopenhauer: Attempt at the Psychoanalysis of a Philosopher (by Dr Hitschmann, one of the first members of the Psychoanalytic Society of Vienna who later moved to Boston. Imago, Volume II, 1915).

In 1913, the family spent their summer holiday in Noordwijk aan Zee; sometimes the children stayed with the nanny while Karl and Hedwig visited Delft or Leyde (where the archaeological museum contained too many things for one visit). In October, the family visited Bremen and on Christmas Day Karl met Freud in Berlin, nine days after Hilda’s tonsillitis operation.

Hedwig travelled to the Baltic coast with the children in 1914 and Abraham joined them after working for a few more days; during these
days he sent drawings and poems with blank spaces for the children to fill in. They remained in Brunshaupten until August; the trip planned to Bremen after which he was to send off the Congress programme together with Eitingon in Berlin was cancelled due to the war. The trip to Tirol, which had been arranged for August, was also cancelled. (Letter to Freud, 31 July 1914).

**Fervent activity in theoretical material: 1909 to 1915**

*Dreams and Myths* is the monograph that Freud praised so highly in his letter of 6 June 1908:

> It is all so clear, well based and constructed, full of conviction and free from misunderstanding and misunderstandability, I liked the place very much. You are right, it is not an essay but a treatise ... but that, after all, is what you chose to make it, and perhaps the persuasiveness of the whole has only gained thereby ... (Freud, 1908)

This carefully written paper made Freud encourage him to write a paper on Segantini, “I will try to take hold of it immediately to decorate the *Schriften zur Angewandten Seelenkunde*. *Dreams and Myths* has made an excellent impression on everyone to whom I spoke, and these testimonials to the many-sidedness of your abilities make me very proud for you.” (Freud to Abraham, 18 February 1909).

On 8 November a dispute broke out in the Neurologische Gesellschaft [Neurological Society], in which he presented on *Hysterical Dream States*; Ziehen, who was acting as president, prevented any discussion, taking the floor himself to make a brief but furious attack. This paper would again receive the praise of the master (22 August 1910): “I do not know of anything to place beside them for clarity, inner solidity, and power of evidence. I am convinced that that is the impact on all readers on our side.” In the same year *Remarks on the Psychoanalysis of a Case of Foot and Corset Fetishism* was published in *Jahrbuch*. Freud meanwhile presented his *Leonardo* and completed the Schreber report in December.

Amidst this hive of activity, the *Zentralblatt* printed *Observations of the Cult of the Mother and its Symbolism in Individual and Folk Psychology; On the Determining Power of Names and A Dream Analysis in Ovid*. On 11 February of the same year, he sent Freud the monograph entitled *Giovanni Segantini: a Psycho-Analytical Study* (Published in 1911 in
Schriften zur Angewandten Seelenkunde. A new extended edition was published in 1925, Wien, Deuticke. The Russian translation appeared in 1913 and the Italian translation in 1926). The complete works of Segantini was edited by Classici dell’arte Rizzoli in Milan (1973). In this paper he psychoanalyses the nineteenth century Tyrolean painter, who had died young and was admired for his mystical country scenes and whose male offspring were somewhat conflictive. Abraham makes this remark to Freud in an unedited letter on 17 February 1911 (Hilda Abraham, 1974, p. 39): his son Mario was arrested in Berlin accused of fraud; another committed suicide after deserting, and the third was an idler. Only his daughter seemed to be worth anything. It is remarkable that the sons completely lack the father’s capacity for sublimation.

In Segantini he first shows the idealisation of the mother, his first love which led him to postpone his adult object choice until the age of twenty-two due to a very strong oedipal link. When he needed her most and felt abandoned by her when she died, the idol, love-object became inaccessible and therefore ambivalent, and he broke down. Although the relationships that the two men had with their fathers were very different (the artist had a violent confrontational relationship while the relationship between Abraham and his father was based on respect and mutual admiration), these two personalities did have some things in common. These connections were the mountains, Engadine and the close relationship with their mothers (who Segantini lost when he was five years old). Another possible reason for choosing the painter as a subject may have been his wish to be a pioneer in a study of this type giving a new boost to applied psychoanalysis; we can see from a letter to Freud (14 February, 1909): “It is extraordinary how great a role is played here by the sublimation of component instincts, the repression of incestuous fantasies and the transfer to non-human objects.”

Proud of his pioneering efforts, Abraham made another contribution to applied psychoanalysis the following year: Amenhotep. Given Freud’s interest in Egyptology, he kept him well informed during the development of the paper: “I did the preparatory work partly in the Egyptian department of the Berlin Museum and was reminded more than once of the first instruction of Egyptology that I enjoyed in Vienna.” (Abraham, 11 January 1912). In February he lamented … “The Egyptian research for Imago progresses only at a snail’s pace .” Before he had warned: “But the material overwhelms me by its diversity, and I am only making slow progress”. (Letter to Freud, 6 June 1910).
So many new projects were sure to please his dear professor who especially liked the numerous germs of works that were emerging. So, a couple of months later when Abraham informed him that he was working on the Amenhotep project, Freud showed his enthusiasm:

That surely is already a great advance in orientation. Do you know that you are now regarded with Stekel and Sadger as being among the bêtes noires of psychoanalysis against whom I have always been warned? Evidently since your Segantini, and what will it ever be like after Amenhotep? But you will not let it worry you … (Freud, 2 November 1911)

Then in August 1911, Abraham told Freud of a new project, *The Psychoanalytical Investigation and Treatment of Manic-Depressive Insanity and Allied Conditions*, presented at the Weimar Congress and published in the Zentralblatt in 1912. The subject would absorb his attention for years and was the starting point for much of his research. In it he establishes the difference between neurotic and psychotic depression (and presents six cases, some of which were of a cyclothymic nature). Later, we will analyse in more detail this work that also disagrees with Kraepelin’s claim that a manic depressive state can never be declared after the age of forty, by presenting a case of a forty-five-year-old patient.

Freud made progress with *On Metapsychology and The Concept of the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis*; while his disciple wrote *A Complicated Ceremonial Found in Neurotic Women*. While the family recovered from their mild ailments, Abraham attempted to find a formula for depression which he found much later: in 1912, he shared his musings with Freud, in which objectality is prevalent:

I can report that I have some time past had a particularly instructive case of cyclothymia under observation … In this patient everything lies unusually close to consciousness, and she is particularly aware of her own inability to love. Physically as well as psychologically she is thoroughly intermediate stage, very masculine in physical appearance, manner, voice, movements, etc., as well as in her thinking and feeling. The mixture of male and female in her is such that she is too masculine to love men; but also she fails to achieve full transference onto women. … Reaction this: vivid substitute gratification in phantasy (prostitution phantasies) and masturbation,
which are, however, not sufficient. Hence repeated lapses into depression, alternating with rapid manic exaltation. I am really quite stuck in this case. The patient lacks the type of transference usually met with in neurotics. (Abraham to Freud, 28 May 1912)

A series of articles on technique raised the voice of alarm with respect to wild analysis. The master was encouraged and acknowledged:

Your approval of the last technical article was very valuable to me ... At present my intellectual activity would have been limited to correcting the proofs of the 4th edition of Everyday Life, if it had not suddenly occurred to me that the opening scene of Lear, the judgement Paris, and the choice of caskets in the Merchant of Venice are based on the same motif, which I have to track now. (Freud, 14 June 1912)

In July 1912, Amenhotep IV. Psycho-analytical Contributions towards the Understanding of his Personality and of the Monotheistic Cult of Aton was printed in Imago. The Egyptian was the religious innovator who would later be analysed by Freud in his book on Moses; both heroes fail, but the guilt which their people feel ferments, and the monotheistic ideology prevails. One could reproach Freud for not quoting Abraham’s essay, which had undoubtedly inspired him to write this book.

Fliess also liked Amenhotep and told its author that he would “try to think through that personality once again, in light of your conception.” (In a postcard sent on 12 October, as quoted by Gay, 1988, p. 311).

Through his daughter (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 51) we know that in October 1912, he read the article on neurotic photophobia for the first time to the small Berlin Society.

In his paper Should Patients Write Down their Dreams? (International Zeitschrift, 1913), which links transference phenomena with anal retention, he confirms and completes the issue raised by Freud in 1912 regarding the Handling of Dream Interpretation in Psychoanalysis. Although thoroughly and carefully written, Abraham considered that the many articles published in this period (between January 1913 and the war of 1914), including Some Remarks on the Role of Grandparents in the Psychology of Neuroses, were brief and insignificant contributions to provide material for the Jahrbuch and journals; meanwhile he was collecting material for more important projects.
These smaller articles include: *Mental After-Effects Produced in a Nine-Year-Old Child by the Observation of Sexual Intercourse between its Parents* (1913), concerning his daughter in the family environment, who quotes a manuscript written by Abraham and given to her by her mother after his death:

There are some introductory notes about his daughter’s tendency to daydream at the age of six to seven … He noted that no signs of anxiety had been observed excepting the fact that she would lie awake at bed-time. He dealt with the problem of masturbation by telling her that it made children tired … as usual, she had changed the subject. One of my memories of this time is of doing some homework with my mother sitting beside me, and being recalled from wherever my thoughts may have been by her fist banging the table and making me and my books jump. She was of course less trained to understand, and easily lost patience in such a situation. (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 57)

Later she relates how, in November 1913, the conversations included in *The little Hilda* took place. In the text she does not refer to the castration anxiety that she suffered very intensely as a result of her tonsillitis operation. The talks that she had with her patient and comprehensive father are a striking contrast to the violence of this operation that is described simultaneously in the biography.

A new article, *On the Psychogenesis of Agoraphobia in Childhood*, gave rise to a slip-up for which Abraham apologised to Freud on 8 December 1913: “I committed an unconscious plagiarism. I refer to the remarks on railway phobia, which I found, to my amazement, already in your works (when reading the Three Essays for the purpose of the Jung review). I shall make the necessary amendment in the proofs.” This refers to his “Essay on representation of psychoanalytic theory by C. G. Jung” (*International Zeitschrift*), a project that was not to his liking but necessary. He took a cool and scientific approach, highlighting the “constant contradictions” and “the inaccuracies in presenting Freud’s theories”. As his daughter comments, this is the only paper written by Abraham with an authoritative tone and resolute and irrefutable arguments. He continued in the letter to Freud on 8 December: “My debt to you is too great in various respects. I feel this with every new stimulus I receive either from you or from psychoanalysis, and the increasing success of
my work evoke this thought no less again and again.” On the same day he wrote again thanking him for sending a picture.

Another of these small articles is *A Screen Memory Concerning a Childhood Event of Apparently Aetiological Significance*, which addresses the subject of scoptophilia, revealing its link with obsessive ruminations, although he notes the importance of anal erotic fixation in the formation of the symptom. Hilda explains that her father collected a huge amount of clinical and historical material in order to continue the line of research that Freud had opened with respect to sexuality, although we can assume that much of his research on exhibitionism or scoptophilia were inspired by observing his son who undoubtedly also reawakened his own repressed fantasies. Another constant feature of his method is his use of linguistic observations and a questioning of the Bible’s disquisitions. When he reached conclusions that were different to those drawn by the master, he found a way of articulating them and usually observed that they complemented one another.

As well as the scoptophilic drives, the neurotic fear of light and the significance of darkness are some of the other subjects which he addresses in an article in 1914, *Restrictions and Transformations of Scoptophilia in Psycho-neurotics*; his anthropological side contemplates infantile totemism (loved and feared totem) as a source of phobic symptoms. Its origin can be traced to a text written by Freud and published in *Imago* (and which would become the third part of *Totem and Taboo*) and the material provided by an obsessive neurotic. Abraham suggested:

> You mention the biblical ban on making images, which refers chiefly to the worship of images … Might not the biblical prohibition of worshipping God as an image, be connected with the repression of scoptophilia? Looking on God is in fact punished with death or blindness. (Abraham, letter to Freud, 3 March 1913)

The professor’s immediate reply encouraged him to continue reflecting on this prohibition: “It would cost you only one hour after all, and would be very valuable to us.” (27 March 1913). He concluded the study by touching on an aspect which, ten years later, would constitute one of his greatest contributions to psychoanalysis:

> The line that such an inquiry will have to follow will be in the sense of our concepts of the component-instincts and the erotogenic zones,
concepts which have become indispensable to our understanding of the subject; and in my present paper I have tried to demonstrate this in the case of one particular component-instinct and one particular erotogenic zone. (Abraham, 1913h, p. 234)

Freud’s good wishes were always forthcoming: “I read your paper for the Jahrbuch yesterday and cannot refrain from congratulating you on it. I think it the best clinical contribution that has appeared in any of the five volumes, unequalled in assurance, correctness, many-sidedness, and interest. Vivant sequentes!” (5 June 1914). From scoptophilia he turned his attention to the outer ear and the auditory passage as erogenous zones. In the same month he published a brief note in Zeitschrift entitled A Contribution Towards the Understanding of the Suggestive Effect of Medicine in the Neuroses.

Abraham was always unwavering, and rejected unconfirmed statements. Rank remembered after his death that he had told him that he needed more experience and more confirmatory case material before setting anything down. Along these lines, his daughter comments:

What is striking is his ability to observe a special aspect, to follow it through to a point reached in his own development as an analyst, and to take it up again when further inner maturation had occurred and when more confirmatory case material had come to hand. (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 55)

We know through his correspondence with Freud that he had to renounce a trip he had planned with his wife to Italy due to the successive illnesses of Grant and Hilda (who caught rubella from their father). At this time, Abraham informed Freud that he had resigned from the Non-Alcoholic Doctors Association. On 5 May, as part of his preparatory work for his essay on habilitation, he visited asylums in order to collect material. He told Freud that he had, at last, increased his fees as he suggested: “Last autumn I had started putting up my fees from 10 to 15 marks and recently made the jump to 20 for the first time.” (5 May 1913).

In A Constitutional Basis for Locomotor Anxiety (written in 1913) he claims that the explanation for agrophobia based on a fixation on the accompanying person and the pleasure in exercising control over the environment was insufficient. He observed that the origin of this phobia was found in a similar process to the case of scoptophilia,
a strong attraction to walking, movement, dance ... “In very different languages the sexual act is denoted by an expression which signifies a mutual going together of the two persons as, for example, coire in Latin” (Abraham, 1927, p. 237). And once again, by playing with the language as did Lacan much later, he used his linguistic knowledge to arrive from walking to coire and coitus. Freud congratulated him again: “I must also mention how excellent your locomotor paper is.” (16 March 1914).

Although much of it was written beforehand, it was published in Imago with the title On Neurotic Exogamy: A Contribution to the Similarities in the Psychic Life of Neurotics and of Primitive Man. On 10 October 1913 he commented to Freud that he planned to base this essay on his article for Imago The Return of Totemism in Childhood.

**International Psychoanalytical Association: the congresses**

Abraham participated in the first nine congresses. As well as contributing with papers and conferences he was the president of the fifth congress in Budapest (1918) and the ninth in Bad-Hombourg (1925), shortly before his death. The last congress held in Germany before the Second World War took place in 1932 in Wiesbaden; it would be another fifty-three years before it was held in Hamburg, in 1985, under the presidency of Adam Limentani.

Until then they were held in: Austria (1908), Germany (1910–1911 & 1913), Hungary (1918), Holland (1920), Germany (1922), Austria (1924), Germany (1925), Austria (1927), England (1929), Germany (1932), Switzerland (1934), Czechoslovakia (1936), France (1938), Switzerland (1949), Holland (1951), England (1953), Switzerland (1955), France (1957), Denmark (1959), Scotland (1961), Sweden (1963), Holland (1965), Denmark (1967), Italy (1969), Austria (1971), France (1973), England (1975), Israel (1977), U.S.A. (1979), Finland (1981) and Spain (Madrid) in 1983.


**First international congress: Salzburg, 27 April 1908**

Forty-two members took part (twenty-six from Austria, two from England, two from Hungary, six from Switzerland and two from America). There were still no presidential, secretarial, or treasury roles.
Freud gave a talk called *The Rat Man* that lasted for five hours on the insistence of the audience. Jones presented his paper on *Rationalisations in Everyday Life*. Riklin addressed the conference with *Some Problems Occurring in Myth Interpretation*; Abraham gave his conference on *Psychosexual Differences between Hysteria and Dementia Praecox*. Other talks were those of Sadger *The Aetiology of Homosexuality*, Stekel *On Hysteria and Anxiety*, Jung *On Dementia Praecox*, Adler *Sadism in Life and Neurosis*, Ferencz *Psychoanalysis and Pedagogy*, Rank *A Letter from Schiller and Free Association* and Brill *Psychoanalytic Reactions in a Case of Multiple Personality*.

A dispute arose with Jung who complained that Abraham did not support the Swiss representatives.

In the meeting following the conferences it was agreed to create *Jahrbuch*, the first psychoanalytic publication which was to be directed by Bleuler and Freud. The project was discussed with the Swiss participants, Abraham, Brill, Ferenczi, and Jones; the Viennese felt excluded and their resentment grew until it erupted into a conflict at the Nuremberg conference in 1910.

**Second international congress: Nuremberg, 30 and 31 March 1910**

*President Carl Gustav Jung*

The most significant talks were: Freud *The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic Therapy*, Abraham *The Psychoanalysis of Fetishism* and Jung *Report on America*.

Brome commented that Freud was the first to arrive and quotes Stekel: “I was surprised to hear Ferenczi’s proposal, following Freud’s recommendation, to appoint Jung as lifelong president of the International Psychoanalytical Association … with a right to read all the articles proposed and to decide which are to be published.” (Brome, 1967, p. 59) [Translated for this edition]. This would mean that no psychoanalytic essays could be published without his consent. After the storm of protests, it was finally decided to elect a president for two years, after which new elections would be held. There would be no censorship.

There are two versions of what happened next: according to Jones, Freud announced his resignation as president of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society proposing Adler as his successor and suggesting the
creation of a monthly journal (which was accepted), the Zentrallblatt für Psychoanalyse, which would be directed by Adler and Stekel, in part compensating Jung’s position as director of Jahrbuch.

On the other hand, Stekel, described by Brome as being superficial and ambitious, said that Freud was surprised when Adler and himself announced that they were to create a new independent monthly journal … they were at war with Jung.

After this reunion, Freud invited a select group of members of the Vienna society to meet. A committee was formed, made up of Abraham, Maeder, and Stekel. Ferenczi announced a project to form a psychoanalytic association that would include affiliates from different countries. However, his proposal was met with censorship from the president. This type of intervention had never existed until then and gave rise to much controversy. Jung was named president of the Association and Adler of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society with Stekel as vice-president.

After the creation of the IPA (International Psychoanalytical Association), the Berlin Society was the first to join with Abraham as president and nine new members including Eitingon.

Third international congress: Weimar, 21 to 23 September 1911

This congress was organised by Abraham as Jung was in America (they had met shortly before the Congress). There were fifty-five participants including Putnam, Bleuler, Hirschfield, Pfister, Lou Andreas Salomé, and Van Emden. In his report after the congress, Jung wrote that the International Psychoanalytical Association had one hundred and six members.

The speakers included: Putnam, who opened the congress with The Importance of Philosophy in the Development of Psychoanalysis. (Freud named him as an ambassador of the cause in America). Abraham presented his paper Preliminary Study for the Investigation and Treatment of Manic-Depressive Psychosis and Allied Conditions. Ferenczi spoke on The Understanding of Homosexuality, Sachs on Reciprocal Relationships between Psychoanalysis and Psychic Sciences, Bleuler gave a conference called On Autism, Jung presented On Symbolism in Psychoses and Mythology, Rank’s conference was entitled Nudity in Poetry and Legends and Freud opened the second day of the congress with Postcriptum of the Famous Schreber Case.
A letter from Abraham to Freud in October describes the fruits of this meeting:

I have followed up the private discussion we had on the last day and found out a number of interesting facts about totem animals. I shall report when my observations are more complete ... I have undertaken one issue of a new series called Beiträge zur Forensischen Medizin [Contributions to Forensic Medicine]. It is to be entitled “The Child’s Instinctual Life and Its Relation to Delinquency.”

(Abraham, 29 October 1911)

This Congress also enabled Lou Andreas-Salomé to meet with Freud, to whom she profusely expressed her wish to study psychoanalysis. Freud confessed to Ferenczi in a letter on 31 October 1912 that Lou was a woman of dangerous intelligence.

Fourth international congress: Munich, 7 and 8 September 1913

President: Carl Gustav Jung, re-elected by fifty-two votes against twenty-two

According to Jones, the only interesting interventions, in addition to Freud, were those of Abraham (Restrictions and Transformations of Scoptophilia in Psycho-neurotics; with Remarks on Analogous Phenomena in Folk-Psychology) and Ferenczi (The Psychology of Conviction).

The Budapest group (presided by Ferenczi) and the London group (with Jones), joined the International Association. A rift appeared between Freudians and Jungians. “The Munich group, led by Leonhard Seif, sided with Jung, so Abraham lost one of his sources of support in Germany ... When the five men separated after the Congress, they seemed, in at least appearance, submit themselves, once again, to the direction of Freud” (Brome, 1967, p. 165) [Translated for this edition]. Lou Andreas-Salomé wrote her impressions in her Journal 7 & 8 September: “The Zurich group had their own table opposite Freud ... It is not that Jung moved away, he allowed them to believe that this distancing was saving him and his work. If Freud defended himself, he interpreted it with an attitude of scientific intolerance, dogmatism and so on ... [Jung’s] vitality is pure aggression, ambition and intellectual rigidity” (Brome, 1967, p. 168).

The next meeting which was planned to be held in Dresden was in the air: Freud comments ... “It is of course impossible to foresee how
weather conditions will permit us to hold the Congress. If the war remains localized in the Balkans, it will be all right. But one can say nothing about Russia” (Letter to Abraham, 26 July 1914). The incorrigible optimist replied three days later: “I do not think any of the powers will bring about a general war. But there is a strong universal feeling of alarm.”

*Fifth international congress: Budapest,*

*28 and 29 September 1918*

*President: Karl Abraham*

Only Germany, Austria, and Hungary were represented. Forty-two participants took part, including some high-ranking military officials sent by the Central Empires. It was agreed that psychoanalytic clinics would be created for many hospitals. The central theme was very topical: *The Psychoanalysis of War Neuroses*. The talks included: Freud *New Forms of Psychoanalytic Therapy* and Abraham *Contribution to the Psychoanalysis of War Neuroses.*

This congress provided a meeting place for Freud and Abraham after four years of separation. In Budapest the hosts laid out the red carpet for the congress participants. It was the golden era of Anton von Freund.

*Sixth international congress: the Hague,*

*8 to 11 September 1920*

Under the presidency of Ferenczi, Jones was elected as the next president.

Sixty-two analysts (according to Jones), finally gathered after the war, including fifteen from England, eleven from Germany, seven from Austria, one from Poland, three from Hungary, sixteen from Holland, seven from Switzerland and two from America. The Circular replaced the correspondence between some members of the Committee. The first memo was sent on 7 October.

The most relevant talks were: Freud *Complement to the Dream Theory;* Abraham *Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex;* Ferenczi *Latest Developments in an Active Therapy in Psychoanalysis* and Róheim *Totemism in Australia.*

Both Melanie Klein and Anna Freud were also present. The splendid closing banquet helped to soothe the tensions that had arisen during
the previous years. The Congress, which was finally attended by all members after the war, was an all-round success.

_Seventh international congress: Berlin, 25 to 27 September 1922_

*President: Ernest Jones*

Before and after the Congress the Committee met to talk about the organisation and the publications. This is the last time that Freud would participate (on this occasion he stayed with Eitingon).

Two hundred and sixty-six people attended, including 112 members of the International Association, which now had 239 members. Psychoanalysis had flourished in Berlin, largely due to the activity of Abraham and his Institute. In fact, almost half of the participants were German. Jean Piaget came from Neuchâtel and Sabina Spielrein from Moscow as the leader of the Russian delegation.


Karen Horney, Ernest Jones, Melanie Klein, Herman Nunberg, Pfeiffer, Radó, and Geza Róheim also participated.

_Eighth international congress: Salzburg, 21 to 23 April 1924_

*President: Ernest Jones*

Freud had not recovered sufficiently to be able to attend. The congress ended to the satisfaction of all and Abraham and Ferenczi sent a detailed report to the master.

There was some controversy in the Committee meeting. Rank left for America, as he did not accept the naming proposed by Ferenczi, of Abraham as the president of the International Association.

The following account is given by Brome:

The four men [Abraham, Ferenczi, Jones, and Sachs], were able to find a harmony which had seemed impossible during their correspondence. The situation with Rank was very different. Encouraged by this success, when Abraham turned to Rank ... their discussion lasted for more than an hour, but it was like a dialogue of the deaf ... After Rank left, with a gesture Ferenczi indicated his
desire to reconcile with Abraham. He decided to propose Abraham as president which was unanimously approved ... At the end of the Congress, five of the six members had reconciled sufficiently in order to continue working together. [Translated for this edition] (Brome, 1967, p. 230)

In a letter to Freud on 29 October 1924 Abraham assured: “I do not feel a trace of hostility”, lamenting that “Otto himself seems to have come—apparently unstoppably—onto a pathological track” (Letter from Abraham to Freud on 29 October 1924). In another letter of 12 November (op.cit, p. 521), he seemed sorry that they had lost one of their best men. The affectionate undercurrent in this rupture is not the same as that experienced years earlier with Jung.

The first speaker was Helene Deutsch with a paper on the psychology of women relating to the reproductive function. Gover talked about perversion, Doctor Harnik from Berlin delivered a talk on compulsion, Lieberman spoke about mono-symptomatic neuroses, Felix Deutsch presented Psychoanalysis at the Patient’s Bedside. Abraham addressed the influence of oral eroticism on character formation. Other participants included Jones, Sachs, Radó, Alexander, Melanie Klein, Wilhelm Reich, Simmel, and Karl Landauer.

*Ninth international congress: Bad Hombourg, 2 to 5 September 1925

President and organizer: Karl Abraham

Jones proposed the creation of an international commission to establish regulations in teaching psychoanalysis in the different societies; the idea was accepted. The new institution adopted the main regulations of the Berlin Society and implemented the didactic analysis and control analyses or supervisions, carried out in Berlin by different psychoanalysts and in Vienna by the instructor.

Freud, once again, could not attend due to ill health. (Some believe that his vanity would not let himself be seen in a deteriorated condition). He sent his daughter, Anna to present his contribution: Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes.

Abraham was disappointed with Groddek’s paper but particularly liked those of Reik, Ophuijsen, Wilhelm Reich, Alexander, Géza Róheim,
and the American, Coriat. He also liked Ferenczi’s contribution as it brought him closer to psychoanalysis, although in doing so he may have brought less original ideas than at other times. Abraham had a long conciliatory conversation with Rank. However, the frenetic rhythm and the superficial nature of Rank’s conference caused Abraham to diagnose him with a maniac condition.

The issue of profane analysis, which had first been debated in 1929 (Congress in The Hague), was in the spotlight once again. In 1926, the five North American societies that had joined the Association, with Brill as leader, were successful in their bid to have lay analysis declared as illegal in New York. (Rodrigué, p. 364)

Max Eitingon was the president of the next three Congresses and was then succeeded by Jones.

**Jahrbuch: from Zentrallblatt to Zeitschrift**

The first specialised journal was the *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen* (Yearbook of psychoanalytic and psychopathological research), directed by Freud and Bleuler in 1908 with Jung as its editor. The first issue was launched in April 1909, and included *The Significance of Intermarriage between Close Relatives in the Psychology of the Neuroses*, read by Abraham in Berlin in 1908 to the Society, and Freud’s *Analysis of the Phobia of a Five-Year-Old Boy*, to which Abraham added a comment indicating the importance of the maternal function until then hidden behind the Oedipus complex: “In some of my analyses it is definitely the mother … It seems to me to depend very much on the individual circumstances.” (Freud, 1908, p. 87).

Let us take a look at some of the highs and lows of the *Jahrbuch:* On 2 November 1913, Freud told Abraham:

I am prepared to keep the *Jahrbuch* if you are willing to undertake the editorship … We think the time has come to think of a severance of all ties with Zurich and thus to the dissolution of the *International Psychoanalysis Association*. As the best way of bringing this about we have in mind forwarding to the central office a resolution proposing dissolution, signed by the three groups in Vienna, Berlin, and Budapest. (Freud to Abraham, 2 November 1913)
On 4 November, Abraham accepted the editorship but believed that the dissolution of the Association was a highly delicate matter, as it was not provided in the statutes. He believed that it would be better to wait until the autumn of 1914, with the election of a new president. At that time, only nine of the eighteen members of the Berlin society were in the city and Abraham thought that making such an important decision in their absence would lead to problems: “it would be a pity if political differences were to occur in our circle just now when it is beginning to develop! […] As soon as I am certain of the rightness and inevitability of your suggestion, I shall of course do everything to ensure its success.” (Letter of 4 November 1913) Abraham was not the submissive disciple that he sometimes seemed to be; he had his criteria and defended them although not vehemently as we can see in the last paragraph of this letter or in the conflict with Jung, for example.

Freud replied:

Under the impact of your letter and a very similar one from Jones, Rank and Sachs have agreed to a postponement of the operation against the Association, and Ferenczi, who has been the hothead in the whole business, will no doubt agree to it too ... We shall all put our best efforts into making the new Jahrbuch a testimonial to what we are capable of, and you will automatically find yourself in an extremely influential position. (Freud to Abraham, 9 November 1913)

The journal was not published during the war due to a shortage of paper and articles.

The creation of the Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse was approved in the Nuremberg Congress of 1910. It was edited by Adler until he resigned from his presidential position of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. Stekel replaced him as editor. On 3 November 1912, Freud announced that he would no longer be the director of the journal due to the sectarian approach adopted by Stekel. He informed Abraham that it was to be replaced by another publication, the Zeitschrift:

I was about to offer you the editorship of the latter and let myself be deflected only by the consideration that luckily your practice already keeps you busy to the point of excess. I have therefore
turned to Ferenczi, but should much like to hear your views on this proposal. (Freud to Abraham, 3 November 1912)

Abraham responded:

If Ferenczi takes on the editing, I might be able to help in some other way. If he declines, then I am at your disposal. Should the proposal be put to me definitely, then what would be most congenial to me would be to collaborate with Ferenczi—if that is technically feasible. (Abraham to Freud, 5 November 1912)

Jung organised a meeting with Freud in Munich to hand over the editorship of the Zentrallblatt to Stekel, on learning that the Zeitschrift, which was to replace it, had just been founded.

In 1912, a third psychoanalytic journal, Imago was created, which had almost been called Eros and Psyche, according to a letter sent by Freud to Jones. (Letter of 9 August 1911) In Freud, Master and Friend, Hans Sachs (1944, p. 58) wrote: “The title of the new journal caused a few headaches. Finally my suggestion was accepted and it was called Imago, after the novel by Carl Spitteler, in which the arts and masks of the unconscious, incursions in the kingdom of consciousness and a stimulation of creative productivity are masterfully presented.” (On the novel, consult Le Coq—Héron, 1979, n. 73) The subtitle was Journal of the Application of Psychoanalysis to Human Sciences. It was co-edited by Hanns Sachs and Otto Rank; the majority of its subscribers were German. It published Amenhotep.

From 1913, the Society had an official publication: the International Journal of Psychoanalysis. Brome (1967, p. 156) describes the confusion that Jones remembers in the practical organisation. Ferenczi and Rank would be the co-editors of the journal after Abraham declined the position. Abraham found a positive side to the resolved conflict: the improvement in relations with Zurich.

The proofs of Jahrbuch were received with enthusiasm by Freud in June 1914; they had taken one year to complete. He thanked Abraham for “his extraordinary efforts” and congratulated him for what he believes to be the “best clinical contribution that has appeared in any of the five volumes, unequalled in assurance, correctness, many-sidedness, and interest” (Letter from Freud to Abraham, 5 June 1914).
It included an article on scoptophilia which he had been working on for a year.

Abraham planned to present the next issue in the spring of 1915, but the war also thwarted this project. However, *Zeitschrift* with the *Korrespondenzblatt* by Abraham was issued in October 1914. Abraham received copies of *Imago* and the *Psychoanalytical Review* (quarterly journal published in the United States) in November, although the shortage of all material on all levels gave rise to a forced interruption of its publication. In November 1915, Karl expressed his delight at the fact that *Imago* and *Zeitschrift* had kept going. In December, he finished and sent *Examination of the Earliest Pregenital Phase of Libido* to the latter, which published it a year later.

Abraham found Ferenczi’s essay in the following issue, published in May 1917, of particular interest, although a hint of complaint can be seen in the following lines:

> I held a talk here on the same theme more than a year ago, which coincides in every detail with what he writes. I may soon write a short supplementary paper, since it might be possible to add some important points that I have recently come to understand. The variety of his contributions to the last issue proves to me that Ferenczi is well on the way to recovery. [Referring to Basedow’s disease which he had suffered at the start of the year.] (Letter to Freud, 28 May 1917)

At the end of 1917, Freud was convinced of the imminent disappearance of the journals; Abraham made a suggestion to Sachs to find a solution, but Freud believed that it was unfeasible to include Deuticke who was seriously ill and also resentful due to the publication of the *Conferences* through Heller. Paper could not be found to print the covers of *Imago*, although the issue had already been printed. In December, the suspension was still not official.

With respect to this matter, Abraham suggested a number of renovations:

> As co-editor of the *Zeitschrift*, I should like to repeat my objection against making it top-heavy. I still think it was a mistake to discontinue the *Jahrbuch*. Especially now that we have our own Verlag,
there should be, alongside the Zeitschrift to which one subscribes, a Jahrbuch that one buys to get information about the development of our science. It seems an unnecessary weighting to include an overall view of the literature in the Zeitschrift. Special issues containing longer articles do not seem practicable to me. I think we should once again consider the question of resuming publication of the Jahrbuch. (Abraham, 23 November 1919)

His “dear professor” replied that he would carefully consider his proposal to reactivate the journals, although he believed that there would be difficulties associated to the high printing costs and the fact that much of the English-written material was derived from the International Journal: “Deuticke might be persuaded to revive the Jahrbuch, but I am afraid that the material produced by us in the course of a year might not be sufficient to keep it going. We do not exactly have an abundance of material even for the Zeitschrift.” (Letter of 1 December 1919).

The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis was first printed in 1920, edited by Ernest Jones.
The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand was merely an excuse to open the hostilities. There was an upsurge of nationalism on all social levels. In August, millions of Europeans were sent to wage a war that had been brewing for years. The Great War, which in the words of Freud aimed to suffocate “all the small players”, directly involved women for the first time who were employed in the factories and farms, while the men were enlisted in the armed forces.

However, this atrocious war in the trenches and mud lands of Europe did not affect the rearguards as much as the Second World War years later. Therefore, Freud was able to enjoy his sacred summer holiday each year, except in 1914, and psychoanalysis maintained a precarious but determined existence during these four years. During this time, in spite of the troubles, three major successes occurred in psychoanalysis.

First and foremost was Freud’s twelve Meta-physiological Writings, then the Introduction to Psychoanalysis, followed by, The Taboo of Virginity. Abraham’s participation in the former was decisive, particularly in the paper referring to Mourning and Melancholia. The second success was the theoretical and practical development of war neuroses (mostly Simmel, Ferenczi, and Abraham), which would be sadly revived again.
during the Second World War by Wilfred Bion. The third successful development was the creation of the Verlag funded by Anton von Freund, which released psychoanalysis from the conflictive tutelage of Franz Deuticke and Hugo Heller.

Something which has not been sufficiently addressed by the different psychoanalytic historians is the curious fact that although the consequences of the tragic First World War divided the proletariat (despite the October Revolution, the Postwar republics of Baviera and Berlin and Bela Kun’s Hungarian government, the International Proletariat gave in to national patriotisms), this did not happen with the International Psychoanalytical Association. Other deeper feelings of belonging, which were not immediately obvious, maintained the unity between Jones, Abraham, Ferenczi, Putnam (until his death), Stärke, Binswanger, Pfister, Lou Andreas-Salomé, Sabina Spielrein, Eugenia Sokolnitzka … and many others who were from different countries that were at war with one another. When the war was over, there was no sign of any reticence. Any ill-feeling was strictly concerned with psychoanalytic development, which, in some way, had experienced a fortunate isolation from the social events.

Finally, the First World War and its consequences, despite the opinion repeatedly voiced by Jones, gave rise to a paper that represented a significant development in Freudian theory: Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Jones echoed the Freudian view that the death drive was in no way connected to social and personal events occurring at the time. The natural continuity of drive theory, which turned a corner with Narcissism (1914), was to be found in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. However, although far from representing a reduction in Freud’s talent, the capacity to sublimate the embodiment of his existence formulating theories was a defining feature of Freud’s career. (These aspects are extensively illustrated in the doctoral thesis of Nicolás Caparrós—Madrid, 1988: Freud Through His Letters: Biographical and Epistemological Aspects.)

During the throes of the war, Freud and Abraham maintained frequent contact through their correspondence (the most important exchange of letters of the period together with that of Andreas-Salomé and Ferenczi), but they did not meet until the Budapest Congress. It was an intense and brief encounter. Freud wrote to Karl shortly afterwards telling him that he had to send him an emotional letter to say what he did not have time to express in person. The master was not inclined to expressing his emotions directly.
The psychoanalytic award won by Abraham for his work on the early infantile stage of libido development, an article with ambitious theories, and another eminently practical paper written by Ernst Simmel on war neuroses marked the start of the tragic pause of four years of the so-called Great War.

**Military hospital of Grunewald**

As he was exempt from active service due to the pulmonary emphysema suffered in his childhood, Abraham was enlisted in the reserves and served as a voluntary doctor during the war. Ruling out a swift end to the conflict, he had to adapt his interest for politics to science, although this made it difficult, on occasions, to make headway.

On 4 August, when the German invasion of Belgium had been confirmed, Great Britain entered the conflict. The old European order had disappeared. Eitingon was one of the first to enlist. Abraham was assigned to the surgical unit in the military hospital at the Grunewald racecourse on the outskirts of Berlin on 1 August as he told Freud in one of the letters that was not lost during this period:

> I still have to wait, am Landsturm and volunteer physician. I shall probably be employed in this latter capacity quite soon. I know no particulars as yet. The practice has, to my surprise, increased somewhat again this week. There is too little tranquillity for scientific work. We are living from one newspaper to the next. (Abraham to Freud, 14 August 1914)

Shortly afterwards, he told Freud:

> I have volunteered for hospital work, perhaps also abroad, or for hospital trains. I remain, for the time being at least, at the military hospital on Grünewald racecourse The German troops are barely 100 kilometres from Paris. Belgium is finished, so is England on land. The same is happening with Russia ... (Abraham to Freud, 29 August 1914)

It is evident that he had been extremely busy when he commented how he had been forced to postpone a paper that he had promised to send to Rank due to the arrival of a convoy of injured soldiers to the hospital, quiet a distance from the city.
That meant that I had to get up at 4.30 a.m., was standing in the operating theatre without a break till 2 p.m. and then spent some hours in my own practice in the afternoon. As the next few days were just as full, I could not even make the smallest beginning on my paper. Perhaps it will be better this week. (Abraham to Freud, 29 August 1914)

As usual, his final note of optimism was not missing.

Hilda remembers this time... “His captain’s uniform with admiration and awe and watched him being saluted” (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 61). Her father told her how little Grant had been enraptured by the sword, and was rendered speechless with happiness when he was allowed to carry it and during lunch the next day commented: “Another father would not have done that, let me carry the sword”. Abraham interpreted this comment in a letter to Freud as follows: “If I had been the owner of that magnificent weapon, I would not have given it to anyone”. Over the following days, the child was particularly affectionate and displayed signs of identification with his father.

In October, during a trip that Freud made to Hamburg, he visited the Abrahams. He let Karl know in a letter: “The time is perhaps too short for a meeting of the group, should rather be saved for our being together, if you can manage it ... I think I shall be arriving from the station just in time for your lunch, counting on your family hospitality as an unvarying factor” (Freud to Abraham, 22 September 1914). They observed how events of the war were reflected in certain pathologies, “I have noticed in general that obsessional people feel better now in wartime, we have descended to their level.” (Freud, 31 October 1914).

It seems as though only single men with an inherited fortune were able to afford psychoanalytic treatment at that time. Abraham congratulated Freud on the technical papers that he sent him. “These technical papers always come in the nick of time” he commented, referring to Observations on Transference Love, one of the paragraphs of which he suggested should be expanded. Acknowledgements are paid: Peter Gay (Letter of 6 November, p. 181) recounts how Andreas-Salomé thanked Abraham for his important paper on voyeurism, praising the clarity and his disposition to expand on the subject without adhering to any rules.

At this time, the correspondence was subject to censorship and the letters were opened before being sent on to their destination (if they arrive at all), both in Vienna and in Berlin when they were sent to
Austria, sometimes being stamped by civil servants. Also during this time the two cities shared a flu epidemic, which affected the families of both Abraham and Freud. The health problems did not stifle creativity and Freud continued to work on the relationship of dementia praecox with reality, a further incentive for Abraham, who was then researching pregenitality with respect to hunger and libido, to plan a trip to Vienna which delighted his dear professor.

The short essay *On the Pleasure of Sucking* formed part of one of Abraham’s larger projects: a series on pregenital organisations. The third part constituted the *Contribution to the Symptomatology of Anal Eroticism*. In a letter on 28 February 1915 he referred to his wish to publish an article on such an ambitious subject for the first time.

His work at the hospital provided a new stimulus for the restless researcher in him:

> It is striking how few people in the hospital are affected by genuine neuroses. I have seen a number of traumatic neuroses, well known to us from peacetime, in a typical form ... I have seen several severe cases of hysteria in people knocked unconscious by an explosion. (Abraham, letter to Freud, 30 January 1915)

The manuscript of *Mourning and Melancholy* was sent to Karl through Ferenczi. The paper pleased him, although he remarked “this is the first of your papers that did not give me anything new”, as it coincided with his own experiences, but added “my own observations were not yet so clearly organized; I therefore could still learn quite a great deal from the way the paper is structured.” (Letter to Freud, 28 February 1915) The article on melancholia gave rise to a passionate exchange of ideas on the role played in this pathology by sadism and anal eroticism. Later we will examine this dialogue in greater depth. Abraham subsequently added his research on the empowerment impulse of melancholics. Freud welcomed his suggestions and informed him that he would include them in the article and indicate aspects which would need further research.

Freud’s attention was now focussed on the Dardanelles, where Europe’s fate was being decided and *The Unconscious*, an article which Abraham greatly admired. “He read it innumerable times. He called it the most important and fundamental paper Freud had written for some time.” (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 63).
**Allenstein**

On 12 March 1915 Abraham was transferred as a doctor of the German navy to Allenstein in Eastern Prussia. Upon his arrival he wrote: “I arrived here yesterday and shall be doing surgical work, though I hope to have more time for my own work than I had at home.” (to Freud, 13 March 1915) Allenstein, a small garrison village which now belonged to Poland, had around 40,000 inhabitants, most of which were German. The Poles worked in factories or farms. As it was located in a rich agricultural region it suffered from less food restrictions; furthermore, the lakes and huge forests provided an ideal environment for the long hikes that Abraham enjoyed.

Sometimes he was sent to Deutsch Eylau, located in another beautiful county which he enjoyed very much and where he often had to take on the sole responsibility of the unit with only the assistance of an alcoholic anaesthetist. He had to wait until November to recover his optimism when he was relieved of his surgical obligations and set up a centre for observing psychopathic soldiers; this gave him more free time for his private work, in which he would use the many cases of paralysis (General paresis) and psychosis that he observed there.

The presence of the war was felt on all levels and after reading the paper that Freud had written on the subject Karl felt himself aligned with the content and drew an interesting parallel from it.

> What is forbidden to the individual in normal circumstances, he must do in such times as these, and in fact in company with all other men. Exactly the same applies to the totem meal, where the whole community consumes the animal that the individual is usually not permitted to touch. (Letter to Freud, 26 April 1915)

Hedwig was able to spend a week with her husband in May. After these beautiful days, Grant Allen, at the age of five, came down with a serious case of diphtheria; four long weeks of quarantine during which his sister felt alone and abandoned. He recuperated completely during a holiday taken close to a forest and a lake where Karl also spent his leave. Grant felt very proud of his father and said that he was going to win the war; the feeling of pride seems to be mutual if we read Karl’s words that he wrote to Freud:

> During the meal, the little chap asked to speak: “Mummy, while you were in Allenstein I kept having a dream … I kept on thinking
when mama comes back from papa whether there would soon be a baby growing inside her.” I should mention that our children have been told about pregnancy and birth in a matter-of-fact way but not about conception. They have never asked about it. I have no idea where else the child could have heard about it, and I think that he must have put two and two together for himself. I have already told you of his jealousy and his wish to have his mother all to himself. This omnipotent position also includes having children with the mother. Our bedroom has always aroused his curiosity; in the morning he has often tried to look through the keyhole. There can definitely be no question of his having observed anything at night. The following shows that nevertheless he had the right ideas. When he had diphtheria, he was kept in isolation in his room. During the subsequent disinfecting my wife was forced to take him into our bedroom for two nights before he could return to his sister. He was beside himself with delight. Already beforehand he had asked questions such as: Does papa allow this? And then: Does he allow me to put my hanky under his pillow, too? (This surely seems to be an obvious displacement of his real wishes onto something very small?) When the night he had waited for arrived at last, the bedside table with the chamber-pot in it had a magical attraction for him. He woke frequently during the two nights only in order to use it. I suspect the dream is explicable from that point of view … (Letter to Freud, 3 June 1915)

Through this fragment (we have omitted other comments, for example the quote of a subsequent letter of 6 July, in which Grant denies being the son of his father, saying that “I am Papa’s half-brother”), we can gain an impression of the family’s everyday life. However, the tranquillity was not only broken by news from the front; in July they received alarming news regarding Karl’s father who was seventy-five years old. He obtained permission to visit him in Bremen although when he arrived the critical point had passed: “When I arrived, the illness had already passed its climax, and he recovered so much before my eyes that I was able to leave after a few days. He is now slowly improving” (To Freud, 6 July 1915). On his return journey Abraham visited Grant Allen in Berlin, who was still rather weak after his severe illness. An anecdote from this trip was when Hedwig had to go to the station and collect the sword that her husband had left on the train, as Abraham was not permitted to go out without it. (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 63).
His work hardly left him any time to sleep and much less for theoretical reflections. However, at last on the 13 November 1915, after many bureaucratic problems, he was able to leave this service and prepare the opening of the afore-mentioned observation centre for psychopathic soldiers, where he would also write many appraisals for the military courts. This is how he told Freud:

I hope shortly to have a psychiatric department of my own, for the observation of patients about whose mental state there is some doubt, for the treatment of nervous patients, particularly those with hysterical paralyses, and for the observation of epileptics.

(Abraham, 28 December 1915)

He spent a brief period of freedom between Bremen and Berlin. With the effort and participation of his wife (who typed it out on “the most primitive little machine imaginable” (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 64), while she was ailing from a virus stomatitis which only allowed her to absorb liquids through a straw), he concluded The First Pregenital Stage of the Libido for the Zeitschrift. Hilda recounts in the biography how, far from his family, he collected material from self-analysis and observations of his clinical work, spending all of his free time immersed in writing this text which two years later would receive official recognition.

Freud’s articles were always received with great interest; without undervaluing his own output, Abraham observed:

When I think, dear Herr Professor, of the abundance of original ideas contained in every one of your new publications, I see all the more clearly the difference between our achievements, that is to say the achievements of your five closest followers, as compared with your own. The five of us, however, seem to be able to accept this fact well enough and to be quite immune from the Jungian type of reaction. (Abraham to Freud, letter of 1 May 1916)

In his reply Freud returned the compliment referring to Ejaculatio Praecox:

The paper with which you presented me is as excellent as—everything that you have been doing in recent years, distinguished by its many-sidedness, depth, correctness, and, incidentally, it is in
full agreement with the truth as it is known to me. It is so crystal clear that it seems to cry out for a graphic representation of the intersecting and merging mental forces. (Freud, 8 May 1916)

At last he was able to take the whole family with him to Allenstein, where he had been based since 1 May in an old five-bedroom furnished apartment surrounded by gardens and ten minutes from a beautiful forest. Two weeks later, the family was reunited, and although Karl and Hedwig missed the cultural buzz of the capital, the children enormously enjoyed the change; his daughter remembered (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 64) how they entered through a window and spent many afternoons in the countryside where on more than one occasion they got lost due to Karl’s adventurous spirit. Grant, at the age of six, insistently asked if he could marry his sister (10 December 1916), although six months later he changed his mind to console his mother, saying that he would marry her if his father died. (18 March 1917) Meanwhile, Hedwig also read Freud’s works with interest (as reflected in different parts of his daughter’s biography and in a comment made by Karl to Freud on 2 January 1917).

The work of the service became increasingly important and Abraham requested Liebermann to assist him with his seventy-seven patients (in December he had ninety cases of neurosis and psychosis and he was provisionally assigned another young assistant who became infected by his enthusiasm for psychoanalysis). As he refused to accept monetary payment from the patients who he visited at home, they gave him eggs and butter, which were very much appreciated in the context where food products were subject to strict rationing. In November 1916, he spent a week “among the lovely scenery of the Baltic” (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 65), quoting a comment made by her father in a letter of 12 November omitted from the official version of correspondence), visiting his mother and attending an official neurological congress which began to discuss some psychoanalytic concepts.

Freud was immobilised in Salzburg for three months, and used this time to write. Karl remarked that the conferences “are a necessary stimulus in the small town in which we live”, (to Freud, 2 January 1917), welcoming the good news of the creation of the Dutch Psychoanalytic Association. In 1912, Abraham, through Bjerre, proposed that the Nobel Prize were awarded to Freud. Four years later, Barany (Professor of otolaryngology in Uppsala, Nobel Prize in 1915 and “one of the most
original thinkers among doctors”—in the words of Abraham to Freud on 10 December 1916) made the same proposal to no avail and to the frustration of Freud himself.

The huge German attack launched on 1 February 1917 caught his attention. Abraham was convinced that that campaign would lead to victory and peace (quoted in Gay, 1988, p. 353), but Freud, much less optimistic, seemed to have lost the bravery of Casimiro … would he live to see the end of the war? Would he continue to publish works? In the winter he complained that he was so cold that his fingers do not respond (Freud dramatically headed a letter on 18 January 1918 to Abraham with the expression “Shivering with cold!”); he was irritated by Germany and his only consolation seemed to be the Balfour Declaration. In contrast, Karl continued thinking about the possibility of obtaining a lectureship after the war.

The frenetic pace of his work in Allenstein prevented him from undertaking any ambitious projects, although he continued to produce short articles which always received praise from the master: “You in particular have written in these unfavourable conditions the two best clinical studies that we possess and have certainly compiled ample new material” (Freud to Abraham, 20 May 1917). So, in 1917, “Some illustrations on the emotional relationship of little girls towards their parents”, was published, in which he used accounts of his daughter previously published in the “Children’s Corner” of Zentralblatt. Ejaculatio Praecox was the second article that he wrote during the war on the subject to complement the previous one (he refers to the failure to enter full genital maturity and identifies narcissism as the source of this disorder). The Spending of Money in Anxiety States was a very short article based on old notes. His experience in legal psychiatry provided raw material for the thesis on academic enhancement. Hilda observes … “My father became more and more involved with the study of libidinal development and fixation to primitive levels” (H. Abraham, 1974, p. 70).

That summer, according to Hilda, they felt the effects of the climate of Eastern Germany in the asthma and bronchitis suffered by Karl, together with the dysentery from which he was ailing. The mark of these years on body and soul is reflected in the photographs that were exchanged … “You would find me too gone grey and, in spite of sufficient food, much reduced in weight” (Letter of 2 November 1917). Although it was almost three years since they last met, the circumstances continued to rule out any possibility of seeing one another; Freud saw a black
future … “The U-boat war has not achieved its object” (to Abraham, 11 November 1917) and in another letter (10 December 1917): “The only thing that gives me any pleasure is the capture of Jerusalem and the British experiment [he refers to the Balfour Declaration] with the chosen people”. His resignation was compensated for by Abraham’s balanced temperament and indestructible vitality.

A short trip taking a wounded official to Bremen enabled him to enjoy two days with his mother; when he passed through Berlin he spoke with privy councillor Bonhoeffer about his teaching habilitation. Without really knowing how he could help, he requested Freud to intervene in his favour through Kraus or Bonhoeffer.

Abraham took on two new patients in his private practice, which now took up three or four hours of his time each day: a lady from Renania who had been treated by van Ophuijsen and her nephew, a twelve-year-old boy with problems at school of which he was proud. Much later, his professional success was confirmed in a letter of condolence sent by his aunt to Hedwig after Karl’s death, in which she also commented that her own life had changed for the better. Based on this case, Abraham wrote an article on patients who were unable to freely associate in the practice and only able to do so at home; although at first he believed it would hinder her progress, in this case it was successful. Another of the cases, an obsessive neurosis, also gave very good results. Payment was usually made in cigarettes, bacon, pork fat, etc. which were also procured through friends and supporters. One patient who he had cured (Tihanyi, a deaf and dumb artist) drew a picture for him.

Ernst Simmel, the director of a military hospital for patients suffering war neurosis, wrote a book about this type of patient from a psychoanalytic point of view, which was completely honest with respect to sexual aetiology. Although he took a mostly cathartic view, it represented a great step forward for the cause. “I think a year’s training would make a good analyst of that man. His behaviour is correct” (Letter to Freud, 17 February 1918). Many of his experiences in the military hospital were similar to those of Abraham who sought to win him over; his hospital in Posen was relatively close to Allenstein and they both had a lot to share. It was not in vain that Karl published *Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses* in 1918 at around the same time.

In February, the family had to move out of their apartment; the new one was not as pleasing to them as the other. It was very primitive, terribly cold, and without a bathroom (the shower that they tried to
install—which was dubbed as the gallows—did not give good results). The winter was the harshest that the family remembered and the rationing of coal, which fired a single stove, was far from sufficient. During this dark time, the “bravery of Casimiro” lacked its usual strength … “He remained hopeful for the future, but found the present, particularly the exile, hard to bear.” (Quoted by H. Abraham, 1974, p. 66).

The Congress of Psychiatry in Wurzburg provided the opportunity of two magnificent days for enjoying nature, architecture, and art: “exceptional beauties of mediaeval and later sculpture”. After attending the congress, he visited his mother again; she was now eighty-three and was seriously ill. Abraham stayed with her for several days. Although she was no longer in danger, “she still suffers from the persistent oedemas” (Letter to Freud, 19 May 1918) Freud replied, referring to his own mother: “Sometimes I think I shall feel a little freer when she dies, because the idea of her having to be told of my death is something from which one shrinks back. He describes himself as powerless embitterment, or embitterment at my powerlessness.” (Letter from Freud to Abraham, 29 May 1918).

After nine years, he finally met Freud again in September at the fifth Psychoanalytic Congress in Budapest. All the men, except for Freud, who attended with his daughter Anna, were in uniform. Grosskurth talks of the event:

The forty-two analysts attending included representatives from Austria, Germany and Hungary. The work that Ferenczi, Abraham, Eitingon and Simmel, had carried out on war neuroses was impressive and awakened interest in the authorities to create clinics for ex-soldiers. The event had a curiously festive atmosphere … Klein met Freud in person. Ferenczi was elected as president of the Internacional Association. (Grosskurth, 1991, p. 101) [Translated for this edition]

Abraham could not help feeling disappointed when he got to know Ernst Simmel better, “He has not yet in any way moved beyond the Breuer point of view”. (Letter from Abraham, 27 October 1918). Despite this he started to analyse him in 1919 and his opinion of him changed as he began to realise that he was one of the most efficient figures of German psychoanalysis. The hostility towards this science from the medical environment in Berlin did not change with the war; however,
although interest mostly focussed on politics, there was talk that Shilder was interested in the cause.

Hedwig and Karl missed Berlin; the nostalgia that they felt, generated by their exile, weakened their optimism during this period. The imperial regime fell on 9 November: pressured by strikes and protests the emperor was obliged to stand down. He entrusted the leadership of the government to the social democrat Ebert. “The city is engulfed in strikes, demonstrations, parades, meetings and countless proclamations and speeches” (Richard, 1991, p. 49) On 11 November the armistice was signed. The Weimar Republic came next.
CHAPTER SEVEN

The psychoanalytic trenches again

The harsh winter of 1918

At last, Abraham was demobilised on 15 December 1918 and after Christmas, postponed by the three patients in psychoanalysis, the family moved to Berlin. They rented a furnished apartment with electricity and a telephone to the astonishment of the children, in the Grunewald (being used to living like gypsies in the country, they tried to find a comfortable home, although outside of the city centre). On the day that they arrived, Abraham chose a good hotel to compensate for the long and hard journey. The search for a permanent home kept him busy almost every day and they did not find one until June.

After his return to Berlin, he resumed his psychoanalytic career with renewed vigour. He trained students, wrote articles and reviews and was the editor of the Zeitschrift, and was responsible for the annual report. In that same period he shared a monetary prize with Simmel worth a thousand crowns. It was awarded by Freud and was partly funded by Anton von Freund in recognition of the best scientific works. Freud decided not to appoint a jury so as not to exclude the best members from the decision and requested tolerance with respect to the
small sum. The winning article was written in 1916: *The First Pregenital Stage of the Libido*. Abraham, who was delighted with his prize, had no doubt about how he was going to use it … “for a long-postponed wish-fulfilment—a visit to Vienna—as soon as circumstances permit.” (Letter to Freud, 15 December 1918).

The commotions of the war continued; on 15 January Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were assassinated; days later, the Germans held elections for the first time. Almost ninety per cent of those of voting age went to the polls. The *Internationale Psychoanalytischer Verlag* was founded in Vienna with a shaky start but Abraham was enthusiastic about it.

There was a five-month break in the correspondence with Freud (from June to October 1919). We are uncertain of the events during this period when Freud described Vienna as being unbearable. We do know that Tausk committed suicide on 3 July.

On 13 March 1920 an attempted coup d’état carried out by General Kapp in Berlin was stifled by the people (with the unions calling for a general strike), although other events confirmed the rising power of the extreme right. The law corresponding to forming a new urban community, imposed by the parties that won the elections that finally respected universal suffrage, came into force on 1 October 1920.

*The expansion of psychoanalysis in Berlin: the Polyclinic*

The Berlin group wished to recover lost time and resumed regular and fruitful meetings; in the month of February 1918 there were three meetings, one about *Imago*. Abraham wrote more papers: *A Particular Form of Neurotic Resistance Against the Psychoanalytic Method*, which referred to patients who permanently avoided free association, and later, *Some Remarks of Ferenczi’s Paper on Sunday Neuroses*. Both were published in the *Zeitschrift*. Freud pointed out that “The technical paper is particularly good and topical. What is perhaps missing is that the whole attitude derives from the father complex.” (Letter to Abraham, 13 April 1919) It is no coincidence that it was these two disciples, considered by many as the most brilliant, who placed most emphasis on the maternal function.

In August, when Abraham, Eitingon, and Freud were all in Berlin it was suggested that Eitingon were incorporated into the Committee as a full member. “Berlin is clamouring for psychoanalysis”, argued the
Berliners with the intention of holding the next international congress in their city; the English and American refusal forced the venue to be changed to Holland. Abraham proposed a further week of conferences after the Congress. This idea was enthusiastically welcomed by the rest who believed it would be fruitful. At the end of that year, Jones founded the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* and Abraham was searching for premises for a polyclinic.

Freud very much enjoyed Abraham’s article on *The Narcissistic Evaluation of Excretory Processes in Dreams and Neurosis*. In 1920 he also published: *The Day of Atonement: Some Observations on Reik’s Problems of the Psychology of Religion; The Applicability of Psychoanalytic Treatment to Patients at an Advanced Age and Psychoanalysis as a Source of Knowledge for the Humanities*. Freud’s comment is not surprising (he was also editing *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and was working on *Group Psychology*): “The papers you announce will be given the usual welcome! It is astonishing how much work you are still able to do in a situation in which, as I am well aware myself, all one’s energy is required to maintain one’s economic level.” (Letter to Abraham, 1 December 1919). We may add that Freud was overcoming difficulties, for example, the death of his daughter Sophie and the fatal illness suffered by Anton von Freind at that time.

At last, the Polyclinic in Berlin was opened on 14 February 1920 which had been proposed a year earlier by Ernst Simmel and Max Eitingon. It was constructed by Freud’s son, Ernst. At that time of economic misery, the polyclinic offered psychoanalytic treatment to a population who was in much need of it. The Psychoanalytic Association of Berlin covered the costs.

In the opening ceremony, Abraham made an introductory speech; then musical interludes punctuated the verses that Ernst Simmel had chosen from two poems from the *Book of Hours*, by Rainer Maria Rilke, *Premonition* and *Madness*; then a text by Oskar H. Schmitz was recited, which had been extracted from *Catastrophic Stories*. After the cultural section, Abraham delivered a speech on *The Rise of the Polyclinic from the Unconscious*. Grosskurth describes the process:

> With the financial support of Max Eitingon who was immensely rich, the clinic was opened in the *Potsdamerstrasse*, which later formed part of East Berlin. It became a model for all subsequent clinics (due to Freud’s resistance to the idea of a clinic, the clinic in
Vienna was not opened until May 1922). (Grosskurth, 1991, p. 128) [Translated for this edition]

Rider gives another account of the event:

Under the direction of Karl Abraham and the efforts of Eitingon and Simmel, the psychoanalytic polyclinic was founded in Berlin. The project received the approval of the ministry and universities ... At the end of the year, Sachs left Switzerland in order to join the clinic’s team. (Le Rider, 1982, p. 132) [Translated for this edition]

The Psychoanalytic Institute was incorporated into the Polyclinic. The first psychoanalysts to practice there were Eitingon and Simmel, who were also teachers. It was Freud’s suggestion to also include Sachs as he was from Vienna and therefore not part of the inner Berlin circle. The Institute became a small private university.

From the outset, Abraham began to teach his courses on theoretical introduction. The course that he taught between 1920 and 1922 was subsequently divided into two courses. In December 1924, Radó took over the teaching of his courses, and after Abraham’s death, Alexander, Fenichel, Rheim, and Theodor Reik also began teaching there.

Abraham, Eitingon, and Simmel shared the management of the design, publishing, financing, and teaching of the courses. This frenetic activity did not hinder his clinical and analytical work or his role as president of the German Society and International Association or his research on which he based his writings. From its creation to the arrival of the Nazis, a hundred analysts were trained in the Institute and almost a thousand people were analysed; its influence can still be observed today in some centres.

The efforts soon gave their fruits: Alfred Gross, assistant to Bonhoeffer, and “a woman just about to take her final exam, who was already well informed before she started” (letter to Freud, 4 April 1920)—Klein—were two of the young people who were attracted to the courses and activities of the Polyclinic. However, while making some headway regarding the coveted lectureship of psychoanalysis at the University of Berlin, this position still eluded him. The opposition from the Faculty was still too strong. Later, Abraham was offered the possibility of obtaining a teaching position if he converted and was christened: he refused.

He spent three weeks, between 15 July and 5 August 1920 at home resting, after giving (very successfully) a conference on the neurotic
disorders of the digestive tract to thirty doctors of internal medicine at the University of Halle. He felt proud to have represented Freud and participated on his behalf with respect to the contribution to the text of Kraus and Brugsh, although he insisted that everyone preferred the contribution of the master himself. Although, Abraham affirmed (27 June 1920), that he had always agreed with profane psychoanalysis—and have indeed furthered it with my own writings—his dear professor did not see it that way when he says (21 June 1920): “I am tremendously pleased that so much is going on in Berlin, [referring to the frenetic activity described by Abraham preventing him from visiting Vienna] and that you too are beginning to be convinced of the impossibility of restricting psychoanalysis to the doctors.” (Freud to Abraham, 21 June 1920).

The requirements for working in the Polyclinic were:

1. Neurological and psychiatric training;
2. Extensive knowledge of psychoanalytic literature;
3. Personal analysis of the candidate.

Karl was moderately optimistic with respect to the situation in Berlin and confident that the satisfactory progress that the cause was making would offer greater fruits in the future: “Expenditure on necessities completely runs through even a large income … I, for instance, can only just earn enough for our needs” (6 December 1920). Freud, however continually used expressions such as: “In Vienna things are pretty quiet, as Berlin has taken the wind out of our sails”. (4 March and 8 April 1923) In January 1923 Abraham gave a conference on the vicissitudes of the Oedipus complex; in February, Klein was selected as a full member of the Society. On 7 November of the same year, it was announced that Melanie would give a course on child sexuality to nursery teachers. Meanwhile, Karl continued to produce papers: *Psycho-analytical Views on Some Characteristics of Early Infantile Thinking; Two Contributions to the Study of Symbols; An Infantile Theory of the Origin of the Female Sex*, which were based on Freud’s *Ego and Id*. In October, a circulating library was set up for the young students of the Society. The Polyclinic became too small for Abraham’s courses (the previous year he had between eighty and ninety students), and he transferred them to the Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht (Central Institute of Education and Teaching), a state institution located opposite the polyclinic.

In February 1925 he was requested to give a conference by a medical association in Berlin. This was a new opportunity offered by the
Gynaecological and Obstetric Association which would be officially recognised in Germany. On the 25th of this month, the social democrat and first president of the German Republic, Friedrich Ebert, died at the age of fifty-four. He was replaced by Field Marshal Hindenburg two months later.

The cause consolidates

For the Congress in The Hague in 1920, Freud asked Abraham, who was then the secretary of the Psychoanalytic Association and known for his linguistic skills, to deliver the opening speech in Latin. Abraham, “astonishing everyone, he delivered the speech fluently” (Grosskurth, 1991, p. 127). [Translated for this edition].

Despite much insistence, in 1920 it was impossible to meet in Berlin. Although not xenophobic, the English and American analysts still harboured anti-German feelings. However, only two years later, on the request of Abraham, the International Psychoanalytical Association chose the city to hold the next congress, which took place with no political recriminations. That was the last congress attended by Freud. We know through Grosskurth (1991, p. 145) that Abraham did not wish to present a text on manic-depressive psychosis, because he lacked data to support his theory; later Klein provided this data for him.

Freud received a sum of money to help with financing the Congress in Holland. He gave the amount that was left over to Hedwig with which to buy bicycles for her children as a Christmas present, “to gratify their heart’s desire”. (Gay, 1988, p. 181) The two children thanked him with charming letters. It was almost impossible to separate them from their bicycles.

On 20 September 1920, the Rundbriefe was started and the first number was issued in October. The objective of the weekly memo was to keep the closest followers of Freud in Vienna, Budapest, Berlin and London in continual contact.

Freud did not hesitate to congratulate Abraham on the publication of his book Clinical Papers on Psycho-Analysis (it includes a selection of his work and possibly provided a reference for his son, Grant A. Allan, when he edited his father’s work in 1927). He wrote to him on 4 February and included the general opinion of the analysts: “a collection of classical, model papers. Incidentally, Deuticke is willing to publish a second edition of Dreams and Myths.” (To Abraham, 4 February 1921). With this
support, and making up for the scant publishing activity during the war, in 1921 he also published Two Mistakes of a Hebephrenic Patient; a contribution to Ferenczi’s paper Psychoanalytic Observations on Tic: Contribution to a Discussion on Tic; and, finally, Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex. It came before Freud’s Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.

A peace treaty was signed between Germany and the United States. There are gaps in the correspondence and we can observe answers and comments to questions that are missing; one example is the deduction through a comment by Freud (6 March 1921), that the Abrahams travelled to the south “to convalesce” with James and Edward Glover (who he was analysing at this time) as “hand luggage”.

The seven members of the Committee met in the Harz Mountains on 21 September 1921. The Hotel d’Angleterre was the venue chosen by Abraham, who organised the event in a tranquil environment, which enabled them to harmoniously blend work and leisure; later Ferenczi would describe them as perfect and unforgettable days.

On 3 January 1922, he travelled to Vienna to see Freud together with Jones, Ferenczi, and Rank. The reason for the trip was to give a conference; he stayed in one of the rooms that Martha Freud had refurbished as a guest room and had been previously used by Andreas-Salomé. He spent some pleasant days in Vienna, during which he witnessed at firsthand how Freud wrote letters until late into the night. This makes him even more reluctant than before to add to your burden, although sometimes his desire to keep Freud updated with his activities was even stronger. He continued writing and published: Mistakes with an Overcompensating Tendency; The Spider as a Dream Symbol; The Rescue and Murder of the Father in Neurotic Phantasy-Formations; and An Octogenarian’s Mistake, probably the “birthday gift”, which he alluded to when he congratulated Freud.

On 24 June, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and director of AEG, Walther Rathenau, organiser of the war economy, was assassinated by a secret extreme right organisation that despised both his Jewishness and his intelligence.

Despite the unstable climate, the summer was spent in the mountains of St. Anton am Alberg. Karl now had a good companion for his excursions: his son.

In September 1922, the seventh Psychonanalytic Congress was held in Berlin very close to the Clinic. A hundred visitors were able to discover the work of the Berlin group. Among other representatives of
the movement, Max Eitingon made an introductory speech about the Clinic’s activities and highlighted the lack of funds to pay its staff in full: “In Budapest, Freud, referring to the psychoanalytic centres that would exist in the future, said: the treatment will be free. To date, we have not gone that far. We ask our patients to pay us what they can or think they can afford. And we cannot say that the fact that the treatment is paid for or not influences the course of the analysis.” (Le Rider, 1982, p. 133) [Translated for this edition].

In 1923, French and Belgian troops took control of the Ruhr basin. The German government decided to adopt a stance of passive resistance, which concluded in September by the decision of Stresemann’s new government.

After the International Psychology Congress in Oxford in July, an opportunity arose for a meeting with Freud at the end of August coinciding with his holidays in South Tyrol in the Groedner Valley (St. Ulrich or Wolkenstein).

The Committee, Freud’s Praetorian Guard, met between 26 and 28 August at the request of the master who wished to iron out the differences between them. The venue chosen by the small group of Freud’s intimate supporters (Abraham, Eitingon, Jones, Rank, Ferenczi, and Sachs), was San Cristoforo, in the Dolomite mountains at the foot of a large hill in Lavarone, where Freud resided. We know from the correspondence that disagreements arose which Karl attempted to resolve; in April 1924 he wrote: “Last year in San Cristoforo the Committee would certainly have fallen apart had I not kept it together” (Letter to Freud, 4 April 1924). We can read in Peter Gay: “There was bad blood among them, and had been for some time, since the end of the war. The Rundbriebe, weekly circular letters they had begun to send around in October 1920, had not helped matters enough.” (Gay, 1988, p. 423) The Rundbriebe never replaced the private correspondence.

When Freud was diagnosed with cancer, Abraham’s incurable optimism did not abandon him throughout the process; in this case, he joined the other disciples in a collective denial to try to stop time. In order to cheer up the convalescing Freud after the surgery that he underwent in the autumn, he sent him a series of new Egyptian photographs and newspaper clippings. The bond between the two men was very solid, Karl commented … “It is 17 years, dear Professor, since I first met you, and in all these years I have always felt happy that I could count myself among those closest to you; and nothing has changed about this even today. I do
not wish the slightest doubt about this to arise.” (Letter to Freud, 8 March 1924, due to the conflict that had arisen with Ferenczi and Rank).

An important social event was celebrated on 29 October 1924: “The radio has become public at a time when economic and politic misery has become a serious problem”. The objective therefore was to give the German people “a little dynamism and joy for living”, to make up for their intellectual impoverishment. (Proclaimed by the secretary of State, Hans Bredow; quoted by Huynh, 1991, p. 191) [Translated for this edition]. Both the radio stations and newspapers of Berlin actively participated in propagating a high quality culture with the support of distinguished writers, artists, and journalists. In Munich, Hitler and Ludendorff attempted to carry out a coup.

The tensions between the Berliners and Ferenczi and Rank ran high at the beginning of 1924. It was the master’s turn to try to lift spirits, although “there are no doubt various dangers involved with this deviation from our classical technique, as Ferenczi called it in Vienna, but that is not to say that they cannot be avoided … Ferenczi’s active therapy is a dangerous temptation for ambitious beginners, and there is scarcely any way to keep them away from such experiments.” (Circular letter, 9 January 1924).

He acknowledged the importance and interest of Rank’s Trauma of Birth, but only partially accepted it having doubts and restrictions regarding many passages. Abraham requested Freud to arrange a Committee meeting during the lead up to the Salzburg Congress to avoid the rupture of the innermost circle. Freud could not attend due to a bad cold and aware of the advantages of not being a witness of the dispute. Ten days before the Congress, in a circular letter, Freud, Rank, and Ferenczi announced the dissolution of the Committee.

Another highlight of Abraham’s career was his Study of the Development of the Libido ..., published at the beginning of 1924, after making last minute modifications to the chapter on mania. The publishing of the Gesammelte Schriften also began.

The Eighth International Congress (in Salzburg), was held in April without any disturbing clashes.

Until his death, a year and a half later, Abraham was the President of the International Psychoanalytical Association; prior to this he had been Secretary. On 28 April he received Freud’s wishes for an active and successful period; the “rocher de bronce” was congratulated for his appointment and his recognised merit for calming tensions.
Despite the continued difficulties inherent in travelling, he took a spring holiday in the calmness of Sils-María (Engadina), where the whole family shared the domestic chores. The area, with its exuberant flowers like no other place in the Alps, enchanted the family. The high season had not started and there were very few people there so they were able to enjoy to the full all the splendours of the alpine mountains. In the privileged environment, he prepared *The Influence of Oral Erotism on Character Formation*. The pleasure culminated in August when they visited the Freuds in Semmering for a few days.

On 12 October, a meeting was held in Salzburg on the banks of the Main among forty-eight people from different countries. Karl tells his master (15 October 1924): “Most of the papers were of a remarkably high standard” and highlights: “In the Spanish language, which I like so very much, one puts the question-mark at the beginning of the sentence.” Training was discussed in depth based on the talks given by Simmel and Sachs; Freud referred to this event as a German meeting.

The research on the number seven that Abraham was carrying out—and which interested Freud immensely—got no further than a rough draft: the ambivalent attitude of men towards the number seven, the seventh day and seventh month as a taboo among Jews and Babylons … But what fundamentally absorbed his time was clinical research, which, at that time, was focussed on the fear of closed spaces (which still had not been studied in detail in the field of psychoanalysis) and female sexuality.

Meanwhile, Hitler went on trial in Munich, and Haarmann, the werewolf of Hannover who committed over twenty crimes, was sentenced to death. Freud worked on *An Autobiographical Study*.

Abraham published several works in the last year of his life: *Character-formation on the Genital Level of the Libido; An Infantile Sexual Theory not Hitherto Noted; Psychoanalysis and Gynaecology; Concurrent Phantasies in Mother and Son*; and finally, in the issue of *Imago* published on the same day as his death, *The History of an Impostor in the Light of Psychoanalytical Knowledge Historia*, an essay based on a legal assessment during the war and which he presented in a course that he organised for lawyers prior to its publication. It forms the basis of the course taught today at the University of Berlin by G. Maetze on the application of psychoanalysis to the study of crimes and criminals.

The director of a large film-making company approached Abraham with the idea of producing a film on psychoanalysis, offering him the
opportunity to select his collaborators. (Letter to Freud, 7 June 1925) Abraham was suspicious although he thought that this kind of thing was typical of our times and would be taken up by other wild analysts if they did not. In short, the plan, described in more detail in the letter, did not excite him or Freud, but he thought that it was appropriate to undertake the project for practical reasons. The news found him in a poor state of health. The film, \textit{Secrets of a Soul}, was eventually carried out with the advisory services of Hanns Sachs.

\textit{The illness and death of Abraham}

May 1925 was a critical month in Abraham’s life; an apparently trivial event led to his fatal illness: Abraham and his wife were members of a club with which they periodically made trips to the country. During one of these trips in Holland, Karl choked on a fish bone that caused a lesion in his larynx, followed by a septic bronchopneumonia, a lung abscess and finally a subphrenic abscess. There were many complications: constant fever, double pneumonia, the need for a gallbladder operation and discomfort due to persistent hiccups that shortly afterwards led to chronic bronchitis.

The illness, closely followed by his professor, developed in the typical manner of a septicaemia before the discovery of antibiotics: strongly variable temperature, intervals of remission and euphoria. Peter Gay also ventures a possible case of undiagnosed lung cancer to explain the evolution of his illness. (Gay, 1988, p. 482) The news caused a great stir in his circles and Hedwig and the housekeeper received concerned visitors on a daily basis. On 9 May he made his last appearance at a Society meeting.

Joseph Breuer died in the month of June.

Abraham improved a little in July, enough to be able to spend the summer with his family resting in the Hotel Victoria in Wengen (the Bernese Oberland in Switzerland), taking short walks in the mountains. It is located at 1,270 m above sea level and had a mountain railway to ascend if climbing conditions were not optimum. Eitingon represented a fundamental support for preparing the next Congress. Although the conditions of the place were ideal—no cars or dust—Abraham’s respiratory problems persisted, “Until now I did not even know that one could walk so slowly or that a lift could become one of the necessities of life …” (Letter from Abraham to Freud, 18 July 1925). He used the
time, therefore, to catch up on reading some of his favourite works: Aristophanes (in Greek) and Heine. We know from Freud’s comments how selflessly Hedwig cared for her husband during his illness. They spent the month of August in Sils-María, Abraham’s favourite region where he felt that he was recovering more quickly.

The family economy became tight with the illness and the longed-for project of the couple to build a summer residence in Sils was no longer a possibility for them.

From 3 to 5 September the ninth Psychoanalytic Congress was held in Bad-Homburg, with a scientifically satisfying standard; and Abraham was re-elected as president. Attendance was higher and more international than in Salzburg. Progress was made with respect to profane psychoanalysis and a proposal was made to unify, where possible, the training of analysts in different countries.

For some months Freud had been debating whether to attend the Congress or not. He finally decided to send his daughter Anna who read his paper “Some psychological consequences …” Her clear speech enhanced the quality of the paper. Those exhausting days left their mark on Abraham … “I will in any case have to undergo some treatment for my nose and throat from Fliess.” The effort was too much for his now weak constitution and Freud, who remained in permanent contact with him, began to feel concern. “So what I feared has happened. The Congress was a great strain on you, and I can only hope that your youth will soon get the better of the disturbance.” (Letter to Abraham, 11 September 1925).

In October, Abraham sent another bulletin: “One can report from Germany that the discussion of Psa. in the newspapers and periodicals is unceasing. We find it mentioned everywhere” (17 October 1925, Gay, 1988, p. 452). It was natural that there would be attacks, but he added reassuringly, “without doubt interest has never been so strong as now.” The reports from Berlin continued to be optimistic, he felt much better, the biliary colics had disappeared and the inflammation of the liver had improved. Fliess, who was treating Abraham, had repeatedly and with the warmest interest asked about Freud’s health. Abraham was convinced that he had extraordinary qualities as a doctor. He thought that he was worth three internal medical professors and, he also commented: “I would tell you how my illness has most strikingly confirmed all Fliess’s views on periodicity.” (Letter to Freud, 8 September 1925). But the improvement did not last. The fevers, pain, and gallbladder problems indicated that the illness was very serious. His cough could only be controlled with morphine.
The atmosphere surrounding him during the last few months of his life was one of disbelief and denial, both in himself and in those around him. An example of this can be seen in Melanie Klein and Alix Strachey as told by Grosskurth: “The two women were so busy with the translation of their conferences and the imminent trip to London that they were unaware of the seriousness of Abraham’s condition … They thought that their analysis had only been interrupted temporarily and could not resume it before leaving for England, so they brought the trip forward from July to June.” (Grosskurth, 1991, p. 184) [Translated for this edition]. However, pages later, the same author admits that Melanie was not as impassive as it seemed. When she returned to Berlin in July, she realised that the state of Abraham’s had worsened and she became very concerned: “Felix Deutsch (also Freud’s doctor and later a psychoanalyst), made frequent trips from Vienna to Berlin to examine him, although Fliess was his favourite doctor. There were days when Abraham felt well enough to see patients and in September 1925 Alix Strachey returned to Berlin with the intention of resuming her analysis.” (Grosskurth, 1991, p. 184) [Translated for this edition]. When Abraham became too ill, Alix returned to England to continue her treatment with Glover.

Abraham could not treat any patients; however he did manage to continue writing and the small previously mentioned papers were published. One month before he died, he wrote what seems almost like a farewell to Freud with respect to transferential aspects responding to what he believed was a reproach in his circular letter of Abraham’s harshness:

I find myself in the same position again as on several previous occasions. In almost 20 years, we have had no differences of opinion except where personalities were concerned whom I, very much to my regret, had to criticize. The same sequence of events repeated itself each time; you indulgently overlooked everything that could be challenged in the behaviour of the persons concerned, while all the blame—which you subsequently recognized as unjustified—was directed against me. In Jung’s case your criticism was that of “jealousy”; in the case of Rank “unfriendly behaviour”, and this time “harshness”. Could the sequence of events not be the same once again? I advanced an opinion that is basically yours as well, but which you did not admit into consciousness. All the unpleasure linked to the relevant facts is then turned against the person who has drawn attention to them. (Letter from Abraham to Freud, 27 October 1925)
In his reply Freud made light of the matter, “Such differences of opinion can never be avoided, but only quickly overcome.” In December, Freud’s anguish was extreme: “We are not in the mood to write a circular letter this month … Abraham’s illness keeps us all in suspense and we are very unhappy that the news should be so indefinite and sound so uncanny.” (Quoted by Gay, 1988, p. 482; letter to Jones dictated to Anna Freud on 13th December 1925).

Gay also comments how (p. 483, from a letter to Jones of 13 December), after Freud had informed Jones that Félix Deutsch had seen Abraham, he said “this week will be the critical period and [that] we ought to be prepared for the worst.” He refused to become discouraged: “It is a gloomy prospect, but as long as he is alive we may cling to the hope that his affection often gives a chance of recovery.” Freud did not feel well enough to travel to Berlin but hoped that Ferenczi would do so and asked whether Jones’ health would allow him to travel. Freud refused to accept the reality that was unfolding before his eyes. “I intentionally abstain from picturing the consequences if that fatal event occurs.”

Five days later, in another letter to Jones he seemed to have found a glimmer of hope: “No news from Abraham today”, the most recent note “sounded reassuring”. He was comforted by the thought that Alix Strachey had also recovered from an abscess on the lungs and by the fact that Abraham’s heart was responding well. But the postscript that he added had a very different tone. Deutsch had just called: he had left Abraham without a fever but he warned that he had suffered a relapse and the situation was hopeless.

Abraham died on 25 December. He was forty-eight years old. According to Gay: “Freud took Abraham’s death very hard. The sensible organizer, the renowned training analyst, the indispensable optimist, the interesting theoretician, the loyal friend was gone.” (Gay, 1988, p. 483).

Vicent Brome gives his point of view of the whole process:

During the First World War, he directed the psychiatric unit of the 20th army corps; he acquired extensive experience in was neuroses but, also inherited poor health. In the following years he suffered from recurring dysentery until the spring of 1924. In May 1925, he caught a virus and in the space of a night it had developed into a serious bronchopneumonia. He suffered from bronchiectasis until his death, and although he presided the Hamburg Congress, it had required a great effort. He improved for a while, only to fall ill again. In November
he underwent major surgery, which did not cure him completely. His
became weaker; he lost consciousness and died on Christmas Day
1925. (Brome, 1967, p. 285) [Translated for this edition]

According to Freud, Abraham’s death was “an iniquity of fate”, he left
his work unfinished. Although his illness reduced his capacity to work,
in his letters he still transmitted his interest and research in the “early
infantile awakening of the libido” and primary narcissism until the
very end.

Condolences

In a letter to Jones, Freud wrote:

I can only repeat what you said. Abr.’s death is perhaps the great-
est loss that could have hit us, and it has hit us. In letters I jokingly
called him my rocher de bronze; I felt safe in the absolute confidence
he inspired in me, as in everyone else. In the brief obituary [Quoted
at the beginning of this chapter] I wrote for the Zeitschrift—a full-
length appreciation will doubtless come from another quarter; Heft 2 is
being reserved for it—I applied to him the line from Horace:
Integer vitae scelerisque purus. I have always found exaggerations at
death particularly embarrassing and have taken care to avoid them,
but with this quotation I feel I have been truthful. Who would have
thought, when we met that time in the Hartz [Committee meeting in
September 1921], that he would be the first to depart this irrational
life. We must work on and keep together. No one can personally
replace our loss, but then for our work no one can be indispensable.
I shall soon depart … (in German, dated 30 December 1925)

In the same letter, he accepted the suggestion to name Eitingon as presi-
dent; another specialist in psychosis took Abraham’s place. The desper-
ate obituary written by Freud contains Horacio’s verse and the no less
sincere and distressed affirmation that with Abraham the psychoana-
lytic movement was burying “one of the strongest hopes of our young
science, still much attacked, a perhaps irretrievable part of its future.”
(Gay, 1988, p. 483).

On 3 January he confesses to Oscar Pfister: “Our situation, let alone
our mood, has been determined by Abraham’s death, which as you
know, took place on Christmas Day. We have lost so very much with him, it will be difficult to replace him. I am writing this with no regard to my emotions, only considering his objective value.” [Translated for this edition].

Jones was one of the people who was most affected by the death of who he considered to be his best friend. The funeral was tremendous—he wrote to his wife—“Freud was too formal maybe due to excessive control. Sachs was too restless; a fine speech and many—myself included—broke down …”

The letter of condolence that Freud sent to the widow read (17 January 1926):

Dear Frau,

Since my telegram on receiving the news of your husband’s death I have put off writing to you. It was too difficult, and I hoped it would become easier. Then I fell ill myself, became feverish, and have not yet recovered. But already I see that putting it off was pointless, it is just as difficult now as it was then. I have no substitute for him, and no consolatory words for you that would tell you anything new. That we have to submit with resignation to the blows of fate you know already; and you will have guessed that to me his loss is particularly painful because I think, with the selfishness of old age, that the loss could easily have been spared for the probable short duration of my own life. The only consolation is the news that in your brother you have found a helper who will enable you to watch over the development of your daughter and son, free from crippling cares. May you find a new and rich meaning in life from your motherhood! I have no prospect of travelling, so I do not know whether I shall see you again. Do keep me too in your memory.

With heartfelt sympathy,

Your devoted

Freud

The commemorative act in memory of Abraham organised by the Vienna Society was a legendary event among analysts, according to Roazen (1985, p. 357). For a long time Freud was afraid that his presence would be an inhibiting factor in the discussions at the meetings
and with the onset of his cancer (which hindered his speech) he had stopped attending them. The meeting in honour of Abraham was the first and last exception that Freud made. Reik, who was then one of Freud’s favourites, was to read the eulogy that Freud had written for the occasion, but was a few minutes late and Freud was angered by this lack of punctuality. Federn presided the meeting, and when referring to his deceased colleague uttered the name Reik instead of Abraham. Later, Federn admitted that he had to give a long explanation to Freud for that *lapses linguae*. (Natterson, 1966, p. 80).

A series of rumours arose surrounding the inevitable rivalries and jealousy inherent in the consolidation of the psychoanalytic institution. For example we can read in Roazen: “Despite his pulmonary ailment, Abraham insisted on having gallbladder surgery. From a medical point of view this was so strange that Sandor Radó speculated with the idea that Abraham would have killed himself in order to avoid a conflict with Freud, echoing Federn’s version of Tausk’s death.” (Roazen, 1936, p. 362).

If Abraham failed to seek the proper treatment during his illness, we can assume that this was due to his state of denial caused by his endless optimism, considering his illness less serious than it was, rather than a voluntary renunciation of his life. However, Ferenczi (7 January) writing to Groddeck, after the funeral of his colleague muses:

In Berlin, a friend of Abraham (an analyst), told me that Abraham had almost fearfully avoided all analytical influence, and we could say that he voluntarily offered himself up to mortal surgery. Furthermore, when he was virtually on his deathbed he was laparatomised, which proved to be useless; the next day, the ventral wound opened after a coughing spell (peritonitis). He was well loved in Berlin. Eitingon, who will take his place, will only be able to do so on an organisational level. The professor has asked me to move to Berlin; some of the younger Berliners (Simmel, Alexander) seem to like the idea. These projects are not at all compatible with my passivity. (Letter from Ferenczi to Groddeck, 7 January 1926) [Translated for this edition]

Martin Grotjahn is one of the few people to focus on Abraham’s biographical aspects; fortunately we also have *the Unfinished Biography* written by his daughter, with the help of Ida Abraham who had survived her son
Karl and who recounted in great detail the story of the family to Hilda, her only granddaughter for a long time. This characteristic was something that Karl and his mother had in common. We know from Hilda how Karl enormously enjoyed telling anecdotes from his son’s childhood and his student years, and about other members of the family.

The different references that exist with respect to Abraham’s life all define him as a serene, enthusiastic, and well-balanced man. Unfortunately, there is a lack of literature to enable us to understand Karl Abraham’s affiliation to psychoanalysis. From the outset, his understanding of the essential elements of psychoanalysis was surprising, as was his capacity to make contributions that went beyond the boundaries of simple exegesis. Without a doubt, he was the first to explore the field of psychosis, ridding himself of prejudices while refusing to renounce clinical evidence to support his theories. In this sense, we could say that he surpassed Freud, in view of his greater experience in this field.

In 1926, the *Int. Zeitschrift*, in a commemorative supplement dedicated to Abraham, posthumously published his *Psycho-analytical Notes on Cout’s System of Self-Mastery*. The following issue had been planned to commemorate Freud’s seventieth birthday. Freud advised Radó to dedicate it to the best German analyst: “we cannot have any celebrations until we have completed our mourning.” (Letter to Radó, 28 January 1926) [Translated for this edition].

Jones always supported the family, both economically, by accommodating them in London and by offering letters of representation to the children. On 10 April 1933 he wrote to Freud: “I was deeply moved by your offer, even in these difficult days, to help the Abraham’s family, and am sure that we shall be able to do something practicable in this respect. I have had to be extremely careful in what I write to them, but I told her that she could always find shelter with us. I am negotiating with a friend of Eder’s to find work for the boy and with van Ophuijsen over the girl’s future. I should imagine it impossible for Mrs Abraham to continue with her pension.” This attitude is a stark contrast to the excessively sober letter that Freud (transcribed above) sent to the widow in which he bids her farewell, suggesting that he would never see her again.

Hilda Abraham took the psychoanalytic baton from her father. In 1938, she left Berlin and arrived in London in difficult conditions in the same year as the Freuds. Although she was the daughter of Melanie Klein’s mentor, she was always fiercely opposed her ideas.
PART II

ABRAHAM’S ROLE AND UNIQUENESS IN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY
First psychoanalytic papers, his theoretical contribution

As early as 1902, in his doctoral thesis, Abraham was already incorporating Freud’s dream analysis. He was no less progressive in applying Freudian theory to his clinical practice. We can see this in his first relevant conference that he gave at the German Association for Psychiatry in Frankfurt, where he presented clinical examples with a clear psychoanalytic approach.

His first papers addressing infantile sexuality were written in 1907. However, later Abraham himself commented on the errors in these early works; we can read in his paper published in 1920 *Psychoanalysis as a Source of Knowledge for the Humanities*, which was a compilation of several articles:

In dementia praecox the phantasy systems revolving around sexuality are predominantly symbolical … From the analysis of the symptoms of dementia praecox we learn that the same significance is attributable to the infantile phantasy material in the psychology of this illness as in hysteria. (On the Significance of Sexual Trauma in Childhood for the Symptomatology of Dementia Praecox. Abraham, 1907b, p. 20)
The first traces of sexual activity appear very early and that for some time they are of an autoerotic character. A stage follows in which the child turns to object-love; but its sexual object need not be of the opposite sex. (The Experiencing of Sexual Traumas as a Form of Sexual Activity, Abraham, 1907c, p. 33)

His ideas were still not particularly innovative, especially if we bear in mind what was to come. These papers were mainly descriptive and had the objective of spreading the ideas and reporting, as was typical with Abraham, his detailed clinical contributions. Even so, in 1921 Ferenczi underlined their importance in his presentation of the series of articles published as Clinical Contributions to Psychoanalysis, constituting an imposing volume of twenty-eight articles by the eminent psychoanalyst. The amount of examples and abundant contributions are remarkable …

original and with high interest, which our science owes to this tireless researcher. The majority of the impressions that he offers have been confirmed and have been assumed as common knowledge by all psychoanalysts. Many of the articles are frankly brilliant due to the refinement and experience of this author. A review cannot provide an idea … of the amount of new knowledge contained … Some articles illustrate his originality and universal spirit.

The Experiencing of Sexual Trauma as a Form of Sexual Activity, obliges us to completely review our current conception of the origin of certain neuroses … Major observations of psychoanalysis that had been neglected, such as partial drives, erogenous zones and sexual organisation are owed to this author …

The Examination of the Earliest Pregenital Stage of Libido … illustrates the importance of the oral phase and sexual organisation in the triggering and choice of neuroses … He also proves to be a first rate clinician in his articles … The important essay The Psycho-sexual Differences between Hysteria and Dementia Praecox made him the forerunner in terms of developing Freud’s ideas on narcissist neuroses … He made a brilliant critique of Jung’s pseudo-psychoanalysis … The volume is not an exhaustive compilation of his works, it only contains medical-clinical papers, leaving out his research in the field of aesthetics and folk psychology. (Text quoted by Boucara, 1977, p. 350) [Translated for this edition]
The origins of both hysteria and dementia praecox are both found in the repression of sexual complexes. In 1908, Abraham pointed out that in the case of dementia praecox sexual experiences in childhood do not constitute the origin of the disease but determine the symptoms. This important difference between pathogenesis and pathoplasty allows us to consider a structural psychoanalysis.

He made progress with his research on the libido: the child’s earliest expressions are autoerotic drives predominately focussed on the mouth; the second stage is object-love directed towards people and things. Later, drives are directed towards the opposite sex and those that are not socially accepted are sublimated (partially). If seduction is not regarded as an internalised interaction the construction of the concept of object in psychoanalysis is hindered. In order to refrain from considering the object as a mere source of stimuli we need to contemplate it from a genetic point of view. And so, infantile sexuality comes into play.

Freud’s earliest psychoanalytic ideas revolved around the father. Abraham, on the other hand, was among the first to assign a primary and central place to the maternal function. Over time, this interpretation became accepted. In 1911, he published Observations of the Cult of the Mother and its Symbolism in Individual and Folk Psychology. He based his reflections on the Russian worshippers of the hole, biblical myths and three patients. One of these patients was frequently punished by his tyrannical father and escaped from the intense fear that he felt by imagining that he could hide in a hole in the ground where he felt completely safe. The mother’s body, says Abraham (1911b, p. 29), is the refuge where the patient said he found the blissful feeling of something warm. This was only the beginning; the genetic perspective was still to come.
Abraham and the psychoanalytic movement

His clinical contributions

Abraham formed part of the prestigious German psychiatric school. His initial contact with severely dysfunctional cases meant that he had to deal with the most archaic narcissistic aspects from the outset. Dieter Wyss writes: “Abraham’s observations regarding schizophrenia were based on the psychiatric hypothesis that had been added to biology. The loss of reality in schizophrenic patients is made possible as the libido is incorporated into the Ego, which invests it in the objects.” (Wyss, 1961, p. 82) Then Wyss quoted Freud (G. W. Vol. XV, Part XXVI, p. 415) when he asked ...

But the question then arose of what happened to the libido of dementia praecox patients, which was turned away from objects. Abraham did not hesitate to give the answer: it is turned back on to the ego and this reflexive turning-back is the source of the megalomania in dementia praecox. Freud 1917 (G. W. Vol. XV, Part XXVI, p. 415)
Except in the case of a couple of his earlier articles (*Sexual Differences Between Hysteria and Dementia Praecox*, 1908 and *Hysterical Dream States*, 1910), it was not hysteria that most attracted Abraham’s attention: maybe this is also partly why the paternal figure was not the central piece in his theories as it was for Freud. The genetic perspective enabled him to reorder existing psychopathological problems, many of which were not cast in the mould of psychoanalysis. Therefore, in Abraham’s nosography, hysteria is the most mature neurosis as its fixation is on the phallic phase in which object-love still excludes genitality.

Even in this less explored terrain he made an original contribution by presenting the clinical material of five males in *Hysterical Dream States*. The conclusions also confirmed the Freudian hypotheses; until then daydreaming had not been researched and even less in the case of male hysteria.

The terminology used by Abraham is commended by Sandler and Perlow in a work addressing incorporation and excorporation:

> In the early years of psychoanalysis, particularly because of the influence of Karl Abraham, there was a tendency to consider processes of internalisation and externalisation in concrete terms such as “taking in” or “putting into the other person”. It should be borne in mind that such reification may be extremely useful from the point of view of description. We are throughout dealing with concepts, with theoretical constructs whose value should be considered primarily in terms of their clinical utility … As such, [identification] was considered by Freud to be related to the oral instinctual impulse of incorporation following a suggestion made by Abraham … The emphasis on the oral aspect of internalisation was reinforced by Abraham, who took the view that all forms of internalisation could be regarded as derived from oral incorporative impulses (1924). (Sandler, 1988, pp. 1, 9 & 11) [Translated for this edition]

He immediately applied these theoretical aspects to clinical cases, which is evident in *Ejaculatio Praecox* (1917b), in which he claims that the corporal excretions of the male child are representations of parts of his body, these products are subjected to a narcissistic over-estimation. We can also appreciate this application of theory in *The Spending of Money in Anxiety States* (1917c), in which he observes the detachment of the libido from the objects of these patients who then transfer the libido in rapid succession to an unlimited number of objects.
The Narcissistic Evaluation of Excretory Processes in Dreams and Neurosis (1920a) focusses on the narcissistic over-estimation observed in a patient whose dream reflects an omnipotence of the bladder and bowel functions. Meanwhile, the more well-known paper, the Examination of the Earliest Pregenital Stage of Libido Development, masterfully addresses the oral stage through the analysis of many patients. We will examine this work in Part III: Evolution of Abraham’s thought on the history of libidinal development.

According to Rodrigué (1996, Volume 2, p. 303) the first analysts can be divided into two groups, the “physicians who conducted themselves correctly”, including Abraham, Eitingon, and Jones, and the temperaments, namely Ferenczi, Rank, and Sachs. Abraham’s correctness without the fanfare may be the cause of the relative void to which he has been relegated.

The extensive range of subjects that Abraham addressed included some that were specific to women, such as Some Illustrations on the Emotional Relationship of Little Girls Towards Their Parents (1917a), An Infantile Theory of the Origin of the Female Sex (1923b) or, more specifically (1920), Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex (Jones, 1926, p. 164 regarded this paper as extremely valuable and clarifying regarding the hostility of women towards men). In the latter-mentioned paper, Abraham illustrates this conflict through a number of neurotic symptoms, such as vaginismus, frigidity, emesis and even, conjunctivitis. In the narcissistic stage of development, the child “wants to keep what it has and to get what it sees”. Abraham then describes the two reactions that consequently occur: “a hostile feeling against the other person associated with the impulse to deprive him of what he possesses”, which is a typical expression of the sadistic-anal stage of libidinal development. When the child reconciles herself to reality, “the undisturbed enjoyment of early genital sensations will be a considerable aid in facilitating the renunciation of masculinity, for by this means the female genitals will regain a narcissistic value.” (Abraham, 1920, pp. 341–342).

There is an important difference in the way Abraham and Freud address female-related issues. The former refers to positive characteristics of the girl and not a simple lack or absence. We know that negativity is an important device in psychoanalysis therefore, penis envy, for example, plays an undeniable role. If this is the case, there is no doubt that there is a need to complement this with positivity, which is clearly illustrated in Abraham’s comments quoted above.
When the afore-mentioned process does not occur harmoniously, we can find neurotic transformations that Abraham divides into two groups: women who aspire to acquire a masculine role and women who reject their feminine role and feel a desire for revenge on men, although:

The phenomena of one group do not exclude those of the other in the same individual; they supplement each other ... The preponderance of this or that attitude can nevertheless often be clearly recognized, so that we may speak of the preponderating reaction of a wish-fulfilment type or of a revenge type. (Abraham, 1920, p. 347)

The first leads to homosexuality while the second is more archaic and can be expressed by the desire to disappoint the man. Abraham gives many examples and warns of the consequences that can be observed in males of the following generation:

This chronic influence of the mother’s castration complex seems to me to be of greater importance as a cause of castration-fear in boys than occasionally uttered threats of castration ... The mother’s anal-erotism is the earliest and most dangerous enemy of the psychosexual development of children. (Abraham, 1920d, p. 369)

This conclusion is brilliant and progressive. Abraham places great importance on the qualities of the object-mother, which complement the Oedipus complex. Giving narcissistic value to the female genitals in the sadistic-anal phase is a desirable transition although there is a risk of a fixation at this stage. If this were the case, the overestimated narcissism of the mother would prevent her from “offering herself as an object” to her baby. The result is a failure to recognise consequences that are more transcendental than the traditional castration anxiety.

In a letter written to Freud on 2 March 1922, Lou Andreas-Salomé referred to this article on castration when reflecting on masochistic fantasies: “When ... Abraham interprets the vengeful actions after defloration (that you mention caused by the perceived cowardice of man on the wedding night) as anger caused by the bloody intervention, the desire for revenge, even in normal cases, frequently has an opposite origin: the man failed to create the original experience of the “love-pain” equation and awaken masochistic ecstasy, which would have awakened the oldest knowledge of a time in which pain was the surest way to awaken
love for oneself, to thrill, which is triggered through rejection (he finds that there is no excess to discharge in a partner; all of libido may be incorporated into sadomasochism, in this seeming duet).” (Andreas-Salomé, 1970, p. 142) [Translated for this edition]. This gives us an indirect view of the first relationship with the ambivalent object.

In her work *Anna Freud*, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl comments on the influence that Abraham’s article which “Freud admired greatly”, had on her observations regarding the love women feel towards their mother. The following comment illustrates the good impression that “Herr Professor” had of his student’s contribution:

Abraham’s (1921) description of the manifestation of the castration complex in the female is still unsurpassed … I am in agreement with the principal points in Jeanne Lampl-de Groot (1927) important paper. In this the complete identity of the pre-Oedipus phase in boys and girls is recognized, and the girl’s sexual (phallic) activity towards her mother is affirmed and substantiated by observations. (Freud, 1931, in GW, V.XXI, p. 241)

In *Facts and Theories of Psychoanalysis*, Ives Hendrick comments on the stir that was made by this article:

The bomb of controversy [the sexual aim in the girl and in the boy] was explored by Karl Abraham’s classic paper, “Manifestations of the female Castration Complex” in 1920 … The vast amount of unconscious phantasy related to this infantile problem of the girl was familiar to every analyst. But Abraham’s masterly survey focused the question on whether this experience of the little girl is not only the source of many dissatisfactions but the decisive factor which turns her thoughts and striving for sexual pleasure toward different aims from those of the boy. The central problem of the controversy was whether the girl is forced to adopt a passive aim and seek a new object—father or brother, and a compensation in motherhood, because the anatomical difference of the sexes makes the pursuit of male objectives realistically futile and disappointing. (Hendrick, 1939, pp. 58–59)

For Freud the response was affirmative. Very few of Abraham’s conclusions had awakened such a high level of objection in other analysts. His argument was based on the opinion that the instinctive development
or both sexes is essentially the same during the first years of life. It has never been questioned that the earliest desires for oral, anal, and sadistic pleasure are very similar in both sexes. Neither is there any doubt that both in boys and girls, love is initially directed towards the mother.

Another of his important pioneering contributions refers to counter-transference, which had probably never been examined before then:

I have tracked down a symptomatic action in myself. While I am analysing and am waiting for the patient’s reply, I often cast a quick glance at the picture of my parents. I know now that I always do this when I am following up the infantile transference in the patient. The glance is always accompanied by a particular guilt feeling: what will they think of me? This has of course to do with my separation from them, which was not too easy. Since explaining this symptomatic action to myself, I have not caught myself at it any more. (Abraham, letter to Freud, 7 April 1909)

Although now we are used to considering transference/countertransference as an inseparable binomial, at that time, the attention focussed mainly on the former, so it is not surprising that the naturalist medical model was still the most valid. A simple examination of the Grienstein Index of psychoanalytic works reveals that it was still a long time before specific papers were written on countertransference.

Presence of Judaism

We have already referred to the deep-held religious beliefs of the families living in the north of Germany. Abraham, however, grew up within a permissive environment which was confirmed when he informed his father that during his intense six-month training period as a psychiatrist, he was not able to respect Jewish law regarding diet and observing the Sabbath.

While he was far from being an orthodox Jew, he was not prepared to comply or renounce his origins. As we saw earlier, Abraham was not assigned a university professorship because he did not accept the condition that he was given in 1920 to convert and be christened. He mentioned to Freud in a letter written on 11 May 1908: “I, too, have always felt this intellectual kinship. After all, the Talmudic way of thinking cannot disappear in us just like that.”
One morning when Jones was on his way to the Opera House, he came across Abraham; Vicent Brome (1982, p. 55) quotes the question that Abraham asked on this occasion: “Do you think Jung can escape the anti-Semitism of a certain type of German?” Brome tells us that the earnest Jones would never have thought that something so crude as anti-Semitism had a place in something so scientific as psychoanalysis and refers to Edmund Burke’s phrase: “I do not know the method of indicting a whole nation”. The arrival of Jung interrupted their conversation. The Jewishness of both Freud and Abraham can be defined as a sense of belonging to a specific group, without adopting its traditionally most important distinctive sign, that is, religion. This is what made the strict Aryan (Jung) wary of Abraham. In fact, Abraham should have known intuitively that many pogroms throughout history have been carried out more by a wariness of the Jewish group than of their manifest religious beliefs. He must have trusted Jones to be able to share this reflection with him. Abraham was right to define him as open, even though in subsequent years he observed Jones’ reticence with respect to homosexuality (see circular letters) and his excessive institutional zeal in psychoanalytic business. However, with regard to religion, Jones was an accessible man in such a way that his anti-Semitic prejudices were not an obstacle for him.

Freud opened the Address to the Society of B’nai B’rith (1926, GW, V.XX, p. 273) by referring to his Jewish origin … “But plenty of other things remained over to make the attraction of Jewry and Jews irresistible”. Rodrigué contemplates the relevance of Judaism in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the mid nineteenth century …

1867: a key date. The life of the Chosen People in Central Europe changed dramatically after emancipation in 1867. Franz Joseph, on renouncing absolute power, modernised the State apparatus and granted equal civil rights to the Jews. This meant … the end of the ghetto, with its civil and geographic confinement. With the doors opened, the Jews moved en masse to the cities. A new type of Diaspora emerged. (Rodrigué, 1996, volume one, p. 38) [Translated for this edition]

The above-mentioned author also refers to the tolerated aristocracy, the Sephardies (merchants who spoke Ladin) and to three nomadic groups who lived in ghettos: the merchants of the cities, the travelling salesmen
and the travelling peasants. Additionally, Rodrigué quotes the profile of the urban Jewish intellectual, described by Renato Mezan (quoted by Rodrigué, Volume one, p. 64): “brilliant, opportunistic, insecure character, full of guilt and contradicting tendencies that distance him from his origin and make him feel remorse for it, with an immense will to triumph. Exalted individualism, narcissism. The Jews married young in those days.” [Translated for this edition].

Meanwhile, Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel affirms that a Diaspora Jew, such as Freud, who was not ambivalent with respect to his Jewish identity, would simply defy the laws governing human psyche …

Freud’s Jewish emotional architecture gave him a firm advantage over the goy (derogatory term given to the gentiles). The idea repeatedly appears in his correspondence with Ferenczi and Abraham. (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1988, p. 42) [Translated for this edition]

Reik’s paper, Problems of the Psychology of Religion (1920), in which he analyses the ambivalence of people’s feelings towards the father-god, prompted Abraham to write The Day of Atonement (1920a), describing two rituals: the “Kolnidre” ritual (oral substitute for the act of violence against the father) and the “Schophar” ritual (the blowing of a ram’s horn to signal the end of the day of purification). Abraham’s clinical application is based on obsessive neurosis in which he found a parallelism with the Jewish ritual: in the Kolnidre there is a periodic attempt to ward off coercions through a single act of violence which is followed by atonement in the same ceremony through the renewal of the covenant.

In this paper, Abraham argues that the story of the Old Testament is a constant vacillating between apostasy from Jehovah and returning to him, clearly demonstrating the ambivalent attitude of the people towards the paternal god (Abraham, 1920a, p. 138). Covenants are made between Jehovah and the Patriarchs; pacts that guarantee their protection if they respect Jewish law. Throughout history, transgressions gave rise to punishments and new severe prohibitions. The Kolnidre is a counterpoint to this whole series of laws. This is the same in obsessive neurosis rituals, whereby a series of formulas protect against forbidden drives in advance. After the sacrifice there is a self-inflicted fast which completes the obsessive series: transgression, atonement and the renewal of the covenant.
While acknowledging Reik’s contributions with scrupulous honesty, Abraham also criticises the fact that he has not referred to the profound connection between the Kol nidre and the primitive ceremonial of the totem meal. In line with mythology, a god eats his children as the counterpart to the killing and eating of the totem. Abraham highlights:

We here encounter the strange fact that it is precisely the totem animals, which are virtually the only ones which may be eaten; whilst among primitive peoples there is mostly a strict prohibition against eating the animal worshipped as the totem. (Abraham, 1920a, p. 146)

A primal killing repeated each year in each family to reflect the ancient community sacrifices. Karl connected this ritual with the Oedipus complex: confrontation with the paternal god and a prohibition of incest.

In short, it seems that Abraham felt a theoretical curiosity towards Judaism rather than any moral mooring. Although it cost him a professorship he was able to live with his religion with more placidity that those who survived him.

The moderator of internal conflicts

If we were to assess the diplomatic capacity of the pioneering psychoanalysts, there is no doubt that Abraham would score very highly. He combined intransigence with hypotheses that undermined psychoanalysis—which is fundamental when forming the bases of a new science. He always displayed an undeniable loyalty to his master yet maintained a capacity to criticise when he deemed it necessary. We are not alone in contemplating him in this way. Edward Glover refers to him in the prologue (in German and Spanish editions) of his correspondence with Freud:

With courtesy, but also with decision, he stood up to Freud whenever he felt that it was necessary. This is particularly visible in the correspondence about the Jung affair. Except for a brief period of hesitation, Abraham stood firmly behind his view and finally proved that he was a better judge of character. Freud gallantly admits this … In 1924, during the less significant crisis with Rank, Abraham again showed that he was the most astute judge. […]
As a visitor of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Association I was able to observe the expertise with which he presided the debate between heterogeneous groups which threatened to become a pandemonium of frequently contradictory ideas. Time and again, Abraham convinced the controversial members to accept the need to support their speculations with clinical evidence … I was witness to his serene and diplomatic handling of controversial issues when, in his function as president of the International Psychoanalytical Association, he proposed and directed its activities and guidelines. (Glover, 1924, p. 14) [Translated for this edition]

Freud’s clear favouritism for Jung in the second International Congress (March 1910), where the latter was named as president of the recently-created International Association, generated a general feeling of discomfort; this jealousy was justified. The greatest merit of Freud’s new son, “the Crown Prince” seemed to be his Aryan origin. His symbolism was not truly psychoanalytic nor was his reluctant attitude towards infantile sexuality; because accepting sexuality is very different to accepting the thorny concept of infantile sexuality. The former had been addressed a long time beforehand by Freud; the latter constitutes the very heart of psychoanalysis.

On the other hand, Jung added a mystical dimension to the libido, which elevated it from its primitive economic grounding. Freud was anxious to expand his school’s boundaries. He wished to see a concomitance between the Jungian associations created by Galton and imported to the Burghölzli by Riklin and his Einfall (spontaneous occurrence). Jung’s real contribution to psychoanalysis was indirect, obliging Freud to consider the field of psychoses and to create a line of research on narcissism. This was a defensive operation in the early days of his career, which much later gave rise to a significant volume of psychoanalytic works.

Bleuler was interested in psychology and had created a cosmopolitan centre for psychiatric training, the Burghölzli. Analysts such as Jones, Ferenczi, Abraham, and Brill conducted research projects there. In 1914 Freud acknowledged that the majority of his followers had spent time in Zurich.

If Jung never conformed to a secondary status with respect to the master, we should not be surprised that he viewed Abraham as a rival on his own level. Freud never concealed his pleasure at the way in which the Berliner tackled the sexual problem. We can see this in a letter he wrote
to Jung on 27 August 1907. Jealousy and envy were emotions with which
the prince was highly familiar with and did not bother to hide them or
repress them. During the three years that he spent in the Burghölzli,
Abraham developed ambiguous feelings towards Bleuler. He strived to
continue to admire him as a master although the limitations that he saw
in him became increasingly evident. Bleuler was an academic psychia-
trist who demonstrated little openness towards innovations.

Bleuler preceded Freud as a source of rivalry between Jung and
Abraham. There was a period during which they were united by a
bond of complicity and mutual respect; Karl valued the creative capac-
ity of the Swiss who embraced this restless young man. Initially, there
was a harmony between the two men with respect to psychoanalytic
approaches. According to Hilda (1974, p. 32), 1907 was a decisive year in
which her father discovered Jung’s personality: great intelligence mired
in unconscious ambivalences between his deep-rooted Puritanism
and the new ideas proposed by his Jewish colleagues.

It was easy to seduce Freud with this Aryan connection. The master
tried to play down the tensions, contemplating them as harmless and as
an almost inevitable rivalry between brothers. He attempted to impose
patience and moderation, particularly with Abraham. We could ven-
ture that as he was the most loyal, he was asked to humour the feckless
prince; the ambassador who would open the Jewish analytic circle.

In dealing with the matter at issue I did not hesitate to say that you
were in the right and to attribute Jung’s sensitiveness to his vacil-
lation … It must also be of importance for us that Jung should find
his way back to the views he has just forsaken, which you have
stood by so consistently … Be tolerant, and do not forget that really
it is easier for you to follow my thoughts than it is for Jung, since
to begin with you are completely independent, and then you are
closer to my intellectual constitution through racial kinship he as
a Christian … finds his way to me only against great inner resist-
ances. His association with us is therefore all the more valuable …
his emergence on the scene that psychoanalysis was removed from
the danger of becoming a Jewish national affair. (Letter to Abraham,
3 May 1908)

However, Freud played a double game, seeking to reconcile the two
men. In the case of Abraham he used their race and religion and the
promoting of the cause, while with Jung he adopted a paternal attitude, as we can see in his letter to Jung, written on the same day:

I have a great favour to ask of you. It has not escaped me that a rift is in the making between you and Abraham … I regard him as a man of great worth and I should not like to be obliged to give him up, though there can be no question of his replacing you in my eyes. Accordingly, I have this request to make of you: be helpful if he consults you about the publication of his dementia paper, and accept the fact that this time he took the more direct path, whereas you hesitated. Apart from that, you have every advantage over him. (Letter to Jung, 3 May 1908)

During the course of that year he sent many letters to both men containing numerous requests and manipulative promises, remembering his broken friendship with Fleiss. Abraham acted nobly and reluctantly acceded while Jung, the rebel, was more prone to histrionics. Abraham received a letter sent on 3 May and another one six days later from an impatient Freud who had not yet received a reply to the first; the reason for the delay:

When I read your first letter, I was not in agreement with all of your points, and therefore let it rest for a few days … I know how hard I find it to avoid polemics altogether … So yesterday I brought the letter into its final form [that Freud requested he send to Jung]. I hope it will now serve the cause. (Letter to Abraham, 11 May 1908)

Freud was convinced that while the world continued to perceive his science as Jewish, his subversive ideas would meet with much resistance. Peter Gay comments:

In a famous poignant outburst to Abraham, picking the most unmistakably Austrian-and gentile-sounding name he could think of, Freud summed up all the miseries of being Jewish: “Be assured, if my name were Oberhuber, my innovations would have found, despite it all, far less resistance.” (Letter 23 July 1908) (Gay, 1988, p. 204)

Several of Jung’s papers revealed a veiled pro-Nazi sympathy, which Abraham naturally never accepted (this can be consulted in the work
included in the *Revue Internationale d’Histoire de la Psychanalyse*, 1, 1988: “Psychanalyse et psychanalystes durant la deuxième guerre mondiale dans le monde” (“Psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts during World War II”). Brome (1967, p. 188) is one of the many authors who questioned his ideology and refers to a document dated December 1933, in the *Zentrallblatt für Psychotherapie*, highlighting the need to distinguish from then on, between German psychology and Jewish psychology. When he was chosen as the crown prince, Freud commented: “He seemed ready to enter into a friendly relationship with me and for my sake to give up certain racial prejudices which he had previously permitted himself.” (*On the History of the Psycho-analytic Movement*, 1914. GW, V. XIV, p. 43): History tells us that this would not be the case.

Freud shared his concern with Abraham about the “anti-Semitism of the Swiss” which he believed was particularly intense against Karl, and recommended that resigning himself to it was the only feasible policy: “as Jews, if we wish to join in anywhere, must develop a bit of masochism, be ready to suffer some wrong. Otherwise there is no hitting it off.” (Letter to Abraham, 23 July 1908).

Abraham, was outraged and responded that he could not accept that in a joint publication by Bleuler and Jung, the only result of years of analysis of mental patients was a “sub-division into primary and secondary symptoms!”; giving his opinion of this paper he wrote: “One would have thought from his talk that he had never heard of auto-erotism, etc.” (Letter to Freud, 31 July 1908).

*Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido* (1911) by Jung, was a far cry from the venturous papers of his rival at that time; while the former regarded incest as a personal complication only in extremely rare cases, we should remember Abraham’s article *The Significance of Intermarriage between Close Relatives in the Psychology of the Neuroses* published in 1909.

Shortly before the Congress in Munich in 1912, there was a violent disagreement over the crisis with Stekel. Freud fainted for the second time. Rodrigué describes the scene contemplated by the Swiss:

> The conversation turned to ancient Egypt and Abraham noted that the negative attitude of Amenophis IV with respect to his father was rooted in his foundation of monotheism. Jung became irritated and pointed out that Amenophis was a profoundly creative man whose acts could not be reduced to mere effects of paternal resistance. Then Freud fainted … Whatever the cause of this syncope
and the former episode in Bremen, Jung concludes that they both had the fantasy of killing the father in common … Amenophis, with his new dynastic name of Akhenaten, would be the main character in Freud’s Moses. (Rodrigué, 1996, Volume 2, p. 18) [Translated for this edition]

In Totem and Taboo (1912–13) Freud expounded an aspect of the oedipus conflict that had not been addressed: the efforts of the father to surpass the son. Referring to the final and most militant of his four essays, published after the rupture with Jung, Peter Gay (p. 340) comments—and we agree—that it was a sweet revenge directed against the crown prince, who had proved to be so brutal with him and a traitor to psychoanalysis.

Shortly afterwards he sadly acknowledged to Abraham: “I am preoccupied with what is going on in Zurich, which seems to prove the truth of an old prediction of yours, which I willingly ignored” (Letter to Abraham, 29 July 1912). In 1913 Freud was decisive when he wrote to Jung (3 January 1913): “I propose that we abandon our personal relations entirely.” However, he did try to maintain some kind of collaboration with him for a while despite the coldness with which he was received. After Jung’s second trip to America, the professor confessed to Abraham: “I have greatly retreated from him and have no longer any friendly thoughts for him. As it is, his bad theories do not compensate me for his disagreeable character.” (27 March 1913) Although he recognised his internal struggle: “Jung is crazy, but I am not working for a separation” (Letter to Abraham, 1 June 1913).

However, in his pursuit to capture him for the cause, he had elevated him in excess; as the president of the International Association he had become the most important official figure of the movement. Except for those who knew about the internal affairs, his figure was directly linked to “Herr Professor”. It was evident that a rift of this size would be harmful to the young science, even more so if we take into account that the organisational and journalistic apparatus were in Jung’s hands.

Abraham took the initiative. Gay (p. 236) refers to the circular letter that he sent in mid-March 1913, in which he proposed that in the month of May the psychoanalytic groups of London, Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest request the resignation of Jung. It was not surprising that his memo, which was only sent to a few people, was headed with the word: “Confidential!”
The letter sent by Freud on 2 November 1913 to Abraham only addressed two points: Jung’s resignation as editor of the Jahrbuch (a position that was subsequently offered to Karl) and the suggestion to dissolve the International Psychoanalytical Association. Jung was not prepared to abandon discreetly. Freud talked of Jung’s display of injured innocence when he put his resignation down to “reasons of a personal nature” and refused to enter into a public debate following Jung’s publication in the Jahrbuch. Abraham’s response was based on a careful analysis of the situation, taking the statutes into account. He concluded that it was inadvisable to dissolve the Association for the time being, although he admitted that he could offer no alternative solution. He accepted the editorship of the journal with Hitschmann as co-editor.

Tensions continued to rise; according to Freud, Ferenczi was the “hothead” and Abraham considered it essential to “bring about the action of secession without friction and with the least possible loss of membership among the seceding groups” (9 November 1913). He suggested presenting an incisive report, drafted by Sachs, which would take a stand against false rumours.

In a censored letter written by Freud to Abraham (December 1913), quoted by Peter Gay, we can read: “One is infuriated with Jung until one discovers that he is simply crassly stupid, ‘emotional stupidity’, as the psychiatrists term it.” (Gay, 1988, p. 240).

In the master’s opinion, the Review of C. G. Jung’s Attempt at a Representation of Psycho-analytical Theory, which Abraham published in 1914, deserved a civic crown: “It is, in short, excellent, cold steel, clean, clear, and sharp. Moreover, God knows that it is all true.” (10 December 1913, on receiving the draft.)

However, it seemed that debating theory was not sufficient to end the confrontation and Freud proposed that they take aggressive action against Jung, which he wished to discuss with Rank and Sachs: “What I am most curious about is the reply from London [for a while Jones was in favour of dissolving the Association], where difficulties could easily arise” (Letter to Abraham, 16 March 1914).

Rank, who had still not published The Trauma of Birth (1924), was considered to be a valid interlocutor. However this paper would give rise to further upset at the heart of the cause. Freud attempted to reconcile ideas and people, but Abraham remained firm when conserving what he considered to be essential points of psychoanalytic theory. Rank took his intrauterine fantasies too far. Initially, Freud welcomed The Trauma
of Birth; but later, claiming that he could not follow the rhythm and ideas imposed by others, he began to have doubts.

At first sight, the trauma of birth could imply a lessening of the prominent and almost exclusive place of the Oedipus complex. If this were the case, in many aspects, this paper would have been a pioneer with respect to the importance of the role of the mother and all the pre-oedipal formulations. However, the trauma of birth not only dethroned the Oedipus complex, but proposed a biologism in psychoanalysis that was different to the biological link that Freud had always sought. Talking about the trauma of birth basically implies the dilution of the entire human race and tracing the psyche not to its ontogenetic aspects modelled on the relationship with either the mother or the father, but to the darkness of the birth canal. By calling this universal experience a trauma, Rank eliminated in a single stroke the specificity that each human being acquires through our object relations in the distinct way in which we discharge our drives, dismissing the uniqueness of our environment.

If he had addressed birth as the first and unrepeatable biographical event rather than a trauma, it would have been different. Perhaps Rank wished to research the biological dimension, but he lacked the training to do so. Abraham considered these hypotheses to be “scientific regressions”.

After this digression, we will return to the final throes of the dispute with Jung who was “meticulously carrying out” the intentions of the loyal supporters of the cause; Freud went on to say (to Abraham, 24 April 1914): “Our reserve has now indeed borne fruit; somehow we will get rid of him, and perhaps of the Swiss altogether.” When Jung resigned as president of the International Association on 20 April, Abraham was unanimously elected as acting president, although the disciple believed that the movement should be led by its founder.

Freud moved decisively in order to recover control over his journal and organisation; the task was not pleasant, but he expressed his confidence in that, “it goes without saying”, that he and his followers “would never imitate Jung’s brutality” (Letter to Abraham, 17 May 1914). His delight lasted for some time. We can still read in another letter to Abraham on the 26 July 1914: “So we are at last rid of them, the brutal, sanctimonious Jung and his parrots!”

Freud’s controversial style was undeniably contagious. An example is the openly provocative essay History of the Psychoanalytic Movement (the Introduction to Narcissism was also used as a theoretical weapon
against the apostasies of Adler and Jung). After it was published he commented (to Abraham, 25 June 1914): “So the bombshell has now burst, we shall soon discover with what effect. I think we shall have to allow the victims two to three weeks to collect themselves and react.” He never placed so much unconditional trust in a gentile again. In this paper we can read: “Abraham is right in saying that Jung is in full retreat from psycho-analysis.” (Freud, GW, Vol. XIV, p. 60).

Meanwhile, the international situation developed implacably towards the nightmare of the First World War.

On different occasions Abraham insisted that he had no difficulty in assimilating new psychoanalytic findings but called for clinical proof in order to accept them. He did not hesitate to lay claim to his conciliatory role in response to Freud’s reproach for not having held more face-to-face meetings to avoid the reactions of Ferenczi and Rank. His reply on 4 April 1924 reads: “Last year in San Cristoforo the Committee would certainly have fallen apart had I not kept it together. During those days I worked with all my devotion to preserve this institution, which is so important to me.”

On 28th of the same month, Freud was “very glad to acknowledge your services in this matter”, the cloud lifted and Abraham was once again his “rocher de bronce”. With respect to Ferenczi, Karl always had reservations regarding his technique, but he also acknowledged his great wealth of ideas, and as he tells Freud on 6 February 1925, he published his article on sexual practices first in the new volume of Zeitschrift in deference to him.

The conflict between Freud and Adler was very different. If we read the correspondence that has been published we can detect the special antagonism that Adler aroused in him. In a letter sent by Freud to Stefan Zweig, replying to his letter informing him of Adler’s death in Aberdeen, he made some extremely hard comments about him. He had never been so harsh in the case of Fliess, Stekel, or Jung. In a letter to Ferenczi on 1 April 1919, he said that he had unravelled the roots of the feeling of inferiority, displaying a sarcastic attitude towards Adlerian findings. Adler, who was never one of Freud’s disciples but in some way had tried to gain an equivalent status, had a sociological vision of psychology which was maybe a little superficial. However, together with the previous contributions of Nietzsche, we owe him the first works on aggression and I would go far as to say that this is precisely why Freud neglected this area as Alder had discovered it before he did.
Abraham’s role was nominal in the disagreements with Adler; he confessed to Freud that his good qualities deserved respect, but he found his “theory of aggressive impulse” to be unilateral …

The pleasure principle is lost entirely ... The fundamental fact of overdetermination is completely neglected ... The “masculine protest” seems to me to be a valid point of view in certain cases. I would say that it is an idea that is already contained in your *Three Essays* (about the masculinity of the libido) … In spite of all these objections, one always finds something valuable, so that one tends to regret that it is all in such a sketchy, fragmentary, and insufficiently explained form. (Letter from Abraham to Freud, 9 March 1911)

Finally, we quote Peter Gay’s account of the conflict with Groddeck: “On March 15, 1925, the Berlin trio—Abraham, Sachs, and Eitingon—reported in their circular letter that Groddeck had given a cycle of three talks in which he had called unpleasant attention to himself. In one of these, it seems, he had stopped after hearing an automobile honking in the street to offer his free associations to the noise … he revealed all the most intimate details of his private life … One of the subjects he discussed, apparently, was his masturbatory activity … A number of other details show that G. does with Psa., whatever suits him at the moment” (Gay, 1988, p. 466).

An overwhelming challenge: Within that environment of multiple trends and schools, what attitude would be adopted by this insatiable and optimist researcher who was so cautious when accepting hypotheses as definitive?
His essay, Dreams and Myths (1909; published in America 1913 in the fifteenth issue of the Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases; translated into Russian before 1912. In Clinical papers, pp. 153–209) provided him with a means to develop and articulate the knowledge that he was passionate about: psychoanalysis, dream interpretation, language, and mythology. Furthermore, he received the assistance of his wife, Hedwig, who was still not too absorbed by children and domestic chores. Perhaps this was one of the projects on which they worked most closely, although the only source substantiating this cooperation is the biography of their daughter.

Abraham postulated that there are no distinct boundaries between daydreams and night dreams as originally thought. He did not accept that the myth was a simple expression of philosophical or religious ideas or the mere result of observing nature.

He quotes Kleinpaul (1881) when affirming that symbols exist, he maintains that they are not invented, they are acknowledged. Myths and dreams require an interpretation that goes beyond their appearance. Sexual symbolism “is a psychological phenomenon, accompanying man through time and space.” (Abraham, 1909b, p. 163).
Today this statement would not surprise us although in that day it may have caused some to think about metaphysical positions. From a structuralist point of view (see Guattari, Lévi-Strauss & Lacan, among others), symbols may be understood as those significant places that form the most essential part of the structure, and their meaning is found in reciprocal relationship that they have within this structure. Seen in this way, the symbol easily fits into a rigorous theory of the object. The object is essential and the relationship with it allows the symbol to be defined but the symbol is meaningless outside of it.

He also refers to drives that are not totally repressed and are conserved through myths; he proposed ...

Owing to this process, for which I should like to suggest the name ‘mass-repression’, the people are no longer able to understand the original meaning of their myths, just as we fail to understand our dreams ... every people varies the myths it takes over (Abraham, 1909b, p. 180)

These comments are concerned with cultural keys and in many cases with the very essence of the ideology.

Abraham claims that the myth was born in the infancy of the people, in its most remote period and refers to the wishes of this prehistoric time ... In the Oedipus myth, sexual impulses were not yet subject to mass repression. Abraham states that mythology originates in the unconscious (the Green brothers, founders of compared mythology also held this view), opposing Jung’s theory that myths are rooted in a magical collective unconscious.

Myths are not prehistoric but a living and mutant present; the myth that is no longer identified with is transformed, or we could say that it surpasses itself, in the Hegelian sense of the word. The Greek version of the myth, “shows emotional displacement”. (Abraham, 1909b, p. 190) Displacement ... this is the undeniable sign of the participation of the unconscious.

Abraham’s Jewish origin extended his interest to biblical stories and he refers to Moses, Samson, Adam and Eve as well as Dyonisius, Hercules, Odysseus and Nausicaa, Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus. He also discusses others more specifically related to psychoanalysis, such as Oedipus and Jocasta, and incorporates others for the first time, such as Askr (the ash tree, the original father in Nordic mythology), the myth of the descent of nectar (Amrta—the god of nectar—soma or haoma in
the Zendavesta) ... His interpretation of them all goes beyond a mere reflection of philosophical or religious ideas or an exegesis of natural phenomena. Freud was delighted with the essay. The reason is clear: it was approached from an analytic perspective.

According to this paper, the wish fulfilment theory of dreams also applies to myths. If the meaning of dreams, which is rooted in the primary process, is concealed by secondary elaboration which acts as a preliminary attempt at self-interpretation, in myths, which are elaborated through the secondary process, there is a greater transparency of symbols from the outset. There is an element of prophecy and fable behind myth formation, so as Gods are the protagonists, an amorality is permitted that is not granted to men. However, from the moment of its conception, the myth also conceals a latent content; therefore we must use our intuition. How can we apply the free association method to a whole culture? How do we survey the wishes of a people among whom there is an inevitable element of repression?

The only way to approach this analysis is to regard it as a work of art or literary text from which we must infer meanings that can never be corroborated by associative chains.

This is one of the tasks that Abraham proposed to undertake in order to clarify the extent to which we can talk about a parallel myth-dream. Does myth formation imply condensation, displacement, wish-fulfilment, and secondary elaboration; the four principal ways that Freud recognises in his dream theory?

Condensation is visible in an overdetermination of myths, its elements amalgamate different meanings; in the example of Prometheus we can observe three: Prometheus as the god of fire; Prometheus as fire, and finally as man. The myth of the stealing of fire was formed from this compositum.

Throughout a people’s history, in the same way as in dreams, myths are modified through displacement and secondary elaboration to assimilate new elements. We can observe the transformations made as the myth gets passed down through the generations. Both dreams and myths change as they accompany a person or people through their lives. The length of time for the development of a myth is much longer than that of a dream. When a generation no longer identifies with a version of a myth, a secondary elaboration takes place.

Karl Abraham explains his view using the legends of Prometheus, Moses, and Samson (the Semitic sun god). He goes right back to
Matarichvan who was not dependent on any higher authority. In the primitive legend, Matarichvan was the fire-bringer and became Prometheus when moral implications came into play. The latter steals the fire from heaven. Moses approaches him to receive the law from the hands of God. Abraham explains that Prometheus, an eminently masculine myth and full of sexual omnipotence, was born from desire and was created by the Greek people who needed an attentive god.

After stealing the fire from Zeus to give it to men, Prometheus was chained in the Caucasus until Hercules freed him. Fire is omnipresent in different Indo-European myths. It is a principle of life and Abraham passionately describes its evolution, breaking it down into its increasingly deeper layers. Fire on earth conceived in the same way as fire from heaven, which is manifested in the daily rising of the sun; the spark of life.

Together with the hero, Abraham also reports his observations of a patient with obsessive behavior; idols and pathos and possible ways through which to express the conflict. Some of the interpretations reflected in this paper show his way of prudently developing hypotheses that may lead to the discovery of ever-deeper and hidden desires.

Myths also contain disguised sexual symbols to avoid censorship and we can see how the contents of the oldest myths have been replaced over time by other less delicate ones (the sexual seed is transformed into divine nectar). Abraham also recalls that many pagan myths adapted to the new religions as monotheism was introduced. He also comments how a myth can disappear if society rejects is old beliefs and modifies its aspirations.

In the same way as one idea can give rise to different dreams, the same wish can underlie different myths. While the symbols in dreams are obscured, those that are found in myths can lack disguise or censorship as they are far removed from human identity.

Object relations can also be found in this essay: “Man’s relationship to inanimate objects is by no means purely objective; this relationship is a distinctly subjective and personal one originating in his sexuality.” (Abraham, 1909b, p. 165).

Sexual symbolism governs both myths and dreams and, together with other authors such as Freud or Kleinpaul, our protagonist extends this to the whole of humanity. Dreams and myths are of the same nature and originate in the unconscious.

Through these musings, Abraham establishes another similarity between the people and the individual. A person creates its wishes in
line with the myths of its prehistory, the individual adapts his wishes in accordance with those formed in the earliest object relations. Jung addressed the same problem in a very different way.

Freud, who was the first to read *Dreams and Myths* was captivated by the essay: “I shall not withhold from you my thanks and full appreciation ... It is all so clear, well based and constructed, full of conviction and free from misunderstanding and misunderstandability. I liked the piece very much.” (Letter to Abraham, 7 June 1908).

We can also appreciate Abraham’s passion for philology throughout the paper.

His in-depth research of the language in dreams (forgetting the name of Unkas—the last of the Mohicans, whose father was called Chingach-Gook—the Big Snake) revealed the sexual games that a patient played with her brother (in *A Complicated Ceremonial Found in Neurotic Women*, 1912c), or Freudian slips (playing with proper names and words by distorting them to produce rude nursery language—1922c–), or the language used by the child who does not want to be a walking-child (Spazierkind) but a mother’s child (Mutterkind) (in *On the Psychogenesis of Agrophobia in Childhood*, 1913d), or that related to the term blind (beyond the loss of visual acuity) in his article on scoptophilia in 1914, are some examples drawn from his lesser known papers.

Another example can be found in the second part of the *A Short Study of the Development of the Libido Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders* (1924i). He finds traces of the positions of the libido in respect to its object (possess-sit on), in different languages ("besitzen": possess, "sitzen": sit in German, the same in Latin: "possidere"): we sit on our possessions in order to maintain a close, reassuring contact with them, “We often notice how a child will take an object that is specially dear to him to bed with him at night and will lie on top of it.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 492). He also observes this attitude in his own dog. He also researches the word throne referring to toilet, an image in which several languages coincide or the concept of ruling one’s bowels and its idiomatic equivalents which illustrate the pride associated to intestinal functions.

In *Dreams and Myths*, Abraham notes how in German, diminutives take the neuter gender; they are related to immaturity. The same applies with “girl” and “young lady” who only acquire their feminine status after marriage. (Abraham, 1909b, p. 164).

The essay that Stekel published on the importance of the name (1911) with respect to the choice of profession, created a storm. Freud refused to include it in the *Zentralblatt* because it appeared that its
author had admitted that the many examples included in the text had been invented. This incident occurred after the Weimar Congress and Abraham subsequently confirmed some of Stekel’s theories in *On the Determining Power of Names* (1911e). “From experience with my neurotic patients I can confirm Stekel’s observation.” As well as referring to two patients, he also quoted a classic, the *Elective Affinities* by Goethe, to support his arguments. However, he believed it was more appropriate to refer to a determinant force rather than Stekel’s more limiting term; constraint.

We will let Freud sum up: “I know that you share my belief that we should completely conquer the field of mythology. Until now we only have two pioneers: Abraham and Rank.” (Letter from Freud to Jung, 17 October 1909) [Translated for this edition].
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Applied psychoanalysis

We have already seen how Abraham’s extensive cultural baggage constituted a stimulus and base for expanding the field of his research. Anthropology, linguistics, painting, history, and mythology harmoniously complemented the new science and it would be difficult to arrange many of his papers in a strict classification.

For example *Dreams and Myths* addresses clinical aspects (psychosis and obsessive symptoms), as well as strictly analytical questions, such as identification, the theory of wish-fulfilment, transference, dreams, and infantile sexuality; he applies his knowledge of languages to his research in the sexualisation of inanimate objects, comparative mythology through Prometheus (who steals and gives fire), Matharichvan (who searches for him) and Moses (the Biblical not mythical one, who provides the law) and incorporates current citations of Freud, Riklin, or Kleinpaul etc. In a footnote at the beginning of this essay, the author comments:

Freud’s work, “Der Dichter und das Phantasieren”, *Neue Revue*, 2nd March, 1908, which was also published after the completion of this monograph, shortly expresses my own basic ideas. There he says: “Myths are probably the distorted residue of wishful
KARL ABRAHAM

phantasies of whole peoples representing the strivings of early man.” (Abraham, 1909, p. 154)

In my opinion this comment is particularly elegant: the exchange of letters inevitably led to the contemplations of one man filtering into the reflections of the other. Abraham sent the manuscript of *Dreams and Myths* to Freud in April 1908 and in previous letters he had explained his theories, some of which are rooted in the childhood phase for which he displays a passion in terms of philology. The whole essay is full of references to the master (mainly acknowledgements and sometimes discrepancies); it is replete with quotes of authors, psychoanalysts, or otherwise, which demonstrates his extensive knowledge and a serious yet passionate research task, which seeks more to advance the new theory than to boast his own findings.

Let us return to the question of this section and examine some of Abraham’s papers that were not directly clinical (although this aspect was never completely absent) and his observations regarding the object, which constituted another of his ever-present themes.

The psychoanalytic essay on Giovanni Segantini, the painter of motherhood, was first published in 1911. Later, a second revised edition was issued in 1924 with more additions than corrections. Peter Gay describes it as one of the most remarkable and commended bibliographical essays.

Abraham was researching depression and his interest focussed on this melancholy character who lost his mother when he was five years old. Giovanni idealised her and worshipped her through his art, not having completely repressed his instincts and impulses. Abraham comments: “The primitive eroticism of the child is purely egoistic. It is directed towards the unlimited possession of its object …” (Abraham, 1911g, p. 215).

He describes how the child feels an amalgamation of impulses towards the object in a very early stage of development. Honouring the father and the mother is a commandment that forbids both feelings of love and hate; both run counter to the prohibition of incest. The painter felt that he was the cause of the death of his mother who never fully recovered after giving birth to him. He attempted to repair the damage that he has done through painting; this feeling ran in parallel to the wish to avenge the maternal abandonment. Segantini’s father is hardly mentioned in his autobiography; he went to America, leaving the small
child with an aunt. This absence again caused Giovanni to indulge in idealisation, which gave rise to the fantasies of grandeur that characterised him throughout his life.

In 1912 Abraham published a new study in which he applied his multiple interests in the analytic field to the case of Amenhotep IV, the first monogamous pharaoh and founder of monotheism (belonging to the eighteenth dynasty who lived in the fourteenth century BC). He was an example of another son who grew in the shadow of his mother, Queen Tiy, and rebelled against his royal father (who died prematurely) to honour the god Ra (Amon), sublimating his sadistic impulses in an attempt to create a kingdom in which love was the force that conquered the world.

These are the two most widely known works of Abraham in the field of applied psychoanalysis although we should also refer to *The Day of Atonement*, an article that we examined in the section of Judaism.

His knowledge of anthropology had helped him lay some of the foundations of psychoanalysis. In 1920 he published an article which had the opposite objective: *The Cultural Significance of Psycho-Analysis*. Abraham stated that primary autoeroticism does not require an external object, it is the narcissist state. This is still an amoral stage in which the child cannot be classed as innocent or evil. Later, religion, moral, law, and philosophy try to impose sublimations to drives whose satisfaction should remain prohibited.

Three years later he published a study on symbols and in 1925 he issued *Psychoanalysis and Gynaecology*, in which he addresses the often-ambiguous attitude of patients with respect to their own femininity and the consequences of the displacement imposed on women from the clitoris as a centre of excitation in childhood to the vagina in adulthood.

Finally we will refer to the detailed case of N., published on the day of Abraham’s death. The psychiatric appraisal of a prisoner for the courts gave rise to the elaboration of a solid theory that explained the antisocial impulses of this fraudster and the key to his transformation due to a profound turn of events in N’s emotional life. The subject had lacked maternal affection and deep disappointments in early infancy had retained his libido in a narcissistic state, the ambivalence of drives was too intense, his role models let him down, therefore the sublimation processes that give rise to an overcoming of the Oedipus complex could not be carried out. A maternal substitute gratified his unsatisfied childhood wishes. I will allow Hanns Sachs to conclude this section, with
the translation of fragments of an article written in 1935: Karl Abraham’s Contribution to Applied Psychoanalysis:

Karl Abraham had acquired the richness of the humanistic education which characterized the currently so much vilified Liberal Era. In addition to his thorough training in medicine and the natural sciences he was equipped with a wide knowledge of cultural history and a lively interest in the arts and literature, which was reinforced by exceptional linguistic talent. In addition to many living tongues he commanded the classical languages well enough to be able to enjoy the Greek dramatists and Latin historians in the original. But far more valuable than these accomplishments was his crystal-clear intellect, his cool, unbiased judgment, and his fine personal integrity which made him serve the truth unswervingly. Every sentence in his writings reflects these characteristics in the pithiness and absolute correctness of his formulations, which tolerate no ambiguities or exaggerations and convey neither more nor less than the writer has reasoned out and found correct.

Mythology, the history of religion and creative art comprise a goodly portion of cultural history, and Abraham devoted himself successfully, and in an exemplary manner, to studies in every one of these fields.

A basic motif in the pictures of Segantini ... is followed by Abraham through all its transformations and variations and is related to the life of the artist, and new light is thrown on the dynamic role of the unconscious in artistic creativeness. Prometheus, another study, brings to light the hidden significance of the myth of the Firebringer and creator of mankind, and explains the fate that befalls him like every other culture hero. The “heretic” King Ikhnaton is subjected to an analysis despite the intervening millennia and serves to illustrate in his hymn to the sun and his attempted reforms the significance of the Oedipus complex on religious sublimation.

Since Abraham’s time psychoanalysis has begun to devote itself to other problems. But Abraham’s work is by no means antiquated today, in part because it presents with complete clarity the foundations of the new science, in part because his work contains a wealth of suggestions and hints whose possibilities still remain unexhausted. (Sachs, 1935, p. 627)

This long and detailed description requires no further comment.
CHAPTER TWELVE

The correspondence

We are forced to limit our study to Abraham’s exchanges with Freud, as scarcely any other quotes from correspondence with other people have been compiled by the historians other than the references in the Rundbriefe. However, the correspondence with Freud is a rich source that complements, accompanies, and explains the works of both authors.

There is no better way to appreciate the great value of these exchanges, than by transcribing part of a letter written on 31 March 1915, in which Abraham postulates sadism as a primary element (hypotheses that would greatly influence the Kleinian School) based on the Freudian ideas that formed the basis of Mourning and Melancholia:

I’m able to accept all the essentials in your work. I do think, however, that one element from my earlier work should be more heavily stressed … stressed that sadism was important because its intensity does not allow the capacity for love to arise; and I deduced depression from a perception of one’s inability to love. I had to leave completely unanswered the question of why melancholia develops in one case and obsession in another … Of the two important factors
in the genesis of obsessional neurosis—sadism and anal erotism—I strongly stressed the importance in melancholia of the former in my paper of 1911. I must still hold to this view. Too much violence and criminality was uncovered in the analyses of my melancholic patients. The self-reproaches do indicate repressed hostile feelings. The complete motor inhibition leads one also to assume that strong motor impulses have had to be made harmless. The same tendency is manifest in the way the melancholic torments those around him. Added to this is the reappearance of the most open sadism in the manic phase.

[...] We ought to agree easily, provided the above ideas are not too wrong. The basic points of your exposition: the melancholic has lost something but does not know what; the impoverishment of the ego and all that is connected with it; the identification with the love-object; the localization of the process of mourning in the ego-investments; the dissolving of object-investments in narcissistic identification—all this should definitely stand. I think sadism and oral eroticism should be added. (Abraham, 31 March 1915)

We can appreciate the difficulty in clinically analysing these aspects with adults and the delicacy with which Abraham conducts the analysis of the material provided by his patients. His work is also replete with citations that incorporate, as we can see here, his own ideas. We could say that this continual openness to incorporate classic thought, the hypotheses of his colleagues and the material drawn from his patients is one of the keys to the depth of his work; monologues tend to be less fruitful.

His mentor helped him and encouraged him to develop his initiatives. On 4 May 1915, Freud responded:

Your comments on melancholia were very valuable to me. I unhesitatingly incorporated in my paper those parts of them that I could use. What was most valuable to me was the reference to the oral phase of the libido, and I also mention the link with mourning. Your request for severe criticism caused me no difficulty; I liked practically everything you wrote. I should like to make only two points: that you do not bring out sufficiently the essential feature of the assumption, that is to say the topical element, the regression of the libido, and the abandonment of the unconscious object investment, but instead put into the foreground sadism and anal erotism as explanatory motifs ... (Letter from Freud, 4 May 1915)
The master was always aware of the meta-psychological aspects while the student sought the source of the conflict that was transmitted in the symptoms. The dialogue is continual and the ideas are generated at a faster pace than the post system allowed, so Freud suggest, much to our disappointment, that they should continue discussing the controversy face to face.

The hardships of the war were not sufficient to silence the theories of Freud who, in 1915 wrote *Mourning and Melancholia*. It was subsequently published and was received with enthusiasm by Abraham, who commented in a letter on 16 April 1918:

> I am pleased to note that my incorporation phantasy could be fitted into the wider framework of your theory … One very minor criticism is the following. The so-called delusional inferiority found in the melancholic only appears to be such. Sometimes it is actually a delusion of grandeur … Even though the self-reproaches may be aimed at the love-object, they signify at the same time a narcissistic over-estimation of the own criminal capacities (similar to obsessional neurotics who think themselves capable of monstrous crimes). (Abraham, 16 April 1918)

In *Mourning and Melancholia* identification was established as the preliminary stage of object selection. Abraham continued to draw conclusions from his manic-depressive patients and observed an interesting parallel with kleptomania, which also stems from the oral phase and represents the biting-off of penis or breast. He observed that the regression of the melancholic had the same aim, only in another form. And so “the taking in of the love-object is very striking in my cases.” (To Freud, 13 March 1922).

*Mourning and Melancholia* was a breath of fresh air which caused Karl to make new reflections and some criticism:

> You, dear Professor, state that you miss in the course of normal mourning a process that would correspond to the swing-over from melancholia to mania. I think, however, that I could identify such a process … a fair number of people show an increase in libido some time after a bereavement … The increase in libido some time after object-loss would seem to be a good addition to the parallel between mourning and melancholia … a special form of parapraxis … like obsessional actions, do not permit the repressed tendency to break through but overcompensate for it. (Letter to Freud, 13 March 1922)
Freud thanked him for the “abundance of your scientific insights and intentions”, but the point of friction regarding normal mourning persisted. “I wonder why you do not take into account at all my last suggestion about the nature of mania after melancholia (in the *Mass Psychology*). Might that be the motivation for my forgetting about the *Mourning and Melancholia*? For analysis, no absurdity is impossible.” He was referring to his lapsus in the delay in sending Abraham an offprint of *Mourning and Melancholia* that he had requested. (Letter to Abraham, 30 March 1922) However, Abraham is not satisfied and insists:

I can find no mention anywhere of a parallel in normal cases, i.e. the onset of a reaction state after mourning that can be compared to mania (after melancholia). I only know from your remark in *Mourning and M*… that you miss something of that kind. And I referred to this in my comment. The increase in libido after mourning would be fully analogous to the feast of the manic. But I have not found this parallel from normal life in that section of *Mass Psychoanalysis* where the feast is discussed. Or have I been so struck by blindness that I am unable to see the actual reference? (Abraham, 2 May 1922)

Once the misunderstanding had been cleared up with the help of Eitingon—Freud had been focussing on the explanation of the mechanism, not on a normal paradigm—he wrote to Abraham to apologise.

While Karl was mobilised, war neuroses occupied most of his time, although he made a curious discovery regarding the eroticism of a part of the body which, due to its obvious nature, is often forgotten:

I have, though, discovered something new about obsessional counting. I shall only say for now that the connected compulsion to establish symmetry is among other things directly linked with the hands (fingers). In these, as in some cases I have previously analysed, the hands are an important erotogenic zone. So far nothing has been written in our literature about patients who at times of libidinal excitation get congestion in their hands. (Letter to Freud, 27 October 1918)

One year later he published an article on a peculiar and prolonged manner of resisting analysis; he was thinking about narcissism, but also extended his research to submission. Submissive patients and patients
who claim that they are not hiding problems which are larger than they seem … In another letter to Freud (5 June 1919), we can read about the other side of this article:

I have taken on the analysis of a paranoia querulans. It is progressing very successfully. The patient has lost interest in those things about which he was querulously complaining, has utterly changed, and is making a surprising switch-over from man to woman. He is a complete and brilliant confirmation of the theories you develop in your Schreber. It is the sort of case where one would least expect to achieve a therapeutic influence. The speed of the improvement can probably be accounted for by only one factor—the patient’s homosexuality had been very little repressed, and its significance became evident to him very rapidly. (Letter to Freud, 5 June 1919)

The *Rundbriefe* circulated from 1920 to 1924, and about a hundred letters were sent in total. Originally it was intended to be issued on a weekly basis, but the many obligations of the Committee members meant that this period was extended to monthly intervals (occasionally Abraham wrote more often). The intended focus on scientific subjects also shifted. Internal politics and the transformations taking place with respect to external recognition took up most of its pages. We can learn from the letters from Berlin, sent usually by Karl Abraham with the consent of Sachs and Eitingon, that one of the most emphatic vetoes to the incorporation of psychoanalysis into the University came from Bleuler. We can read in Grotjahn:

The Professor characterized Abraham’s hopes as chimera [*Hirnbespinst*]. Three years later, Abraham announced that the younger assistant physicians from the university psychiatric clinic came more and more frequently to the lectures of the institute. In as much as Abraham never did achieve official recognition from the university, this underground recognition must have pleased him. (Grotjahn, 1974, p. 29)

The same source informs us of how Abraham accepted the ideas of Ferenczi although he disagreed with his methods.

The genesis of the idea for his important essay on libidinal development published in 1924 was born through the exchange of letters. He proudly notifies “Herr Professor”: 


In the circular letter I mentioned my recent talk on the history of the development of object-love. It has brought me an unusual amount of appreciation from our circle, and I myself feel that it is an important addition to the theory of sexuality and, at the same time, my best work up to now. I shall try to write it up soon. At the same time I feel that this whole idea accords with your own views and will also meet with your approval. Apart from the main result (enlightenment of the developmental process from narcissism towards object-love), the paper makes a not unimportant contribution to the understanding of paranoia and other forms of neurosis, such as pseudología, etc., which have so far not been exhausted. (Abraham, letter of 1 April 1923)

He carries on along the same lines, referring this time to the first collaboration with Melanie Klein, who was one of his patients and that year had been elected as a full member of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society. We transcribe a portion of the letter to Freud, 7 October 1923:

In my work on melancholia ... I have assumed the presence of a basic irritation [Ur-Verstimmung] in infancy as a prototype for later melancholia. In the last few months Frau Dr Klein has skilfully conducted the psychoanalysis of a three-year-old boy with good therapeutic results. This child faithfully presented the basic melancholia that I had assumed and in close combination with oral erotism ...

I am pleased to see that my assumptions about the two stages in the anal-sadistic phase are confirmed by new material. I had a remarkable experience with one of my melancholics ... On my return from the journey, I found him at the beginning of a new depression triggered by a disappointment connected with his fiancée. The depression had not set in with the same intensity as on previous occasions, but the rejection of the love-object was visible in its characteristic form. Quick intervention resulted in the melancholia changing within a fortnight ... into an obsessional neurosis with the main symptom of the fear the main obsessional idea of having to strangle the mother (fiancée). In contrast to previous times, no cannibalistic-oral sadism, but manual sadism ... The patient has already resumed working, and my impression is that it has been possible to divert melancholia in statu nascendi into a relatively more favourable form of illness ...
What I said in Lavarone about the stages of object-love, and particularly about partial incorporation, is being very nicely confirmed at present. I had assumed that in paranoid and related psychoses regression to this phase could be demonstrated. The analysis of a psychosis that Loofs presented at our first meeting, supplied excellent confirmatory material. Among other things, the patient had the delusional idea that a monkey was sitting inside her. This monkey could be shown with absolute clarity to be the father’s penis. (Letter to Freud, 7 October 1923)

As far as I know, this letter has never been quoted in relation to the theoretical background of the depressive position which Klein would later describe. In fact, the proto-melancholia and the emphasis on explaining these two cases related to the vicissitudes of the anal phase, I believe, constitute important theoretical material prior to developing the positions, particularly the depressive position.

Abraham did not use a diagnostic classification approach. Genetics always formed a part of his assessment of the level of pathological regression; obsessive neurosis slows down the onset of a severe depression. Orality continued to be a central theme of his contemplations.

In the summer of 1924, in his letters to Freud, he began to express an interest in the meaning of the number seven in mythology. Freud showed whole-hearted enthusiasm for the subject (see the correspondence; e.g. the letter on 23 August 1924). The texts consulted included a book by Lévy-Brühl on the thought systems of primitive civilisations.

Freud also showed an interest in predicting the future from entrails. Based on the account of a patient who reminded him of the Jewish prohibition of eating milk and meat together and the enigmatic biblical law repeated several times “thou shall not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk”, in the letter of 12 November 1924, Abraham commented that the prohibition seemed to prevent the same action in the case of a human child, and even before birth. He told Freud that this law went against the primitive customs you suggest. It appears that an account told by Rank gave rise to these musings.

Adding to what we have already said about feminine psychology in the previous section, we will refer to Abraham’s letter to Freud of 3 December 1924:
But I have recently wondered whether in early infancy there may be an early vaginal blossoming of the female libido, which is destined to be repressed and which is subsequently followed by clitoral primacy as the expression of the phallic phase. A number of observations seem to bear this out ... we would be better able to understand the female Oedipus complex as the result of an early vaginal reaction to the father’s penis and the change of the leading zone in puberty would then be a resumption of the original state of affairs. (Abraham, 3 December 1924)

The clinician continued to develop the discussion further:

I have for a long time questioned whether the displacement from the clitoris to the vagina could happen in a way different from the one it had taken earlier—though in an inverse direction ... This assumed pre-stage would have to have as a sexual aim the reception of the penis. The opening intended for this seems to me, too, to have cloacal characteristics; that is to say, one has to assume that vaginal sensations arise that are transferred from the anal zone as well as that pleasurable contractions of the vagina must somehow be linked with contractions of the anal sphincter. The ease with which little girls can be seduced to coitus-like actions, as well as the tendency to vaginal masturbation and, in particular, the introduction of foreign bodies, must probably all rest on such processes. Two neurotic symptoms have forced me to assume a—let us say, vaginal–anal—pre-stage: frigidity and vaginism. In the light of all my psychoanalytic experience, I cannot believe that frigidity is merely based on the failure to appear of the transition of the libido from the clitoris to the vagina. There must be a prohibition that has an immediate local basis; this is even more valid for vaginismus ... (Abraham, 27 December 1924)

Freud had no preconceived ideas about this subject and was eager to learn all that he could.
On 27 August 1908, Abraham created the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society with four other doctors: Juliusburger, Magnus Hirschfeld (a homosexual rights advocate), Iwan Bloch, and Heinrich Körber—president of the cultural and philosophical movement, the Monisten-Bund. The solidness of the meetings that he organised regularly in his apartment gave rise to the formation of the Berlin Group of the International Psychoanalytical Association, founded in the Nuremberg Congress in 1910.

The Psychoanalytic Institute was subsequently created. Abraham was the president of both the Institute and the Society until his death. Professionals in different fields, teachers, and criminologists sought psychoanalytic training. Müller-Braunschweig was responsible for the philosophical and theological perspective of psychoanalysis, Harnick, Fenichel, and Karen Horney were concerned with the treatment of children and Boehm and Liebermann trained specialists and general practitioners.

From the outset, the library was a very important part of the Institute. It had a special section for loans (which, according to Boucara (p. 253) had four hundred volumes in 1930) and another section for study (with 1,200 books in the same year).
In 1911, Karl Abraham organised four-week courses for beginners and advanced students, which, according to Le Rider (p. 127) were “pioneering”. Teachers from the institute were invited by different free universities in German to give courses and conferences. Lessing University, for example, invited Müller-Braunschweig and Heinrich Koerber in 1923 and 1924. Simmel (director of the Association of Socialist Doctors) was also very active on the radio.

The syllabus was carefully planned. It covered a wide range of subjects and logically included the reading of all of Freud’s works. Although all of the students read Freud, not all of them would become psychoanalysts, so a distinction was made between candidates and listeners.

During its first thirty years in operation, the Institute trained more than one hundred analysts. Between 1919 and 1933 almost a thousand people were analysed. Its influence was not paralysed by the arrival of the Nazis. Those who had to leave increased their prestige from abroad and the Institute served as a model for many of today’s institutes.

When other centres were still debating whether training analysis was necessary, in Berlin nobody could become an analyst if they had not been analysed themselves. This process was expected to last for at least one year. The Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute established itself as an influential force and its prestige was well-known among aspiring analysts. Candidates flocked there. According to Peter Gay (p. 463), it received many foreign students who loved the informal attire and were surprised by the enthusiasm of the participants and their stimulating seriousness.

The Polyclinic of Berlin, which treated poor patients free of charge, opened in 14 February 1920. The project had been presented a year beforehand by Ernst Simmel and Max Eitingon. This milestone is described by Ives Hendrick in *Facts and Theories of Psychoanalysis* (p. 327): “In 1920 a new era in psychoanalytic education was inaugurated by the opening of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute. This was the culmination of the work of Karl Abraham, whose qualities as scientist and man had appeared early” (Hendrick, 1939, p. 327).

The Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute was integrated into the Polyclinic with its premises in Postdamerstrasse until 1928. It then moved to a larger building at number ten Wichmannstrasse. Again, the architect was Freud’s son, Ernst. The first psychoanalysts to begin working there were Eitingon and Simmel, who were also teachers. It was Freud’s suggestion to employ Sachs who, being from Vienna, did not form part of
the close-knit Berlin circle. The courses, which began in March 1923, were designed by a teaching commission made up of Abraham, Eitingon, Horney, Müller-Braunschweig, Sachs, and Simmel. Radó became a member of the commission in 1924, as did Alexander in 1927.

Carl Müller-Braunschweig, who had been a member of the Society since 1920, was elected as Secretary of the Institute, and in 1950 he created the German Psychoanalytic Association which was recognised by the International Association one year later. At the same time he oversaw the reconstruction of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute that was demolished by the Nazis. In 1970, the Institute celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and changed its name to the Karl Abraham Institute in honour of its founder.

The Polyclinic became a consultative body for a wide range of institutions. Career counselling services, marriage guidance counsellors, school health services, social workers and the juvenile courts sought its advice or therapeutic support. The number of student applications increased.

The first condition for becoming a candidate was to undergo a personal analysis. Subsequently, the candidate had to analyse a patient under the supervision of a teaching analyst. The theory of psychoanalysis was taught through courses, seminars and workshops. In the next section we will see many of the famous patients who Abraham analysed throughout his life.

We will allow Peter Gay to conclude this section:

Berlin’s greatest attraction for psychoanalysts was Karl Abraham—reliable, confident, intellectual, a steady support to the young and the imaginative. What Freud had once called Abraham’s Prussianity was, in the context of exuberant and excited Berlin, no drawback … The Berlin clinic … and its associate institute were the first realization of Freud’s call to utopia … Simmel wrote, Berlin’s psychoanalysts had, in addition to their therapeutic and professional activities, engaged in the “psychoanalytic treatment of public opinion” … Otto Fenichel reported that between 1920 and 1930, the institute had undertaken 1,955 consultations, of which 721 had led to psychoanalyses. Of these analyses, 117 were still continuing, 241 had been broken off, and 47 had to be written off as failures. Of the 316 other cases, 116 had shown improvement, 89 distinct improvements, and 111 had been cured. (Gay, 1988, p. 462)
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Training analyst and supervisor

The list of patients who Karl Abraham analysed looks more like a roster of psychoanalytic experts. It included the distinguished English analysts Edward and James Glover; Helene Deutsch, who was also analysed by Freud and made her name with papers on female sexuality; the respected theoretical innovators Karen Horney and Melanie Klein, and a sharp English observer who would later become one of Freud’s translators: Alix Strachey.

Ernst Falzeder constructed a map of the analyses known to have been conducted during the early days (some supervised analyses, others with family members, sons or lovers) in the form of a table to which over the course of many years he added new lines as he discovered new data. The result is an impressive maze with Sigmund Freud at the core surrounded by a series of nodules including, of course, Karl Abraham. Falzeder’s map forms part of the article *The Threads of Psychoanalytic Filiations or Psychoanalysis Taking Effect*, included in *100 Years of Psychoanalysis* (Haynal & Falzeder (Eds.), 1994. It is a special issue of the *Cahiers Psychiatriques Genevois* that includes the texts of the Symposium with the same title held in Geneva in 1993). The training analyses recorded were conducted with: Felix Böhm, Helene Deutsch,

Falzeder also compiled a long list of distinguished psychoanalysts who had spent time at the Burghölzli, directed by Eugen Bleuler. As well as Jung and Abraham, we can mention Ludwig Binswanger, Abraham, A. Brill, Trigant Burrow, Max Eitingon, Sándor Ferenczi, Otto Gross, Ely Jelliffe, Ernest Jones, Hans Maier, Hermann Nunberg, Johan H. W. von Ophuijsen, Franz Riklin, Hermann Rorschach, Tatiana Rosenthal, Sabina Spielrein, Wolf Stockmayer, and Alexander Young, etc. However, in this Central European breeding ground of psychiatry that was more influential than many universities, training analysis did not exist in its modern form.

This author acknowledges that he had found very few training analyses “lege artis” like those carried out by the Berlin Group in the Institute in 1920. It was not without reason that a model was established at the ninth International Psychoanalytical Congress in Bad Homburg in 1925.

In 1923, after writing her *Autobiography*, Melanie Klein approached Abraham to analyse her; he expressed his reservations about analysing a Berlin colleague. He was referring to some extremely unpleasant situations that resulted in the termination of analysis with colleagues who had become hostile to him. “I do not know where I found the courage to respond: Can you tell me one person in Berlin to whom I can have enough consideration to ask him to take my analysis?” He never replied, but accepted her and the treatment started at the beginning of 1924. The analysis ended when Abraham fell very ill in summer 1925 and died on Christmas of the same year. “It was for me a great sorrow and the beginning of an extremely hard time to overcome.” (Quoted by Grosskurth, 1977, p. 149).

Helene Deutsch had already been analysed once by Freud (at that time she was analysing Victor Tausk in 1919). She entered by the private apartment and before the session she shared the half-litre of goat’s milk that she used to take with Martha. Deutsch became his confidante which gave rise to rivalry with Anna. This prompted her to seek further analysis, this time with Abraham (and not Sachs as “Herr Professor” had suggested). Her sessions began as soon as she arrived in Berlin in 1923, and soon afterwards she told her husband that it was not just an academic exercise: “The analysis affects me profoundly. At
the end of the session I am always extremely moved and exhausted. Abraham is a cold and highly intelligent man. I believe that I am in
good hands” (Roazen, 1985, p. 240) [Translated for this edition]. Time
did not affect this first impression … “Psychoanalysis with Abraham
is magnificent! Completely objective without any destabilising trans-
ference.” (Roazen, 1985, p. 242) [Translated for this edition], she wrote
later, with suspiciously excessive enthusiasm, to Felix. Roazen believes
that the strong emotional bond with Freud, who she did not forgive
for refusing to resume her analysis, was an obstacle in her work with
Abraham.

This aspect of his work at the Clinic was not one that he particularly
enjoyed. He believed that some of the difficulties experienced by his
group arose because many of its members were analysed by him. There-
fore, he delegated this role to Sachs (in the first two years he referred
twenty-five candidates to him) and to Max Eitingon (who was respon-
sible for all the supervised sessions).

Freud also tried to avoid analysing those close to him; of the five
members of his inner circle to whom he gave the rings, he only analysed
Ferenczi in a more orthodox way.

Maybe it is worth considering some of the opinions regard-
ing Abraham’s work as an analyst. For Jones, he was, together with
Ferenczi, the best clinical analyst of all his contemporaries. This assess-
ment was shared at least by Helene Deutsch, Melanie Klein and Alix
Strachey.

The latter had been analysed by Freud before Abraham. She preferred
the hothouse atmosphere of Berlin to Vienna which was comparatively
dormant. Also, as an analyst, she preferred Abraham to Freud. “I have no
doubt” she wrote to her husband in February 1925 “that Abraham is the
best analyst with whom I could work.” She was convinced that “in these
five months I have achieved more psychological work than with Freud in
fifteen.” (Letter from Alix to James Strachey, 9 February 1925). Although
this seemed strange to her at first, she observed that others, such as Klein,
also thought that Abraham was a better analyst than Freud.

Gay (p. 461) tells us that Alix was in love with Berlin. It was where
analysts and candidates talked and argued in professional meetings, in
“Konditoreien”, and even in social gatherings. Eating cake and danc-
ing all night was not incompatible with serious conversations about
oedipal effects and castration anxiety. For an analyst in the 1920s, Berlin
was the place to be.
Roazen (1985, p. 357) conveys that Abraham attracted people from other countries to Berlin: he performed an ordered, methodical and surgical examination of the unconscious. Of all the early analysts, except for Freud, only Abraham conducted training analysis with the most eminent future analysts. In their opinion, Abraham’s therapeutic technique was moderate, calm, and regular (interview with Edward Glover, 25 August 1965).

We know through Grosskurth (1991, p. 259) that, following in the footsteps of James Glover (considered as the brilliant member of the family), his brother Edward (also a graduate in Medicine from the University of Glasgow and always seeking to outdo his brother) was attracted to psychiatry and was analysed by Abraham in 1920. He describes his sessions as more of a learning experience than a training analysis (inferring that he was too “normal” to need analysis). They held some of the sessions in the olive groves of the Gardone Riviera during Abraham’s holidays. When he returned to London, Edward became a member of the British Psychoanalysis Society to which his brother already belonged.

As a supervisor, we can learn about Karl’s opinions through his correspondence with Freud. In a previously quoted example (letter to Freud, 7 October 1923: “Frau Dr Klein has skilfully conducted the psychoanalysis of a three-year-old boy with good therapeutic results ...”), we can see how he closely followed Melanie Klein’s analysis of a three-year-old child which met with his approval.

He was also pleased with the work carried out by Doctor Deutsch who he said: “has now got far enough to be able to do efficient theoretical work and she is working on her investigation into the psychology of women.” (Letter to Freud, 16 October 1923).
PART III

EVOLUTION OF ABRAHAM’S THOUGHT REGARDING THE HISTORY OF LIBIDINAL DEVELOPMENT (1907–1925)
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Incorporation into psychoanalysis

The time Abraham spent in Zurich constituted a springboard for his career. When he began working in Burghölzli in 1904, Bleuler held the Chair of Psychiatry and Jung was a resident doctor. Psychoanalytic treatment was provided there. He worked mainly with cases of dementia praecox and was witness to the discovery of the schizophrenia diagnosis which enabled him to confirm the hypotheses of Freud: a new disciple had been born.

The Burghölzli Clinic represented a critical juncture for the future of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. At the end of the nineteenth century, hysteria, in general terms, through Charcot, Janet, Babinski, and Freud, had been a source of debate, paving the way for research on the Oedipal complex. Psychosis, on the other hand, gave rise to investigation into the most archaic aspects of the pregenital stage. The pioneers of this field included Kraepelin, Bleuler, Jung, Freud, and Abraham.

In 1898, Eugen Bleuler was appointed as director of the clinic to replace Forel. The theories of Emil Kraepelin were flourishing. In his nosology, Kraepelin distinguished between three fundamental psychoses: paranoia, manic-depressive psychosis, and dementia praecox.
He defined paranoia as an “insidious development, depending on internal causes and with a continuous evolution, of a lasting and unmodifiable systematic delusion, associated with a complete maintenance of lucidity and order of thought, will and action.” (Quoted by Madrone, F. in *A Psychiatrist and a Paranoiac*, JEP: Number 2—Fall 1995-Winter 1996). He described manic-depression as a basic disorder of mood (depression or euphoria), racing thoughts (flight of ideas) and volition (inhibition or psychomotor excitation). He also divided dementia praecox into three different subtypes: chronic hallucinatory psychosis, involving non-systematised delusions and hallucinations, hebephrenia, with excessive intellectual and motor activity and catatonia, with negativism, mutism, and stereotype.

Bleuler made innovative contributions in this field: he maintained that the causes of mental illness were genetic and toxic. Although this idea was not new, he can be regarded as a pioneer with respect to treatment. Bleuler continued the tradition of Sydenham and so many others who believed that the patients had “something to say about their disorders.” He did not treat them as mere objects for examination.

The third person to whom we will refer is Jung who arrived at the clinic in 1900, two years after Bleuler. Ellenberger (1970, p. 746) describes the different factors that differentiated him from Freud from the outset. Jung was born in 1875 in Thurgovia and was highly influenced by his Swiss origin. His famous grandfather, who had the same name and was presumed to be the illegitimate son of Goethe, was his role model throughout his life, rather than his father for whom he felt disdain. Ellenberger claims that, contrary to Freud, it was not easy for Jung to relate to the Oedipus complex. His mother was vulgar and he considered his father to have an insignificant role. However, his grandfather had an almost legendary status. There is no doubt that his interest in parapsychology and numinosity was closely related to his family background. Soon after finishing his schooling in 1985 he became interested in the occult. He finished his medical degree in 1899, and started working in the Burghölzli Clinic one year later, under Bleuler and his Spartan-like discipline. Sometimes as often as three times a week, the residents were required to write out medical histories which were later discussed.

The central focus was on the patients and the students were encouraged to learn how to talk to them. At that time, everyone in the hospital, from the professor to the youngest resident doctor, was completely
absorbed by their work and the abstinence from alcoholic drinks was the norm. (Memoirs of Doctor A. Maeder collected by Ellenberger, 1970, p. 747).

After spending a period in Paris with Janet, Jung returned to the clinic and was married in 1903. In 1902 he had begun his work on the associative test, a formal link that would initially unite him with Freud. However, the well-known free associations, (which would be better described as free occurrences), had little in common with this test. This test consists in offering the patient a list of trigger words that cause an internal conflict (complex), and the time lapse before the patient responds with the associated word is measured. This technique is more characteristic of Janet than of Freud. In 1905 Jung became second-in-command at the clinic and was appointed as “Privatdozent” (a private teacher or lecturer paid directly by student fees) at the University. A year later he began to exchange correspondence with Freud and in 1909 he left the Burghölzli and went to Küsnacht. With respect to his ideas on psychosis, Jung maintained a different stance to both Bleuler and Freud. He claimed that psychosis was explained by the presence of an insurmountable complex to which the patient dedicates all his attention and becomes diverted from reality. During his time in the Swiss clinic, Jung worked with severely psychotic patients and soon discovered the presence of universal symbols, which he would later call archetypes in the patient’s delusions and hallucinations.

With respect to the aetiology of psychoses, there was a progressive decentralisation from the extreme organicity advocated by Kraepelin to Abraham’s theories on intrapsychic conflict.
The beginnings of object theory (1907–1916)

The libido unites. An account of intersubjectivity can be established through the libido, and this is what is carried out today in intersubjective psychoanalysis, particularly regarding the inevitable transference/countertransference relationship. But for this and other psychoanalytic developments to be possible, it was first necessary to describe the structuring role of the libido, that is, its function in the construction of subjectivity.

As we shall see, Abraham described the internalisation processes in minute detail, without which it would be impossible to consider structure.

As we have already mentioned, the status of the object in Freud’s work suffers different transformations, starting as a simple place where drives are discharged and evolving to an essential Other which establishes identification, identity and the possibility of otherness. We shall see how this process is rigorously observed throughout Abraham’s work and analyse the most prominent examples. I have gone into greater depth on this point in the chapter titled “El estatuto del objeto en los paradigmas psicoanalíticos”, in I. Sanfeliu (1996).

In his earliest analytical works, we can observe Abraham’s interest in the way in which Freud approached sexuality. In On the Significance
of Sexual Trauma in Childhood for the Symptomatology of Dementia Praecox (Abraham, 1907b, pp. 13–20), he describes his experience with this condition, comparing it to hysteria and applies Freudian findings. He analyses the earliest signs of sexual activity, which in the first phase is autoerotic. He goes on to indicate how in the following stage, the child experiences object-love, although the object does not have to be of the opposite sex.

Abraham began his research in psychoanalysis when infantile sexuality had already been formulated. This was the keystone on which psychoanalysis in the strict sense of the word was built. It did not seem to disturb him as it did some of his counterparts at the time, such as Bleuler and Jung.

For the moment, ideas emerged in no apparent order. “In addition to heterosexual and homosexual impulses certain other impulses, of a sadistic and masochistic character find expression.” (Abraham, 1907c, p. 53).

Abraham was not a Lamarckian and therefore did not feel repulsion towards the indecision that is characteristic in the earlier stages of development: homosexuality and heterosexuality are more than a simple choice of object; they fulfil the function of seeking one’s identity. In the same way, the disturbing presence of sadism and masochism were, for him, not related to moral values, but an inevitable sign of the conditions of development.

At that time he worked within an environment which dictated the psychoanalytic guidelines so he confined himself to exploring within these limits. The problem of sexuality was open to the world of fantasy related to the object: choice of Self, destruction and possible repair.

Here it is appropriate to refer to the letter written by Freud in 1907 (7 July), which includes very few pleasantries, but focusses on the emergence of the beginnings of a theory. It is a reply to a lost letter of Abraham. He writes, for example: “I am particularly glad that the approach to dementia praecox by way of autoeroticism seems hopeful to you.” We can assume that the “trigger letter” contains an avalanche of questions and ideas regarding the earliest research into the libido due to the wide variety of subjects addressed by the master. He talks decidedly about fantasies of seduction, not real seduction.

Fortunately, we do have Abraham’s reply of 8 August; the dialogue is animated …
I would be ready to admit that the revelation of the most intimate secrets is a sign of the onset of dementia, if the concept of dementia had been clarified; so far, however, this is not the case. I believe what in cases of chronic mental illness is called dementia is nothing but the patient shutting himself away from the world, the withdrawal of libido from persons and objects. (Abraham, 8 August 1907)

As a good clinical observer, he did not accept that organic psychoses and epilepsies should be diagnosed as dementia. He claimed that the differences were manifested in the context of object relations. He brilliantly concluded:

In spite of all the dementia, even in deepest imbecility, the epileptic shows definite object-love ... epileptics become demented and keep their object-libido, the chronic mental patients become demented and lose their object—libido. (Abraham, 8 August 1907)

In the previous letter from Freud, the master insinuated that in cases of regressive development there was a predisposition to developing dementias. Here, Abraham replied with firmness:

The insufficient development towards object-love is due to an inhibition in the unfolding of the personality ... I therefore believe that in cases of chronic mental illness one ought to speak of a standstill in personality development rather than of dementia. (Abraham, 8 August 1907)

This is an excellent appraisal. We cannot say that Abraham was submissive. From the outset he did not hesitate to question aspects that contradicted his observations. Freud expressed his complete agreement with these conclusions, acknowledging that he only saw these types of cases very rarely.

A year later, he continued relating his clinical observations to Freudian theory. In *The Psychosexual Differences between Hysteria and Dementia Praecox*, he identifies the varying importance that object-love has in these conditions (which are both rooted in repressed sexual complexes):

Many persons have almost no needs in this respect, while others are completely under the dominion of their passion for certain
objects … this illness [Dementia Praecox] involves a cessation of object-love and of sublimation. [...] The turning away of the libido from the external world is the basis for the formation of delusions of persecution in general. (Abraham, 1908a, pp. 67, 74)

In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* Freud refers to the object as a passive agent where drives are discharged. It was still early for Abraham to question this stance. He would go on to take a genetic point of view that considered the object as an active participant in the creation of the self. Dementia praecox, obsessive neurosis, and manic-depressive states were the principal clinical disorders that impelled him to reconsider psychoanalytic theory. The object was still external, but in this paper he notes:

> Dementia praecox destroys the person’s capacity for sexual transference, i.e. for object-love ... In hysterics we often find this affection morbidly increased towards one person, and changed into violent aversion towards another. Such family affection is usually lacking in dementia praecox patients; and we find in its place indifference or pronounced hostility passing into delusions of persecution ... This revulsion of the libido from an object upon which it was at one time transferred with particular intensity, is an irrevocable one in dementia praecox. (Freud, 1908, pp. 69–70)

In hysteria, the internal object is libidinally invested; in dementia praecox the libido is invested in the self-object. This theory was suggested by Abraham as follows:

> Auto-erotism is also the feature which distinguishes dementia praecox from hysteria. In the one case the libido is withdrawn from objects, in the other it invests objects in an excessive degree. On the one hand there is loss of the capacity for sublimation, and on the other increased capacity for it. Object-love has not fully developed. (Abraham, 1908a, p. 77)

He could now expand on what he had hinted at in his first analytic paper. This was a constant feature of Abraham; building on analytic research that he had previously addressed but which had been left open for further contributions.
Freud’s assessment was highly positive:

Thank you very much for your paper on dementia praecox and hysteria, which arrived today. I value the resolute tone and clarity of your writings so highly that I must ask you not to think that I overlook their beauty. (Freud, letter of 23 July 1908)

In the same year, Abraham published a paper on sexuality and alcoholism (1908b, pp. 53–60) which gave rise to a differentiation of sexes based on an original state of bisexuality. Freud suggested a pair of partial drives (voyeurism/exhibitionism; to watch/to be watched). Abraham added another pair also characterised by the passive-active relationship: masochism/sadism, in which supremacy over the sexual object or its submission is sought (Abraham, 1908b, p. 80). This activity-passivity combination would later delimit the different stages of libidinal development.

In 1910, Freud was investigating “a special type of object choice in men”, while Abraham was researching analogies between alcoholism and sexual perversions.

With respect to the concept of autism, before he broke away from Bleuler, in a letter to Freud, Abraham wrote of a patient who was a poet and “highly talented but undoubtedly suffering from dementia praecox. In him I found the auto-erotism in a sublimated form … nothing but he himself interests him … The turning away of the libido from the external world could not be more beautifully illustrated” (To Freud, 23 February 1908). This was the first time that he referred to self-induced melancholic delusion.

Before Freud wrote Totem and Taboo, Abraham published a short paper in 1909 on The Significance of Intermarriage Between Close Relatives in the Psychology of the Neuroses (Abraham, 1909, pp. 21–28). After reading the manuscript, Freud commented: “Your idea about marriage between close relatives is certainly correct and worth describing” (letter of 11 July 1908) In this paper, Abraham postulates an occasional incapacity to transfer love onto persons outside of the family. This incestuous tendency is particularly prevalent among patients with dementia praecox. In many cases a “relative will be most likely to show certain traits, especially beloved in mother or sister”. (Abraham, 1909a, p. 24).

Dreams and Myths: A Study in Folk-Psychology (Abraham, 1909b, pp. 153–209) can be considered to be Abraham’s first ambitious
analytical study. His command of philology, symbolism, and language gave him the confidence to put forward his theories and enthusiastically defend Freudian concepts. Independently of Abraham’s education, in Germany at the time, the interest for mythology and compared mythology (Grimm brothers) was much greater than in Vienna. The same is true for symbols (Leibnitz). Naturally, this influence is visible in the Berlin-born Abraham. We examined this paper in greater depth in the third section of the second part of this book, “Abraham, linguistics and mythology”. We will now concentrate on some genetic references.

When he sent the essay to Freud, he commented: “I very much hope that you will agree with the conclusions I drew for the myth from the interpretation of dreams, etc.” (Letter from Abraham, 4 April 1908). Freud replied: “I am more and more convinced that you are right and that we share the honour of resolving mythology.” (23 July 1908).

All myths are a “product of the human imagination”, stories that hide structures rather than content, wishes “that survive from a remote period in the life of a people which we might call its infancy …” (Abraham, 1909b, p. 180) which are repressed in order to distance the myth from the specific subject; Abraham explored this in depth, contemplating the individual mythology of dreams: the creation of myths in infancy … he wrote that there is no distinct borderline between daydreams and the dreams of sleep. With a different reference outline, he holds similar views to Jung; for Abraham, the unconscious was where myths were formed, while for Jung, mythology was born from the collective unconscious.

In fact, Abraham’s ideas would culminate in Freud’s work published in 1915 on *The Unconscious*. The laws pertaining to the unconscious make it difficult to distinguish between fantasies and dreams.

However, the origins or the “Ur” of myths were what interested him, and Abraham went back to early infant emotions:

> It is erroneous to assume that the infant’s feelings towards his parents and siblings are loving from the beginning. On the contrary, there is always a certain amount of rivalry between siblings … he lives in a state of naive egoism. (Abraham, 1909b, p. 157)

The true root of all conflict is the contrast between two concepts, in this case love and hate. Taking an Arcadian approach implies accepting the Roussonian point of view of a natural essential goodness. According to Rospigliosi’s definition during the Renaissance period, Arcadia
gave rise to the famous phrase “et in Arcadia ego”, which Poussin used as the title of his famous painting and which should be interpreted as “death is also there, as is conflict” (in the painting death is represented by a skull).

This line of thought is completely consistent with the genetic point of view proposed by Abraham. Autoerotism cannot produce anything else. When this phase is overcome, the deceptive duo of narcissism-objectality appears, and within this context both selfish and altruist expression is possible. The child identifies death with absence and “one child’s hostile impulses against another manifest themselves in death wishes” (Abraham, 1909b, p. 157).

This early view of child hostility, which originates from the defencelessness caused by a lack of object constancy, was the forerunner of many of Klein’s theories. It requires adopting a position that is decidedly in favour of infantile sexuality theory. Abraham’s interest was focussed on anal erotism as we can see in this fragment of a letter in which he takes a Freudian stance when describing humour:

The loving interest in their defaecation displayed by men who have exhausted their sexuality early certainly belongs in this context, as a way of returning to anal erotism. Would not the following also belong here? Before puberty, lavatory humour plays the same role as sexual humour does later. There are people who never rid themselves of the first kind, whose greatest pleasure is to make jokes referring to defaecation in the most unsuitable surroundings. Are such people not anal erotists? It seems to me that old men as well, after their potency disappears, also return to lavatory humour. (Letter to Freud, 4 April 1908)

His interest in anal erotism continued. At the beginning of 1909, he explored the symptoms and associations of a homosexual patient. Abraham also studied The Joke and its Relation to the Unconscious in depth. He believed that it clarified aspects of the querulent pathology and unravelled the Talmudic structure (the contrast technique, for example), which underlies some of them.

In Dreams and Myths [translated into Russian before the summer of 1912, published in America in the Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases in the same year and translated into Dutch in 1914] he contemplates sexuality understood as a bond. A sexuality that prevents the absolute distance which is necessary to achieve the objective relationship
desired. “Man’s relationship to inanimate objects is by no means purely objective; this relationship is a distinctly subjective and personal one originating in his sexuality.” (Abraham, 1909b, p. 165).

Once again, Abraham’s cultural background, which was so far removed from the Saxon positivism, enabled him to formulate this idea. The notion was not in keeping with the terse Aristotelic affirmations but with the philosophy of the sublunar world, the world of passions, of affinities and rejections. It was closer to Goethe than any formal logic.

His approach to the myth with respect to the origin of the divine nectar goes beyond the ideas of Kuhn which he uses as a starting point. He believed there to be a clear sexual content and the nectar symbolised semen donated by the gods. The fertilising potion, with its immortalising effect, ensures reproduction. He introduces the clinical dimension later when he addresses drunkenness through this myth.

There is no doubt that those who are familiar with Melanie Klein’s theories will find similarities with them in this paper. According to Lacan, we should talk about transmission rather than psychoanalytic teaching. Therefore, we could venture that the analysis sessions that Klein had with Karl must have had this consequence of theoretical transmission. Although during this period there was an undisputed dominance of the Oedipus complex, in this paper we can detect new lines of thought that strictly correspond to this concept. Children often hold little affection for their parents and siblings. The root of these feelings is more primal than that described in the famous complex: absence is death (today we would call it a lack of object constancy); the children’s hostile impulses that arise from the absence of the object are translated into death, into the most absolute elimination possible.

Abraham observed a similar father/son conflict in the Oedipus tragedy and in the myth of Uranus and Titans. Practically without any symbolic disguise, it tells of the castration of Uranus by his son Kronos, a “form of revenge which points to the sexual aspect of their rivalry” (Abraham, 1909b, p. 160). Kronos (Saturn), then devours all of his sons except for the youngest, Zeus who, saved by his mother, obliges his father to disgorge his siblings otherwise he will castrate him. “The son’s sexual desires for the mother give rise to wishes which, like many others, are subject to repression.” (Abraham, 1909b, p. 180).

Ilse Barande, who translated the complete works of Abraham, highlights (in a footnote of the Payot edition, O.C. Volume I, p. 92)
his use of the notion of transference to the first true love-object in the autoerotic–non-object phase of libidinal development.

We could add that this maternal transfer had often been neglected in favour of the paternal transfer in previous stages. In his study of myths, Freud continued to focus on an analysis of the father: Jung however did address maternal myths although he did not apply any analytical methodology.

Karl Abraham researched the origin of myths and dreams … “In dreams the adult retains not only the pattern of infantile thinking but also its objects.” (Abraham, 1909b, p. 178) When talking of myths, identification is inevitably addressed …

Mental patients tend, for instance, to transpose their delusions, especially their delusions of grandeur, to their infancy. […] In the myth, too, identification takes place … All peoples claim to be descended from their principal god. The original identification of man with his god has, both in myth and in religion, been lost sight of. (Abraham, 1909b, pp. 186, 206)

Both Freud and Abraham referred to the emotions and wishes that originally gave rise to legends. It was only much later that, under the effect of repression, philosophical and religious reasoning came into play. This rationality is applied in parallel to the shaping of the culture of a people and to the process of individuation. The same occurs with other mechanisms, such as condensation, displacement, over-determination and secondary elaboration which are present in myths and dreams.

Abraham also extracts conclusions from hysteria that are particularly interesting as they draw from five male cases of this pathology. It is curious to note that of the six clinical cases mentioned, five of them were males. In those days it seemed that hysteria was a disorder reserved for women. This did not prevent Meynert telling Freud that male hysteria did exist and that he had suffered from it. Abraham thought:

His fixation was of a marked bisexual character. The heterosexual components of his libido had his mother as their object, in relation to whom he identified himself with his father who was dead. His homosexual components were attached to his father, and in relation to him he identified himself with his mother. Thus in his neurosis he sometimes played the father, sometimes the mother. (Abraham, 1910, p. 114)
The assertive figure of the father, with the intense concomitant sadistic fantasies led the patient to submissions. The violence was replaced by an absolute passivity.

In one of his cases, patient E displayed an intense infantile sexual transfer on to both of his parents; his libido had been temporarily withdrawn from the objects around him when his mother died. He had repeatedly fantasised about his mother’s death before the real event having suffered a reaction-formation. He felt that nothing seemed real if he was not by her side. As his disorder progressed he developed a strong identification with his mother which led him to suffer from terrible headaches every twenty-eight days which coincided with “her periods”.

Freud highlighted that there were secondary benefits from hysterical attacks. Abraham indicated that the same was true for dream-states. So, patient F

Sought to gratify those wishes, which proceeded from the confluence of his sexual instinct and his instinct of aggression, i.e. his sadistic feelings. He had the feeling in general that he did not give an impression of manliness, and that he was being treated like a child. This feeling resulted from the suppression of his sadism. In his dreamings he was the energetic, despotic man, but afterwards he changed back into the weak and dependent child. (Abraham, 1910, p. 125)

In a paper published in the same year (A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men), Freud describes the associative chain of representations that begins with the maternal figure.

Partial drives (component-instincts) “of an abnormal strength” are addressed by Abraham in Remarks on the Psychoanalysis of a Case of Foot and Corset Fetishism (1910b, pp. 125–136). He claims that the phenomenon is formed by partial repression and displacement. The patient identified the corset with the maternal figure and he preserved it. However, it constituted a complete replacement (if the corset were eliminated the mother would not appear, only a strong feeling of abandonment), implying a redistribution of investments. In this case, the weakness of internal objects led to full replacements, unlike partial drives, which could lead to an imaginary castration.

Abraham denied a possible traumatic origin of the symptoms; “His interest in his mother’s corsets … was doubtless the expression
of a perversion which was already in existence. It is therefore a question of fixation upon a preliminary sexual aim.” (Abraham, 1910b, p. 127) Partial drives were associated with perversion. The patient never crossed the boundary of auto-erotism and his high aesthetic standards indicated a strong need to idealise the object and his libido originally sought certain aims which seemed particularly unaesthetic to normal adults, giving rise to feelings of disgust in them.

The repression of an originally excessive drive had given rise to a massive libidinal displacement at a very early stage. It by no means follows that there was a fundamental, primary weakness of the libido in him although genitality was absent; a phallic mother, as in the case of an obsessive patient, leads to a fixation in the anal stage.

His research confirmed a comment in a letter sent by Freud (to Abraham, 24 February 1910), regarding the specific role of the repression of coprophilic pleasures in the psychogenesis of foot fetishism: “The purely sexual interest of his first period of childhood had given place to an interest in the processes of excretion.” (Abraham, 1910b, p. 130).

He indicates the great importance in this case of the anal area from infancy, with specific autoerotic activity. He concludes by highlighting the patient’s traits of sublimated anal eroticism: “pedantic economy and love of orderliness were especially prominent features” (Abraham, 1910b, p. 134).

The monograph on fetishism once again received the praise of his “Dear Professor”: “I do not know of anything to place beside them for clarity, inner solidity, and power of evidence” (Letter to Abraham, 22 August 1910).

In 1912, the correspondence between Spielrein and Freud became more cordial; Sabina’s wedding helped to dispel the tension which had arisen due to her affair with Jung. We can refer to a letter written on 14 June in which Freud responds to certain claims made by Spielrein which refer to Abraham (we can assume that these claims were related to aspects regarding aggressiveness and self-destruction; fields that she had researched but for which she had received no credit):

The seed of this idea is clearly to be found in our early works; and if I were to be rigorous I would find a clear appropriation of this idea in *Traum und Mythos* by Abraham, p. 90. Jung must have forgotten this passage when he dictated the phrases of the conference, the same as me when I wrote the note in *Imago*. I will make a correction
in order to restrict Jung’s merit and re-establish yours, and likewise with Abraham. (Freud, 14 June 1912)

Four months later he sent her another letter (of 13 October 1912) in which he shows his pleasure in her approaching to Abraham: “A great deal may be learnt from him and his sober style constitutes a good counterweight to certain temptations.”

In 1909 Abraham (letter to Freud, 14 February) had expressed an interest in Giovanni Segantini, “whose personality and works can be understood only with the help of the theory of sexuality.” When Oppenheim obstructed his research on the sexuality of the patients at his clinic, Abraham decided to postpone his study on traumatic neuroses and investigate the intricacies of this painter (according to a letter to Freud of 5 March 1909). Although it would still be some time before he began his research on the oral-cannibalistic stage, in his essay on Segantini published in 1911 he ventured:

The primitive eroticism of the child is purely egoistic. It is directed towards the unlimited possession of its object, and is resentful if others also obtain pleasure from the proximity of the loved one. It shows manifestations of hate as well as of love. At that period of yet untrammelled impulses and instincts a boy’s love is coupled with an aggressive, even cruel, element. (Abraham, 1911g, p. 215)

These overpowering impulses of love and hate in Segantini were later subjected to vigorous sublimation; sublimation of the component of cruelty that enables a gradual development of reactions of fear, horror, and compassion. Abraham told Freud of the difficulty he had experienced in collecting material with which to explore the homosexual component. Other areas addressed in relation to Segantini’s life are: a type of transference … “as she stands before him she replaces his mother in his imagination and by the process of transference” (Abraham, 1911g, p. 220), the choice of sexual object, fantasies of affiliation (also collected in 1913 and reported in Mental After Effects Produced in a Nine-Year-Old Child by the Observation of Sexual Intercourse between its Parents) and reaction formation:

The sadistic impulses, the feelings of hatred, and the death wishes had to be withdrawn from those objects on to which they had
mainly been directed. They were partly transformed into thoughts of his own death, and partly sublimated by means of reaction-formation into their opposite. (Abraham, 1911g, p. 252)

For Abraham, the mother has a central role: The first and most lasting psychological contact of one human being with another, which he related to the feelings of earliest pleasure which are associated with suckling ... “The strength of this relationship to the feeding mother becomes apparent in human psychic life in many ways.” (Abraham, 1911g, p. 261).

The opinions of this study were, in the words of Freud “extremely appreciative, and I hope that our opponents will also have to speak of it with respect.” (Letter to Abraham, 18 May 1911).

In the same rotund manner as Segantini, whose first object-choice was definitive (an unwavering love such as that for his mother), Amenhotep IV, renounced his personal object choice throughout his whole life (his libido remained intensely fixed on his mother and he remained faithful to his wife who he was forced to marry when he was less than ten years old). Comparisons have been made of these monogamous bonds to those of Abraham’s happy marriage to Hedwig. However, Abraham’s relationship with his mother lacked this pathological intensity, which was present in both of these figures.

Nurses, nannies, wet-nurses, or nursemaids were ...

... among the love-objects of infancy to which the neurotically disposed may cling with tenacity ... It is very common for the wet-nurse to remain close to the child after weaning. (Abraham, 1912d. Footnote, p. 268)

Abraham was making his first serious step forward in the organisation of the libido. In his study on the libido published in 1924 he himself acknowledges “I first attempted to trace the aetiology of manic-depressive disorders on psycho-analytical lines” (Abraham, 1912d, p. 137). He was referring to: Notes on the Psychoanalytic Investigation and Treatment of Manic-depressive Insanity and Allied Conditions (Abraham, 1911c, p. 137–156). Abraham explored the free interval in this condition and considered an aspect which Freud had not contemplated previously: the feeling of superiority of melancholic sufferers—within their ambivalence—which enables them to enter the manic phase: “The idea of guilt contains the fulfilment of a wish: of the repressed wish
to be a criminal of the deepest dye, to have incurred more guilt than everyone else put together … Thus even the deepest melancholic distress contains a hidden source of pleasure.” (Abraham, 1911c, p. 146–147).

He also establishes a parallel between the pleasure of wit and manic euphoria. The manic and depressive phases …

Both phases are dominated by the same complexes, and that it is only the patient’s attitude towards those complexes which is different. In the depressive state he allows himself to be weighed down by his complex, and sees no other way out of his misery but death … The onset of the mania occurs when repression is no longer able to resist the assaults of the repressed instincts … a condition which the patient has experienced before in his early childhood, that is. (Abraham, 1911c, p. 149)

The lack of inhibition and the flight of ideas unconstrained by logic take him back to the childhood roots of this pathology. The flight of ideas has a double function; it provides a source of pleasure and also a means of gliding over ideas that are painful to consciousness.

The incapacity to relate to the object due to the intensity of aggressive drives is similar to that found in obsessive neurotic patients; the two pathologies take different courses as they evolve. Abraham also applied this productive way of researching through differential diagnosis in later studies. In 1924, obsession provided this astute observer with interesting material:

The libido cannot develop in a normal manner, because two different tendencies—hatred and love—are always interfering with each other … His inability to establish his libido in a definite position causes him to have a general feeling of uncertainty and leads to doubting mania. (Abraham, 1911c, p. 139)

In serious cases of obsessive neurosis, the capacity to love is greatly reduced with respect to the capacity to hate; the sadistic component of the libido prevalent in the origin weakens the patient. Abraham refers to the stages described by Freud of the psychogenesis of paranoia in order to clarify the genesis of manic-depression:

A different conflict lies concealed. It is derived from an attitude of the libido in which hatred predominates … It can be expressed in the following formula:
1. I cannot love people; I have to hate them.
2. People do not love me, they hate me ... because of my inborn defects. These symptomatic states are not usually apparent to direct observation ... in the depressive phase there is more opportunity for observing them than in the manic one.
   (Abraham, 1911c, p. 137)

We should refer here to the philosopher V. Gómez Pin (1981, p. 85), who asserted that love for the object is hate of the object when the subject is the object and not its otherness; in other words, the fusional identification does not allow a selfness as in the case of psychosis. With this paper, Abraham draws attention to melancholic states which at that time within psychoanalysis were classified as states of neurotic anxiety; in many cases, both extremes are two poles of the same condition; he points out: “a patient suffering from an anxiety-neurosis will be subject to states of mental depression, and a melancholic will complain of having anxiety.” True depression, psychotic depression had still not been researched.

He alludes to it directly in A Complicated Ceremonial Found in Neurotic Women (1912), although without naming symmetrisation as an operation of the unconscious: “It is true that consciously she expected, not her father, but death. But her analysis showed that the two ideas were identical.” (Abraham, 1912c, p. 161).

He comments on a case of a patient who performed a meticulous grooming practice before going to bed as the bride of death. Our author remarks that the ceremony constituted both repressed incestuous desires and a repressing force: “At the same time as she was continually expecting a sexual attack in her unconscious”, the patient had to keep following the ritual “to prove that her death had been preceded by no sexual act”.

At this time, the attention of both Freud and Abraham was drawn to anthropology and to cultural perspectives. Freud wrote Totem and Taboo, “something from the psychoanalysis of savage peoples” (in a letter to Abraham on 2 January 1912), while Abraham was fascinated by Egypt, a subject that he knew also interested Freud; in a letter to Freud on 11 January 1912, he comments that he had remembered throughout the preliminary studies the “first instruction of Egyptology that I enjoyed in Vienna in December 1907”, and sought to “analyse all the manifestations of repression and substitutive formation in a person
who lived 3,300 years ago. The Oedipus complex, sublimation, reaction formations all exactly as in a neurotic today.”

Abraham’s Amenhotep (Amenhotep IV). Psycho-analytical Contributions Towards the Understanding of His Personality and of the Monotheistic Cult of Aton. Abraham, 1912d, pp. 262–290), was published before he had read Freud’s work on the Totem in June 1913.

The controversial priority of the maternal or paternal figure at the origin of conflict caused Freud, after reading this study, to make a comment. Over time, the master acknowledged the pioneering role of Abraham with respect to his theories on early relationships with the object:

You claim that when the mother is particularly important, the conflict with the father takes milder forms. I for my part have no evidence of this and must assume that you have had special experiences in this respect. As the matter is not clear to me, I ask you to revise this passage. (Letter to Abraham on 3 June 1912)

Abraham replied that he would continue researching. “There is some truth in my statement, but it is untenable in the general form in which I put it forward. I hope that, after all, something useful will emerge in the end” (Letter to Freud, 9 June 1912).

It is possible that the censored material would have been very useful, but Freud much preferred the new version, writing: “it is an adornment of our Imago” in a letter on 12 October. We are not able to read the original manuscript which, as the correspondence confirms, underwent correction, but we can assume that Freud was referring to a paragraph similar to this one in which he decisively claims:

In the marriage of his parents, King Amenhotep IV and Queen Tiy, the queen undoubtedly had the upper and ... Her influence is most clearly discernible in every department of her son’s life ... this mother to an unusual degree. Such a strong and lasting attachment of the libido to the mother leads in later life to certain effects upon the eroticism of the maturing or adult son ... It makes it more difficult for him, as I have demonstrated in an earlier paper, to detach his libido at the time of puberty from his mother and to transfer it to new love-objects. Not infrequently such detachment fails entirely. In most cases it succeeds but partially. (Abraham, 1912d, pp. 267–268)
Abraham also used *Amenhotep* to address aspects of the common infantile fantasy whereby the prince dethrones his father: “The king does not wish to be the son and successor of his father, but the son of the god Ra. He does not wish to worship the god of his real father, but an imaginary father Ra (Aton)” (Abraham, 1912d, p. 271).

The new god Aton, is “an idealised father, and he is not only the king’s father in the strictest sense of the word, but the father of all creatures and the founder of the universe … pervading space and time.” (Abraham, 1912d, p. 274). Again, monogamy—and here monotheism—: “Aton is both father and mother to him” (Abraham, 1912d, p. 282). This figure was referred to by Freud when talking about Moses in a letter written to understand his position regarding Judaism:

> [Moses] was not a Jew, but an Egyptian of high lineage, a high-ranking official, maybe a priest and staunch defender of the monotheist faith, which Amenhotep IV had converted into the dominant religion. [...] When the new religion fell apart after the death of the Pharaoh and with the extinction of the eighteenth dynasty, this ambitious, high-flying figure lost all hope. He decided to leave the Motherland and create a new nation which he wished to educate in the magnificent religion of his master ... With the choice and gift of the new religion, Moses created the Jew. (Letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 6 January 1935) [Translated for this edition]

However, in his *Moses*, Freud does not mention Abraham’s work, which he himself put down to a parapraxis. There is speculation as to whether this was one of the causes of his second fainting spell in Munich, when Jung criticised Abraham’s *Amenhotep* paper. Rodrigué ventures: “Was Freud’s lapse a double one? As well as forgetting the leading German analyst he had erased the image of the patriarch from Ur of Chaldea. Maybe it was going too far to acknowledge that both parents of the Jews were non-Jewish, the second of who inverted the intention of the first. Complicated!” (Rodrigué, 1996, p. 459) [Translated for this edition].

Returning to Abraham’s writings, in *Should Patients Write Down their Dreams?* he comments how the anal stage relates to transference:

> Just as the neurotic with autoerotic tendencies wants to retain the products of his body and is anxiously concerned to lose as little as possible of his bodily substance, so also he guards against the loss of his mental products. (Abraham, 1913b, p. 35)
Taking into account the resistance he encountered, Abraham was openly doubtful when a patient confidently established a causal relationship between an event and her neurosis ... “The connection between certain symptoms and that particular psychic trauma was uncertain” (Abraham, 1913g, p. 167). In another paper written in the same year (On the Psychogenesis of Agoraphobia in Childhood, pp. 42–43), he observed: “The question arises as to how the phobia developed in view of the fact that his desire to be a mother’s child was so near his consciousness.” (Abraham, 1913d, pp. 42–43) In fact, in both cases there was a covering up of even more archaic events. Freud commented about this paper (in a letter written on 10 December 1913): “it would deserve a civic crown if such distinctions existed in science! It is, in short, excellent, cold steel, clean, clear, and sharp. Moreover, God knows that it is all true.”

An original approach to the Oedipus complex, expanding on the previous generation, may be read in Some Remarks on the Role of Grandparents in the Psychology of Neuroses (1913e). Abraham indicates that the interest of patients in their grandparents is usually due to the rejection of the father or mother. He supports his arguments with two clinical cases: a child punished by his mother cries out: ‘‘now I’ll marry granny’. He thus indicates to his mother in an indirect way that he had really meant to marry her ... The boy plays off his grandparents against his parents.” (1913e, pp. 44–45).

A neurotic patient associates his maternal grandfather with his father:

By putting the dethroned grandfather side by side with the still ruling and youthful father, the boy secretly comforted himself with the thought that his father, too, would not rule for ever but would one day be deposed just like his grandfather ... the neurotic may defend himself against this complex concerning his parents by debasing the power of the father or mother. (Abraham, 1913e, pp. 45–46)

Crises can be excellent stimulants for growth. This was true when internal struggles in the psychoanalytic movement stimulated the creativity of the master and his disciple. Abraham wrote enthusiastically at the beginning of 1914 (7 January), relating an incident involving his son with some of Freud’s considerations regarding masochism:

Your communications about the genesis of masochism have, in the last few days, led me onto a trail that seems promising. It
concerns solving the question of exhibitionism (as a perversion, not the general exhibitionistic tendencies of neurotics). The connection with castration anxiety seems quite striking to me. It would stand for exhibiting that part of the body about which one is anxiously worried for several reasons, probably mostly composite ones:

1. Compulsion with strong anxiety; one exhibits oneself anxiously (because of the threatening castration) and, like the masochist, follows one’s unconscious impulse and wish to be castrated.

2. Defiant exhibiting: in spite of the threat, I still have the penis!

3. The wish to impress the woman, or, rather, to frighten her. The attempt to incite the woman to similar activity, as the diminished sexual activity (castration anxiety!) does not allow for any other mode of behaviour. (Usually impotence is to be found simultaneously.) According to my analysis, exhibitionism is certainly originally directed towards the mother. An attempt to compete with the father. (Abraham, 7 January 1914)

Until then, this symptomatology, classified as perversion, had not been analysed in depth. Once again, Abraham was addressing the pre-oedipal phase: autoerotically attested partial drives blended with an aggressive quantum and an instrumental part; an attempt to achieve an identity. It is true that in the act of exhibition the penis is a distinctive feature, but at the same time, it is the desire to recover the mother which directs the act, more than what follows: the desire to be like the father and compete with him, dethroning him to have access to the mother in the same way as the father.

In this respect, Freud conducted one of his finest studies called Narcissism which constituted a theoretical development regarding his drive theory. We should remember that, in this paper, he objectively addresses his scientific divergence with Adler and Jung; this could explain Freud’s dissatisfaction with this manuscript, which caused him headaches and intestinal problems. On 16 March he wrote to Abraham:

Tomorrow I am sending you the narcissism ... It is still very much in need of retouching. Please choose the passage where I have to mention your first (Salzburg) paper yourself; I shall be grateful to
you for this, as grateful as I am for any kind of objections. Your comments on the contributions will be taken into account in the proofs ... I must also mention how excellent your locomotor paper is. (Freud to Abraham, 16 March 1914)

Abraham was very enthusiastic and described (in a letter of 2 April 1914) the work as brilliant and completely convincing ...

Your expositions about the ego-ideal are especially valuable for practical purposes. These expositions had been in my mind for a long time already, and with every sentence I read I was able to guess what was coming next. In particular, the distinction between ego-ideal and true sublimation is something that I have always explained to my patients, but without putting it in so precise a form ... I think this is where the contrast between Jung’s therapy and psychoanalysis can be most pointedly stressed. (Abraham, 2 April 1914)

Sublimation is a mechanism that occurs in a much later stage and follows a formation path that diverges from that followed by the Id and the ego-ideal. The ego-ideal loses contact with the object as it internalises it, while in sublimation a relationship with the object does exist; the ego-ideal represses libidinal impulses while sublimation reinforces them. Freud did not hesitate to reply (6 April):

That you also buy the Narcissism from me affects me deeply and binds us still more intimately together ... I shall incorporate the comment you would like on the bypassing of sublimation in the Zurich therapy. (Freud, letter to Abraham, 6 April 1914)

It is not surprising that Abraham accepted narcissism. For him, a type of over-determination existed: this was most evident in his enmity with Jung, but at the same time it would not have been difficult for him to follow Freud’s as his theory on narcissism is coherent based on the historical vicissitudes of the object. The autoerotism–objectality line of thought required the inclusion of narcissism and the previous works of Abraham, which we have previously quoted, are all written from this perspective.
A short paper on The Relationship Between the Oral and Sexual Drive, which was published as The First Pregenital Stage of the Libido in 1916, was received once more very warmly by Freud:

I think it … the best clinical contribution that has appeared in any of the five volumes, unequalled in assurance, correctness, many-sidedness, and interest. Vivant sequentes! (Freud, letter to Abraham, 5 June 1914)

The end of 1913 was an unsettled time due to the definitive rupture with Jung. However, it seems that this did not trouble Abraham too much given the large volume of papers that he was publishing at the time. The extraordinary erogenous nature of the skin of some of his patients motivated him to write The Ear and Auditory Passage asErotogenic Zones (1913k, pp. 244–247. Ferenczi was the first to receive the draft). The way in which one of them scratched herself caused her to have an orgasm, Abraham comments … “This method had the advantage over masturbation, which she had practised earlier, in that no self-reproach was attached to it.” (Abraham, 1913k, p. 245) Doctor H. Hempel from Berlin confirmed his observations.

The Review of C. G. Jung’s “Attempt at a Representation of Psychoanalytical Theory”, (1914a, pp. 101–115), enabled Abraham to update the states of development which, as described by Jung, had also been negatively appraised by Ferenczi. The article condenses Freud’s ideas. He criticises Jung for:

… entirely neglects all erotogenic zones except the mouth, and this certainly is from the scientific point of view one of the most reactionary steps … Jung sees in the Oedipal relationship a mere symbol, and denies all real meaning to incestuous impulses. (Abraham, 1914a, p. 108)

The incest conflict can lead either to the compulsive distancing from everything reminiscent of the original object of the drive, or an attachment that will lead to a domination of the drive and the institutionalisation of exogamy. He addressed this aspect in On Neurotic Exogamy: A Contribution to the Similarities in the Psychic Life of Neurotics and of Primitive Man (1913j, pp. 48–50), examining the opposite extreme to
intermarriage among relatives analysed in 1909. He recounts the case of a patient who …

… showed the strongest aversion to women of the same type. Nothing in a woman was permitted to remind him of his original love object, his mother. He could not even bear women who spoke his native dialect. (Abraham, 1913j, p. 49)

The great intensity of the patient’s fixation on the original object caused him to flee from incest through an unending series of substitute objects. The influence of Totem and Taboo is clear. Abraham himself acknowledged that after receiving the proofs in 1913 he had extracted many seeds for further research in a field that attracted much interest.

Another manifestation of incapacity to detach oneself from the original object was observed in a patient who suffered from motor anxiety: A Constitutional Basis of Motor Anxiety (Abraham, 1913i, pp. 235–243). As on other occasions, Abraham proposes a theory in his paper, which he continued to modify in line with his observations. In this case, a year earlier he had written about agoraphobia in children. He writes:

They are pronouncedly autoerotic, and thus they are inclined to postpone reaching the end-pleasure indefinitely … dread attaining their libidinal aim. Their anxiety prevents them from becoming free from themselves and from the objects upon which their love was fixed in childhood, and from finding the way to objects belonging to the external world. (Abraham, 1913i, p. 241)

Once again he highlights the incestuous fixation of the libido in neurotic patients: “Every attempt he makes to separate himself from his love-object signifies in his unconscious an attempt to detach his libido from it.” (Abraham, 1913i, p. 235).

The “component-instinct” (partial drive) concept already formed part of Abraham’s psychoanalytic vocabulary, which he used with fluency in another paper: Restrictions and Limitations of Scopophilia in Psycho-Neurotics; with Remarks of Analogous Phenomena in Folk Psychology (Abraham, 1913h, pp. 169–234). He first presented this paper at the Munich Congress (1913), and later extended it with the abundant material drawn from his patients:
The sexual component-instinct of scopophilia, or pleasure in looking, is—like its counterpart, exhibitionism, or pleasure in displaying—subject to numerous restrictions and transformations. Under normal conditions both instincts, which are allowed free expression in early childhood, are subjected to a considerable measure of repression and sublimation later on. (Abraham, 1913h, p. 169)

Displacement is used as a defence mechanism in scopophilia: “namely, to the eyes and the feet. Even these parts of the body were not themselves permitted to play the role assigned to them through the process of displacement.” (Abraham, 1913h, p. 178) Later in the paper he talks of substitution with another organ:

They never spoke of their eyes but, with a regularity which excluded all chance, only of an eye as though only one eye existed. This is quite intelligible if we keep in view the mechanism of displacement upwards. The eye is a substitute for an organ, which only exists in the singular. Anxiety about the eye of the father therefore corresponds to the repressed castration phantasy directed against him. (Abraham, 1913h, p. 182)

The same mechanism is referred to in another type of disorder in which patients place excessive emphasis on the minutest details of their small sphere, which they faithfully commit to memory:

Such a person will in especial avoid sexual looking and every kind of sexual activity. As is evident, a process of displacement has taken place. Whatever is likely to stimulate the person’s scoptophilic instinct strongly is avoided as something illicit, and his interest is displaced on to indifferent and permissible things. [...] The ambivalence of their attitude towards their totem (the feared animal) is obvious to many of the patients themselves. (Abraham, 1913h, pp. 195, 227—each paragraph respectively).

Ambivalence is always present; there is a darkness which is both birth and death at the same time: “In its primitive curiosity the child desires to see these organs or processes; a desire to know about them implies that its scopophilic instinct has already been subjected to
The problems of the obsessional neurotic are always insoluble. The question which in fact he wants to ask is not allowed to be answered; the question which takes its place cannot be answered; and thus the secret is kept. There exists in the patient a permanent conflict between two parties, one of which would like to investigate and now the facts while the other strives to remain ignorant of them. (Abraham, 1913h, p. 212)

The war left little time for scientific matters. Even so, Abraham wrote and published *A Contribution Towards the Understanding of the Suggestive Effect of Medicine in the Neuroses* (1914c, p. 51). He sent the manuscript to Freud on 28 October 1914. He recounts how a patient whose anxiety remained completely fixated on his mother was able to liberate this anxiety by carrying medication in his pocket (counterphobic object).

The comments made by Abraham regarding the draft of *Mourning and Melancholia* converted his letter of 31 March 1915 into a small essay to which we referred in the second chapter. He also remarked:

I have long postponed commenting on your outline of a theory of Melancholia ... Some years ago I myself made an attempt in this direction but was always aware of its imperfections, and was therefore afraid that my attitude to your new theory might well be too subjective. I think that I have now got over this difficulty and am able to accept all the essentials in your work ... should like to put forward a suggestion that may solve the question left open by you. Important questions do naturally remain unresolved. (Abraham, 31 March 1915)

In fact, Abraham very deftly addresses an issue that was re-crafted in *Mourning and Melancholia*: first, mourning and melancholia are two separate concepts but share common characteristics. Second, based on *The Rat Man* (obsessive neurosis), he establishes a connection between melancholia and obsessive neurosis. Third, he subsequently develops an interest in sadism, to some extent the opposite of object-love. Fourth, this leads him to establish an obvious link between sadism and narcissism. Also, most importantly, he establishes a relationship between narcissism and depression as described in *Mourning and Melancholia.*
After supporting his ideas with different observations from his clinical cases, he suggests the possibility of establishing a differential diagnosis for the two pathologies based on anal erotism, claiming that “this may well be the point where these conditions, which in other ways are so closely related, diverge” (Letter to Freud, 31 March 1915). One of the aspects which he finds most difficult to understand is the transfer of the melancholic of all the reproaches aimed at his love-object onto himself, although he accepts this possibility in the light of Freud’s ideas regarding the identification with the love-object. He continues …

It appeared to me as if the melancholic, incapable of loving as he is, desperately tries to get possession of a love-object. In my experience, he does in fact identify with his love-object, cannot tolerate its loss, and is hyper-sensitive to the slightest unfriendliness, etc. from that side. He often allows himself to be tormented by the loved person in masochistic self-punishment. He reproaches himself for this instead of reproaching the loved person because unconsciously he has done far greater harm to that person (omnipotence of thought). […] What harm has the melancholic in fact done to the object with whom he identifies? The answer to this is suggested to me in one of your recent papers—I think it is the one on narcissism (?)—. There you discuss identification and you point to the infantile basis of this process: the child wants to incorporate its love-object: to put it briefly, it wants to devour it. I have strong reason to suspect that such cannibalistic tendencies exist in the melancholic’s identification. It may be safely assumed that this identification has an ambivalent meaning—a manifestation of love as well as destruction—. The first argument I would advance is the melancholic’s fear of starvation. Food has taken the place of love here. I would assume that the role played by the anal zone in obsessional neurosis is assigned to the mouth in melancholia. In menopausal depressions in particular, the fear of starvation plays a dominant role. A further dominant symptom is the refusal of food. In other calmer and more chronic cases, food in the positive sense is of excessive importance. (Letter to Freud, 31 March 1915)

He also refers to lycanthropy which is the delusion of having eaten human beings and comments on the expression used to de-dramatise a specific situation: “What have you done, have you perhaps devoured small children?” The ego is impoverished because it has lost what it
wanted to incorporate. Abraham insisted on incorporating sadism and oral erotism into Freud’s theory that the melancholic has lost something but does not know what.

Freud found these observations highly valuable: “Unhesitatingly incorporated in my paper those parts of them that I could use. What was most valuable to me was the reference to the oral phase of the libido, and I also mention the link with mourning.” (Letter to Abraham, 4 May 1915). His criticism: he did not highlight sufficiently the topical element, the regression of the libido and the abandonment of the unconscious object investment. Abraham fully agreed with Freud on the topographical aspect although he still asked Freud to provide clearer evidence to indicate that the reproaches that are directed against another person are transposed to one’s own ego; he was not convinced (Letter of 3 June). Unfortunately for us, “Herr Professor” arranged to continue this interchange, which he deemed very stimulating, in person.

For eight months, Abraham’s scalpel ceased to dissect the unconscious and instead he used it to operate on wounded soldiers from the front. His internal musings, however, did not cease, and his hypotheses continued to take shape. Eventually they saw the light in the manuscript to which we will dedicate the next section. This paper was considered by Freud to be “as excellent as everything that you have been doing in recent years, distinguished by its many-sidedness, depth, correctness, and, incidentally, it is in full agreement with the truth as it is known to me.” (Letter of 8 May 1916).
In 1916, the third edition of Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* was issued; both this edition and the subsequent one were reviewed and extended by Freud. In Ferenczi’s presentation of the fourth, he comments how he had taken into account “the most recent results obtained in psychoanalytic research in the field of sexual organizations such as Abraham’s article on the cannibalistic phase” (Ferenczi, 1920, p. 137). Abraham subsequently published *The First Pregenital Stage of the Libido* (1916, pp. 248–280). With this article he won the International Award for Psychoanalysis in 1920; he spent the prize money on a trip to Vienna. He supported his theories with all of his clinical material on psychosis and emphasised that the material selected was not influenced by preconceived theories as it was based on personal observations made many years before. One of the cases used dates back to 1913; in a letter to Freud in March, he told him that he was interested in the anal erotism of a hebephrenic patient with mouth pollutions. In another letter in January 1915 he also referred to starting a small paper about the relation between hunger and libido. His intention at that time was to write a series dedicated to the pregenital organisations (letter to Freud,
In this paper he examines the oral phase in-depth, and outlines the anal phase through the two clinical conditions (melancholia and obsessive neurosis) with which, in 1924, he would continue to develop his hypothesis on the stages of development. Freud’s theory of the melancholic’s introjection of the love-object was redefined by Abraham as a process of incorporation, which corresponds to a libidinal regression to the cannibalistic stage.

In this work he identifies the key differential diagnosing point between melancholia and obsessive neurosis as the oral devouring of the object; the most important symptoms are related to the consumption of food (excessively or insufficiently); the aggression towards the object is expressed through a desire to eat it up. He reveals how incorporation in mourning represents resurrection, while in the melancholic patient it expresses a conflict, ambivalence. Freud had assimilated both processes, underlining how normal mourning was not derived from a manic state. Abraham observed that the subject who is recovering from a state of mourning and is beginning to detach her libido from the deceased person, experiences more intense sexual desires or, through sublimation, a greater intellectual activity.

He begins the paper by commenting on Lindner’s observations—he acknowledges Freud for having referred to this author—. Abraham’s faithfulness to his sources is a constant feature throughout his work; the feeling this transmits is similar to the satisfaction of working in a team; enjoying the discoveries of others and making the most of them as well as placing one’s own contributions at the disposal of the analytic community. Unfortunately, this magnificent virtue has become very rare in today’s academic world where power restricts the growth of our science. He refers to Lindner’s observation on the sucking habits of children …

The instinct … is manifested auto-erotically; In the second place, this most primitive form of sexual expression … is dependent upon a function important for the preservation of life, namely, sucking for nourishment; so that it is the reproduction of a pleasurable stimulus which the child has experienced during feeding. In the third place, the attainment of the pleasure is attached to an erotogenic zone—the mucous membrane of the lips—which cannot be separated from each other in their earliest state. The mucous membrane of the lips must, moreover, possess erotogenic quality, which fluctuates in intensity in different children. (Abraham, 1916, p. 249)
And then makes reference to the anal stage:

According to Freud a similar double function attaches to the anal aperture of the alimentary canal as well ... The child seeks to reexperience the local sensations necessarily associated with the emptying of the bowel, and, by holding back its contents, is able to intensify those sensations ... The deliberate intensification of this accessory pleasure obtained in defaecation by stimulating an erogenous zone is, like sucking, similar in nature to genital masturbation. (Abraham, 1916, p. 249)

In addition to these phenomena, Abraham also refers to partial drives (component-insterincts) which are not yet grouped together in any organised way, and are directed at the object from the outset. These drives continue to seek increased pleasure and only later do they become united under the "primacy of the genital zone":

The earliest is the oral stage, which may also be called the cannibalistic stage ... sexual activity is not yet separated from the taking of nourishment ... Freud says: A second pregenital phase is the sadistic-anal organization ... sexual polarity and the external object, are already discoverable. But there is as yet no organisation of the component-insterincts or subordination to the function of procreation.

I have now roughly indicated the present position of the theory of sexuality as far as it applies to our subject ... While the observations which have led to the description of the sadistic-anal organization have found special consideration in psycho-analytic literature ... the earliest ‘oral’ stage of development of the libido awaits further investigation. (Abraham, 1916, p. 251)

Abraham believed that certain psychopathic disorders were still unknown, or at least, had not been taken into consideration. He therefore offered examples to demonstrate the persistence in some adults of infantile cannibalistic oral drives.

We can see in the afore-mentioned letter of May 1915 how he insisted on justifying the self-reproaches of the melancholic for devouring and destructing the love-object. He also highlighted the differences between his contributions and those of Freud and Jones, who, he said, claimed that defending against sadistic-anal drives gives rise to obsessive disorders.
I should like to attempt, on the basis of our material connected with the earliest pregenital organization, to make two contributions to psycho-analytic theory—namely, to consider the question of the origin of psychic states of depression, and to discuss the problem of the "choice of neurosis". (Abraham, 1916, p. 253) (Ferenczi—see critique of 1921—among others, believed that he was right.)

The two aspects complement one another. Abraham used his solid, German, psychopathological training and his excellent listening skills to analyse a case of simple dementia praecox (Bleuler’s schizophrenia), with an associative activity that proceeds so far along organised paths that a “psychoanalysis can be carried out with them just as well as with a psychoneurotic” (Abraham, 1916, p. 254).

He turned his attention chiefly on to his own ego in a markedly narcissistic manner ... His own physical condition absorbed his interest more than anything else. His genital and anal sensations were of the highest importance to him. Moreover, he was addicted to anal as well as to genital masturbation. During the period of puberty he derived pleasure from playing with faeces, and later on he occupied himself with his bodily excretions. For instance, he took pleasure in eating his own semen. But his mouth played a very special role as an erotogenic zone ... The patient directed my attention to the erotogenic significance of the mouth when one day he spoke of “mouth pollutions” as something quite ordinary and well recognized. On being questioned, he described an occurrence which frequently took place. He would wake up in the night from an exciting dream to find that saliva was dribbling out of his mouth. (Abraham, 1916, p. 254)

From this information Abraham was able to draw many associations regarding the erotism of the mouth. As a child, the patient had found immense pleasure in drinking milk; in fact, he never felt satisfied. This tendency continued, although in a modified form. Until the age of fifteen he had drunk milk in a special way; curving his tongue upwards, pressing it on the palate behind the upper teeth, he would suck in the milk. The milk had to be at body temperature. “It is like sucking at the breast. I suck at my own tongue as though it were the nipple.” (Abraham, 1916, p. 255) As an adult, he often woke up with intense sexual desires and drank the milk that he had placed ready in his bedroom.
He used often to get up at night and go to the kitchen for milk. If at any time he could not find any he used to put an end to his sexual excitement by masturbating; but otherwise he used to satisfy himself by taking milk. He himself felt that his longing to suck milk was his deepest and most primitive instinct. (Abraham, 1916, p. 255)

The associations are evident and led on to the later developed form of taking nourishment …

Since childhood he had had “cannibalistic ideas” [Abraham stresses that the expression corresponds to the patient, as this analysis was conducted three years before the third edition of Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality published in 1915, in which the term applied to psychoanalytic literature was used for the first time]. These ideas were at first traced back along associative paths to his fourth year [chronological precision confirmed] he had had a nurse to whom he had been very much attached. It was she who was the centre of his cannibalistic phantasies. At a later period the patient still often used to want to bite into her, and to swallow her, skin, hair, clothes, and all … just as he many times experienced a sudden longing for milk, so he did for meat. It seemed to him as though he wanted a substitute for human flesh. His associations led from this point to the phantasy of biting into the female breast … Even when his libido found new sources of pleasure the earlier ones showed no diminution of their importance … his libido never achieved uniformity of direction.

He could not attain a normal emotional attitude towards other persons and could not advance to object-choice; and at the same time his different erotogenic zones maintained their original independent significance. (Abraham, 1916, p. 257)

Among the elements that contributed to the development of the patient’s illness he included a constituent factor (oral erotism), a fixation of the libido on this phase, a narcissistic injury that gave rise to the first important failed love (prior to the development of the Oedipus complex) and the subsequent re-enactment of this first frustration. Abraham summarised the characteristics of this clinical case in the following points:

1. The oral zone was more important than the other erotogenic zones. Pleasure in sucking was particularly strong. Sucking milk produced a state of gratification.
2. The sexual function and the nutritive one were associated in the act of sucking.
3. The patient had the desire to incorporate the object which attracted his wish-phantasies. (He himself called this a cannibalistic impulse.) (Abraham, 1916, p. 258)

He points out that these characteristics are the same as those that Freud attributed to the first stage of libidinal development. But he goes a step further. From an anthropological perspective, he observes large variations with regard to the time that individuals are weaned and focusses on cases in which weaning is particularly difficult. In one case he refers to the fixation on the infantile pleasure of sucking and uses another example to illustrate the subsequent regression to this source of pleasure.

In the following section, he addresses how the abnormal feelings of hunger in some neurotics lead to anxiety: hunger attacks in frigid women who cannot imagine from where their neurotic obsession obtains such power. Later it is understood as being the sheer strength of repressed impulses which gain expression by this means. Once again, Abraham supports his ideas with clinical examples. He recounts a case in which the patient did not have a desire to suck but to take in solid food very frequently.

The patient’s whole behaviour becomes intelligible to us only when we recognize the pleasure-value—conscious or unconscious—which eating had for her … It was, moreover, not merely the eating itself that was charged with so much affect; for she enjoyed a certain fore-pleasure in the purchase of her provisions, the preparation of her meals, etc. (Abraham, 1916, p. 264)

He goes on to make an important observation that outlines the subdivision of the oral stage:

Compared with that group of neurotics which we have just discussed, adult thumb-suckers represent a more advanced stage of libidinal development. Their libido has achieved a certain independence of the nutritive instinct … Their oral zone has certainly retained its predominant role, and they, too, are still far removed from having made a successful transference of their libido on
to objects. In real life they show many signs of the strongest repudiation of sexuality ... According to my experience, neurotics who have not overcome the sucking habit tend to indulge in a very high degree of autoerotic stimulation of other zones, especially the genitals. We also find that the small child, besides having pleasure in sucking, tends to take hold of some part of its own body and to carry out on it rhythmical plucking movements. (Abraham, 1916, p. 266)

He adds two clinical examples in which he has observed this tendency and provides practical criteria for identifying obsessive habits: the appearance of neurotic symptoms when the subject is deprived of the stimulus. He then refers to neurotics ...

... who employ a pleasurable oral stimulus to dispel their depression ... autoerotic gratification has two uses: it prevents a depression of spirits when it is threatened and removes it when it is there. (Abraham, 1916, p. 270)

Abraham continues with more cases; a young cyclothymic patient; a young man with neurotic depression who had been breastfed for the first year of his life; diet addicts ... The manifestations of depressive mental disturbances reveal two symptoms that are directly related to the intake of food, enabling us to go a step further: These are the refusal to take food and the fear of dying of starvation (Abraham, 1916, p. 275). Abraham does not accept that the patient had decided to die; why should he choose the lengthy and uncertain way of starvation? Neither is he convinced that the second symptom could be accounted for by simple causes. His extensive experience with psychotics once again helps him to resolve the problem:

He should choose the lengthy and uncertain way of starvation. A deeper insight into the structure of depressive psychoses has led me to conclude that in these patients the libido has regressed to the most primitive stage of its development known to us, to that stage which we have learned to know as the oral or cannibalistic stage. Even under normal conditions traces of a regressive change of the libido can be seen in the age of involution. (Abraham, 1916, p. 275)
He also alludes to an aspect which years later would be explored by Klein …

The melancholic depressed person directs upon his sexual object the wish to incorporate it. In the depth of his unconscious there is a tendency to devour and demolish his object. (Abraham, 1916, p. 276)

He goes on to remember the parallelism that he had established in another paper between the structure of melancholia and that of obsessional neurosis, insisting on the ambivalence of feelings and the predominance of sadism in the patient’s emotional life, establishing what seems to me to be an essential difference:

The libido is predominantly hostile towards the object of its desires and endeavours to destroy it; but it seems to me that in contrast to the sadistic desires of the obsessional neurotic, the unconscious wish of the melancholic is to destroy his love-object by eating it up. (Abraham, 1916, p. 277)

If the deepest, repressed wishes of the melancholic are of a cannibalistic nature, referring to a forbidden act of eating, we can understand the refusal to eat.

He behaves as though complete abstention from food could alone keep him from carrying out his repressed impulses. At the same time he threatens himself with that punishment which is alone fitting for his unconscious cannibalistic impulses—death by starvation … the mouth zone shall never experience that satisfaction. (Abraham, 1916, p. 278)

Lacan, in the seminary La relation d’objet (The object relation), regarding anorexia stated (1956, p. 211): It is not a nicht essen, it is a nichts essen. What happens, in specific terms, is that the child eats the nothing, which is not the same as a refusal to perform the activity. He uses this absence, savoured as such, against what he has facing him, namely the mother on whom he depends. Thanks to this nothing, he makes her depend on him.

Finally, Abraham notes that through dreams and classic legends, normal adults also experience unconscious fantasies such as the one previously mentioned with respect to Saturn devouring his children.
This was the first in-depth study regarding the psychopathology of melancholia from the perspective of object relations.

Freud used the main points regarding the defences employed by the subject to cope with loss in this article for his paper *Mourning and Melancholia*, which, in turn, motivated Abraham to resume his study of these stages in manic-depressive states while insisting on the delusions of grandeur that underline the self-reproaches of the melancholic.

“His” fantasy was built on by Nicolas Abraham and María Torok (1987), who describe the replacement of the introjection process in mourning by these fantasies of incorporation, creating what is known as a crypt; a type of intrapsychic cave.

**Presence of object relations in the clinical papers written between 1916 to 1924**

In 1912 Abraham successfully treated two cases of impotence, but he did not publish *Ejaculatio Praecox* until five years later. (1917b, pp. 280–298) Until then, this issue had not been addressed in psychoanalytic literature beyond being mentioned in conjunction with other impotences. He suggests that it can be considered as a combination of two processes: “it is an ejaculation with regard to the substance of the emission, and a micturition with regard to the manner of it.” (Abraham, 1917b, p. 281).

Freud received the manuscript in 1916 and without delay commented to Ferenczi (letter to Ferenczi on 15 May 1916): “Abraham has sent me a very good article on premature ejaculation as a personal gift”. In *Thalassa*, Sandor, defending Abraham as a “fervent explorer of pregenital organisations.” (Ferenczi, 1924, pp. 250–323), [Translated for this edition], reflects the relationship that Karl established between premature ejaculation and genitality and urethral erotism.

Abraham discovered that these patients had gained a late control over their bladder functions and displayed an exhibitionistic pleasure in urinating in front of others.

It is now evident that these neurotic persons have remained behind at a definite stage in the development of their libido, and derive infantile pleasure from the outflow of their bodily products. Nevertheless, ejaculatio praecox has at the same time a pleasure and a displeasure value for them ... This state of ambivalence is particularly to be noted. (Abraham, 1917b, p. 283)
Without establishing any fixed boundaries, Abraham divides the patients treated into two groups, one which was apathetic with a lack of energy and another which was feverish and hyperactive:

The inertness and passivity exhibited by these neurotics is, however, a reactive manifestation. It can be found that such an attitude has taken the place of a too forcible sadistic impulse. (Abraham, 1917b, p. 287)

Consequently, he later addresses castration anxiety. Basing his arguments on Freud’s *On Narcissism: An Introduction*:

As a disturbing influence emanating from repressed narcissistic tendencies that have not succeeded in obtaining complete control … Psycho-analysis brings to light the narcissism of these patients, and never fails to reveal the fact that their object-love is very imperfect. Their true love-object is themselves. (Abraham, 1917b, p. 291)

Then, in one page, he succinctly addresses the infantile development from the earliest gratifications (feeding and defecating) and the first feelings of love towards the person taking care of the infant who awakens pleasurable sensations …

This stage of the development of the libido, in which the child itself is the central point of its still limited world, and in which it accepts demonstrations of love from other persons without giving anything in return, we term narcissism. The child’s relations to its love-object develop a step further when it begins to give to other persons something of its own. The products of its own body—which according to the child’s idea are a part of its own body—are the first coinage which it makes use of. These products are subjected to a narcissistic over-estimation. (Abraham, 1917b, p. 291)

He also refers to the greeting of some primitive peoples who offer a corporal product, for example saliva; there is nothing more courteous than offering part of oneself.

The associations of a patient prompted new ideas regarding narcissism. He continues to support the theory with his clinical observations:
We are now at last able to comprehend the unconscious sexual aim of that symptom … Just in the same way as the small child wets his mother with his urine, which he cannot as yet contain, the patient wets his partner in his premature ejaculation … is not able to give love, but only to receive it … his unconscious endeavours once more to restore the ways of life of early childhood … Giving away the products of its own body … Another method of conferring love and asking for it is found in exhibitionism.

It must, however, be borne in mind that this exhibiting before the woman (the mother) bears an ambivalent character. (Abraham, 1917b, pp. 293, 295 respectively)

What does this object-woman-mother represent for these subjects? Someone who arouses desire in order to disappoint in revenge for the disappointments that she suffered as a child. It is a form of soiling the woman (with semen-urine); an ambivalent offering. He also refers to the symptom of impotentia ejaculandi where there is also a sexual disinclination arising from narcissism.

In a short paper, *The Spending of Money in Anxiety States* (1917c, pp. 299–302), Abraham addresses the relationship of neurotics with money, the illusion that libidinal freedom can be obtained through buying a whole host of objects. He interprets these aspects after analysing infantile dependency …

Two contrary mental currents can always be found to exist in these patients: a conservative one, in the direction of a permanent fixation, and another one, in the direction of turning towards objects of the external world. Every attempt to transfer the libido on to new subjects is accompanied by severe anxiety, for the very reason that the unconscious desire is so especially violent and impetuous … restricts the transference of their libido within the narrowest bounds, so that they become incapable of making free use of it, and this not only in the strict sense of actual sex-relationships. (Abraham, 1917c, p. 300)

War neuroses were researched by both Abraham and Ferenczi. During the many months that they served on the front, they collected an abundance of material to conduct their investigations. A similar process was conducted later by Bion. Part of Abraham’s reflections can be seen
in *Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses* (Abraham, 1918b, pp. 59–67), in which he observes that traumatic neuroses frequently affect sexuality: give rise to a regressive change in the direction of narcissism. He comments that Ferenczi and himself reached the same conclusion without discussing the matter beforehand. Anamnesis was, once again, the via regia for explaining the different reactions of these subjects to similar events, who, momentarily, “must at all times be prepared to sacrifice themselves unconditionally for the general good. This involves the renunciation of all narcissistic privileges” (Abraham, 1918b, p. 61).

A healthy person is able to do this. However, as well as being willing to die, a readiness to kill is demanded of him; the narcissistic illusion of being invulnerable vanishes. The almost entirely male community that constitutes the army can lead to a situation where “the capacity for transferring the libido is lost, Narcissistic security gives way to a feeling of powerlessness, and the neurosis sets in.” (1918b, p. 63).

The cheerful atmosphere that was characteristic of the infirmaries for amputees caused Abraham to reflect on these moments of manic elation …

What they had to forego in love from outside, they replaced by self-love. The injured part of the body gained a significance as an erotogenic zone, which it had not previously possessed … feeling of an immense loss … his impoverishment in object love, for which he cannot be adequately compensated. Here, too, the patient’s behaviour is due to narcissism. The genital zone has lost its primacy. (Abraham, 1918b, pp. 64–65)

Within this context, Abraham successfully practised what we call today brief therapies.

The apparent submission during the analysis reveals that the most narcissistic patients were those who resisted the fundamental psychoanalytic rule. Yet again we come across transference and the tendency to indentify oneself with the doctor in *A Particular Form of Neurotic Resistance Against the Psycho-Analytic Method*. (Abraham, 1919a pp. 303–311).

Auto-analysis as a substitute for masturbation, particularly in obsessive neurosis … we shall not be surprised to find pronounced sadist-anal traits. He quotes Tausk when he identifies the child’s first opportunity to deceive the adult in the control of his sphincters …
They [these neurotics] pride themselves, as it were, upon being able to decide whether, when, or how much they will give out from their unconscious psychic material. Their tendency to bring perfectly arranged material to the analytic hour shows not only an anal-erotic pleasure in systematizing and cataloguing everything ... Narcissistic neurotics with a strong anal disposition such as we are dealing with here have a tendency to give presents instead of love. (Abraham, 1919a, p. 309)

Emilio Rodrigué (TI, p. 231) maintains that Freud’s definition of obsessive neurosis in *New Observations on Neuro-Psychosis of Defence* (1896) is contemplated from a dynamic and economic perspective.

Freud claims that defence is expressed by repression in which all neurotic obsession is rooted. The essential element of obsessive neurosis is self-censorship, reproaches that arise from repression related to a pleasurable sexual act carried out in infancy. If the defence fails, the memories return in a deformed state to consciousness as representations and obsessive traits. If the corresponding reproaches also return, another type of obsessive neurosis will come to light where the obsessive traits predominate over the representation and guilt is easily transformed into shame or hypochondriac fear. The aggressive drive that Abraham incorporated into the description of obsessive neurosis and how it affects object relations through repression is one of his most important findings which he addresses in his essay of 1924.

The anal dimension continued to interest him, and he sent a manuscript to Freud on the subject: *The Narcissistic Evaluation for Excretory Processes in Dreams and Neurosis* (Abraham, 1920a, pp. 318–322). In a patient with a particularly repressed genital erotism ...

The enormous power which the dreamer ascribes to her excretions deserves special consideration. On the basis of this dream we are able to set beside the primitive idea of the omnipotence of thoughts, with which we are quite familiar, the idea of the omnipotence of the functions of bladder and bowel ... Both ideas quite obviously express the same narcissistic over-estimation of the Self. (Abraham, 1920a, p. 319)

The mother of another patient, who had believed he was a prince in early childhood, had elevated her obsession with his bowel movements
to a cult, “constantly concerned about their quality and quantity, and used to give him an enema almost daily.” (Abraham, 1920a, p. 320).

The actions of the external object disturbed the structuring of the internal world. The son responded by reinforcing this attitude, and after witnessing his parents having sexual intercourse.

He had identified himself with his mother and transferred his phantasies of anal coitus on to his father. Up to this time he had attributed a penis to his mother, which was represented by the enema tube. But now he took up a female passive attitude towards his father. Soon afterwards he was confined to his bed. During this time he went a couple of days without having an evacuation, and as a consequence of this he had a feeling of pressure in the abdomen. That night he dreamed that he had to expel the universe out of his anus. (Abraham, 1920a, p. 320)

The omnipotence of defecation is very clearly expressed. The myths of the creation draw parallels between excrement and mud or clay. Abraham continues to compare specific cases of his patients with the universal references ingrained in different cultures. Diarrhoea represents suppressed outbursts of rage …

The most fundamental relationship between sadism and anal erotism doubtless lies in the fact that the passive sexual feeling associated with the anal zone becomes coupled with the active-sadistic impulses. (Abraham, 1920a, p. 320)

The ambivalence of the impulses of the obsessive neurotic patients resides in this linking of active and passive components.

In his next paper, *The Day of Atonement* (1920b, pp. 147–167), Abraham researches the analogous tendency of the Jewish religion to protect the institution with respect to obsessive behaviour. Two chapters address the rites of the “Kolnidre” and the “Schophar”. The former is the prayer that marks the beginning of “Yom Kippur” or the Day of Atonement. The two oldest men in the community ceremoniously consent to its beginning. A cock is sacrificed for the men and a hen for the women, while a formula is recited: “This is my expiatory sacrifice; this is my substitute; this cock is to go to its death in my stead”. Once the birds are tied by the feet, they are thrown aside with disgust and then
killed and eaten in the totem meal. The “Kolnidre” is spoken again; the man who imitates the totem blows the “Schophar” or ram’s horn which represents the voice of God, culminating in the following formula being repeated seven times: *Jahveh is the only God*. The following twenty-four hours constitute a fast of atonement.

“Kolnidre” is a Hebrew word-meaning vow. It is contemplated as an oral substitute of the act of violence against the father and charged with emotional ambivalence, analogous with obsessive neurosis. But Abraham provided more convincing evidence than Reik who limited his interpretation to the repetition of the original killing. Abraham, on the other hand, added that as well as the death of the totem there is an intellectual separation from the father-god. “As with primitive peoples the totem is first killed and eaten and subsequently imitated in solemn ceremonial whereby its adherents identify with it, so, too, with the rite now under consideration.” (Abraham, 1920b, p. 146) Primordial ambivalence had been addressed by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, published in the same year.

An important paper in the construction of this theory was *The Cultural Significance of Psychoanalysis* (Abraham, 1920c, pp. 116–136). This paper constituted a further consolidation, with a greater emphasis on the oral stage: the ego-drives and sexual drives act in unison; an unorganised and opposing set of drives develop into the first autoerotic movements, sucking and finally, the object:

The juxtaposition of opposing drives is characteristic, so that friendly and hostile impulses, love and hatred, may be directed towards the same person. Other drives, later classified as sexual, show their active and their passive aspects simultaneously … During this time, that is, around the fifth year, the child’s sexual curiosity is very strong … with this process. The small child lacks all those inhibitions in the instinctual life, which we take for granted at a later age. The gradual adjustment to its immediate and more distant environment … is based upon the process of repression … The unconscious then becomes more and more the repository in which is collected all that is unbearable to consciousness because of its painful content. (Abraham, 1920c, p. 120)

Projection is still not used in order to externalise intolerable content. Repressed drives are diverted into socially acceptable or desirable aims
and so it becomes again admissible to consciousness. Only in maturity when full aggregation of the object has been achieved and component instincts join together …

an integrated direction of sexual impulses is achieved. The opposite sex becomes the sole sexual object, and coitus the sexual aim. […] In early infancy the thoughts of the child are governed by his own pleasurable instincts. Just as his activity consists of play, so his thoughts consist of phantasy … we shall no more praise the child as innocent than condemn him as wicked. Rather shall we stress the fact that in the earliest phase of his life the child is dominated by his instinctual impulses, so that his wishes and actions cannot be judged by moral standards. We can trace death dreams back to this amoral period of childhood. (Abraham, 1920c, pp. 121, 124)

A possible way to conquer the oedipal position is to transform primitive erotism into affection towards the mother and channel hostility towards the father. Abraham continued to incorporate Freud’s reflections in his work. In this case we are referring to wit which enables infantile freedom to be momentarily restored.

He refers to the importance of ethics for an individual and within a culture:

Religion, ethics, law, philosophy, customs and conventions. All such systems are founded on the need for a transformation of those instinctual drives to which direct satisfaction must be denied. They are thus equivalent to the products of individual sublimation. (Abraham, 1920c, p. 132)

His final observation concerns the relationship of the child with animals, which can awaken both a loving interest and also fear and hatred due to a possible displacement of his parents. Ferenczi’s paper on tics provided a new stimulus for Abraham’s creativity. “These two conditions [tics and catatonia] have ecolalia, ecopraxia, stereotypes, grimaces and mannerism in common” wrote Ferenczi (1921, p. 89), suggesting a theory of a common constitutional basis. He also recalls the pleasure of moving described by Abraham as being favourable to motor phenomena in both pathologies. He refers to the uncontrollable excitation which occurs in obsessive neurotic patients; although he also points out that narcissistic regression is less pronounced in tic sufferers than in psychotic patients.
Ferenczi is quite right in calling attention to the similarities between tics and catatonia, but he overlooks the much more fundamental differences between the two conditions ... On the other hand, the assumption of an increased organ libido and the conception of a pathoneurotic tic seem to be very useful ... cannot agree with the view that the suppression of a tic causes anxiety. An important objection follows from another consideration. Ferenczi says that a tic does not seem to contain any relation to an object. In my analyses, however, I have found a double relation to the object, namely, a sadistic and an anal one, and herein lies the similarity of a tic to an obsessional neurosis. This similarity seems to me to be a closer one than that to catatonia. (Abraham, 1921c, pp. 323–324)

Abraham illustrates his objections through a table in accordance with how he conceived the evolution of object-love at that time (Contribution to a Discussion on Tic, Abraham, 1921c, pp. 323–325):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object-love</th>
<th>Genital organisation</th>
<th>Normal state</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Control of organ</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Capacity to deal with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>psychical stimuli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object-love Genital</td>
<td>Genital org.</td>
<td>Conversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>hysteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object-love Sadistic</td>
<td>Sadistic-anal org.</td>
<td>Tic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anal Organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obsessional neurosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcissism to auto-</td>
<td>Pregenital organisation</td>
<td>Catatonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erotism</td>
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<td>Paranoid states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conversion series</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety series</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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[The tic] represents a regression one stage lower than the hysterical conversion symptom, and is nearer to catatonia than to hysteria. (Abraham, 1921c, p. 325)

The controversy continued and Ferenczi, after reading Abraham’s comments on the subject, acknowledged that he had not underlined the importance of the sadistic and erotic-anal components to which Abraham attributes the source of the tic. However, he continued to define the tic and catatonia, stating that “even in Abraham’s outline, the tic is as close to obsessional neurosis and hysteria as it is to catatonia.” (Ferenczi, 1921, p. 134).
At this time, Abraham published another important paper: *Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex* (Abraham, 1920e, pp. 338–369). This is one of the articles on which Freud based his comment: “In the valuable and comprehensive studies on the masculinity and castration complexes in women by Abraham, Horney and Helene Deutsch, there is much that touches closely on what I have written but nothing that coincides with it completely, so that here again I feel justified in publishing this paper.” (*Some Psychic Consequences on the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes*, Freud, 1925, p. 258) In May 1919 he had touched on the subject in the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society and his intention was to present the paper to Freud as a birthday present. However, a shortage of time and the unforeseen increase in size of the paper meant that it did not arrive on time. In addition to what we mentioned in the second chapter, we will refer to his invocation of the anal phase once again, linking defecation with the possible emergence of the girl’s desire for a penis:

The process of identification further establishes a close relation between the ideas faeces and penis ... In girls, however, the phantasy occurs of obtaining a penis by way of defecation—to make one themselves, therefore—or of receiving it as a gift ... We regard it as normal for the libido in a woman to be narcissistically bound to a greater extent than in a man. (Abraham, 1920e, p. 343)

The female castration complex can be traced back to the anal phase in its retention form. As opposed to men for whom we can refer to a process of identification; faeces = penis, for the woman there is a process concerned with creation and bartering: making a penis or receiving one in exchange for the gift-child. He describes three states in the female castration complex:

**FIRST STAGE:** I rob you of what you have because I lack it.

**SECOND STAGE:** I rob you of nothing. I even promise you what I have to give.

**THIRD STAGE:** I will not give you what I have promised.

In both conditions (frigidity or ejaculatio praecox) the libido is attached to that erotogenic zone which has normally a similar significance in the opposite sex. (Abraham, 1920e, pp. 358–359)
In the following lines he addresses the conscious or unconscious motives for feminine prostitution and the love-choice of passive and effeminate men. His clinical observations lead him to define more symptoms of conversion than perversions in his female patients with a castration complex, who transfer the problem on to their children:

They influence the psychosexual development of their daughters either by speaking disparagingly of female sexuality to them, or by unconsciously showing their aversion to men. [...] A mother with this kind of aversion to the male sex injures the narcissism of the boy ... He soon sees that his mother ostentatiously looks the other way, even if she does not give expression to her disinclination in words ... The boy is thus forced into a new orientation of his libido. Either it is transferred from the genital to the anal zone, or the boy is impelled towards a member of his own sex—his father in the first instance. (Abraham, 1920e, p. 368)

Jacques Lacan, who describes this article as admirable, comments:

The notion of a lack of an object is when one simply reads the good analytic authors, among whom I count K Abraham [In the 1994 edition, M. Abraham appears—also in the subsequent lines—but the article to which he refers leaves no doubt to the identity of the author]. In an admirable article published in 1920 [Ilse Barande provides the date of 1921, as this is when it was published in full in the *Jahrbuch*] on the castration complex in women, he gives the example of a little girl of two who goes into the cigar cabinet after lunch. She gives the first to Papa, the second to Mama who does not smoke and she puts the third between her legs. Mama collects the whole panoply and returns it to the cigar box. It is not at all chance if the little girl goes back and begins again, because that happens just as it should ... K. Abraham implicitly admits that the third gesture of the little girl indicates that she lacks this symbolic object. She shows the lack in this way. But it is no doubt also for that reason that she first gave it to the one who is not lacking to indicate in what way she can desire it ... (Lacan, 1994, p. 221)

In 1922 Abraham divided his attention between different subjects, for example, parapraxis which he relates to overcompensation. After
analysing nightmares he reveals that the essential element is not “anxiety, defence or flight … but rather the impulse of the dreamer.” (Mistakes With an Overcompensating Tendency, Abraham, 1922c, p. 79).

He addressed the symbolism of the spider (The Spider as a Dream Symbol (1922e, pp. 326–332)) which can mean different things: the wicked mother (who is formed like a man) or the male genital attributed to her. Pubic hair is represented by the web and the single thread symbolises the male genital …

Abraham also wrote about the Oedipus complex through rescue fantasies, with a fear of becoming trapped in an unstoppable movement which cannot be controlled; the neurotic’s intention to separate her parents from the perspective of the changing phases of the conflict between instinct and repression. (The Rescue and Murder of the Father in Neurotic Phantasy-Formations, Abraham, 1922a, p. 68) He delayed the publication of this article in order to try to locate a reference that he believed that he had read in Freud’s work. He sent Freud a copy to check that nothing that he considered to be new was to be found in Freud’s writings, in which case the manuscript should be destroyed. Freud fully agreed with all of his disciple’s interpretations, merely reminding him that the original Oedipus talks of a crossroads not a hollow way: “an awkward feature of the Oedipus passage which has already caused me a great deal of trouble.” (Letter to Abraham, 8 August 1921).

In 1922, we can read from their correspondence that Abraham was researching the relationship between manic-depressive conditions and kleptomania. However, once again the dialogue was interrupted; Freud responded enthusiastically but although he said that he would like to talk about all of those issues particularly with Abraham it was difficult for him to do so: “but no possibility of writing about them. In the evening I am lazy … With eight and soon nine hours’ work, I do not manage to achieve the composure required for scientific work.” (Letter from Freud, 30 March 1922).

Now we will turn our attention to another paper, Psycho-analytical Views on Some Characteristics of Early Infantile Thinking. (Abraham, 1923l, pp. 86–90) He emphasises that he will not explore the twofold meaning of the mouth as an organ for eating and an erotogenic zone, underlining the predominance of sucking in the earliest phase and the progressive capture of the world through sight and sound. More recent papers on this first phase also refer to the predominant role of smell and touch in the initial contact with the object. The infant takes everything that it is able to grasp to its mouth …
The ego and its interests are more important than the object-world. At the stage of the primitive pleasure in biting there is as yet no inhibition to check the destruction of objects: the child is still wholly without adaptation to the outside world … In the realm of the ego-instincts egoism is wholly dominant, as is narcissism in that of childish sexuality. Thus we see that the child’s primitive attitude towards objects is a simple matter of pleasure or pain … Thus the psychic attitude of the young child towards objects is determined simply and solely by the pleasurable or painful effect produced upon him by those objects … the discovery that, when two objects arouse in the child similar feelings of pleasure or of pain, he proceeds unhesitatingly to identify them. [Symmetry principle which, although with another name, Kernberg describes when discussing object relations theory in 1976, p. 31]. The critical mode of thinking by which we compare and differentiate is wholly absent at this early stage (Abraham, 1923l, p. 87)

In *The Ego and the Id*, also published in 1923, Freud defines the difference between the function ego and the ego invested as an object, which contains the history of the previous object-choices. Abraham adds some examples of infantile thinking related to identifications, including the substitution of animals with people in child phobias.

Gradually this aim is replaced by another, namely the craving to possess and master the object … This attitude towards the object includes a tendency to preserve and protect it and this is the first step in the direction of adaptation to the outside world; it is on this basis only that the adaptation of thought to reality is possible. The influence of narcissism on his thinking is still paramount … He ascribes to his desires and thoughts an unlimited omnipotence which can so operate on the outside world as to effect changes in it. Only gradually does his critical faculty teach him the bounds which are set to his influence upon that world. (Abraham, 1923l, p. 89)

It is tempting to continue studying this process to show how closely this evolution is related to the relationships that the child builds with the people in its environment. From his next article (*Two Contributions to the Study of Symbols*, 1923a, pp. 81–85): “Analysis reveals the incestuous character of the dream. The patient’s unconscious contains pronounced necrophilic phantasies.
Not until his mother was dead could he possess her.” (Abraham, 1923a, p. 84) And so we arrive at the fruit of all of this research: *A Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders* (Abraham, 1924i, pp. 418–502), to which we will dedicate the next section of this book. Abraham analysed a succession of stages of development, each with its unique characteristics and laws. Later, Freud would find the model of phylogenetic development of the species in this theory.

Lacan (in the Introduction to the Seminar *The Object Relation*) identifies Abraham as one of the first analysts who underlined the importance of the subject-object relationship from an essentially dialectic perspective, and not only as it had until then been described as a conflictive relationship. “Until now, the evolution of the subject has always been seen as a reconstruction in a retroactive way, based on the central experience of the conflictive tension between the conscious and unconscious.” But the subject is not recognised through consciousness, “there is another element and an outside … unknown to the subject” (Lacan, 1994, p. 17). “This point of view has been abandoned by the initiative of a group of personalities who have a large following.” (Lacan, 1994, p. 18). Everything is reorganised around the object. He says textually:

> This perspective has progressively gained ground from the moment that Abraham formulated it in 1924 in his theory of the development of the libido. His conception founds for many the very law of analysis, frames everything that occurs there, forms the system of coordinates within which the analytic experience is situated and determines its point of achievement, that famous ideal object—final, perfect, adequate—which is presented as in itself marking a goal attained, namely the normalisation of the subject. The term normalisation introduces a whole host of categories, which are unrelated to the starting point of the analysis. (Lacan, 1994, p. 10)

The genetic perspective, which had always been present in psychoanalysis, was not addressed in depth. Abraham investigated the subject’s relationship with its environment, regression and the genetic dimension; Freud approached the subject from a dynamic and structural point of view.
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A short study of the development of the libido, viewed in the light of mental disorders (1924)

This essay has two parts. The first (Abraham, 1924i, pp. 418–479) is divided into an Introduction and six parts. This was undoubtedly Abraham’s most complete and in-depth study in which, with an impeccable psychoanalytic style, he unites his clinical experience with theoretical considerations, passing from psychopathology to normal development. In a logical sense it represents a solidly accomplished inductive system. In terms of his analytic method, he successively peels back the different layers until the essential aspects, which analysts do not see at first, are revealed. So many of them would have conformed to the first observations and gone no further!

Freud approached psychoanalysis from the dynamic perspective and based his theories on structural models. This perfectly complemented Abraham who worked on the relationship of the subject with its environment, object-love, regression, and the genetic dimension. This study went beyond an economical perspective as we may be led to understand from the title: the genetic dimension, which had always been present in psychoanalysis, was now approached in depth and the structural aspect was also addressed. From the start, the issues in this essay are addressed in great depth; Abraham received the manuscript
of *The Ego and the Id* when he had already written a substantial part of the paper.

Abraham’s conference to the Berlin circle on the subject before he wrote the essay met with “an unusual amount of appreciation from our circle”. He himself was aware that he was making “a not unimportant contribution to the understanding of paranoia and other forms of neurosis, such as pseudologia, etc., which have so far not been exhausted.” (Letter to Freud, 1 April 1923), and had made an important addition to the theory of sexuality; he considered it as his best work so far.

A preview of where Melanie Klein would situate depression is reflected in a letter from Abraham to Freud on 7 October 1923:

> I have assumed the presence of a basic irritation in infancy as a prototype for later melancholia … This child faithfully presented the basic melancholia that I had assumed and in close combination with oral erotism … I am pleased to see that my assumptions about the two stages in the anal-sadistic phase are confirmed by new material … What I said … about the stages of object-love, and particularly about partial incorporation, is being very nicely confirmed at present. I had assumed that in paranoid and related psychoses regression to this phase could be demonstrated. (Abraham to Freud, 7 October 1923)

The letter includes the prognosis of a melancholic patient who was able to direct his melancholia “in status nascendi” into a relatively more favourable form of illness: after a disappointment with his fiancée (rejection of the love-object) he entered into a new depression. Quick intervention resulted in the melancholia changing within a fortnight, and more clearly on each subsequent day, into an obsessional neurosis.

*Manic-depressive states and the pregenital levels of the libido*

We will begin by taking an economic perspective, examining the widely accepted theory of an affinity between melancholia and obsessive neurosis, which share a libidinal disengagement from the outside world although …

> It had not hitherto been possible to discover anything concerning the point of divergence of melancholic and obsessional states; nor indeed had any light been shed as yet on the problem of the specific
cause of the circular insanities. I was able to show [1916] that certain psychoneuroses contain clear traces of that earliest phase in the organization of the libido; and I ventured the suggestion that what we saw in melancholia was the result of a regression of the patient’s libido to that same primitive oral level. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 419)

However, in 1916 Abraham did not have enough material to offer irrefutable proof. He also refers to the almost simultaneous advance made by Freud on the issue from another perspective: the patient lost his love-object and regained it once again through introjection, so the melancholic self-reproaches are directed at the lost object. This was a controversial aspect which Abraham now accepted but with nuances.

Introjection does not always generate the same results: the genetic aspect is an essential element, which has a varying influence depending on the stage of development; incorporations are not always devoured. Quoting Freud, he reminds us that while in the melancholic patient the important event is the loss of the object that precedes the manifestation of the illness, this is not the case for obsessive neurotics, who, despite their ambivalent attitude towards the object, preserve it. Abraham goes on to remark on the reservation that he used in publishing clinical material for reasons of discretion saying …

In the first part of this book I shall briefly examine certain problems concerning manic-depressive states—in particular the problem of the patient’s relation to his love-object during his states of depression and mania and during his ‘free interval’—. In the second part I shall treat those problems in a broader way and shall consider the subject of the development of the libido as a whole. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 421)

*Melancholia and obsessive neurosis: the anal-sadistic phase*

The first clinical observation is concerned with melancholia and obsessive neurosis as two stages of the anal-sadistic phase of the libido: “the manic-depressive states run an intermittent course, whereas obsessional states are on the whole chronic in character” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 422).

After conducting psychological research into the free intervals in melancholics, he finds that even during these periods, the patient has
an abnormal character-formation. We are, therefore, taking a structural perspective, seeking differences between the two conditions without success for the moment. During these periods of calm, melancholics exhibit the same characteristics as obsessive neurotics with regard to cleanliness and order; they both have the same tendency to display an obstinate and defiant attitude which alternates with extreme docility and they display an abnormal behaviour in relation to money and possessions; these shared traits relate both conditions to the same pregenital phase.

The economic perspective gives way to the search for genetic aetiology. Although he remembers Freud’s previous conclusion: the melancholic abandons relations with the object, while the obsessive neurotic maintains them, Abraham raises a new question as to “why the object-relation is so much more labile in the one class of patients than in the other” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 424). Fixation serves as both a guide and an obstacle to development:

The fixation points that have been formed in the course of the development of the libido will determine to what level of organization the libido of the individual will advance, and to what level it will retreat in the event of a neurotic illness. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 424)

The individual’s relationship with the outside world is also determined by early fixations. This succinct phrase about the double role of fixation is highly important.

However there is something that resembles an enigmatic black hole:

If, therefore, it appears that such widely divergent pathological processes can take their inception from the sadistic-anal stage, it follows that this stage contains heterogeneous elements [translated in the French version as “oppositions internes”, internal oppositions], which we have not been able to separate out hitherto. In other words, our knowledge of this stage of libidinal development must be insufficient. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 424)

Abraham’s primary contribution is taking shape; the circle is closing and clinical developments offer new information for this genetic theory.

Next he refers to the three stages in libidinal development. In each stage a specific erogenous zone has preponderant importance
A SHORT STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIBIDO

(oral–cannibalistic, anal-sadistic, and genital). However, prudence prevents him from rushing into inferring erroneous correlations, and he merely indicates the corresponding libidinal excitations “belonging to anal erotism had close and manifold connections in that stage with sadistic impulses … yet we have never inquired into the origin of that especial relationship.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 424).

The relationship between the biological and psychological levels can only be contemplated from an economic perspective. A gradual trans-action mitigates the effect of the separation. Abraham takes a step further; he had already addressed the subject in Contributions to the Theory of the Anal Character (1921a), but now he is able to confirm the theory. We can only talk about the capacity to love if the genital stage has been reached:

Thus we have on the one hand anal erotic processes combined with sadistic behaviour, in especial with unkind and hostile emotions which are destructive to their object; and on the other, a genital erotism combined with tendencies which are friendly to their object. Abraham, 1924i, p. 425)

But he insists that this comparison only brings us a little closer to solving the problem; why sadistic impulses exhibit particular affinity for anal eroticism at a specific moment in development. Again, Abraham’s empirical data is useful and shows (Abraham, 1924i, p. 425):

1. That anal erotism contains two opposite pleasurable tendencies.
2. That similarly two opposite tendencies exist in the field of sadistic impulses.

He also points out that in this middle stage of development, subjects treat their objects of their desire as if they were their earliest pieces of personal property (like the contents of their bowels), while during the genital phase positive feelings emerge together with the reality principle; but …

The ambivalence of feelings still exists in full force on this inferior level, he expresses his positive attitude towards his object in the form of retaining his property, and his negative attitude in the form of rejecting it. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 426)
He is impregnating biological processes with psychology; both the threat of losing the object for the obsessive neurotic and the actual loss of it for the melancholic mean an expulsion of the object “in the sense of a physical expulsion of faeces.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 426).

As an example he refers to the violent intestinal sensations experienced upon receiving the news of the death of a loved one, or the primitive ritual described by G. Róheim (quoted by Abraham on page p. 427; see Róheim, 1967) whereby the deceased’s relatives defecated on the grave, although he also mentions the ever-present over-determination. In German, the word for animal excrement is “Losung” (“what has dropped off”, “Droppings” in English). The connection between “los” (as a prefix = “without”. “Einem loswerden” = “to be rid of somebody”) and the English word “lose” is evident (revealing his interest in linguistics). Furthermore, “nothing is so eloquent in confirmation of our view as the utterances of children. A small Hungarian boy … once threatened his nurse with these words: ‘If you make me angry ka-ka you across to Ofen’” (a district on the other side of the Danube). (Abraham, 1924i, p. 427).

If a student is excluded from an official event due to bad behaviour, it is said of him “Er gerät in Verschiss”. Literally, “Verschiss” = “excrement”, used colloquially as “shithouse” instead of “Verruf” = “discredit, boycott”. Less forceful in French version: “Il tombe en disgrâce”.

The object is organised from the body and corporal elements. But, according to Matte Blanco (throughout his work; consult bibliography), the internal/external boundaries are not clear in the unconscious. There is content that can belong to the interior and the exterior at the same time. If there are no differentiated spaces, there is no conflict, whether there is adaptation or not.

J. Gutiérrez Terrazas addresses the constitution of the unconscious from a different perspective:

> The unconscious functions with a multi-faceted logic. In other words, in some circumstances it works without heeding the non-contradiction principle and in others it respects it. Then there are different ways of functioning within the unconscious itself, which inevitably leads us to forget the idea of a homogeneous unconscious. (Gutiérrez Terrazas, 1988, p. 37) [Translated for this edition]

The strata of the unconscious described by Matte Blanco range from indivisibility where everything is equal to everything, where difference
is cancelled out and logic ceases to exist, to the secondary process in which Aristotelic logic prevails. The dual logic which he describes includes the multi-sided nature referred to by Gutiérrez Terrazas.

Returning to Abraham and his original theory of the component-instinct of sadism with two opposing tendencies in action:

One of these tendencies is to destroy the object (or the external world); the other is to control it. I shall later try to show in detail that the tendency to spare the object and to preserve it has grown out of the more primitive, destructive tendency by a process of repression … For the moment we will confine our interest to that sadistic instinct which threatens the existence of its object. And we see that the removal or loss of an object can be regarded by the unconscious either as a sadistic process of destruction or as an anal one of expulsion. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 428)

Again he turns to linguistics: “verlieren” (German) = “to lose” (English) = “amittere” (Latin) = let something go, anality. While “ἀπολλύω” (Greek) = “perdere” (Latin) = “perdre” (French) = “echarse a perder” (Spanish) = to ruin or destroy something. He also uses the example of military reports in which places were “gesäubert” (cleaned) of enemies, the trenches were “aufgeräumt” (cleared out); or, in the French version “nettoyer” (“sauber” = to clean) and “cleaned up” or “mopped up” in the English reports.

With respect to neurotic patients, he observed that conserving tendencies (that spring from anal and sadistic sources) to retain and control combine and reinforce each other. There is also a close alliance between destructive tendencies coming from “tendencies to expel and to destroy the object”. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 429).

He goes on to present a hypothesis supported by a great mass of empirical data: the excessive love for cleaning in obsessive neurotics is considered as a reaction formation against coprophilic tendencies. Subsequently, he refers to a “co-operation of sublimated sadistic instincts” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 430) and contemplates the compulsive love of order as an expression of the patient’s desire to dominate. Both the remission of the obsessive neurotic and the interval of the manic-depressive, “appear as periods in which his anal and sadistic instincts have been successfully sublimated” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 430). That is to say, that they both possess this capacity, but they lose it when there is a threat that their object will be lost. In this case:
If the conserving tendencies—those of retaining and controlling his object—are the more powerful, this conflict around the love-object will call forth phenomena of psychological compulsion. But if the opposing sadistic-anal tendencies are victorious—those which aim at destroying and expelling the object—then the patient will fall into a state of melancholic depression. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 430)

These situations arise due to the changes suffered by the object. Its destruction leads to a state of melancholia, while its retention and the impossible yet always renewed desire to control it leads to obsession. This provides us with the first clear distinction between the two conditions. A little later Abraham adds that at the onset of the illness, the depressive patient completely breaks off all object relations.

After exhausting the economic perspective he moves on to the genetic-structural point of view. He adds that an observation of children confirms that the destructive impulse is “ontogenetically the elder of the two” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 431).

All of this leads to his definition of the two levels included in the anal phase: an earlier level in which hostility is expressed towards the object (inclination to destroy and lose it) and another later stage (to which the obsessive neurotic regresses), in which the conserving tendency prevails (retention and control); passing from one stage to another is fundamental for creating a bond with the object:

There is a decisive change in the attitude of the individual to the external world. Indeed, we may say that this dividing line is where “object-love” in the narrower sense begins, for it is at this point that the tendency to preserve the object begins to predominate. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 432)

The object, the provider of pleasure, precedes the love-object. Structure, internal world, reality principle ... The regression process of the melancholic does not stop at the first level. Abraham points out that:

Once the libido has relinquished its object-relations it seems to glide rapidly downwards from one level to the next ... analysts, of course, would not attempt to make a rigid separation between neurotic and psychotic affections. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 433)
Having begun his paper with the “free interval” he now proceeds to study the prelude to the real melancholic illness, which Freud has called the “loss of object” and the process that is intimately linked with it; the introjection of the lost love-object. Before he begins he highlights the lack of clinical material that has been published to support the theory and the limitations of his contribution. Referring to a patient with mel- ancholic depression who accused herself of stealing, he writes:

> It is only by means of a regular psycho-analysis that we are able to perceive that there is a relationship between object-loss and tendencies … to lose and destroy things; and that the process of introjection has the character of a physical incorporation by way of the mouth. Furthermore, a superficial view of this sort misses the whole of the ambivalence conflict that is inherent in melancholia. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 435)

With respect to normal mourning, he describes a case that confirms that the subject carries out a temporary introjection of the loved-one: “I carry it within myself and can never lose it”. He identifies this process with that occurring in melancholia and declares that he will try to demonstrate later that “melancholia is an archaic form of mourning”. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 437).

He also gives the example of one of Groddeck’s patients whose hair went grey when his father died, absorbing him in himself. Abraham had a similar experience. Upon his last visit to his father he had noticed that his father’s hair had become and long and white. When his father died, Abraham’s hair turned white and a few months later it changed back to its normal colour. While normal mourning seeks to compensate a real loss, of which we are conscious, in the melancholic, introjection arises from the ambivalence from which he can only escape by “turning against himself the hostility he originally felt towards his object”. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 438).

He continues with a case where the patient’s Ego was really submerged by the introjected object: a three-year-old boy lost his paradise (weaning, death of his older sister, abandoned by his wet nurse, change of home …) and turned his libido towards his father. However, the
father began to drink and he transferred his libido back to his mother. When his father died his mother remarried and once again repulsed her son’s love. At the same time feelings of hatred towards the stepfather were aroused. The boy experienced a new wave of homosexual feelings but now he preferred men who resembled his mother. Sometime later his mother died in his arms; feeling elated he returned to his hometown and after the funeral he felt as though he carried his mother with him, always his through a process of incorporation. This process “of introjecting the loved object, began when the patient lost his mother through her second marriage” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 441).

To help us understand this case, he recalls Freud’s statement: “the shadow of the lost love-object falls upon the ego”. In melancholia, the ambivalent conflict is so strong that love is at once threatened by its opposite emotion. “A frustration, a disappointment from the side of the loved object, may at any time let loose a mighty wave of hatred … it will lead to the giving up of the object.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 442).

The process of introjection in melancholia:
two stages of the oral phase of the libido

By way of introducing this section, Abraham uses a clinical case; a young man with romantic problems, “whose identification with his mother became quite evident in his analysis” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 443), turned away from the object, his fiancée. We could infer that this identification with the mother was transferred to a primordial object given the seriousness of the following chain of events: depressive state with delusional ideas (delusion implies persecution; when he lost the object that he had found so threatening he became delusional. Delusion implies a more primal activity than depression).

During the time when his state of depression was worse than usual, he had a compulsion to contract his sphincter ani. This symptom proved to be over-determined … such a retention symbolizes possession, and is its prototype in the unconscious. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 443)

This symptom protected him from both the loss of the object and homosexuality. In paranoia, the recovery of the object “is achieved by projection. In melancholia the mechanism of introjection is adopted, and the results are different” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 443).
A new symptom in the afore-mentioned patient consisted of a compulsive fantasy of eating excrements that he came across as he walked along the street. This is interpreted as a desire to recover the object, which he had expelled in the form of excrement.

In the same way as before, connections are made between melancholia and obsessive neurosis, and now also with paranoia. Therefore, a structural grading of the object is established taking the object as the organising element:

- **Paranoia**: expulsion and delusion.
- **Melancholia**: destruction.
- **Obsessive Neurosis**: control.

Sophisticated methods are used to get rid of the object. The reincorporation (oral) is carried out by more archaic means that are less careful with the object. Abraham’s observations of cases of melancholia showed him how the patient made the love-object a target for certain impulses that correspond to a lower anal-sadistic level:

> Expelling (in an anal sense) and of destroying (murdering). The product of such a murder—the dead body—becomes identified with the product of expulsion with excrement. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 444)

He refers once again to Róheim (on p. 444 of Abraham’s paper echoing a conference given by him in the psychoanalytic congress of 1922; consult G. Róheim 1967), who considers it very likely that in their archaic form, rites of mourning included the eating of the deceased person. He also makes a reference to Doctor Hárnik’s observation of the Egyptian custom of inscribing a prayer on gravestones in which the dead person asks to be spared the punishment of eating excrement.

Another patient’s habit of shining and cleaning mother-of-pearl buttons reveals repressed coprophilic impulses. In another session the same patient told of his fascination for pieces of Johannis bread (which had magical connotation in his culture) displayed in a shop. New associations were formed: from his childhood he remembered a woman (the mother of a playmate) who offered him this bread and who he contrasted with his weakened mother who had already disappointed him. He made a metonymic displacement (the bread for the woman) and a condensation process joined the two women together. Furthermore, the
long shape and brown colour of the bread reminded him of excrements. Once again we see the expression of incorporating a lost love-object. The mother-of-pearl of the buttons took him back to his native town, which he undoubtedly identified with his mother, and where he found shells (universal symbol of the woman) which were covered with earth and looked dirty on one side, but the other side glistened like mother-of-pearl, representing the ambivalence that he felt towards his mother and which were precursors of the buttons (Abraham, 1924i, p. 447).

In order to highlight Abraham’s influence today, we will include the following paragraph, quoting Gómez Pin who describes two conditions of melancholia that are dialectically linked: this pathology constitutes a regression, he says “to the libidinal state characterised by the tendency to incorporate and therefore eliminate the object” (Pin, 1981, p. 85) [translated for this edition]; he also suggests that melancholia arises as a reaction to the loss of an object.

Abraham once again refers to devouring fantasies:

But if we find that the melancholiac is inclined to give up that position in favour of a yet more primitive one, namely, the oral level, then we must suppose that there are also certain fixation points in his libidinal development which date back to the time when his instinctual life was still mainly centred in the oral zone. And psycho-analytic observations bear out this supposition fully. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 447)

He illustrates this statement with some examples of patients who imagine biting or devouring the person who they love or others who reactively or as a self-punishment refuse to eat.

I believe that it would be appropriate here to mention the repetitive childhood dream that an anorexic patient described to me recently. In her dream she went to buy meat and saw her parents displayed for sale on the butcher’s counter ready to be chopped up. This is a very regressive aspect of anorexia with its counterpart, bulimia. Biting and carving (the object is preserved, it can remain whole), have a very different meaning to devouring (the object disappears); there are three moments; devouring, incorporation, destruction.

Returning to Abraham, in a small footnote, he describes how the attempted suicide of one of his patients was really an attack on his introjected love-object together with the impulse to punish himself. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 448).
Let us examine the daydreams of another patient recovering from depression (again this is a moment of remission or an interval period, when the most analysable material emerges); his fixation on the mother’s breast “found expression in ... a great number of symptoms connected with the oral zone, and in a very marked desire to lean his head against something soft like a woman’s breast” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 449).

The original Nirvana can only be restored on a psychological level, never on a biological one. But other content is added to the object which originally gave pleasure (the memory of his brother at the mother’s breast which generated a feeling of intense jealousy), which causes an ambivalence of feelings, hindering a subsequent harmonious development. After confirming that the melancholic is trying to escape from his oral-sadistic impulses, Abraham indicates the existence of an internal differentiation in the oral phase of the libido, in the same way as in the anal-sadistic phase:

On the primary level of that phase the libido of the infant is attached to the act of sucking. This act is one of incorporation, but one which does not put an end to the existence of the object. The child is not yet able to distinguish between its own self and the external object. Ego and object are concepts which are incompatible with that level of development. There is as yet no differentiation made between the sucking child and the suckling breast. Moreover, the child has as yet neither feelings of hatred nor of love. Its mental state is consequently free from all manifestations of ambivalence in this stage.

(Abraham, 1924i, p. 450)

Sucking is exchanged for biting on the secondary level. According to Freud, the autoerotic phase is confused with narcissism. Abraham claims that the object is devoured and destroyed in autoerotism; in narcissism the object (oneself), remains. Given the way narcissism is incorporated into Freudian theory, it is not easy to combine it with autoerotism. In reality, autoerotism is paired with aloerotism, while narcissism is the opposite of objectality. Abraham is undoubtedly referring to secondary narcissism.

A personal communication from van Ophuijsen confirmed him the link between the original form assumed by sadistic impulses (biting), and a regression to the age when teeth are formed. Teeth constitute the first instrument of the child to damage the outside world (when the hands are still learning how to grasp or hold things).
Abraham also mentions the relationship between sadism and the muscular system, which develop simultaneously. Ambivalence may bring about feelings of jealousy. He identifies the beginning of the ambivalence conflict with the oral-sadistic stage, while he regards sucking as pre-ambivalent. Klein refers to an ideal object in the first phase and a persecutory object in the second. Abraham points out that the ambivalence conflict is moderated only gradually and the libido adopts a less violent attitude towards its object.

He goes on to point out the necessity of distinguishing between “two stages within the genital phase of the libido, just as we did within its two pregenital phases … it would seem that the libido passes through six stages of development in all.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 452) Although he does stress that this classification is not necessarily definitive, he uses it to illustrate the gradual process of conquering object-love …

Within the first—the oral—period, the child exchanges its pre-ambivalent libidinal attitude, which is free from conflict [notion addressed by Hartmann, 1952, while Klein never spoke of it], for one which is ambivalent and preponderantly hostile towards its object. Within the second—the analsadistic—period, the transition … means that the individual has begun to spare his object from destruction. Finally, within the third—the genital—period, he overcomes his ambivalent attitude and his libido attains to its full capacity both from a sexual and a social point of view. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 453)

A conflict-free space would be impossible to maintain in the presence of the death drive. In this sense, the very core of narcissism as the precursor of the death drive is also conflictive (see Caparrós, 1998). What can be maintained is a difference in the world of object relations which is based on divalence, starting with monovalence and ending in ambivalence. The overcoming of the latter can never be complete and therefore the optimistic Abraham had to give in to the more pessimistic Freud.

*The psychogenesis of melancholia*

The research was given a new dimension.

The libidinal withdrawal by the melancholic extends to everything that previously interested him/her. Unlike psychotics these patients
feel regret about this process. Abraham defines it as a detachment from
the outside world.

If the object is persecutory, delusion sets in. In the opposite case
depression emerges; one possibility or the other arises depending on
the profound status of the lost object. Abraham suggests the existence
of ambivalence towards the ego which manifests itself in melancholia.
He is decisive in his discovery which was accepted by the master:

The melancholiac has a feeling of superiority, which is observable
even during his free interval ... What makes of a phantasy a delu-
sional idea, and what prevents that delusion from being open to
correction, is the purely narcissistic character of the train of thought.
(Abraham, 1924i, p. 455)

He reproaches clinical psychiatry for characterising the ideas of mel-
ancholia as delusions of inferiority; “in fact those ideas include a great
deal of self-appreciation on the part of the sufferer especially in regard
to the importance and effect of his own thoughts, feelings, and behav-
iour.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 455). He describes how there is a positive and
negative narcissism in melancholia that oppose one another. He also
observes in its prodromes a loss of the object that is not always evident
at first sight and is reflected in an initial traumatic event. There is a
powerful compulsion to repeat.

Abraham defines a series of factors and underlines that the specific
symptoms of melancholic depression only appear when they interact
with one another:

- Constitutional factor (constitutional reinforcement of oral erotism).
- Fixation of the libido on the oral stage (one of the most important
  conditions).
- Severe injury to infantile narcissism (total abandonment, disappoint-
  ment).
- Important disappointment in love before the oedipus wishes have
  been overcome (narcissistic stage has not been overcome. Strong
  incestuous desires).
- Repetition of the primary disappointment (anger is ultimately
directed against one single person—the person who was most loved
in early childhood—).
He continues to refer to relationships with the object, for example the tendency of melancholics to invert the oedipus situation: “the patient’s castration complex was quite predominantly connected with his mother” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 460).

When analysing the self-reproaches of the melancholic he defines two forms of introjection through a patient whose “criticism of himself therefore stood for an unfavourable judgement passed by his introjected mother on his introjected father.” However, not all of the melancholic’s complaints are expressed in an introjected way. There are other means of expression “and he makes use of these in his free intervals as well.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 462).

Abraham points out that Stärcke considered weaning as a primal castration. When the melancholic patient seeks revenge, in his imagination he chooses biting as the means to do so and Abraham remarks that:

He should like once more to lay stress on the ambivalent character of those phantasies. They involve on the one hand a total or partial incorporation of the mother, that is, an act of positive desire; and on the other, her castration or death, that is, a negative desire tending to her destruction. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 463)

H. Kohut, who developed self-psychology in the 1970s, claimed that there are patients who do not suffer from castration anxiety. He maintained that the conflict is always secondary; all patients have a structural deficit; the disturbance is always primarily of the self. From this point of view we should consider which types of introjections are directed towards the self in the case of the manic-depressive and why narcissism emerges during the manic phase.

At the risk of being repetitive, we will refer to the summary that Abraham offers in this section: when the melancholic patient suffers an intolerable disappointment from the object, he/she shows a tendency to expel and destroy it. This is followed by the act of introjecting it and devouring it, a specifically melancholic form of narcissistic identification: “Their sadistic thirst for vengeance now finds its satisfaction in tormenting the ego—an activity which is in part pleasurable” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 464).

The period of self-torment persists until the sadistic urges have been appeased and the risk of destroying the object has been eliminated, then the object can, as it were, come out of its hiding-place in the ego. “The
melancholiac can restore it to its place in the outer world ... during the course of an attack of melancholia the love-object goes through a process of psychological metabolism within the patient.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 464).

The infantile prototype of melancholic depression
In this section, Abraham describes the analysis of a patient’s dream; ambivalent feelings prevented him from carrying out his plans of revenge after feeling rejected by his mother. He concludes that he was incapable of both loving and hating and succumbed to:

... a feeling of hopelessness ... he made repeated attempts to attain a successful object-love; and every failure to do so brought with it a state of mind that was an exact replica of his primal parathymia. It is this state of mind that we call melancholia. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 469)

Another example refers to a brother substituting the father figure in the Oedipus complex of another melancholic patient.

Mania
The research conducted on the manic state gave rise to new advances; the patient in this situation is celebrating a triumph over the object. Up until this point the manic state had been compared to “a state of intoxication, in which all existing inhibitions are swept away.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 470) Intoxication has been a familiar concept in psychiatry since this discipline was separated from the anatomopathological model. It can be seen in Freud’s early writings on the genesis of anxiety. We could remember, for example, that Basedow’s disease (hyperthyroidism), in many cases has symptoms that are very similar to those of anxiety neurosis. In Abraham’s day, these conditions were classed as intoxications. But he immediately highlights a differential aspect:

The child forms its super-ego by introjecting the objects of its libido into its ego, of which they henceforward form an organic part ... in the manic condition the patient is celebrating a triumph over the object he once loved and then gave up and introjected. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 471)
In the manic state the object is almost invisible; it is devoured but does not stay inside. It remains on the borders of the stages in which the introjected objects do not leave their mark.

In the binding analytical model the manic condition is contemplated as a conflict: a grandiose Self that has specular relationships with objects which also become grand. A contrast of this type incurs the risk of a catastrophic outcome with the possible simultaneous destruction of the self and the object. This situation reminds us of the famous biblical phrase when Samson declared: “Let me die with the Philistines”. In the manic patient’s world everything lacks proportion, is excessive and has an unadulterated immense purity and confronts mirror-image replicas that contest the desire to occupy the whole space. The manic patient lives in a world with new objects with no history.

Once the ego is no longer consumed by the introjected object, the individual eagerly directs his libido towards the outside world, a change in attitude that gives rise to many symptoms ...

Based on an increase in the person’s oral desires ... Whereas in his depressive phase he had felt that he was dispossessed and cast out from the world of external objects, in his manic phase he as it were proclaims his power of assimilating all his objects into himself (Abraham, 1924i, p. 472)

Abraham believes that he has enough data to clarify a new aspect in psychoanalysis: the conversion from melancholia to mania ...

Gradually the narcissistic requirements of the ego diminish and larger quantities of libido are set free and can be transferred to external objects. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 474)

Now he has an explanation that is more fitting to this early stage, as it is not a failed repression that leads to mania, as it was formerly believed. On the other hand, mourning is frequently followed by an outbreak of the libido (banquets, libidinal desires ...), which is also observed in primitive mourning rites. Once again, mania can be described based on the relations that a subject has with its objects.

The transition from the manic phase to the depressive phase is more abrupt than the inverse case, where the gradual process can give a misleading feeling of improvement in the analysis; the observation of increasingly less feelings of guilt, a detachment from the external object,
the expulsion of the object ... Giving the super-ego up to the narcissistic outbreak.

Manic elation is understood as being reactive, although Abraham observes some exceptions in infantile traumas. A further differentiation to be found between manic-depressive conditions and obsessive neurosis is that the former are:

... Intermittent and liable to relapses, represent an expulsion of the love-object repeated at certain intervals of time; whereas obsessional states, which have a more chronic character and allow of remissions, correspond to a dominant tendency to keep possession of the object. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 475)

The psychoanalytic therapy of manic-depressive states

With respect to treating melancholia, Abraham proposes the elimination of regressive libidinal impulses and the promotion of a progression of the libido until it reaches the genital stage and object-love, “the touchstone of real mental health” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 477).

Among the changes brought about by the treatment, he identifies the most important as the formation of transitory symptoms, observed with sufficient frequency to rule out the possibility of chance. Although he says that he will address this aspect in more detail in the second part, he observes:

That a psychoneurosis should have ascended from a melancholic to a hysterical level seems to me a significant and noteworthy achievement. And the fact that the patient’s object-love has shown itself more resistant than before to external influences is undoubtedly of the greatest practical consequence. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 479)

This conclusion seems obvious to the extent that it is derived from the implicit nosology on which it is based. The object enabled a panorama to be constructed that associated clinical symptoms that were otherwise unconnected: dementia praecox (withdrawal of object-libido), melancholia (loss), paranoia (projection), obsessive neurosis (control of the object), mania (devouring); also the transition between mourning and melancholia and from depression to mania (or vice versa).

Using the object as a reference, the cases being treated improved as the destinations of the objects underwent certain changes. At the same
time, this presentation of clinical pictures, which is so different to that corresponding to psychiatry, allows us to play in a surprising way. This constitutes analysing libidinal destination: retraction vs. expansion. Schizophrenia is the true opposite of mania and not melancholia as classically believed. A neurotisation or hysterification in the therapeutic treatment of the melancholic patient with transitory symptoms constitutes a positive step forward.

*Origins and growth of object-love*

This is the title of the second part of this paper, which addresses the ontogenesis of object relations. The clinical observations give way to a metapsychological study. Abraham points out that until this point he has only contemplated the theory of the pregenital stages which does not cover the whole field of facts.

We have seen that there are two different pleasurable tendencies in the anal-sadistic phase: A more primitive tendency to expel and destroy the object and a subsequent tendency to regain and control it. The libido of the melancholic patient regresses to the cannibalistic phase, in which his instinctual aim is to incorporate the object in himself, which he unconsciously identifies with his faeces (Abraham, 1924i, p. 481). The conflict becomes stronger until a tendency arises to regress to an even earlier stage “whose sexual aim is that of sucking. This stage we have considered as pre-ambivalent” [divalent in Bleger and in the binding analytical model, Caparrós]. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 481).

Finally in the genital phase he observes a similar differentiation: “It is only the most recent of those two levels that we have been able to regard as free from ambivalence, or post-ambivalent” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 481).

After distinguishing the three phases of libidinal development, Abraham goes on to define three stages in the relationship of the individual to his object. He refers to the phases defined by Freud: the autoerotic phase (no object), the narcissistic phase (the individual is his own object) and the Object-love phase (the object is another). Abraham intends to make new contributions through the study of “the narcissistic neuroses and of certain neuroses belonging to those levels of object-love which are closely related to the narcissistic neuroses in a certain respect.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 482).

He bases his theory on the manic-depressive cases described in the first part of the paper. He refers to a case of a patient with a complex
clinical picture: a pseudologia phantastica since the age of six, with severe kleptomaniac impulses; fits of compulsive weeping triggered by a castration complex and the excellent relationship with her father, which had suffered a sudden check when she was six. After seeing him naked and having sexual intercourse with her mother, she developed a compulsive interest in only one part of him: his penis. The father …

had ceased to exist for her as a whole person; only one part of him had remained … Her kleptomanic impulses were in a great measure derived from her active castration tendency directed against her father … the act of lying made her feel mentally powerful and superior to others. She had no real mental contact whatever with anyone … she had arrived at this position, so far removed from a regular and complete object-love, through a regression from such an object-love. She did nevertheless maintain some kind of relation to her objects, and she clung to them with the utmost tenacity … object as a whole but to bite off and swallow a part of it and then to identify herself with the part. Such a partial incorporation of the object seems to occur in other cases of kleptomania as well. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 484)

“Y” was a patient suffering from severe neurosis with hysterical vomiting and kleptomaniac tendencies which was also determined by her castration complex. She focussed all of her libidinal interest on her father’s penis and had oral-sadistic impulses.

In both of these cases, the mother was also represented by only one part of her body, namely, her breasts. Abraham later identifies this as a partial object. He continues …

X once dreamed as follows: “I was eating away at a piece of meat, tearing it with my teeth. At last I swallowed it. Suddenly I noticed that the piece of meat was the back part of a fur coat belonging to Frau N.” It is not difficult to understand the “back part” as a displacement from before backwards. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 486)

This example illustrates an association between topological images and the body. Displacement backwards was a frequent feature in the fantasies of these two patients who rejected their mothers, comparing them to excrement. There are two problems here: first, a regression, although incomplete, and second, the recovery of a memory in the here and now. In both cases a considerable degree of narcissistic regression is observed, generating a
disjuncture: had the capacity of object-love been imperfectly developed or had it regressed to a stage of imperfect development? In other words, are we talking about regression or a failure to progress? “The libido was in an unmistakable state of ambivalence towards its object and showed a strong tendency to inflict injuries on it” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 486).

We should remember that biting is not the same as devouring. The reality principle prevents the object from being completely destroyed although the partial cannibalistic impulse is very strong. But Abraham does not restrict himself to underlining the significance of castration which, for example, is obvious in the case of the young patient who imagined biting his father’s finger off; this idea was found to have a great number of determinants:

What chiefly interests us here is the ambivalence expressed in the phantasy … we must not see the hostile side of the phantasy only and overlook its friendly tendency … to spare the existence of the object except for one part, and again in his desire to keep that part as his own property for ever. We may thus speak of an impulse of partial incorporation of the object. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 488)

His anthropological knowledge gave him a keen curiosity that led him beyond the obvious. A conclusive statement: “Complete and unrestricted cannibalism is only possible on the basis of unrestricted narcissism” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 485) (that is, primary narcissism). In a footnote, he alludes to the cannibalism of primitive tribes, who discriminate when deciding who eats whom, the selection of the victim has a strict affective determination. Partial cannibalism originates in complete cannibalism although this patient shows signs of preserving the object …

We may also regard such a care, incomplete as it is, as the first beginnings of object-love in a stricter sense, since it implies that the individual has begun to conquer his narcissism. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 488)

Even so, at this level of development, the subject cannot recognise the physical or mental existence of another individual.

At first, Abraham did not give too much importance to the clinical observations of van Ophuijsen (1917) and Stärcke (1919), as he thought that they presented isolated facts that did not fit into the general body of knowledge. But now he finds sense in them within a broader picture where the paranoid patient represents his persecutor by a part of his
body and he believes that he is carrying it inside him and would like to “get rid of that foreign body but cannot.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 489)

Abraham also acknowledges that Ferenczi had recognised the relationship between paranoia and anal erotism. Schreber, analysed by Freud, continues to reconstruct his lost object.

We may now add that in this process of reconstruction the paranoiac incorporates a part of his object. In doing this he undergoes much the same fate as the melancholiac who has introjected the whole of his object … Nor can he, either, escape his ambivalence in this way. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 489)

For a paranoid patient, the object is the equivalent to faeces which he cannot get rid of—the introjected object in melancholia exercises its despotic powers from within.

The melancholiac incorporates his abandoned love-object as a whole whereas the paranoiac only introjects a part of his … we may put forward the view—though with all due hesitation—that in respect of its sexual aim the libido of the paranoiac regresses to the earlier of the two sadistic-anal stages, while in respect of its attitude towards its object it goes back to the stage of partial introjection. Whether that introjection takes place in an oral or an anal way must be left an open question … is total or partial in its extent, and oral or anal in its means. We shall have no certainty on this subject until we know more about the part played by the ego in those two forms of illness. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 490)

The paranoid patient introjects a part of the object, trying to construct beyond it. The melancholic incorporates the object as a whole; depression is related to the whole object and ambivalence.

If we suppose that there is such a stage of partial love … we begin to understand a certain peculiarity of sexual perversions [the choice of the bodily parts of his object that concentrated the interest]. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 490)

At this point, Abraham recalls the paper that he wrote in 1910 on fetishism, explaining the excessive value attached to a part of the object due to a regression of the libido to this supposed stage of partial love.
The libido is still linked to a part of the object but no longer wishes to incorporate it; now it seeks to possess and control it. In this way its existence is recognised and safeguarded.

The peculiar attitude of obsessive neurotics towards possession leads Abraham to assume that there is a connection between that illness and the stage of partial love. In healthy people there are also traces of this partial love; this stage “represents the love-object that is cathected with his ambivalent feelings by a single part of its body, which he has introjected into his own.” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 493).

With regard to hysteria, Abraham refers to Freud’s *Three Essays* in which he indicates that hysterical patients reject normal genital sexual aims in order to consolidate his theory of a stage of object-love that excludes the genitals, in line with what was already accepted in psychoanalysis. In a footnote, he suggests that this stage coincided in time with Freud’s phallic phase in the psychosexual development of the individual. The rejection of the genital area applies to the subject’s own body as well as to that of his object. This situation is responsible to a great extent for impotence in men and frigidity in women.

He proposes a provisional organisation in the form of a table which by no means implies that those stages are only six in number. We cannot reproach him, therefore, if new findings modify this structure, as he was fully aware of its temporary nature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of libidinal organisation</th>
<th>Stages of object-love</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI Final genital stage</td>
<td>Object-love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Earlier genital stage (phallic)</td>
<td>Object-love with exclusion of genitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Later anal-sadistic stage</td>
<td>Partial love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Earlier anal-sadistic stage</td>
<td>Partial love with incorporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Later oral stage (cannibalistic)</td>
<td>Narcissism (total incorporation of object)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Earlier oral stage</td>
<td>Autoerotism (without object)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The separation between neurotic regression and psychotic regression is made between the third and fourth stages. He is aware of what is
Consequently he remarks that he considers the autoerotic stage exempt from drive inhibitions in accordance with the absence of any real object relations and that the first evidence of inhibition is seen in the cannibalistic phase. The overcoming of this stage is associated with the feeling of guilt, which is followed by feelings of pity and disgust arise in the individual and cut off this form of libidinal activity. In the next stage—that of object-love with the exclusion of the genitals—inhibition takes the form of feelings of shame. Finally, in the stage of real object-love we find social feelings of a superior kind regulating the drive life of the individual. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 496)

If we add these aspects to his way of conceiving the principal clinical pictures, his original table would be more complete …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of libidinal organisation</th>
<th>Stages of object-love</th>
<th>Impulse inhibitions</th>
<th>Fixation points of …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI Definitive genital stage</td>
<td>Object-love</td>
<td>Social feelings</td>
<td>“Normality”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Earlier genital stage (phallic)</td>
<td>Object-love with exclusion of genitals (ambivalent)</td>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>Hysteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Later sadistic-anal stage [retentive]</td>
<td>Partial love (ambivalent)</td>
<td>Pity—disgust</td>
<td>Obsessive neurosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Earlier sadistic-anal stage [destructive]</td>
<td>Partial love with incorporation (ambivalent)</td>
<td>Feelings of guilt</td>
<td>Paranoid states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Later oral stage (cannibalistic) [seizure]</td>
<td>Narcissism (total incorporation of object) (ambivalent)</td>
<td>First instinctive inhibition (anxiety)</td>
<td>Melancholia manic-depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Earlier oral stage [object is not destroyed]</td>
<td>Autoerotism (no object) (pre-ambivalent)</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The contemptuous attitude towards parts of the body, which formerly corresponded to the love-object that awakened ambivalence (penis, breasts, excrements ...), arises in the fourth stage once the tendency to incorporate objects has been overcome. In some cases strong regressions have been observed where the sexual aim becomes the eating of faeces, “for in our unconscious we retain our original narcissistic estimation of the value of excrement” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 497).

Abraham returns to his analysis of melancholia and paranoid states, offering an addition of only two points and that with every reserve. He repeatedly insists that he never strayed from his empirical data to give way to speculation. Furthermore, instead of closing the analytical model he highlights the gaps in his material.

Due to a poor capacity to love, the melancholic patient regresses to the cannibalistic phase to incorporate the object; the regression stops earlier in conditions of paranoia. Abraham underlines the simplicity of the development process proposed, following the same lines as organic growth “what was at first a part grows into a whole, and what was at first a whole shrinks to a part and finally loses all value or continues its existence as a mere rudiment” (Abraham, 1924i, p. 498).

His medical training enabled him to establish relationships with embryonic development:

For a time there exists an open connection between the intestinal canal (rectum) and the caudal part of the neural canal (canalis neurentericus). The path along which stimuli may be transmitted from the intestinal canal to the nervous system might thus be said to be marked out organically. (Abraham, 1924i, p. 500)

For a long time, parallelisms with biological processes had been sought in psychoanalysis to support the explanation of the development of object-love in the individual. Based on the new neurological findings, Abraham once again sought to find this parallelism.

The biological prototype is clearest in the child’s oral-sadistic (cannibalistic) and anal-sadistic phases. He quotes a passage from Freud’s *History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1918), in which he contemplates the anal organisation as a continuation of oral development.
CHAPTER NINETEEN

Character-formation on the genital level of the libido

These studies are included in Selected Papers (pp. 370–417). The French edition by Payot is the only one that includes the three texts exactly as they were published “Psychoanalytische Studien zur Charakterbildung”, in the Internationale Psychoanalytische Bibliothek, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag (Vienna-Leipzig-Zurich, 1925). The first part includes an article published in 1921 which, in the English version (Karnac, pp. 370–392) and Spanish version (Hormé, pp. 52–81) are printed independently; the second part constitutes a conference given in Salzburg in April 1924 and corresponds to Chapter Twenty-four of the English edition (pp. 393–406) and point 3 of the Spanish version (pp. 82–99). Finally, the third part on the genital stage is another paper first read at a conference in 1924, in the English version it is Chapter Twenty-five, and in the Spanish version Chapter Four (pp. 100–114).

Although they were written at different times, the three papers that we will analyse in this section form a unit that cover the oral, anal, and genital stages. Abraham illustrated each stage with a wealth of clinical material. According to Dieter Wyss:

the essential element in Abraham’s work (with respect to this subject) resides in his clearly presented theory of how certain
character traits are developed in successive stages and are based on each other. In this assessment, the character trait is not differentiated from the symptom and it also emerges as a compromise between wish and reality. A man’s character, understood in general terms, would be the sum of his symptoms. (Wyss, 1961, p. 139) [Translated for this edition]

**Contributions to the theory of the anal character**

*(1921a, pp. 370–392)*

This is the earliest stage of the libido organisation and was described by Freud as the pregenital stage. Abraham, who also acknowledged the contributions of Ferenczi and Jones, was certain that this theory could only be constructed through their joint collaboration: For the work of a single person cannot do justice to the multiplicity and complexity of the phenomena. At first he credited Adler for establishing the relationship between ambition and urethral erotism, although he rectified this after receiving a letter from Freud dated 31 July 1924 in which the master claimed that “that was my discovery”. From Freud, he draws three particularly pronounced character traits in the anal character: a love of orderliness, parsimony and obstinacy. Sadger (quoted by Abraham, 1921a, p. 372) adds that these people are usually convinced that they can do everything better than anybody else. Jones (1923, quoted by Abraham, 1921a, p. 372) identifies two different actions in the child’s personal hygiene education with regard to its drives: the child should renounce its coprophilia and its pleasure in the process of excretion.

Abraham continues by describing the difficulty that adults have in understanding the sources of infantile pleasure; the child enjoys …

the stream of warm urine on the skin and contact with the warm mass of faeces produce pleasurable feelings. The child only begins to give signs of discomfort when the excreted products grow cold against its body. It is the same pleasure which the child seeks when it handles its faeces at a somewhat later period. (Abraham, 1921a, p. 372)

He also insists on the need to differentiate the act of excretion from the pleasure obtained from the products of this process and the mental
gratification based on the achievement of this act. The child’s education in hygiene habits “exposes the child’s narcissism to a first severe test” (Abraham, 1921a, p. 373). However, the majority of children are compensated for this primary injury to narcissism by the gratifying feeling of being good in their parents’ eyes.

After recounting the case of a patient, he warns of the possible effect of demanding the child to acquire cleanliness too soon. The child is ready when it begins to ...

Transfer on to objects (its mother, etc.) the feelings which are originally bound narcissistically. Once the child has acquired this capacity it will become cleanly for the sake of this person. If cleanliness is demanded too soon, it will acquire the habit through fear. Its inner resistance will remain and its libido will continue in a tenacious narcissistic fixation, and a permanent disturbance of the capacity to love will result. (Abraham, 1921a, p. 374)

The infantile megalomania with respect to faeces can be traced back to certain cultural peculiarities. The term “throne” which is used colloquially for toilet has its equivalent in other languages: “trono” in Spanish, “thon” in German and “trône” in French. However, it is the Spanish language to which Abraham refers when he uses the expression “regir el vientre” (to rule the belly) to indicate the pride taken by the person in the functioning of his bowels. If this control can be regarded as a sign of power, constipation, or an inhibition of the bowel function can be regarded as though it were a genital impotence. (Abraham, 1921a, p. 375)

Here we will refer to the letter that Freud wrote to Fliess in 1897 (22 December):

An old fantasy of mine, which I would like to recommend to your linguistic sagacity, deals with the derivation of our verbs from such originally coproerotic terms. I can scarcely detail for you all the things that resolve themselves into … excrement for me (a new Midas!). It fits in completely with the theory of verbal stinking. Above all, money itself. I believe this proceeds via the word dirty for miserly. (Freud, 22 December 1897)

He was clearly referring to the anal phase of libidinal development. What Freud discovered as obsessive neurosis was later described as pertaining to the primary process.
The ritual of one of Abraham’s obsessive patients not only testifies the obsession for order in its inventor, but also to his love of power, which is of sadistic origin. (Abraham, 1921a, p. 377) He also describes other peculiarities of this type of neurotic patient: those children who rebel equally against the “shall” (being told to empty their bowels) as against the “must” (a child’s expression for the need to defecate) … “show the self-will we have described in the matter of giving” (Abraham, 1921a, p. 377)—although they can give generous gifts of their own free choice—in other words they try to preserve their right of decision. In social life they constitute the main body of malcontents.

People with an obsessional character reduce their activity which affects the whole of their behaviour, leading them to a state of isolation; the genital sexuality in healthy adults leads to a positive feeling-attitude towards the love-object which reinforces social adaptation.

Emilio Rodrigué comments:

Reich followed in the footsteps of Abraham, who, in 1921 had published his Contributions to the Theory of the Anal Character. Abraham constructed a characterological typology of libidinal development, talking of an oral ego, an anal ego and a genital ego. But for Abraham this character constituted a transitory resistance in the course of libidinal development, while Reich saw it as a structured function of the ego, the dissolution of which formed the central goal of all analysis. (Rodrigué, 1996, T. II, p. 382) [Translated for this edition]

Karl Abraham held a more dialectic view of the problem. Reich’s characterological armour alludes to something which, as its name suggests is given and static. Abraham, on the other hand underlined the evolutive-resistant quality of the character, indicating that all structures constitute a base or possible starting point and at the same time a resistance to a subsequent regression. If we consider the concept of structure, we must remember that its very existence implies a resistance to its destruction, and therefore, the character as a structure or any other psychic formation that deserves this title, is at the same time a space of both psychic production and resistance.

Returning to Contributions to the Theory of the Anal Character we can find another paragraph referring to the reaction-formation of these patients:

Gentleness which is frequently observed in such people must not be confused with a real transference-love. Those cases in which
object-love and genital libido-organization have been attained to a fair extent are more favourable. If the character-trait of over-kindness mentioned above is combined with a partial object-love of this kind, a socially useful “variety” is produced, which in essential respects is, nevertheless, inferior to full object-love. (Abraham, 1921a, p. 380)

He also observes two opposing attitudes in these patients; they interrupt everything that they start or are not able to stop what they have started, which is what occurred to one of his patients with respect to his intellectual activity:

Instead of thinking about the success of his work, he used to ponder over the question of what would happen to his curses—whether they reached God or the devil, and what was the fate of sound-waves in general—. His intellectual activity was thus replaced by neurotic brooding. It appeared from his associations that the brooding question about the place where noise finally got to referred also to smell, and was in the last instance of anal erotic origin (flatus). (Abraham, 1921a, p. 382)

In marked cases of anal character-formation, relationships “are brought into the category of having (holding fast) and giving, i.e. of proprietorship … But we will only make a passing reference to the sadistic and anal roots of envy.” (Abraham, 1921a, p. 382).

Erotism implies a relationship to otherness where the other initiates the excitation, but in anal erotism the other is the self; as expressed by Gómez Pin:

The issue of excrement is constitutive; excrement is perceived, therefore, it is an object that is consequently lost. Excrement is, however, the object that has been seen to emerge from within the Self and with it the paradigm of the correlative utopia of one’s desire: possessing … what essentially has been lost. (Pin, 1981, p. 119) [Translated for this edition]

He also makes an observation regarding the occasional displacement of avarice to time, or the pleasure produced from contemplating material possessions or intellectual creations, linked to the satisfaction of looking at one’s own faeces. (Abraham, 1921a, p. 385)
The behaviour of patients with respect to orderliness and cleanliness is as contradictory as it is in spending money. Abraham outlines the different forms that obsessive neurosis may take: a more developed form in which patients refuse to take initiatives expecting others to provide everything (in some way they access object-love) and the anal type of obsessive neurosis in which patients believe that they are unique and nobody else could carry out their activities; they feel a compulsive, sadistic-type need for orderliness and reserve the right to decide how to give things (faeces in childhood), administering them in a way to ensure the dependency of those to whom they are giving them.

He mentions other cases where sadism cooperates with anal motivations or manifestations of unsublimated anal eroticism, such as the tendency to forget debts “there is no doubt that the displacement of libido from the genital to the anal zone is the prototype of all these reversals” (Abraham, 1921a, p. 390).

We can read in Dieter Wyss (1961, p. 256), how Harald Schultz-Hencke (1940, book dedicated to work with psychosis and psychosomatic medicine) includes in the fundamental incentives of the human being, the anal-retentive impulse which “essentially correspond to the studies carried out by Abraham and Freud on the relationship existing between the phase of the child’s personal hygiene education and the tendency in small children to retain their excrement, not wanting to give it up.” (Wyss, 1961, p. 256) [Translated for this edition]. Schultz-Hencke, who Wyss describes as being more scientific and systematic than Karen Horney (“His profound psychology could very well be considered as constituting the best empirical grounds within the neo-analytical field.” Wyss, 1961, p. 478), also underlines the aggressive character that excrements can take in his observations of psychosomatic illnesses of the gastrointestinal tract, or the impotence derived from anal-retentive conduct. “Schultz-Hencke’s impulse theory is completely and extensively oriented by Abraham’s studies.” (Wyss, 1961, p. 479). We can identify the points that these two men had in common as the priority that they gave to clinical work and the similar type of conditions that they treated (psychosis, obsessive neurosis …).

E. Rodrigué (1996, T. I, p. 499) highlights the relationship between the anal character and obsessive neurosis in Freud’s The Rat Man: an educated twenty-three year old lawyer with a range of symptoms …
Freud contemplated his anal tendencies, although he had still not made the essential connection between anal tendencies and obsessive neurosis. The notes that Freud wrote on the case addressing homosexuality and castration were not read by Abraham as they were published in 1955. (Rodrigué, 1996, T. I, p. 499) [Translated for this edition]

The existence of the article written by Abraham on obsessive rituals and anal character and erotism (1912c, p. 157) refutes E. Rodrigué’s comment: “The role of regression related to the sadistic-anal state was first given importance in 1913 (Freud: The Predisposition to Obsessive Neurosis) when the active-passive polarity in pregenital object relations of the libido was discussed.” (Rodrigué, 1996, T. I, p. 500) [Translated for this edition]. Abraham got there first.

*The influence of oral erotism on character formation*

(1924c, pp. 393–406)

After reminding us of the usual view that character formation is attributed to both an inherited disposition and environmental effects, Abraham goes on to describe how early oral and anal erotism conditions social and sexual relationships.

If our observations are correct, then we can speak of oral, anal, and genital sources of character-formation; in doing so, however, we quite consciously neglect one aspect of the problem, since we are only taking into consideration those contributions to the formation of character which are derived from the erotogenic zones, and not those coming from the component-instincts. This neglect is, however, more apparent than real. (Abraham, 1924c, p. 394)

He uses the bond between cruelty and oral erotism as an example. Abraham reports that he has gone into greater depth with regard to anal character traits than oral traits and has studied the erogenous zones more than the component-instincts of this erotic form. Unlike anal pleasure, oral pleasure is easier to experience in adult life, which is why oral elements do not need to be changed or sublimated in the same way as anal ones. Oral and anal characteristics are merged in the following lines:

If we proceed to study these mixed products of two different sources of character-formation more deeply we make a new
discovery, namely, that the origin of the anal character is very closely connected with the history of oral erotism, and cannot be completely understood without reference to it. (Abraham, 1924c, p. 395)

When the child gives up the pleasure of sucking it exchanges it for the discovery of the pleasure that can be obtained through exploring the environment with its new instruments (teeth), contributing to identity formation through aggression, a process on which it focusses all of its attention.

After describing the conflicts of the genesis (dynamic perspective) he then examines pleasure from the economic perspective. During the teething phase,

... Begins to have ambivalent relations to external objects. It is to be noted that the friendly as well as the hostile aspect of its attitude is connected with pleasure ... Whereas to begin with, pleasure was only associated with taking in something coming from without or with expelling bodily contents, now there is added the pleasure in retaining bodily contents, which leads to pleasure in all forms of property. The relation in which these three sources of physical and mental gratification stand to one another is of the greatest practical significance for the later social conduct of the individual. (Abraham, 1924c, p. 396)

There is an interplay of spaces which incorporates topology. As we can see in the above-quoted paragraph, Abraham investigated the structure, the whole. When he classified certain aspects based on clinical cases or on his observations of the development of the infant, they were always subsequently integrated into a global perspective that went beyond his starting point. The pleasure of obtaining, of possessing, of giving, together they consolidate the foundation that will enable ambivalence to be overcome.

He deduced that any quantitative variation in the degree of normal pleasure can generate disorders. Points of fixation arise through either an excess, or a lack of pleasure in the earliest period of life. The result is the same ...

It takes leave of the sucking stage under difficulties. [Few authors contemplate the problem of excess pleasure; maximum
preoccupation leads to frustration. [Since its need for pleasure has either not been sufficiently gratified or has become too insistent, it fastens with particular intensity on the possibilities of pleasure to be got from the next stage. In doing this it finds itself in constant danger of a new disappointment, to which it will react more readily than the normal child with a regression to the earlier stage. (Abraham, 1924c, p. 397)]

The binding analytical model (Caparrós) insists on the same aspect. We find that fixation, and therefore regression to points of fixation, is an infantile response to the historical characteristics of the object, which either overindulged or disappointed the child. The child escapes the danger (Scylla), and is threatened by another (Charybdis). “The pleasure in acquiring desired objects seems in this case to have been repressed in favour of pleasure in holding fast to existing possessions.” (Abraham, 1924c, p. 399).

Conflicts during the breastfeeding period give rise to individuals who are always asking for something, either making requests or demanding aggressively. When the character is under the oral influence we find “persons in whom the sucking was undisturbed and highly pleasurable … They face life with an imperturbable optimism” (Abraham, 1924c, p. 399).

However, this optimism in some cases goes hand in hand with a passiveness or indifference towards the world. This aspect contrasts with the pessimism which defines the anal character, although for Abraham these cases do not have a direct anal origin, but are derived from a “disappointment of oral desires” in the early years. (Abraham, 1924c, p. 400)

Verbosity can also be explained by a peculiar displacement in the oral sphere:

Their longing to experience gratification by way of sucking has changed to a need to give by way of the mouth … besides a permanent longing to obtain everything, a constant need to communicate themselves orally to other people … these people could not control their other activities any more than they could their speech. (Abraham, 1924c, p. 401)

As a characteristic of the oral-sadistic stage, speaking also takes the place of repressed impulses from another quarter (hostile). The compulsive
need to speak signifies desiring and attacking ... every kind of bodily evacuation, including the act of fertilisation.

However, with respect to the oral character, it is important to differentiate whether its origin arose in the earlier or later stage (here Abraham quotes a paper by Glover—1924—in which he gives these difference particular relevance), whether it expresses an unconscious tendency to suck or bite—the latter is where we find the clearest expressions of ambivalence. In any event, the desires that are derived from this oral stage are still free from the tendency to destroy the object, a characteristic of the next stage. Abraham continued to advance, and in the year of his death he addressed the genital phase of the libido.

He matches the different characters to the libidinal states in which they were formed: those who have been gratified in the earliest stage are bright and sociable, those who are fixed in the sadistic-oral stage are hostile and malicious, while reticence and moroseness characterise the anal character.

**Character-formation on the genital level of development**  
*(1925a, pp. 407–417)*

At the beginning of life, children react instinctively to the outside world. The oral and anal states which define the most archaic features of the individual are overcome in a short space of time and egoistic impulses and narcissism are only conquered gradually: “takes the step towards object-love. And, as we know, attainment of this stage of development coincides with ... the highest level of libidinal organization—the genital level” (Abraham, 1925a, p. 408).

The most important step in overcoming the original narcissism and the hostile tendencies towards the object is taken when the child has been able to subdue his Oedipus complex with all its constituents. The mother’s body arouses sensations that are transformed over time. First ambivalent feelings arise; curiosity and fear combined ...

But gradually he achieves a libidinal investment of his love-object as a whole, that is, with the inclusion of those parts of it which had formerly aroused those contrary feelings in him. If this has been achieved there arise in him expressions of his libidinal relation to his object that are inhibited in their aim—feelings of fondness,
devotion, and so on—and these co-exist with his directly erotic desires for it. (Abraham, 1925a, p. 409)

If development continues normally, the feelings that the child has towards the mother become carried over to his father, and subsequently to the community at large “he no longer has an ambivalent attitude towards the genital organ of his heterosexual object, but recognizes it as a part of that object whom he loves as an entire person.” (Abraham, 1925a, p. 410).

Finally, the interests of the individual and those of the community no longer oppose one another. The character cannot fit rigidly into a normal model, or remain fixed at a specific point ... when they change their love-object it can happen that they change their character accordingly; in the same way that a regressive change of character may occur. Variations in the character of a group of people may also be observed over time. At the end of the paper Abraham also points out the influence of the processes of evolution and involution to which the child is subject after infancy.

As usual, Abraham gives us a clinical example: a patient who had conducted himself in a polite and friendly manner became suspicious and irritable.

In terms of development, the pathology extends to every intricate corner of the human being and requires us to analyse all of the stages in the subject’s development. The final stage borrows from the preceding stages everything that leads ...

... to a favourable relation between the individual and his objects. From the early oral stage it takes over enterprise and energy; from the anal stage, endurance, perseverance ... from sadistic sources, the necessary power to carry on the struggle for existence. (Abraham, 1925a, p. 415)

One aspect to which we will give particular importance, and which is often disregarded with respect to other issues of sexuality but which Abraham does take into account, refers to “the aggressive impulses necessary for the maintenance of his life. And a considerable portion of his sadistic instincts is employed no longer for destructive but for constructive purposes” (Abraham, 1925a, p. 415).
Narcissism is also a controlling force:

No developmental stage, each of which has an organic basis of its own, is ever entirely surmounted or completely obliterated ... each new product of development possesses characteristics derived from its earlier history. (Abraham, 1925a, p. 416).

We could say that character is a consequence of the changes experienced in the object relations of a person. Abraham believed that different types of relationships coexist with the object in each person; some individuals fail in achieving a “full” object-love, others permanently and excessively display only one type of relationship. Object relations theory, which had still not been conceived as such, was already there.
CHAPTER TWENTY

Final papers

After addressing the papers that are largely based on the content alluded to in the title of this book, we will now contemplate Abraham’s final contributions, some of which were published posthumously. Different infantile theories regarding conception complement aspects already addressed.

A short article written in 1925 (An Infantile Sexual Theory not Hitherto Noted. 1925e, pp. 334–337), describes how the intense homosexual fantasies of a patient interfered with his capacity to love. The mature men who he fantasised about passively represented his father, while he identified himself with his mother. His active fantasies were about men who were younger than himself, representing his younger brothers, and of whom he had been jealous when he saw them at his mother’s breast. He gave the nursing mother an active role and the act of breastfeeding caused him sexual excitement. He ends by highlighting that in the sexual fantasies of the child, we should take into account that the male sex is superior as regards the genital organ and the female as regards the breast.

These considerations complemented an aspect of the theory which Freud found extremely dark and about which he was eager to learn. Abraham continued to defend the vagina as the leading erotic zone with
respect to the clitoris, which was inversed in puberty (from the clitoris to the vagina). He supported this theory on the existence of pleasurable vaginal sensations that originate in anal sphincter contractions, the tendency for girls to masturbate by inserting foreign bodies into the vagina and the neurotic symptoms of frigidity and vaginism:

In the light of all my psychoanalytic experience, I cannot believe that frigidity is merely based on the failure to appear of the transition of the libido from the clitoris to the vagina. There must be a prohibition that has an immediate local basis; this is even more valid for vaginisms. Why should the vagina react so negatively to the first attempt at coitus unless something positive has preceded this? (Letter to Freud, 26 December 1924)

Using this material as a base, he wrote a paper for a gynaecological conference: *Psycho-analysis and Gynaecology* (1925f, pp. 91–97), which he presented on 13 March 1925 to the Berlin Medical Society. It was an important step as it was the first medical society in the city to dedicate a space to psychoanalysis. He highlights an essential factor in female neuroses: “the patient’s attitude towards the fact of her own femininity” (Abraham, 1925f, p. 92). The former castration fantasies persist in the unconscious; everything is more complicated for the woman who during her adolescence is subject to a …

Greater measure of instinctual repression ... In early infancy autoerotic genital stimulation is exclusively centred in one part of the external genitalia, namely the clitoris. Later, however, in sexual activity with men the main centre of excitation should be the vagina. Normally this change-over takes place successfully, but in neurotics it generally fails to occur. (Abraham, 1925f, p. 93)

Many more conferences followed: three in Berlin on *The Crime*, another in the Medical Society of The Hague on *The Hysterical Symptom*, two in Leiden for psychiatrists on *The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Schizophrenic States*. The last year of his life was a whirlwind of activity.

*The History of an Impostor* [Hochstapler in the original, chevalier d’industrie in the French edition] in *the Light of Psychoanalytical Knowledge* (1923n, pp. 291–305) was published in *Imago* on 25 December 1925, the day of Abraham’s death. This was the last paper that he sent to
print himself. It is a curious yet exhaustive document. It was based on a psychiatric report that Abraham was required to write during his time as a military doctor (1918). We will analyse the case due to the peculiar object relations therein. The patient was conscripted into the army to do his military service after having serving a number of prison sentences imposed by the tribunal courts of several countries. He systematically repeated the characteristic behaviour of becoming very popular and gaining the trust of everyone in his environment (people of any age, status, or sex), and subsequently began to abuse this trust. He had the appearance of a man with means and ingeniously gained favour with the most influential families in the different places where he carried out his criminal activities. Abraham is surprised that he did not use his skill to evade being caught; this clumsiness was not present when he was behind bars, and he was able to escape by winning over the guards and never had to use violence.

Although at first Abraham visited him in prison, he soon realised that this case required more attention and he was transferred to the hospital by his special guard (three people who were not permitted to hold any conversations with him). He discovered that N’s crimes began at a very early age: He was the youngest child of a very humble and large family of civil servants. He had always revealed a desire for aggrandisement; when he was five he turned his back on poorly dressed children and when he was six he procured a marvellous pencil-box by posing as the son of a general. At school he only obtained good results if he received special attention and failed at secondary school due to a lack of perseverance. He constantly ran away from the reformatory due to imagined or real slights against him. At the age of nineteen he went to Berlin and his artistic talent gained him access to the higher social circles.

In the report, Abraham classified N’s condition as chronic and irreversible based on general psychiatric experience. Months after his conviction, the war ended and Abraham heard nothing more of him until a civil court asked him to write a new report, five years later, for crimes that were identical to the previous ones, but committed before the spring of 1919. N said that throughout the last four years he had been settled and industrious. A complete modification had taken place which was confirmed by irrefutable evidence. N had got married and was living a life of a middle-class family man, who was loved and respected without “dazzling” people as he had done before.
What had led to this change? Abraham notes: “The solution of the enigma is to be found in the realm of psychology” (Abraham, 1923n, p. 298). He detected a change in the patient’s attitude towards him: in 1918 he was defiant and rebellious, whereas in 1923 he opened up to him as he felt he was now on the same social level. Therefore, he was able to obtain new biographical information: when he was born his siblings were much older than him and he often heard his mother saying how unwelcome he had been …

Whilst the older siblings were already out at work, N was one more mouth to feed … a burden on the family budget. At any rate he felt himself unloved by both his parents and by all his siblings. (Abraham, 1923n, p. 299)

The conclusion is clear. In these circumstances he was not able to develop full object-love and his first attempts to invest his libido failed. Therefore, there was an inevitable regression to narcissism together with a “marked tendency to hate the objects”. (Abraham, 1923n, p. 299).

This explains his need to disappoint the ones who come to love him, he needs to prove himself worthy of their love to later prove that he is not worthy of it in line with the bi-phasic actions of obsessional neurotics.

But a great change took place: he met a widow with grown up children who found him a job in which he was able to develop his artistic talent. Socially accepted and well paid in his work, the relationship consolidated and they got married. He was promoted to a higher position in the company. Previous moments of prosperity only gained him a temporary gratification of his narcissism, with cycles of success, guilt, and self-punishment; now it was different.

Abraham had tried to explain the persistence of the libido in the state of narcissism through a process of regression, linked to the profound disappointments in his early childhood. Hinshelwood (1989, p. 366) believes that Abraham’s death represented a loss for object relations theorising with respect to the period of primary narcissism. He says that there is still no agreement today. During this phase Abraham described an incorporation and expulsion of objects or fragments of objects.

Abraham’s work, in a rather sketchy way, suggested that the infant does relate to objects at this primary stage but they are very odd
sorts of objects, which he called partial, or part-objects; and he was at pains to describe the development at a later stage of true object-love. This distinction was of great importance in Klein’s development of the idea of the depressive position. (Hinshelwood, 1989, p. 212)

Although Abraham gives special attention to pregenitality he does not forget the role of the paternal function:

N was unable to exalt his father into an ideal figure. On the contrary, we saw how from an early age the wish for another father dominated him … Nor could he identify himself with his siblings in the Oedipal struggle against the father. (Abraham, 1923n, p. 301)

His parents, together with his siblings, constituted the enemy, preventing the normal development of the Oedipus complex from taking place. Abraham includes a footnote to clarify aspects of the Oedipus complex, a source of pleasure, both …

in reality and in phantasy. If, however, the child is allowed a certain limited amount of pleasure, he gradually learns to renounce the greatest and most important of such wishes … This seems to be, for the child, an indispensable aid to the successful overcoming of ambivalence towards the parents … If the child is entirely denied all such pleasure, then a favourable sublimation of the Oedipus complex fail to take place, and all libido flows back into the ego. (Abraham, 1923n, p. 301)

When a woman satisfied his desire for maternal care, showing him signs of love to which there are no obstacles (he is the favourite and the woman’s sons do not object), and providing him with financial and social promotion, his infantile desires were fulfilled.

I do not of course mean that a complete object-love, a successful overcoming of his narcissism, had been achieved, but that he had progressed, though to what extent could not be precisely determined, from the narcissistic fixation of his libido, in the direction of object-love (Abraham, 1923n, p. 302)
Abraham leaves open the question to whether this new situation can be considered to be stable. Whether this change is structural or not depends on two factors:

a. The profound function that the widow was carrying out. Although she was his wife in appearance she played a maternal role.

b. This maternal function is a necessary condition but not sufficient. An internalisation process should also take place.

If only the first of the two conditions is true we would find a situation of what Helen Deutsch (1970) termed “As if personalities”.

Abraham made an observation that was paramount for the understanding of possible structural changes which were profound in this case: the displacement of part of the narcissistic libido to the object-libido, or, the redistribution of libidinal investments.

But there is still more, although this reflection is not immediately visible from reading the text: if the wife is a maternal imago that acts as a corrector of archaic experiences, some introjects of this relationship are transferred directly to the self, and therefore, we are not referring only to the introjection of gratifying objects in his internal world, but also to a reduction of the persecutory component formed by an excessively narcissistic libido.

This type of reflection enables us to make decisions with respect to treatment. The factor of chance also plays a significant part. Abraham concludes that the lack of love provides the pre-condition for the “establishment of dis-social traits. An excess of hatred and fury is generated which, first directed against a small circle of persons, is later directed against society as a whole” (Abraham, 1923n, p. 304).

It is appropriate to mention here that this idea is based precisely on the most modern psychoanalytic research on the “anti-social personality”. We can extract Abraham’s final contributions from a handwritten text on Coué’s method (Abraham, 1925j, pp. 306–327); his formula for self-mastery: “Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better”. It must be recited three times each day, twenty times on each occasion: “The patient should try to imagine himself near Coué when reciting the formula. The fact that the sufferer identifies himself with the leader here again becomes obvious” (Abraham, 1925j, p. 320).
There is a second formula for occasional complaints, such as pain: “It will be over soon, it will be over soon.” Abraham finds equivalents in different cultures:

Is a modern version of the rosary of the Catholic Church. We know that such devices result in prayer becoming merely an automatic formula. Similar rituals can be found in the most diverse peoples. (Abraham, 1925j, p. 320)

Repetition facilitates access to the unconscious. He refers to catatonic states as a far-reaching regression of the libido to the earliest stages of development in which verbigeration can be observed. He also alludes to obsessional neurotics who express drives and impulses; a wish for pleasure and the need for punishment appear simultaneously.

He gives the example of a patient who before beginning his analysis had used Coué’s formula as a child, clinging to his mother and endlessly repeating “Forgive me, mother!“:

This behaviour did in fact express his contrition, but it also expressed far more strongly two other tendencies. In the first place, he continued in this way to torment his mother, whilst asking her forgiveness … instead of trying to reform himself, he always preferred to repeat his faults and to obtain forgiveness for them. This was also a disturbing factor during his psycho-analytical treatment … the rapid rattling-off of the formula of atonement had been devised in imitation of the rhythm of his masturbation. Thus the forbidden sexual wish contrived to break through in this concealed form. (Abraham, 1925j, p. 324)

Adopting behaviour reminiscent of obsessional neurotics, the patient exchanged his previous illness for a mild form of obsessive neurosis. Abraham explains that the method has a therapeutic effect as it is bound to a regression. He reflects on the use of a piece of string; its manipulation can be seen as a “reappearance of the forbidden manipulations … Thus forbidden sexual wishes, punishment, the striving for reforma- tion, and consolation all unite in this one formula.” For Abraham, from a psychological perspective, it is clear that the Coué method is “the direct antithesis of psychoanalysis”. (Abraham, 1925j, p. 326)
PART IV

ABRAHAM, THE OBJECT,
AND PSYCHOANALYSIS
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The object as a key concept

As Laplanche rightly points out in his *Vocabulary of Psychoanalysis*, the concept of object has many connotations which often give rise to misunderstandings. From a philosophical point of view, the object belongs to exteriority. Almost all of the different philosophical schools of thought consider that the object pertains to facts of consciousness. From this perspective, the object is the opposite of the subject and the knowing subject. How can consciousness understand the object? Is the object understandable? Or is the object a “sui generis” product of consciousness?

Philosophical schools have debated this issue and are unable to reach a full agreement. One prominent example is Plato’s definition of objects as the fall or degradation of ideas, as he wrote in his *Allegory of the Cave* or *Timaeus*. According to Aristotle, the object is an entity that possesses attributes; Parmenides had already established the difference between being and becoming, between the essence and the phenomenal discourse to which it belongs. Aristotle made the first formal definition of the object and therefore the subject from which the most fundamental laws of logic, the product of consciousness, emerged.

Another major problem on a philosophical level is the debate regarding the status of the object. Kant described it as an unknowable
noumenon while Mach and Avenarius and later Marx maintained that it is reflected in consciousness. The empirical philosophers have tried every way possible to separate the object from its obvious relationship with the subject. Disciplines far removed from psychology, such as physics, have conducted research in this field.

In psychoanalysis, the object is something different. The contributions made by this science are complementary not alternative to other perspectives. The object is contemplated as the place where drives are discharged or is an element that forcibly imposes limits to the incipient and immense omnipotence. It has always been controversial.

The newborn is “penetrated by” and “penetrates” the maternal figure; in this unison both are modified. The mother and child experience this relationship in different ways. Object and future subject, free of discrimination, establish a specular relationship in which the symbolism of the mother’s universe which is still impossible for the child to metabolise, provides spatiality to the newborn, creating a void where it will situate everything pertaining to itself, the external world and later to the object. This “sui generis” duo is far removed from the subject-object contrast defined by philosophy. Piera Aulagnier (1975) differentiates between autoinformation (from external stimuli and endogenous excitation) and the original aloinformation of a psychism in relation to another, an outline of otherness in the primary representation and finally, verbal communication which provides a vehicle for symbolic forms on the secondary representation level.

The primary identification which occurs in the baby is the first precarious discrimination that it makes and on which subsequent differences will be based. It is worth highlighting the notion of adhesive identification proposed by Esther Bick (1968), and later adopted by Meltzer (1975): before introjections are possible, the baby must develop a space with limits. This aspect was also partly developed by N. Caparrós (2004), when he discussed the split that occurs in the primary narcissism stage followed by rejection. Bick also investigates what this space is able to contain and concludes that it is due to the nipple which, in the act of breastfeeding, gives rise to the presence of a hole, the mouth, into which the nipple is introduced. The hole, whether the mouth, vagina or any other cavity, only exists so that it may be filled. The nipple is the essential external object that renders the cavity practical. It is the first form introjection which is essential for other identifications.
The breast appears as an object that is still not external at a stage when internalisation is not yet possible. Therefore dependence does not exist, the breast forms part of me, it is not only my property. The object is not the object; it represents the most radical disavowal from which those in the future will emanate. (Caparrós, 1999, p. 88)

The baby not only finds the object, it creates it and sees itself in it. The affectionate environment prevents the baby from giving way to impulsive rage generated by frustration and from falling into the chaos of ingesting everything external, incited by the violent voracity that she experiences at the same time. Affection is a filter of excess introjections and projections: Bion’s α element (Alpha element: mental content with a meaning derived from the translation of sensorial information) containing the first anxieties. Through a presence/absence pattern with respect to the object, the infant will conquer the first representations with which it will be able to identify in order to feed the still precarious Self and constitute a unique individual in a world of similar beings. The primary identification is the first being, or the first possible being.

We are gradually beginning to explore secondary identification. This is also a double operation in which symmetrisation (what makes the subject and the other equal) and asymmetrisation (what distinguishes them) processes intervene. According to Jean-Claude Stoloff (1997, p. 82), the specular identificatory process acts on the previously formed base. The analogical non-verbal meanings transmitted between the mother and child play a significant role. Once the infant is immersed in instability and has acquired a capacity to reflect which reaches its full potential through language, she accesses symbolism that goes beyond moving between the two poles in order to enter the universe of rules. The child becomes aware that she belongs to this world yet to be discovered and is a subject and object, a being of reflection and reflexivity. Language provides the distance for the child to be able to think about herself. New inter-related representations are on the horizon, new sources of anxiety. The self becomes the subject of enunciation as a result of the space, contradiction, and temporariness which establish the historical dimension.

The identity of the ego is acquired through the gradual integration of images of the self, which enable the process of separation/
individuation to take place. The constitution of the ego undergoes a series of identifications: with the image of the body, with the sex to which it belongs, with the name it is recognised by and with different aspects that are definitively borrowed from the environment in other group encounters.

The collision between the demands of internal and external realities is the engine that drives the identificatory process. Identifying oneself is a desire of early infancy but it is also proposed by the “other”. Constructing subjectivity is more than maintaining the homeostasis; it is the transfer of pleasure (discharge on the object) to the love for the object. Hereafter the process of subjectivity is a changing and never-ending course between the two extremes; enabling one to discover that love and hate are two unattainable ideals. The ensuing process can be summarised as desire.

Desire is the psychological engine of dynamic processes. Dynamics require economy to continue the perpetuum mobile of psychic activity. Likewise, need is the symptom of all open systems. It is worth considering the fundamental points of this concept; the problem is far from simple. It is paramount to remember the series of conceptual clarifications that have emerged from the notion of the object. It is not by chance that psychoanalysis has been obliged to do this.

On each level of integration, the object has a different “weight”. In order not to expand too much we will focus on the biological, psychological, and social levels.

On the biological level, the object is mostly an external element, necessary to the extent that all biological structures, by definition, are open systems. With a low entropy level from the environment it is maintained with a periodic energy contribution. The gene as a unit of replication which possesses a compulsion to repeat, tries to iterate to infinity its own structure against other similar genes competing with the same objective. The external object is a nutrient “used” so that the replication process may be sustained. Using a metaphor inspired by psychoanalysis, the gene has created mediators so as not to be in direct contact with the outside world, in the same way as the psychic apparatus generates its membranes so as not to expose its delicate interior to the outside. The gene’s mediator is the body of its thousands of different forms, which gives rise to the phenomenology of the species. Each species constitutes a unique way of survival of the gene which sacrifices bodies in order
to survive. In this sense, the movements of cooperation and solidarity are other historical achievements underpinned by an elementary desire to survive which are far from altruistic. In biology, history is the story of evolution; in psychology it is the objective reference transformed into the object reference. Finally, on the social level, history is the memory of the effort of group structures.

On a psychological level, the integration of the external object is ultimately the basis of all occurrences. However, it is the process of internalisation that is decisive in acquiring these psychological valences which bind the individual to psychic laws. Internalisation is the object of the self and therefore, a central part of the subject. Internalisation is an element which integrates the structure of the internal world. It is this decisive part that confers the subject its historical dimension.

Abraham knew how to express this in his article of 1924. It was an analytical study in which, supported by specific clinical material, he reflected on the unique structures that we acquire throughout our development. At first, an external object, for example the mother, earns merits so that due to her attitude towards her baby she remains anchored in a state of ambivalence. The initial condition is external, but the introjective act internalises it and a transmutation occurs whereby the baby that initially has no object, finds itself thrown into a world which, due to circumstances unrelated to it, is ambivalent. It becomes structured as a subject that embodies ambivalence within it. The child is no longer fed in an ambivalent environment, he is ambivalent. The first significant fixations are structuring organisers to which the subject regresses when it experiences loss. The external object, which disappears, is nothing by itself. The meaning has long moved to the interior and is the shadow of the internal object which conceals and overwhelms the external object. All of this drama happens in a specific way in each individual life, at different times and with different and unique intensities and rhythms.

The object defines the construction of the subject; it gives it its uniqueness and historical memory. In fact, desire is an “archaic memory” in metaphorical terms. The desire is not to be human, or too human; it is, on the contrary, the displacements and consequent equivalents through which the desire passes in each unique existence.

Each subject is exactly what it cannot reach. We are who we are because we have lost something, “being whole is not being” writes
Caparrós (1998, p. 83). The subject is the structured whole of the external objects which it introjects, projects and with which its constructs a useless yet fruitful desire. Today the central role of the internalised object is undeniable as all human relationships revolve around it.
Abraham—pioneer of object relations theory

The first basis provided by Freud on which to develop the theory of the object, once he had unintentionally become a psychoanalyst, was the concept of drives. The drive is discharged on the object (external for now). In his metapsychological writings, Freud focussed on the internal world and wished to underline the importance of the impulse and the “randomness” of the place where it is satisfied. A significant shift occurred from the classic conceptions of instinct to the new drive concept. The environment, the external world, is a necessary place yet it runs the risk of accumulating drives. The object or class of objects is never predetermined, static, or specific. It is within this in definition that the richness of psychic life is developed.

With the theory of fantasy, the object was no longer something exterior with which to maintain the classical subject/object relationship. In some way this primary exteriority necessary to “be”, is incorporated, the hallucinatory satisfaction of a desire is related to this. From this moment the status of the object in psychoanalysis assumed original features. “Representation” is also an object. The impulse-satisfaction dialogue in the external object is represented. Representations are more than inert memories; as the child matures its representations give rise to different versions of himself and his environment. This is the internal
object. Trauma causes a real injury (traumatic interference of the object according to Laplanche), which is necessary in the constitution of the human being.

The first love for the object corresponds to the ego (Caparrós, 1999, p. 83.), the narcissism is injured; this is the loss referred to in Freudian thought; the stages of object-loss fulfil this function in Abraham’s theories and later in Klein’s work. According to Freud, the autoerotic phase can be confused with narcissism; Abraham claims that in autoerotism the object is devoured and there is no trace left of it, while in narcissism an object (the self) remains.

Abraham clinically proved the existence of specific fixation points for psychotics in the very early stages of libidinal development. He was not surprised by this result, as narcissism had been postulated as a primary state of the infant and narcissism of the psychotic regression corresponded to a fixation in this period. There were many clues: primary narcissism with no object; dispersion of objects and a return to the object projected in paranoia, objects destroyed in the melancholic loss, etc.

The origins of orality

Karl Abraham gave a new dimension to the mouth as an organ (with its sucking reflex), which represents the boundary between biological and psychic hunger, to which he contributed other fields of knowledge, namely anthropology and linguistics. Many years later, another Abraham—Nicolas—continued this line of research regarding incorporation, the cavity, the void contemplated from negativity, the absence. The list of authors who have analysed this subject (particularly in relation to object relations theory after 1970) would be too long to include here. I will give a couple of examples: Grinberg defined incorporation in 1990 and Greenson wrote: “The original purpose is to get close to an object, to take it in, in order to get satisfaction, to be reunited with it, and then later on to control and master it” (Greenson, 1954, p. 211).

In 1911, Abraham identified the mother as the earliest and longest lasting psychic bond. Over time, this idea became consolidated: he insisted on the priority of the maternal figure in early life, the object that satisfies sexual and nutritional needs. The feelings that are first felt towards the mother are later transferred onto the father and finally to the community at large. His shared his musings in his correspondence with Freud: “Are you also of the opinion that the father
is so predominant? In some of my analyses it is definitely the mother.” (Letter to Freud, 7 April 1909).

Ten years after this letter, Freud wrote to Abraham to inform him of the death of Jones’ father, remarking that the death of the father is the most important event in a man’s life. It was not until almost the end of his life when he began to give a greater weight to the maternal function. Therefore, Abraham’s emphasis on the role of the maternal function based on analytical experiences, and not merely on a hypothetical-theoretical level, in the year 1909, just five years after the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* was published, constituted a transcendental contribution, which although at the time was not fully accepted, today is definitely worth mentioning. We should take into account that, at that time, many of the fundamental analytical papers had still not been written, including all of the metapsychological writings.

Abraham understood that the mother is the original object. He did not simply emphasise the first phase of the Oedipus complex, during which the child expresses an attachment to the mother in competition with the father who is seen as a rival; in this sense the mother’s role is undeniable, she is the object on which drives are discharged, that is, the element with which the infant fulfils its eroticism. To this point, the maternal function is evident and is fully described and understood in the Oedipus complex.

But Abraham went a step further, doubtlessly influenced by his experience with psychoses and highly dysfunctional patients; he observed not only the discharge function of the mother, but also her structuring function. This is why Abraham should be considered as the pioneer of object relations theory, much before this psychoanalytic development took its name, even before Freud became fully aware of these maternal characteristics.

At an equally early stage, he dismantled the idealised infantile innocence to reveal a “naive egoism”, which, in 1909, he claimed could be the only state until the emergence of narcissism/objectality. Emotions and drives uncontrollably spring forth and connect the child’s eroticism to “even cruel” components, in its tendency to seek unlimited possession of the object. Aggression towards the object is expressed orally, through devouring (1916). Sadism and masochism are contemplated as fundamental conditions of development irrespective of moral values.

The tendency to incorporate the object changes to a desire to possess and obtain control over the object, preserving it without destroying it.
In 1913, Abraham attributed partial drives (component-instincts) to the pre-oedipal stage and an aggression that seeks to provide the subject with an identity. This can be observed through reading the descriptions of the oral and anal phases which are highly determined by deep sadistic impulses. As an example, we can refer to Abraham’s paper of 1919 on transferential resistance in which he describes facets of latent aggressive manifestations. Abraham always showed an interest in the different manifestations of these violent emotions.

*Retaining vs. expulsing*

Subjecting oneself to the object or obtaining supremacy over it, passiveness or activity, feminine or masculine sexuality. Ambivalence in obsessive neurotic patients and their severe defence mechanisms are also closely related to these aspects. This juxtaposition is present in the oral stage: the genital phase is reached once loving and hostile partial drives unite to form a whole object.

In 1910, the study of fetishism provided a good way to unravel the partial drives that underlies perversion; these subjects almost completely devalue the object to the benefit of one of its parts. Displacement is used as a defence mechanism, pushing away the area of focus and with it the anxiety.

The desire to recover the original mother, when influenced by a castration anxiety, gives rise to exhibitionism (1913). Again we can see partiality, the active gaze of the voyeur opposing the passiveness of the exhibitor being watched. When Abraham was researching premature ejaculation in 1916 he also observed exhibitionism in people who achieved a late control of the sphincters (amalgamation of ejaculation and urination); once again violent sadistic drives due to a deficient object-love lead to passivity as a reactive manifestation.

Love is something negotiable with the object. It would seem that the child offers its mother its corporal products marked with a narcissistic overestimation. Narcissistic neurotic patients with an anal tendency tend to offer gifts instead of love; but in the retention stage they economise all of their possessions: corporal, material and mental (1913). The libido is transferred to an unlimited number of objects, including money as we can see in Abraham’s paper published in 1917.

In 1920 he also pointed out that there are mothers who, with their obsession for the excrements of their child, are ahead of the anal erotism
of the child. Another aspect of anality is diarrhoea as an expression of repressed rage. And a defence mechanism is the reaction-formation that converts the coprophilic tendency of the obsessive neurotic patient into an anxious desire for cleanliness (no object finds rest; the subject must control them all).

Abraham indicated that jealousy arises in the sadistic-anal phase when he was exploring the feminine castration complex. He outlined three ways of obtaining pleasure in the anal character: the act of defecation, the provision of products (warm objects that can be seen, smelt, and touched) and the mental gratification for carrying out the act (for which he receives the approval of the parents). Contemplated from an economic point of view, emotional ambivalence gives rise to two opposing types of pleasure: appropriating the object or expelling it (this is the loss which threatens the obsessive neurotic and which is carried out in melancholia).

Abraham believed that the ambivalence was overcome when the subject was able to enjoy the pleasures of retaining, obtaining, and giving.

The clinical pictures

In his papers on dementia praecox Abraham refers to Freudian theories, but where Freud indicates an evolutionary regression, Abraham contemplates an inhibited development. He also differentiates these conditions from organic psychoses and epilepsy based on the relation with the object (sufferers of the latter maintain a distinct object-love). Years later, one of these patients showed that the erotic zones conserve their former meaning due to a fixation on the oral stage: the first disappointment with the love-objet which was later repeated prevented him from choosing an object.

Later, Abraham described that within the oral stage there is a pre-ambivalent period in which the incorporation is not related to the existence of the feeding person and the libido is linked to suckling. Later, biting becomes the earliest form of expressing the sadistic impulse, the object is incorporated and destroyed and ambivalence emerges with respect to the relationship with the object. Again in 1908, the object is a key element in separating the experiences of dementia praecox patients (who ignore the outside world because they were never able to develop a full object-love) from those suffering from hysteria (excessive investment in the object). Abraham continued to study hysteria when Freud
turned his attention to paranoia with Schreber and narcissism as a transition, following the path paved by Abraham with respect to megalomania as a sexual overestimation of the ego.

Abraham shifted his interest from dementia praecox to manic-depressive states. In 1911, he reported on his research and treatment of six clear cases of this condition; he had observed that the intensity of aggressive drives prevented a normal object relation, which is why he was surprised to discover transference phenomena in these patients. One year later, he consolidated his attempt to create a theory on mania, claiming that in the depths of melancholic misery there is a pleasure derived from the patients feeling of superiority and the scale of his sadism.

Manic-depressive psychosis seems to consist of repetitive cycles of incorporation and expulsion, together with an extreme anxiety felt towards the objects that are incorporated or expelled. Let us compare the steps taken by Abraham with a current version of manic disorders. Now we would say that mania sparks narcissism and internal objects are dissipated, then the subject incorporates new objects without a history with which it establishes specular connections. The object becomes almost invisible, it is devoured but is not incorporated; it remains on the border of the stages where the introjected objects leave no mark. The transition from the manic phase to the depressive phase is faster than the opposite case where the transition is gradual; subjecting the superego provokes the narcissist eruption.

Abraham contemplates the triumph over the object which was first loved, then abandoned and introjected. Narcissism is present in the first stage; then the ego becomes separated from the object that is incorporated and the libido is then directed avidly towards the world of objects. The cycles occur at the same time as the intervals in which the love-object is expelled (as opposed to the tendency of the obsessional neurotic who retains it).

Obsessive neurosis, with its equally virulent emotions, is on the other end of the scale. In both cases the libido is extracted from the object world and both conditions are characterised by latent despotism, but: why do the patients of one condition maintain more labile object relations than those of the other? They are different in the way in which they capture the object and patients suffering from these two conditions regress to different points of fixation in libidinal development. Abraham confirmed this intuition in 1924: The melancholic patient
loses the object and recovers it through introjection (first stage). The obsessional neurotic adopts a more ambivalent attitude with respect to the object, the loss is not consummated (with time, the concept of loss would give way to that of a deficit); the subject avoids it and seeks to dominate it, retain it, but does not incorporate it. Destroying the object by devouring it in melancholia vs. the sadistic greed in obsessive neurosis. The conflict between wanting to know and the fear of knowing takes over the subject, but the subject should not seek to resolve the enigma.

In 1916, in the first in-depth study on the psychopathology of melancholia from the perspective of object relations, Abraham remarked that the ego of the melancholic patient is impoverished when he loses what he wished to incorporate. He asked why somebody would choose to die by way of starvation. He explained that the mouth should not feel the satisfaction craved by the unconscious through devouring the object. The ambivalent drives are directed towards the mother. In other neuroses they are directed towards the father.

Depending on the profound status of the lost object, one of two situations may arise: delusion (if it persecutory, implying more primal activity) or depression (if it is not persecutory and a consciousness of loss exists). The object in delusion is lost given that it is projected but at the same time, as pointed out by Matte Blanco, it is in two places at the same time—inside and outside. This ubiquity of the persecutory object indicates that it is profoundly rooted in the unconscious. In delusion, the reality principle is hardly appreciable.

Abraham addressed what psychiatrists call endogenous or psychotic depression. Reactive, exogenous, or neurotic depression is related to the super-ego and therefore to guilt.

With respect to mourning, the Berliner postulated creative ideas that Freud later used in his paper on the subject. He based his ideas on the loss of the object, not on conflict, and affirmed that the libido is intensified after periods of mourning. Basing the theory on loss implies addressing the most intimate part the structure. Conflict is a clash between the agencies in a structurally mature subject. If the theory is based on loss, this implies addressing the deficit as opposed to the neurotic level of conflict.

With respect to the psychogenesis of paranoia, Abraham suggested that it emerged harmoniously in relation to depression and supported Freud’s view that it is connected to homosexuality. Subjects suffering from
paranoia regress to the sadistic-anal stage of libido development. With respect to the object, they try to compensate the loss of the relationship with it by trying to reconstruct it, but do not achieve the incorporation that melancholic patients obtain. Ambivalence is also present here; the repressed desires transform love into hate and passive feelings of persecution into active ones, the introjected part of the object refuses to abandon the subject and exercises its tyranny.

The effects of war on neuroses are very similar to those produced by other traumas. Both situations require a predisposition (in this case a narcissist reaction to an injury caused from the outside). There is a regression to the moment when the subject must sacrifice himself for the community. The jovial disposition of amputees is due to a regression to narcissism whereby the erogeneity is directed towards the injury. Nothing can compensate the loss of object-love. The genital zone loses its priority and anal erotism is reinforced.
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

To conclude

I began this project by reflecting on the fundamental role played by Karl Abraham in the early stages of the construction of object relations theory. I have, however, always been in favour of presenting hypotheses within a context that gives them meaning. A starting point was the concept of the unconscious and the unconscious as a structure requires an analysis of the numerous elements of which it is comprised. These include the object.

Abraham was an emblematic author in clarifying the chaotic and unpredictable unconscious and the unstable object. His strengths resided in the breadth of his interests, his solid humanistic training, psychoanalytic theory, and his incessant clinical work consisting of extremely diverse cases.

After working with cases of dementia praecox at the Burghölzli, for example, a patient dominated by autoerotism referred to himself as you in his countless writings, because he was the only object in which he held any interest; Abraham compared autoerotism (with which he distinguished dementia praecox from hysteria) with object-love (or aloerotism, according to Caparrós).

In order to summarise Abraham’s contributions we can artificially organise them into three approaches. I say artificially because, as we
have outlined, they form part of an interlinked whole and they need each other in order to be sustained. The first concerns the baby, where he examined the productive scope of aggression and the role played by the mother as the original object. The second refers to the activity/passivity duo studied horizontally (clinical pictures) and vertically (genetic dimension) and finally, we have seen how he contributed to the structural understanding of certain pathological profiles.

Depression occurs around ambivalence; love and hate emerge with intensity and mutually cancel each other out, giving rise to inhibition. Abraham was the first to acknowledge the initial depression of children as a precursor of melancholia, an undeniable precedent of Klein’s theories in this respect. He also maintained that there was a direct relationship between oral frustration and schizophrenia, and related the latter to a regression to a narcissistic infantile stage. Much later, these concepts were discussed further by René Spitz.

The incorporation of the aggressive drive in the structure of obsessional neurotics and its influence on object relations through repression was another of Abraham’s greatest contributions.

His intuitions regarding mourning and the reinforcement of the libido after the trauma of object-loss (which could involve an attempt at a love relationship with the object) have been extensively confirmed by clinical experience. During this period of transition, a rupture or abandonment can take place through an oral process of cannibalism (incorporating the lost object into the ego) and its complementary anal expulsion. In 1924, from the projection/introjection perspective, Abraham worked on object relations and from the economic perspective with respect to melancholia, obsessive neurosis, manic-depressive psychosis, and paranoia. People suffering from paranoia contemplate partial objects while the melancholic patient contemplates the whole object.

Abraham’s genetic sequence has earned him much prestige. Those who reproached its static nature forgot that he had emphasised that his diagram was provisional and should be contemplated taking into account any new research. His intention—which was successful—was to create a starting point, it was never meant as a definitive theorisation. On the other hand, this table defines boundaries that facilitate the understanding of a dynamic structure. In other words, with the exception of major pathologies, we can observe a combination of oral and anal stages with an indication of where some predominate over others. The
points of fixation are fundamental and mark the development of both excesses and a lack of pleasure (1924); the harmful effects of excesses had not been fully addressed previously.

Another highly interesting aspect is how he established the boundary where object-love begins. In the anal-expulsive phase (the earlier phase) hostile tendencies are directed towards the object that used to be loved and which has been rejected; subsequently in the anal-retentive phase (the later phase) there is a tendency to conserve the object, to retain and control it giving rise to the possibility of maintaining internal relations with it.

After this examination we can maintain the initial hypothesis that Abraham truly inspired and was even the pioneer of the theory of object relations. With a rare equilibrium he maintained something which many of his successors were not capable of doing: he highlighted the nodal importance of the object which, due to its very nature, affects many dimensions.

Allow me to summarise:

1. According to Abraham, the object is still where drives are discharged, just as Freud had previously established. This indisputable aspect allows the economic dimension to be present in object relations, contrary to what Fairnbairn claimed years later.

2. But the object is also something that gradually becomes assimilated into the mother in early infancy; this is what we call the maternal function. Abraham thus implied a certain deviation from the previous prevalence of the Oedipus complex.

3. The object possesses social attributes whereby, according to Abraham’s biological metaphor of the metabolism, it incorporates the social humus, enabling it to develop and grow, first becoming the maternal figure.

4. Furthermore, the symbolic universe of the object also comes into play.

5. With Abraham, psychoanalytic clinical practice probably reached its most refined moment. Only a simplistic reading of his works could cause us to describe his proposals as static. On the contrary, he skilfully interlinked deficit and conflict; he distinguished between different levels in development and points of debate within a certain level. Furthermore, in any of these clinical formulations it is possible to trace and follow the vicissitudes of the object.
6. Klein considered that she had gone further than her analyst with respect to the object. She acknowledged that if he had had more time, Abraham would have defined the internal object. I would have to disagree with this affirmation, irrespective of the prestige of the person who uttered it. The internal object, as we have seen, was present in Abraham’s major article of 1924. What else was he referring to when outlining the differences in the changes of the object in depression, paranoia, and obsessive neurosis?

Moreover, the epistemological and metapsychological rigour with which the “object” is contemplated is much stricter in Abraham’s work than in Klein’s.

In his old age, Freud gave an increasing importance to the maternal figure and insinuated a path to follow. Abraham’s death put an end to his drives and we are left with the uncertainty as to how his research would have evolved.
Sigmund Freud was born in Freiberg.
The study of aphasias began after Broca’s discovery of the disturbing effects caused by injury to the frontal lobe of the brain.
Equal rights for Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire granted by Emperor Franz Joseph.
Black Wednesday.
Brücke published the *Conferences on Physiology*.
Abraham was born in Bremen on 3 May.
Theodor Aschenbrandt found that administering cocaine to soldiers enhanced their endurance on manoeuvres.
Freud discovered the gold method.
First meeting between Wilhelm Fliess and Sigmund Freud in Vienna.
A year of abstinence for Freud after discovering cardiac problems.
December: Freud, *Manuscript K*.
Abraham began his degree in medicine, which he studied mainly in Wurtzburg and Freiberg.
The World Zionist Organisation was created.
Pierre Janet: *Neurosis and Fixed Ideas*.
1899  Freud: *The Interpretation of Dreams* (4 November).
1900  Rupture of Freud’s friendship with Wilhelm Fliess.
      17 May: Abraham started working as a volunteer; shortly afterwards he was appointed as assistant to Professor Liepmann in the municipal mental hospital in Dalldorf.
      Freud: *On Dreams*.
      Freud: *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*.
1902  Abraham met his future wife on a German philology course.
      Creation of the *Wednesday Psychological Society*.
      Jung: *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena*.
1904  Abraham was named second assistant to Jung at the Burghölzli clinic (he began on 8 December). He resigned three years later.
      Abraham got engaged to Hedwig.
1905  Abraham was appointed as First Assistant at the Burghölzli.
      Summer with Hedwig’s family in Switzerland. Abraham crossed the Daelli point for the first time where the “Corraggio Casimiro”, expression in his exchanges with Freud, was born.
      Freud: *An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (Dora case study); *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality; The Joke and its Relation to Unconsciousness*.
      Meeting between Freud and Otto Rank.
1906  23 June: Abraham got married in Switzerland. The couple took up residence in an apartment close to the Burghölzli.
      The Wednesday Psychoanalytic Society hired a paid secretary: Otto Rank.
1907  27 February: Jung visited Freud.
      15 April: Freud officially established the Wednesday Society as the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society and Rank was appointed as secretary.
      June: *On the Significance of Sexual Trauma in Childhood for the Symptomatology of Dementia Praecox* (*Zentralblatt*).
      *The Experiencing of Sexual Traumas as a Form of Sexual Activity*, presented by Abraham at one of the first meetings of the Freudian Association at the end of the summer.
      September: Meeting between Freud and Jones in Amsterdam.
October: Freudian Association created in Berlin. The second meeting was attended by “no less than twenty doctors”. For the third meeting Abraham prepared a report on infantile sexual trauma.

November: Abraham resigned from his position at the Burghölzli.

15 November: First meeting between Abraham and Freud (In Grosskurth, 1991, p. 215), the meeting is recorded as taking place on 15 December).

18 November: Abraham’s daughter Hilda was born.

25 November: Jones visited Jung in Zurich.

December: Abraham was invited for the first time to a meeting of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society.

21 December: Abraham left Zurich and moved to Berlin, becoming the first German doctor to have a private psychoanalytic practice.

Freud and Abraham began their correspondence.

Max Eitingon joined the team at the Burghölzli.

The Freudian association in Zurich was created.

Freud: Delusion and Dream in Jensen’s Gradiva.

1908

The Viennese Psychoanalytic Society had twenty-two members, although no more than ten were usually present in the meetings.

4 April: Abraham finished Dreams and Myths. He designed a course for doctors.

24 and 25 April: Congress of Psychiatrists in Berlin.

27 April: First International Psychoanalytical Congress in Salzburg (Error in Le Rider who placed it in Berlin.) (Jaccard, 1982, p. 125.)

First meeting of the International Psychoanalytical Association (with forty-two members from six countries). The dispute with Jung erupted.

10 June: Albert Moll, a specialist in nervous disorders and a criminologist based in Berlin, invited Abraham to collaborate in a new journal. Abraham accepted.

27 August: Abraham founded the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society (with Iwan Bloch, Magnus Hirschfeld, Otto Juliusburger, and Heinrich Koerber).

9 November: Abraham addressed the Berlin Society for Psychiatry and Nervous Illnesses regarding neurosis and intermarriage between close relatives. Abraham psychoanalysed his first patient. *The Psychological Relations between Sexuality and Alcoholism* (*Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft*).

*The Jahrbuch für Psychoanalytische und Psychopathologische Forschungen* was launched with Jung as editor.

1909 February: a Russian journal invited Abraham to send a short article on psychoanalysis. He accepted. Freud, Jung, and Ferenczi travelled to the United States. Freud: *Remarks on a Case of Obsessional Neurosis; On Psychoanalysis*. 1 April: The *Jahrbuch* was issued which included: The Significance of Intermarriage between Close Relatives in the Psychology of the Neuroses (lecture in 1908 to the Berlin Association). It also contained Freud’s *Analysis of the Phobia of a Five-Year-Old Boy*.

September: Max Eitingon followed Abraham’s footsteps and moved to Berlin (he would become one of Abraham’s most loyal and efficient collaborators).

Early October: Freud visited Abraham in Berlin.

8 November: battle in the *Neurologische Gesellschaft*, in which Abraham published *Hysterical Dream States*.

1910 28 February: Abraham began to teach a course on the theory of neuroses (including sexual theory and dream analysis). The course was held on two afternoons a week for an hour and a half. Fee: 30 Marks.

30 and 31 March: Second International Psychoanalytical Congress in Nürremberg. The International Psychoanalytical Association was founded with Jung as president. The monthly journal, *Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse*, was created in Nürremberg and directed by Alfred Adler and Wilhelm Stekel.

March: *Remarks on the Psycho-analysis of a Case of Foot and Corset Fetishism* (*Jahrbuch*).

31 March: Abraham founded the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute of which he was president until his death.
25 August: Abraham’s second child, Grant Allan, was born in Berlin.
12 October: Adler was elected as president and Stekel as vice-president of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society.
18 October: The Abraham family moved to a larger home at 24 Rankestrasse.
Abraham contracted dysentery which weakened him for the rest of his life.
December: Freud completed the _Schreber Case._
*Hysterical Dream States._
Freud: _Leonardo da Vinci: A Memory of his Childhood._

1911

- The Berlin Society received a visit from Lou Andreas-Salomé.
- February: Meeting between Fliess and Abraham.
- 3 March: Freud informed Abraham that he had taken over the direction of the Vienna Group from Adler and Stekel in February.
- 9 March: Abraham confessed to Freud that he felt ambivalence towards the eight hours of analysis that he was carrying out each day which left him little time “for science”.
- April: Short holiday in Schandau (near Dresden) where he met with the Berlin group and people from the region.
- 9 May: First meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Society in Baltimore.
- June: Adler resigned from the Viennese Society together with another nine members.
- July: Adler resigned from his position at the _Zentralblatt._
- Summer: Abraham spent the long and hot summer in Skagen (Denmark); the two children had chickenpox.
- Late August: Abraham took his daughter to Bremen to see her grandparents.
- September: _Observations of the Cult of the Mother and its Symbolism in Individual and Folk Psychology (Zentralblatt)._
- October: Hirschfeld resigned from the Berlin group.
- December: _Imago_ was founded with Rank and Sachs as editors.
*On the Determining Power of Names (Zentralblatt)._  
*Analysis of a Dream by Ovidio (Zentralblatt)._
Giovanni Segantini: *A Psycho-Analytical Study* (*Schriften zur Angewandten Seelenkunde*).

Freud: *Psychoanalytic Notes Upon an Autobiographical Account of Paranoia* (*Schreber*).

1912

March: *Notes on the Psychoanalytic Investigation and Treatment of Manic-Depressive Insanity and Allied Conditions* (*Zeitschrift*).

June: Jones proposed the creation of a secret committee. It was formed in the same year with Ferenczi, Sachs, Abraham, Rank, and Jones.

July: *Amenhotep IV. Psycho-analytical Contributions Towards the Understanding of his Personality and of the Monotheistic Cult of Aton* (*Imago*).

Summer: In the Hotel Stooss (Switzerland), beside Lake Lucerne.

9 August: Abraham was optimistic about Zurich in a letter to Freud, after a long bronchial ailment.

1 October: Hedwig’s father died from a stroke.

24 October: Conference in Munich, where Abraham met Freud.

3 November: Freud informed Abraham that he was no longer the director of the *Zentralblatt*.

24 November: Jung organised a meeting with Freud in Munich in order to transfer the directorship of the *Zentrallblatt* to Stekel.

November: The *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* was founded with Ferenczi, Rank, and Jones as editors.

*A Complicated Ceremonial Found in Some Neurotic Women* (*Zentralblatt*).

Freud: *A Note on the Unconscious in Psycho-Analysis* (*Metapsych.*)

1913

March: *Should Patients Write Down Their Dreams?* (*Int. Zeitschrift*).

May: *A Screen Memory Concerning a Childhood Event of Apparent Aetiological Significance* (*Int. Zeitschrift*).

May: *On the Psychogenesis of Agoraphobia in Childhood* (*Int. Zeitschrift*).

5 May: Abraham prepared his doctoral thesis.

19 May: Ferenczi founded the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Society.
25 May: Freud gave rings to the members of the Vienna Committee.
Freud: Totem and Taboo (read twice with enthusiasm by Abraham in June).
July: Abraham spent a few days in the Dutch seaside holiday resort Noordwijk aan Zee, where Freud had also been on several occasions.
6 August: Abraham visited the archaeological museum of Leyde.
September: Restrictions and Transformations of Scopophilia in Psycho-Neurotics; with Remarks on Analogous Phenomena in Folk Psychology (Jahrbuch).
7 and 8 September: Fourth International Psychoanalytical Congress in Munich. Abraham presented: “Restrictions and Transformations of Scopophilia in Psycho-Neurotics …”
October: Abraham visited his parents (in Bremen) on a Sunday.
30 October: Jones founded the London Psychoanalytic Society.
4 November: Abraham accepted the directorship of the Jahrbuch after the resignation of Jung, but he believed that the dissolution of the International Association proposed by Freud was very delicate, as it was not provided in the statutes.

March: The Ear and Auditory Passage as Erotogenic Zones (Int. Zeitschrift).
A Constitutional Basis of Locomotor Anxiety (Int. Zeitschrift).
20 April: Jung resigned from his functions as president of the International Psychoanalytical Association and as editor of the Jahrbuch. Karl Abraham temporarily replaced him.
May: Meeting of the Berlin group to debate the oedipal phenomena in childhood.
Freud suggested to Abraham the creation of a Korrespondenzblatt (news bulletin for the affiliates of the International Psychoanalytical Association) that could be included in the fourth number of the Zeitschrift; it was published in June.
10 May: Abraham accepted the presidency of the International Psychoanalytical Association.
June: A Contribution Towards the Understanding of the Suggestive Effect of Medicine in the Neuroses (Int. Zeitschrift).
28 June: Assassination of the Austrian archduke in Sarajevo. Great War. Abraham was enlisted in the twentieth East Prussian army corps. He was a reserve and worked as a surgeon in Berlin and Allenstein.
3 July: Conference at the Gesellschaft für Sexual Wissenschaft: Eigentümliche Formen der Gattenwahl, besondere Inzucht und Exogamie.
6 July: Abraham travelled to the Baltic Sea with his wife and children (he followed them later after working for a few more days). They stayed in Brunshaupten (Hotel Dünenhaus) until 2 August.
1 August: Abraham was mobilised to the health service in the military hospital at the Grunewald hippodrome on the outskirts of Berlin.
3 August: Germany declared war on France and invaded Belgium. The International Psychoanalytical Congress in Dresden had been planned to take place on the eve of the outbreak of the war. It was never held.
4 August: Great Britain declared war on Germany.
29 August: (in a letter from Abraham to Freud) The German troops were barely 100 kilometres from Paris. Belgium was finished, as was England, on land. The same was happening with Russia. … Few signs of war here in Berlin, (13 September).
October: Ferenczi was enlisted as a doctor for the Hungarian Hussars.
The publication of the Jahrbuch was suspended.
Freud: History of the Psychoanalytic Movement and Introduction to Narcissism.
1915  13 March: Abraham was transferred as a doctor of the German army to Allenstein military hospital in East Prussia.  
Freud: *Instincts and Their Vicissitudes (Metapsych.), Repression (Metapsych), The Unconscious (Metapsych.)* and *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death. Observations on Transference Love.*  
September: Freud visited Ferenczi in the Papa barracks in Hungary.  
13 November: Abraham, liberated from his surgical obligations, set up an observation centre for psychopathic soldiers. Later he was assigned psychiatric beds and organised a psychiatric hospital unit.

1916  The family moved to Allenstein.  
*The First Pregenital Stage of the Libido (Int. Zeitschrift).*  
Freud: (and 1917) *Introduction to Psychoanalysis.*  
Abraham specialised as an expert witness in military trials, testifying with respect to the mental state of convicted soldiers.

1917  *Some Illustrations on the Emotional Relationship of Little Girls Towards Their Parents (Int. Zeitschrift).*  
*Ejaculatio Praecox (Int. Zeitschrift).*  
*The Spending of Money in Anxiety States (Int. Zeitschrift).*  
30 July to 31 August: The Freud family spent their holidays in Csorbato (Hungary).  
Freud: *Mourning and Melancholia (Metapsych.)* and *Metapsychological Addiction to the Dream’s Theory (Metapsych.).*  
December: The troops of English general, Allenby entered the Palestine capital. Although Chemouni comment “the Joyfulness that (Freud) shares to Abraham”, refers to this fact, there is no direct allusion to it in the correspondence at that time.

1918  *Psycho-analysis and the War Neuroses. (Int. Psychoanalytische).*  
Anton von Freund created a fund to sustain psychoanalysis.  
Freud: *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis (the Wolf Man).*  
28 and 29 September: Fifth International Psychoanalytical Congress in Budapest.  
October: Freud arranged a meeting between Abraham and Ernst Simmel. Abraham began analysing Simmel in early 1919.  
late October: Symposium on neurosis in Berlin organised by Karl Abraham.
9 November: The Emperor was forced to abdicate; the armistice was signed on 11th. The social-democrat leader Friedrich Ebert came to power.
Abraham returned to Berlin.
Tony von Freund created a foundation to support psychoanalysis called the Internationaler psychoanalytischer Verlag.

1919

Mid-January: The International Psychoanalytischer Verlag was founded in Vienna.
19 January: German women voted for the first time.
February: A Particular Form of Neurotic Resistance against the Psycho-Analytic Method (Int. Zeitschrift).
20 February: Jones re-created the English group as the British Psychoanalytic Society.
May: Ferenczi was expelled from Budapest’s medical society during the “White Terror”.
June: The peace conditions of Versailles were accepted.
3 July: Suicide of Víctor Tausk.
August: Meeting in Berlin between Freud, Abraham, and Eitingon.
11 August: The Weimar Republic was officially constituted.

1920

Freud: Beyond the Pleasure Principle.
20 January: Anton von Freund died.
23 January: Sophie Freud Halberstadt died.
14 February: Opening of the Berlin Polyclinic.
13 March: Failed attempt at a coup d’état, quashed by the people.
June: the Applicability of Psychoanalytic Treatment to Patients at an Advanced Age (Int. Zeitschrift).
Late summer: Hanns Sachs left Switzerland and moved to Berlin.

8–12 September: Sixth International Psychoanalytical Congress in The Hague. Under the presidency of Ferenczi; Jones was chosen as the future president. The last Congress that Freud attended.

20 September: The first weekly bulletin, *Rundbriefe* was issued.

October: *The Cultural Significance of Psychoanalysis (Die neue Rundschau).*

September: *Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex (Int. Zeitschrift).* Presented at the Congress in The Hague.

1 October: a new law was passed to create a new urban community imposed by the two winning parties (socialists, independent, and social-democrats) in the elections that finally recognised universal suffrage.

Abraham analysed E. Glover.

1921

January: *Contributions to the Theory of the Anal Character (Int. Zeitschrift).*

March: Freud published *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.*

June: *Two Mistakes of a Hebephrenic Patient (Int. Zeitschrift).*

June: K. Abraham contributed to Ferenczi’s paper *Psychoanalytische Betrachtungen über den Tic, Discussion on Tic (Int. Zeitschrift).*

A peace treaty was signed between Germany and the United States.

December: Abraham spent a few days with Freud in Vienna together with Jones, Ferenczi, and Rank.

1922

*Mistakes with an Overcompensating Tendency (Int. Zeitschrift).*

*The Spider as a Dream Symbol (Int. Zeitschrift).*

*The Rescue and Murder of the Father in Neurotic Phantasy-Formations (Int. Zeitschrift).*

German-Soviet Treaty of Rapallo.

Abraham was appointed as secretary of the International Psychoanalytical Association. He held this position until 24 September when he was promoted to president.

24 June: The minister of foreign affairs and director of the AEG, Walther Rathenau, was assassinated by a secret right-wing organisation.
25–27 September: Seventh International Psychoanalytical Congress in Berlin, very close to the Clinic. Jean Piaget attended and Sabina Spielrein led the Russian delegation.


1923

Psycho-analytical Views on Some Characteristics of Early Infantile Thinking (British Journal of Medical Psychology).

Two Contributions to the Study of Symbols (Imago).

An Infantile Theory of the Origin of the Female Sex (Int. Zeitschrift).

January: Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr district. The German government decided to adopt a stance of passive resistance, which was ended on 26 September by Stresemann’s new government.

February: Klein was admitted as a full member of the Berlin Society.

April: Freud published The Ego and the Id.

Freud was diagnosed with cancer.

26–28 August: The Committee met in San Cristoforo (Dolomite Mountains), at the foot of the Lavarone, where Freud resided.

29 October: The radio became public in Berlin.

Attempted coup d’état by Hitler and Ludendorff in Munich.

1924

A Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders (Neue Arbeiten zur ärztlichen Psychoanalyse).

In a letter ten days before the Salzburg Congress, Freud, Rank, and Ferenczi announced the dissolution of the Committee.

The publication of the Gesammelte Schriften began.

Jones came to an agreement with Hogarth Press to publish psychoanalytic works in English.

21–23 April: Eighth International Psychoanalytical Congress in Salzburg. Ferenczi nominated Abraham as president which was unanimously approved.

Abraham was the President of the International Association until his death.

27 April: Rank left for America.

October: First Conference of German Psychoanalysts, in Würzburg.

Hitler’s trial in Munich.
1925  

**Character-formation on the Genital Level of the Libido** (Internationale Psychoanalytische Bibliothek).

*An Infantile Sexual Theory not Hitherto Noted* (Int. Zeitschrift).

*Psychoanalysis and Gynaecology* (Zeitschrift für Geburtshilfe und Gynäkologie).

*Concurrent Phantasies in Mother and Son* (Int. Zeitschrift).

*The History of an Impostor in the Light of Psychoanalytical Knowledge* (Imago, in the number that was issued on the day of Abraham’s death).

Freud: *Autobiography and My Life and Psychoanalysis*.

February: Friedrich Ebert, social-democrat and first president of first German Republic died. He was succeeded by General Hindenburg.

May: During a trip Abraham choked on a foreign body. The complications that followed were: a constant fever, double pneumonia, the need for a gall bladder operation and discomfort due to persistent hiccups which later gave rise to chronic bronchitis.

9 May: Abraham made his last appearance at a Society meeting.

June: Joseph Breuer died at the age of 83.

7 June: Abraham wrote to Freud from his bed. In July he felt better and spent the summer in Switzerland with his family.

3–5 September: Ninth International Psychoanalytical Congress in Bad Homburg (Germany). Abraham’s attendance was an excessive strain on his weak constitution.

17 October: Despite his optimism, the fevers, the pain, and gall bladder problems indicated the seriousness of Abraham’s illness.

16 December: Félix Deutsch visited Abraham.

25 December: Abraham died at the age of forty-eight. Commemorative meeting of the Vienna Society was held in honour of Abraham. Freud had decided to stop attending the meetings. This was the first and last exception.

1926  

*Psycho-analytical Notes on Cout’s System of Self- Mastery* (Int. Zeitschrift, in the commemorative issue paying tribute to Abraham, posthumous paper).

Eitingon replaced Abraham as President of the International Psychoanalytical Association.
February: Freud published *Inhibition, Symptoms and Anxiety*.

7 May: Last meeting of the Committee with Freud in Vienna. Anna Freud took the place of Rank in the Committee.

September: Klein left Berlin and moved to London.

1938 Hilda Abraham arrived in London from Berlin in the same year as the Freuds. Although she was the daughter of Melanie Klein’s mentor, she always fervently opposed her ideas.

1945 Psychoanalysis began to be taught in German universities.
Adler, Alfred (1870–1937)

Born in Vienna. He held left-wing views and was knowledgeable in history, psychology and German philosophy. He had been a sickly child. He was the first of Freud’s students to separate from the master; his ideas (for example, viewing the oedipus as symbolic) began to diverge in 1910. In spite of this, he was appointed as president of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society in the same year to calm tensions caused by the naming of Jung as the president of the International Association. He resigned in the following year together with nine of the thirty-five members of the society and founded the Society for Free Psychoanalytic Study which later became the Individual Psychology Society, (willpower as an engine of character formation, expressed fundamentally in the form of masculine protest), which held its first meeting in 1911. With Stekel (Rodrigué (1996) established certain biographical similarities between the two) he founded the Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse.

He was described by Brome (1967) as being sociable and given to mood changes. The politics in psychoanalysis aggravated the disagreements between Freud and Adler. On one occasion, writing to Abraham,
Freud observed: “politics corrupt the character” (1 January 1913); in the same letter he commented that Stekel “will obviously preach Adlerism, as he is now in their employ”. Freud admitted that Adler reminded him of Fleiss. It was not only Freud who rejected Adler, however. Adler also repudiated Freud with the same intensity.

*Andreas-Salomé, Lou (1861–1937)*

Born in St. Petersburg into a wealthy, protestant family. She had a happy childhood, idolised by her mature father and six elder siblings, in the still vibrant Russian society. She lived in Berlin between 1883 and 1903 and later in Göttingen until her death. She met Abraham in the Weimar Congress in 1911. She mixed with the most distinguished men of her time. She fascinated Paul Rée and Nietzsche, with whom she formed an “ideal pseudo fraternity”. Bjerre, “the nerve specialist”, introduced her to Freud. In 1912 she began to attend the Wednesday meetings. Her optimism contrasted with Freud’s pessimism. She avoided taking sides in the internal conflicts, maintaining a very useful cheerfulness during times of tension.

We will draw from Freud’s obituary to her in 1937: “On February 5 of this year Frau Andreas-Salomé died peacefully in her little house at Göttingen, almost 76 year of age. For the last 25 years of her life this remarkable woman was attached to psycho-analysis, to which she contributed valuable writings … she had kept up an intense friend-ship with Friedrich Nietzsche, founded upon her deep understanding of the philosopher’s bold ideas. This relationship came to an abrupt end when she refused the proposal of marriage which he made her … many years later she had acted alike as Muse and protecting mother to Rainer Maria Rilke, the great poet, who was a little helpless in facing life. But beyond this her personality remained obscure. Her modesty and discretion were more than ordinary … My daughter, who was her close friend, once heard her regret that she had not known psycho-analysis in her youth. But, after all, in those days there was no such thing” (GW, 1937, p. 297).

*Bernays, Minna (1865–1941)*

Younger sister of Martha; shortly after Freud’s wedding she lived with the couple until the end of her life. Freud considered her as a better sounding board for his work than Martha who was occupied with
bringing up the children and the domestic chores. In recent years, there has been much comment about the hidden aspects of Freud’s relationship with his sister-in-law. In the pioneering years, Freud considered her to be his “most intimate confidante” together with Fliess.

**Binswanger, Ludwig (1881–1966)**

Owner, director, and doctor of a Swiss clinic for nervous diseases. He practiced psychoanalysis in the Burghölzli clinic but was later drawn to existential psychology, although he always maintained friendly relations with Freud. He was the first president (1910) of the Swiss Psychoanalytic Society. With Jaspers and Minkowski, he introduced the phenomenological method in psychiatry.

**Bleuler, Eugen (1857–1939)**

In 1898 he replaced Forel as director of the Burghölzli. He was a secondary figure in the history of psychoanalysis, only briefly coming to the forefront. He was a professor of psychiatry at the University of Zurich and became interested in Freud’s work thanks to Jung who was his assistant. Later he resigned from the Swiss Society, claiming that he wanted no involvement with an international organisation. He was a natural psychiatrist and with his distracted demeanour and attractiveness he was an excellent hypnotist. He initiated the de-medicalisation of psychiatric practice, and introduced occupational therapy. He treated delusions as creations that can be understood.

From the outset he was ambiguous with respect to psychoanalysis. He is known for introducing the concept of ambivalence in psychiatry. Freud wished to remain on friendly terms with him but conflict arose due to problems with Jung. Bleuler complained that he disagreed with Jung and resigned from the Society. It was a definitive estrangement.

In a letter to Freud on 18 October 1910 Abraham wrote: “I have talked much psychoanalysis with Bl., and I must say that he is taking a keen interest in the cause. During the congresses he had many discussions with Kraepelin, Aschaffenburg, and others, and they all considered him, as I personally heard, a really convinced partisan … Bl. *wants a rapprochement*. He is at odds with himself and suffers from it. Should not there be a way to come to an understanding?” (Letter to Freud, 18 October 1910).
Brentano, Franz (1838–1917)

Founder of the phenomenology from which Freud took the term representation: “Psychic phenomena are representations or are based on representations” (Rodrigué, 1996, Vol II, p. 227) [translated for this edition]. Every representation presupposes its object, but meaning is not derived from it but from its relationship with other representations. He taught in Vienna when Freud studied there. He was interested in hypnosis and visited the famous magician, Heidenhaim, in Leipzig.

Breuer, Joseph (1842–1925)

Collaborator of Freud in Studies on Hysteria in 1895. Defined by Rodrigué in his biography of Freud as “the midwife of psychoanalysis”, he was a pupil and assistant of the semiologist Oppolzer. He was the personal doctor of many of the professors of the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna, being popular due to the reliability of his diagnoses. In 1894 he became a member of the Viennese Academy of Science. Like Abraham and Freud he enjoyed hiking in the Alps. It is possible that Freud met him during a course given by Breuer on nephropathy in 1877.

When Breuer died in 1925, Freud wrote a warm obituary in which he described him as a “man of rich and universal gifts” (Roazen, 1985, p. 98). Fourteen years older than Freud, he was his friend and support. He referred to his rift from him to Abraham: “I exchanged cordial letters with the family and so brought my fateful relations with Breuer to a dignified conclusion” (Letter from Freud to Abraham, 1 July 1925).

Brill, Abraham Arden (1874–1948)

The first psychoanalyst to practice in the United States, to where he emigrated at the age of fifteen with three dollars in his pocket. In 1907 he worked for six months in Zurich under Eugen Bleuler, replacing Abraham who had left for Berlin. In 1911 he founded the New York Psychoanalytic Society and contributed to the creation of the American Psychoanalytic Association. He is described as being hardworking, generous, and adventurous, a stateless ambitious Jew, and a terrible translator.

Charcot, Jean Martin (1825–1893)

One of the most eminent neurologists and neuropathologists of his time. He used hypnosis as a therapeutic treatment. He was an admired
teacher and had numerous fascinated disciples. Charcot welcomed his students into his family and showed his undying loyalty towards them (Charcot, *Standard Edition*, Vol 3, pp. 15–17).

*Deutsch, Helene (1884–1982)*

Analysed in Berlin by Abraham in 1923–1924. At the end of 1924 she became the director of the teaching institute of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society. She analysed Victor Tausk in 1919, when she was still a patient of Freud. She emigrated to Boston in 1934, and was followed a year later by her husband. Paul Roazen (1985, p. 484) recounts that she was Freud’s favourite and intimate disciple for only a few years at the beginning of the 1920s. Then her husband (Freud’s personal doctor until he found out that he had been hiding the truth about his illness from him), seemed to come between her and the master. When she moved to Berlin she felt she needed another analyst and preferred Abraham to Sachs who Freud had proposed. Although she left her husband in Vienna and went to Berlin largely due to the difficulties that had arisen between him and Freud, the Deutschs hardly spoke of that matter; like the Ranks, there were a couple who did not talk about the most delicate aspects of their lives. In analysis with Abraham, he showed her a letter from Freud in which he said that their marriage was one that analysis should not break (interview with Helene Deutsch, 23 September 1967); the couple remained together until Felix’s death in 1964. Menaker, (1990, p. 115) was more critical of her, accusing her of analysing with prejudices and seeing the patient as an element with which to confirm a preconceived theory.

*Eitingon, Max (1881–1943)*

Born into a wealthy family which moved from Mohilev (Russia) to Leipzig, when he was twelve years old. He worked as a volunteer in the Burghölzli before completing his dissertation. In 1907 he attended the meetings of the Viennese Society as a visitor and also began to attend the Wednesday meetings at the School of Doctors. He abandoned traditional medicine in favour of the new psychological theories. He finished his medical training in 1909 and met Abraham in Berlin. According to Grosskurth, as a fervent Zionist it was rumoured that he had links with the KGB.

He completed his medical degree, but due to a stammer from which he suffered all of his life he was never able to pass the exam
which enabled him to practice; therefore, strictly speaking he was an unqualified analyst. He had an almost biblical attitude towards Freud’s work and never published any works of his own as he believed that Freud had already said everything and that he could only spread his teachings (Jones, 1943). It is commonly thought that Eitingon had personal analysis sessions with Freud (Jones, 1943), but they were merely informal afternoon chats. He compensated with his dedication and commitment.

Although at first Abraham did not have full confidence in him, (remarking in a letter to Freud on 16 July 1916 that he is rather unsuitable for active collaboration) in 1919 he made him the sixth member of the famous Committee. He replaced Anton von Freund who after a serious illness died shortly afterwards. After Abraham’s death he was temporarily president of the International Psychoanalytical Association; a weighty task which he resigned from a year later. Freud was concerned that Jones would replace him and realised that his favourite candidate, Ferenczi, was not appropriate, and persuaded the affectionate and loyal Eitingon to continue in the position. He had an excellent knowledge of Freud’s writings; according to Abraham in a letter written in 1921, he had almost unfailing knowledge of the literature. Freud left the establishment of the regulations of psychoanalytic training to the initiative of Eitingon and sent him one of his favourite followers, Hanns Sachs, as the first training analyst. In 1920 he moved to Berlin, where he financed the creation of the psychoanalytic clinic and institute. He remained in the city until 1933; he was one of the first analysts who left Nazi Germany. In Palestine he founded the Palestine Psychoanalytic Association, which he presided until his death.

Erikson, Erik (1902–1994)

For Erikson, contrary to the opinion of Freud and Abraham, original oral behaviour, such as incorporation or retention, were extended to the anal and urethral zones and the entire muscular system. According to Dieter Wyss (p. 196), he took Freud and Abraham’s theories further with his concepts of basic trust, making these qualities and capacities of the child the central focus of development. Functionally extending oral types of behaviour to the anal or genital phase was only partially new. Even Abraham did not strictly adhere to the boundaries of each specific phase. What is unclear is what Erikson understood by ego, to which he attributes a central importance in the genesis of neuroses.
Fairbairn, W. R. D. (1889–1964)

Isolated in Edinburgh, he criticised Freudian drive theory, claiming that it did not fit in with the stages of development. He disagreed with the central role given to the depressive position by Klein, considering that she should have given greater emphasis to the schizoid position which implies a deviation of the ego, instead of assuming that it arises from the Oedipus complex. Freud believed that the libido has no specific goals, while Fairbairn believed that it seeks objects, although he did not give particular importance to the breast as the first partial object. According to Grosskurth (1985, p. 480), the principal difference between Fairbairn and Klein is that the former was interested in the development of the ego in relation to objects, while the latter was interested in the aetiology of anxiety.

Federn, Paul (1871–1950)

Treasurer of the Wednesday Society, he was the orchestrator of the idea of paying tribute to Freud on his fiftieth birthday by presenting him with a medallion on which the Oedipus confronting the Sphinx was engraved, with the inscription: He who divined the famed riddle and was a man most mighty.

Fenichel, Otto (1897–1946)

One of Freud’s most serious followers. He avoided simplifications and tried to harmonise his loyalty to the fundamental psychoanalytic principles with the historical and social variations of the time. His paper *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* is an excellent compendium of psychoanalytic theory. His most notable contributions are those published between 1925 and 1935 on the importance of the castration complex in the genesis and evolution of neuroses.

Ferenczi, Sandor (1873–1933)

Born in Budapest, he was the fifth of twelve siblings. His parents ran a bookshop and lending library. He graduated in medicine in Vienna in 1894, and was appointed as head of neurology at the Elizabeth Hospice in Budapest and later as a psychiatric expert at the Royal Court of Justice. His correspondence with Groddeck transmits an
image of a family in which physical affection was replaced by keeping up appearances.

His first met Freud in 1908. Freud was seduced by his sharp and speculative spirit and his easy smile (Brome, 1967, p. 44). The circle admitted him as a new member; he was fully accepted and recognised as a disciple. He did not have eminent students like Abraham, but except for Minna, he was Freud’s favourite travelling companion. It could be said that hypochondria was a mediating object between them. Freud felt flattered by the confidence that Ferenczi placed in him and he offered him advice. On the other hand, Ferenczi displayed a boundless and attractive imagination.

Freud sent his new manuscripts to Ferenczi as he did with Abraham, awaiting his comments; he considered the scientific work of the two men to be on the same level. According to Brome his career did not a continuous line of successes like Abraham’s. With opposing temperaments the two men followed different paths. It was difficult for Ferenczi to believe that Abraham, born to be president of any intellectual group to which he belonged, was, according to Balint’s expression, constantly honest. Maybe he was somewhat resentful because he did not feel understood, although he admired his sharpness and ingenuity.

The gradual distancing from Freud due to the modifications in technique became apparent in 1927, when he assumed that the patient should receive true love to compensate the deficiencies that gave rise to his disorder. In 1913 he founded the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Society, which originally only had five members. Grosskurth (1991, p. 100) remarks on the informality of the sessions which wives and other guests regularly attended. In October 1914 he was enlisted as a doctor to the Hungarian Hussars and in 1919 he was appointed as the first dean of psychoanalysis at the University of Budapest.

_Fliess, Wilhelm (1858–1928)_

An otolaryngologist from Berlin. He had an extraordinary friendship with Sigmund Freud. He provided a good sounding board for Freud’s self-analysis which formed the seed of psychoanalytic theory. Passionate about Darwin, he knew how to win Abraham’s favour. Contemplating his theories within the context of his time enables us to judge them less harshly.
Breuer suggested that Fliess attended Freud’s courses at the University. He was married in 1892 to Ida Bondy, and was the first to propose the idea of innate bisexuality to Freud. He also postulated the existence of a connection between the nose and the female genital organs and tried to connect biology and mathematics through his famous cycles. Fliess, who was two years younger than Freud, became his analyst, but the intense idealisation to which he subjected him led to the breakdown of their friendship which became rivalry. We do not have Fleiss’ version of these events, as the majority of his letters have been lost.

According to Peter Gay (1988, p. 216), at the beginning of 1911, when Fliess heard that Abraham had discovered Fliessian cycles in one of his patients, he invited him to visit him. Abraham informed Freud of the invitation who replied with caution: “I cannot see why you should not call on him”, he wrote, adding that Abraham “will meet a highly remarkable, indeed fascinating man”. The visit would give him the opportunity to “coming scientifically closer to the grain of truth that is surely contained in the theory of periodicity”. However, Freud warned Abraham that Fliess would undoubtedly try to sidetrack him from psychoanalysis “and, as he thinks, from me”, to draw him towards his own channel. He went on to describe Fliess as a “basically a hard, bad man” and added: “I warn you particularly against his wife. Wittily stupid, malicious, a positive hysteric, therefore perversion, not neurosis.” (13 February 1911. In the official correspondence the word bad and the warning about Fleiss’ wife were omitted).

This advice did not prevent Abraham from maintaining contact with Fliess. He thanked Freud for the warning and promised to “exercise the necessary caution”. He gave Freud detailed reports of his visits. He was relieved when he discovered that Fliess did not try to sidetrack him from psychoanalysis or its founder and, did not have the fascinating impression that Freud had predicted (26 February 1911). But with his characteristic reservation he made no comment about the derogatory remarks that Freud had made about Frau Fliess. Without a doubt, Freud had exaggerated the dangers of Abraham establishing a relationship with his ex intimate friend, probably through jealousy. We should not forget that despite the unpleasant end to their friendship, Freud always kept a picture of Fleiss on the wall of his apartment (Roazen, 1985, p. 115).
Freud, Anna (1895–1982)

The youngest of Freud’s six children, she dedicated her life to her father. After a difficult labour, Martha took a holiday and left Anna in the care of Josefina, a Spanish nanny who remained with her throughout her childhood. She did not get on well with her sister Sophie who was the favourite and a source of envy. As Rodrigué points out, “in the times to come, Melanie would be Sophie.” (Rodrigué, 1996, T. II, p. 197), [Translated for this edition]. In 1918 she began analysis with her father that lasted for almost four years; it seems that before this she had told him her nightmares and they analysed them together. In 1924, when Abraham, Eitingon and Sachs from Berlin suggested she became a member of the Committee, the sessions resumed.

Anna was an excellent teacher for almost six years at the Cottage Lyceum. She believed that she was innovative in her profession and, after beginning with no guidelines, had developed her own method. Her observations made during the war of evacuated children who had been separated from their parents constituted her first clinical material on children. She, like the Berlin group, considered that the analysis of children was only necessary in the case of neurosis and, contrary to Klein’s belief, should not be extended to education in general. She became a member of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society in 1922 and was the second woman (after Lou Andreas-Salomé) to be given the distinctive ring of the Committee in 1924, still a newcomer and beginning her work as a trainer. Ruth Mack Brunswick, who was Anna’s friend and rival, was also given the ring. Her first publication, *The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Children* is a criticism of Melanie Klein’s work.

Freud, Sigmund (1856–1939)

The eldest child of Jacob (merchant) and his third wife Amalia; born in Freiberg (Moravia). He had four sisters and a brother Alexander, who was ten years older than him and another brother who died in infancy. The family moved to Vienna when Sigmund was three years old. He began studying medicine in 1873 and in 1882 he got engaged to Martha Bernays. He became interested in psychiatry in the same year. In 1883, Breuer told him the case of “Anna O”, Freud adopted the free association method and in 1885 published *Studies on Hysteria*. In 1897 Freud began self-analysis and in 1902 created the Wednesday Psychological
Society to discuss his revolutionary theories. In 1902 he became a professor at the University of Vienna although he was only authorised to teach a few private courses.

In December 1921 his life became comfortable enough to invite Abraham to stay at Berggasse 19. To persuade him he told him that the Freud’s guest room was not only much cheaper than a hotel but it also had heating.

Freud’s cancer advanced and the two operations that he underwent on 4 and 12 October 1923 were on the whole successful but were highly invasive, rendering him speechless and unable to eat for a while. A week after his second operation, still in hospital, he sent a note written like a telegram to Abraham: “Dear Incurable Optimist, Tampon renewed today, got up, put what is left into clothes. Thanks for all news, letters, greetings, newspaper cuttings. If I can sleep without injection, I go home soon.” (Letter of 19 October 1923). The Freud’s had many house guests and over time they reserved one of the rooms in their apartments for guests. However, this hospitality became rather strange. According to Roazen (1985, p. 78): Sigmund was not sociable and Martha was not very lively (it seems that of his followers he had a preference for the Abraham family).

Glover, James (1882–1926)

Younger brother of Edward. In 1920 he became the director of the Brunswick Square Medico-Psychological Clinic. When he returned to his position after being analysed by Abraham in Berlin between 1920 to 1921 he eliminated everything that was not strictly psychoanalytical from the clinic’s activities.

He analysed Sylvia Payne; when she began her training with James Glover in 1919, they sat opposite one another and he wrote down every word that she said. Later, when Glover returned from his analysis with Abraham in Berlin, he changed his technique: she lay on the couch and he sat behind her, usually making his interpretations at the end of the session. He only made transferential interpretations when they were beyond any doubt. “The analyst was very passive”. She also said this of the very systematic Hanns Sachs in the last session that she had with him. Sylvia Payne indicated how, even before the arrival of Melanie, the English analysts had begun to use transferential interpretations very
actively. In the same book, Grosskurth insinuated a strange relationship between Glover and Melitta, Klein’s daughter (p. 456).

**Groddeck, Georg (1866–1934)**

Born into a large family of doctors in Baden-Baden (Germany) where he directed a small sanatorium in the Black Forest after completing his military service. He developed a theory according to which illness could be the manifestation of unknown forces which he called “the it”, a term borrowed by Nietzsche and in turn by Freud. In 1920, in the Congress at The Hague, he described himself as a “wild analyst”. He influenced Ferenczi, who he visited every year after 1921, with respect to the innocence with which he persuaded his patients to trust in him. Roazen (1985, p. 358) referred to him as very different from our protagonist … “Groddeck is so unsystematic and disorganized as disciplined scientist is Abraham”. Le Rider (p. 141) described him as being the originator of modern psychosomatic medicine.

**Heimann, Paula (1899–1982)**

We will quote Grosskurth’s description: “Apparently just as ambitious and competitive as Melanie Klein … [who] repeatedly stole ideas from her without acknowledgment. Heimann’s countertransference paper was of immense significance in that it was an area where Klein disagreed with her to such an extent that she could not borrow any of her ideas. […] She felt that she should have been listed as the co-author of some of Klein’s papers, especially, *Notes on some Schizoid Mechanisms* … But what about Klein’s own envy of Heimann? Surely in the countertransference a good deal of projection could have been take place? Heimann was younger than Klein, widely liked, and regarded as brilliant. Klein was highly critical of Heimann’s countertransference paper, which had immediately been hailed as a classic.” (Grosskurth, 1985, pp. 384, 419).

**Herbart, J. F. (1776–1841)**

The ideas of Meynert and later Freud can be connected to this Kantian thinker. Herbart maintained that mental processes can be governed by scientific laws. He used the concepts of inhibition and repression to describe the dynamics of representations in conflict, which control
unconscious mental processes. However, while Freud taught that affection is the sum of the excitation of representations and could be separated from them, Herbart claimed that it was a mere quantitative sum of them and did not integrate these concepts in an overall theory. He was also a pioneer when applying the conversion concept to the petrification of emotion in the nervous system.

**Horney, Karen (1885–1952)**

German analyst who studied feminine sexuality with great interest. Trained in Berlin and psychoanalysed by Abraham. She emigrated to New York in 1932 and after fifteen years of loyalty to Freud she radically broke away from him. She formed part of the social wing of psychoanalysis.

**Hug-Hellmuth, Hermine von (1871–1924)**

Daughter of a military man who belonged to a noble Catholic family. She was one of the first women to study at the University of Vienna. Her step-sister’s son made her sadly famous when he was eighteen by murdering her after an intermittent period of analysis which began when he was four years old. The case gave ammunition to the critics of the psychoanalysis of children and once again Abraham had to defend Klein.

In 1912 she published *The Analysis of a Dream of a Five-Year-Old* and in 1913 another paper in which she included play as a technique, although with a different perspective to her colleagues. Rodrigué defines her as a precursor, not a pioneer. She was always faithful to Freud which he acknowledged, and due to her modesty she dared not get involved in the dispute between Anna and Melanie.

**Isaacs, Susan (1855–1948)**

A moment of dramatic intensity between Anna Freud and Susan Isaacs is expressed by Grosskurth (1991, p. 320). On 7 December 1938, Freud was too ill to attend scientific meetings; it was his daughter Anna who was there when Isaacs presented her paper: *Temper Tantrums in Early Childhood in their Relation to Internal Objects* (*Int. J. Psycho-Analysis*, 1940, 21: p. 281) where we read: “The general theory of internal objects,
derived first of all from the work of Freud and Abraham, has now been clearly developed in the various contributions of Melanie Klein and other members of the English group. This paper is concerned not with the elucidation of the general theory of internal objects, but with the way in which an understanding of the various phantasies connected with internal objects serves to illuminate the phenomena of temper tantrums and helps in their analytic treatment.”

Janet, Pierre (1859–1947)
Disciple of Charcot who conducted research on tele hypnosis in Le Havre. He was a philosopher who was influenced by Bergson’s mysticism and later studied medicine. He developed the technique of automatic speech under hypnosis in 1892, as Rodrigué points out (V1, p. 365), almost in parallel with the creation of Freud’s free association method. His use of the term subconscious prompted Freud to use of the term unconscious.

Jones, Ernest (1879–1958)
Born in Wales; son of a mining engineer. He graduated in medicine in London in 1900. He first met Freud at the Salzburg Congress (1908). In the same year, invited by Dr Clarke, he helped set up a new psychiatric clinic in Toronto (Canada). In May 1913 he was forced to leave the university due to scandalous behaviour.

President of the International Association and of the British Local Society. When he resigned from his position as president he was given the title of honorary president of the Association. Between the two world wars he directed the Journal and the International Psycho-Analytical Library.

For Peter Gay he could not have been more different to Abraham. The two got on well and remained friends throughout the stormy evolution of the international psychoanalytic movement. They shared an intense admiration for Freud, an addiction to work and a love for physical exercise. Jones (a reformed playboy) preferred figure skating—on which he wrote a paper—he was well-built, active, and exuded vitality. But from an emotional point of view the two men were very different. Jones was vocal and provocative while Abraham was—or at least seemed to be—serene and sensible. The former repeatedly and
sometimes disturbingly got involved in erotic affairs while Abraham was serious and monogamous. Jones was the most obstinate and—as Freud took pleasure in observing—most combative of his followers, a tireless letter writer, an imperious organiser, and a militant debater.

We can learn of Jones’ opinion of Abraham in his biography of Freud: emotionally contained, he was, undoubtedly, the most normal member of the Group that surrounded Freud; or in the correspondence in which he apologised to Abraham (letter of 18 June 1911) for writing to him in English, “but I am sure that your English is better than my German.”

One of the very few times that he opposed Freud was when he supported and protected Melanie Klein who had been labelled as schismatic in Vienna. His most notable works are those concerning the theory of symbols, the phallic phase and the sexuality of women.

**Jung, Carl Gustav (1875–1961)**

Son of a Swiss clergyman and the supposed illegitimate grandson of Goethe. In 1900 he was a student of psychiatry working under the orders of Eugen Bleuler at the Burghölzli Clinic in Zurich. In 1906 he claimed that in dementia praecox a toxin attacks the brain and as a result repressed material is released. In his study, *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox*, he still defended Freudian theories. A year later the two men held an uninterrupted discussion for three hours. He also analysed his daughter, Agathli (letter to Freud) who appeared as Anna in *Conflicts in the Child’s Soul*.

Brome’s harsh comments are quoted by Rodrigué (p. 456): “With a mediocre father and an ugly, fat, authoritarian and arrogant mother, it appeared that he had a lonely childhood and was frequently taunted by his classmates.” (Rodrigué, 1996, p. 456) [Translated for this edition]. Perhaps the weakest point of his *Complex Psychology* was the ambiguity that arose from trying to go beyond Freudian positivism but at the same time depending on him for a series of basic concepts.

**Klein, Melanie (1882–1960)**

Born in Vienna in 1882, she was the youngest of four children in a Jewish family. Her father (who she idolised although he preferred her sister), of Ukrainian origin left the Talmud for medicine and married for the second time at the age of forty-five to a young woman of twenty-four.
Her mother, to whom she was very close, fell ill and died in 1914, causing her to have a severe crisis. She began her analysis with Ferenczi which lasted for almost five years. Melanie’s brother played a fundamental role in her life which suffered many ups and downs. She was married at the age of seventeen and had three children. From the time her family moved to Budapest in 1910 she suffered chronic depression. In 1921, she moved to Berlin with the idea of advancing her career and publishing her writings. There she started analysis with Karl Abraham, who she had first met in the Congress in The Hague (1920). She became his protégé and in February 1923 became a member of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society.

According to Klein, the internal world of the child is a conglomerate of destructive and distressing fantasies filled with unconscious images of mutilation and death. For Freud the child is a selfish savage; for Klein the child is a murderous cannibal. In her autobiography she remembers how Abraham’s death had meant the sudden termination of her analysis with her with “a considerable amount of material still to analyse.” We can assume that her period of mourning was short-lived as Grosskurth affirms (1977, p. 563): “I was never desperate and I’m not now.” Another picture of Klein is given by R. D. Laing, who during his training attended her clinical and theoretical seminars. “I could not stand her”, he said decisively in an interview in March 1982, “I found her absolutely detestable”. Others defined her as being indifferent and impassable. She had tenacious supporters and bitter critics in equal amounts.

**Meynert, Theodor (1833–1898)**

Professor of psychiatry, Freud’s master and boss. He maintained that consciousness is merely cerebral life; all processes are closely determined. His concept of the genesis of human consciousness was the forerunner of Freud’s psychic apparatus: moral responsibility inhibits the activity of the primary organ of the primary brain (what he also called the unconscious ego) in which Meynert situated bad or infantile instincts; opposite this is the conscious ego of the secondary brain which regulates it. The essential characteristics of the unconscious were present. He represented German psychology. Rodrigué (p. 221) talks of a sensitive but pompous man, cold towards his colleagues and distant from his students. He confessed to Freud that he was a classic
case of masculine hysteria as described in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. He described two vectors of energy in terms of attack and defence. He developed the Herbartian displeasure principle and, like Freud, he spoke of the “sum of excitations”. The mind receives stimuli from two sources, the external world and the body and both are treated in the same way by the psyche.

*Oppenheim, Hermann (1858–1918)*

A Berlin-born neurologist who from 1894 quoted in his *Manual of Diseases of the Nervous System* the *Preliminary Communication on Hysteria* by Breuer and Freud of 1893. While he showed an interest he also exhibited some reticence towards psychoanalysis. As he was Jewish he could not aspire to a position at the university clinic. He was related to Karl Abraham by marriage and recommended him to some patients during his early years of practicing in Berlin.

*Pfister, Oskar (1876–1956)*

Protestant clergyman and psychoanalyst. Together with Jung he founded the Swiss Psychoanalytic Society in 1910. He remained faithful to Freud after the split with Jung in 1913. Abraham sometimes questioned his orthodoxy but his arguments did not convince Freud.

*Rank, Otto (1884–1939)*

Born in Vienna into a working-class family. He is described as being insecure, shy, and self-conscious. At the age of nineteen he changed his surname due to problems with his father. In 1905, his family doctor, Alfred Adler, arranged for him to meet with Freud. After studying philosophy, art, and history he became interested in psychoanalysis. He began collaborating with his friend Sachs in 1913. At first, he was, for both Freud and Abraham, one of the most valuable members of the Wednesday Group. Although he was in constant contact with Freud, his relationship with him never went beyond the functions of his personal aide.

The stir that his *The Trauma of Birth* (1924) caused marked the beginning of the end. In this paper he underlines the importance of the child’s anxiety in this experience and he maintained that it is this, not
the anxiety caused by the separation from the mother that constitutes the blueprint for all subsequent anxieties experienced in life. The tensions with Freud caused him to move first to Paris and later to America (University of Philadelphia), where he saw a large number of patients, charging them high fees in order to maintain his extravagant lifestyle. He influenced Karen Horney, Sullivan, and Fromm.

Eitingon wrote to Freud on 31 January 1924: “The issues that separate Rank and Abraham are undoubtedly unpleasant, but much less important for the movement as a whole than the conflicts between R[ank] and Jones.” Abraham believed that the ideas expressed by Rank in his *Trauma of Birth* were too bold to ignore or excuse. At least at that time, Freud refused to pay any attention to the alarm that Abraham had raised in Berlin, but he was still doubtful and sent out contradictory messages. On Christmas day of the same year, the Berlin group (Eitingon, Sachs, Abraham) sent their “dear Otto” a letter welcoming him back into the fold.

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**Reik, Theodor (1888–1969)**

A Viennese lay analyst trained by Abraham and analysed by Freud for some time. Abraham held him in high esteem and communicated this to Freud in a letter on 21 June 1918.

After being found guilty by the Court of Justice in Vienna for illegally practicing medicine, he emigrated to the United States where he established his own training institute in New York. Through the correspondence with Abraham we know that he went to the city’s magistrate courts and explained his procedures. This was followed by heated debates, expert testimonies, and court battles. Reik was ordered to stop practicing as an analyst. However, he consulted a lawyer, presented an allegation and continued to practice for a while. He recruited the help of Freud who sent him money regularly, found him work and introduced him into the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society where Reik participated with his comments and read his papers. “He has obvious faults, but he is a good modest boy of great devotion and strong conviction, and he can write well.” (Freud to Abraham, 15 February 1914). Upon the insistence of Freud, a new lay analyst was born. Dieter Wyss (p. 197) asserts that he was the only follower of Freud who expressed his Psychonanalytic experiences in autobiographical form.
Rie, Oskar (1863–1931)
Paediatrician and a close friend of Freud.

Riviere, Joan (1883–1962)
One of the best translators of Freud in England before the Stracheys. She met Melanie Klein officially in the Congress of The Hague in 1920, but she really got to know her in the Salzburg Congress in 1924.

Sachs, Hanns (1881–1947)
Born in Vienna and graduated in law in 1904. He joined the Wednesday Psychological Society in 1909. He was the most distant member of the Committee. He had a fine and brilliant spirit but with an apathetic tendency which Freud did not like.

Sadger, J. (1871–1938)
He had tried to specify the genesis of homosexuality by the extreme fixation of homosexuals on the mother and established the theory that they indentified with the mother in order to be subsequently loved by men like the mother. Defined by Abraham after his visit to the Wednesday Group as Talmudic, interpreting and observing each of the master’s rules with the rigour of the orthodox Jew.

Simmel, Ernst (1882–1947)
One of the founding members of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society. He emigrated to Los Angeles in 1934. He collaborated with Freud, Abraham, Ferenczi and Jones in Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses (Vienna, 1919).

Spielrein, Sabina (1885–1942)
Born in Odessa and later sent by her parents to Zurich to study medicine. She began her treatment in the Burghölzli with Jung. She became a member of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society in 1911. She analysed Jean Piaget. She returned to the Soviet Union in 1923, where she worked
in the University of North Caucasus. She was killed by a Nazi firing squad together with her two daughters.

In the biographical novel by Karsten Alnaes, *Sabina* (Siruela, 1996), based on her diary we can read: “Karl Abraham has talked at length and sensibly with me about all of this. He is a very human analyst and has extensive knowledge. You would have been able to develop your talent in his clinic and would have felt very comfortable there.” (Siruela, 1996, p. 324) In another part she repeats this impression of Abraham: “He is warm and hospitable and also hard-working and highly capacious. What worries me is that he has little time for research. He says that Berlin is not fertile enough for an analyst who wishes to conduct research, and this is where I come in. I could take over some of his patients for him.” (Siruela, 1996, p. 242). [Translated for this edition].

*Stekel, Wilhelm (1868–1940)*

From Poland. He was analysed briefly by Freud in 1902. He was the driving force of the Wednesday meetings and in 1912 he resigned from the Viennese Society. Freud rejected the many attempts at reconciliation that Stekel made. Abraham considered him to be superficial. He was analysed by Freud for a short time due to a sexually related condition from which he recovered very quickly. On Freud’s suggestion he coined the term anxiety neurosis.

According to Roazen (1985, p. 245), the final split with Stekel occurred when Freud took Tausk’s side after an “unpleasant scene” between Stekel and Tausk in the Society. Freud had wanted Tausk to supervise the book reviews in the *Zentralblatt*, of which Stekel was co-director (together with Adler). Stekel obstinately opposed to this intrusion.

Stekel was excluded from the Psychoanalytic Association although he remained in his position at the *Zentralblatt* which continued to be published for a further year. This journal was replaced by the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*.

*Strachey, Alix (1892–1973) and James (1887–1967)*

The first authorised translators of Freud’s work into English. They belonged to the Bloomsbury Group of intellectuals in London. In 1920 they moved to Vienna to be analysed by Freud. Alix received training analysis until 1922 (shortly after beginning, she fell seriously ill and
therefore missed many sessions). Two years later, on the suggestion of Freud, she began analysis with Abraham in Berlin.

**Tausk, Víctor (1875–1919)**

Born in Slovakia to non-practicing Jewish parents. He was a lawyer’s assistant in Croatia and a theatre director in Germany for a while before moving to Vienna where he studied law (he could not afford to study medicine as he would have liked). His youthful years spent with his wife and two sons were politicised and romantic. He separated from his wife in 1905 and went to Berlin where he lived a bohemian, tormented and creative life. Encouraged by Freud to become an analyst, he returned to Vienna where he studied medicine with the financial help of Federn, Friedjung, Hitschmann and Jekels. When he returned to Vienna after the war he fell ill but it is unclear as to the nature of his illness. Shortly after being referred by Freud to Helene Deutsch for analysis, he committed suicide.

Freud informed Abraham three days later that “Tausk shot himself a few days ago. You remember his behaviour at the Congress”. In Budapest, in September 1918, Tausk had suffered a terrible attack of vomiting. “He was weighed down by his past and by the recent experiences of the war; he should have been married this week, but could not struggle on any longer. Despite his outstanding talents, he was of no use to us.” (Letter to Abraham, 6 July 1919, p. 400.) For more information on Victor Tausk, see *Brother Animal* by Paul Roazen and *Victors Tausk’s suicide* by Kurt Eissler. Freud also informed Oskar Pfister of Tausk’s suicide in a letter written on 13 July 1919, ten days after the event.

**Waldeyer, Wihhelm von (1836–1921)**

Medical doctor with whom Abraham worked for several years in the field of microscopy after finishing his degree. He was a highly renowned professor of anatomy and histology at Freiberg and later Berlin.


Grosskurth recounts an anecdote: On one occasion, when driving Pearl King home after a Scientific Meeting, Winnicott, close to tears, suddenly burst out: “If only Mrs Klein just once would acknowledge an idea
she has borrowed from someone else!” (Grosskurth, 1985, p. 374). For Melanie, Winnicott’s problem was that he was too independent and did not discuss his work with her. Winnicott had read a compelling article to the British Society in 1947 called “Hate in the Countertransference”, in which he underlines the fact that the analysts own capacity to hate should not be ignored. Paula Heimann’s concepts are very similar.

His transitional object refers to a space between the thumb and the soft toy, between oral erotism and true object relationship; the infant begins to bond with this object a little after four months of life. The transitional object is not an internal object (which is a mental concept), it is a possession. The baby can use the transitional object as long as the internal object is real and good enough. But this internal object depends on the existence of the living nature and behaviour of the external object. Should the external object be bad or absent, the internal object could become persecutory. If the failure of the internal object persists, the internal object would be meaningless and the transitional object would also lose its significance.

Winnicott was never satisfied with the schizo-paranoid position and he considered that Melanie’s conception of envy was too extreme. According to Winnicott, the child does not exist in a vacuum; the mother-child relationship precedes all self-awareness. Melanie Klein’s concept of envy implied extremely complex feelings in the baby and Winnicott could not accept any description of the baby that did not take into account the conduct of the person caring for it.

Wulff, Moshe (1878–1971)

Of Jewish origin and born in Ordesa, he played a fundamental part in the birth of psychoanalysis in Palestine. He studied medicine in Berlin, at the same time as Julius Burger and Abraham, who introduced him to the psychoanalytic movement. Abraham referred to him in a letter to Freud (10 November 1909): “is now going to settle in Odessa. He is very interested in psychoanalysis and, because of this he lost his last job in Berlin after a few weeks. I know him to be a diligent and trustworthy man who is, however, in a very critical financial situation. Perhaps you (or one of the colleagues there) could occasionally refer patients to him? I assume he will write to you personally as he has asked me for your address. In addition, he would like to do translations into Russian, as I hear from Julius Burger.” In fact, he translated Freud’s Gradiva and Abraham’s Segantini paper.
1900
Normentafel zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Huhnes (con el Prof. Keibel). *Normentafeln zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Wirbeltiere*, Heft 2. Jena.

1901

1902
1904


1907


c. Das Erleiden sexueller Träumen als Form infantiler Sexualbetätigung. C., N.F. Bd. xviii., November, S. 854–865. [The Experiencing of Sexual Traumas as a Form of Sexual Activity, Selected papers.]

1908


1909


1910

a. Über hysterische Traumzustände. J., Bd. ii. S. 1–32. [Hysteric梦Dream States, Selected papers.]


c. Historisches Referat über die Psychoanalyse. B., 29 April.

d. Psychoanalyse eines Falles von Hysterie mit ungewöhnlichem Hervortreten der Inzestfixierung. B., 7 June.

e. Über sadistische Phantasien im Kindesalter (kasuistische Beiträge). B., 31 August.


g. Mitteilung zweier Ödipus-Träume. B., 8 December.
1911

d. Über die Beziehungen zwischen Perversion und Neurose. (Summary of Freud „Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie“.) B., 30 October.

1912

Psycho-analytical Contributions Towards the Understanding of his Personality and of the Monotheistic Cult of Aton, Clinical Papers.]

e. Über neurotische Lichtscheu. B., October.

1913


i. Über eine konstitutionelle Grundlage der lokomotorischen Angst. B. Octubre, I. Z., Jahrg. ii. Heft 2, March 1914, S. 143–150. [A Constitutional Basis for Locomotor Anxiety, Selected papers.]


1914


1916


1917


1918


d. Tiertotemismus. B. 16 Mars.

c. Über den weiblichen Kastrationskomplex. B. 17 April.


1919


b. Tierotemismus. B. 16 Mars.

c. Über den weiblichen Kastrationskomplex. B. 17 April.


1920


c. [The Cultural Significance of Psycho-Analysis, Clinical Papers.] Previously read in the University Clinic, Halle, 10 de July.


f. Technisches zur Traumdeutung. B. 24 Septiembre.

g. Die Psychoanalyse als Erkenntnisquelle für die Geisteswissenschaften. Die neue Rundschau, Jahrg. xxxi. de Freien Bühne, Octubre, Heft 10, S. 1154–74. [Psychoanalysis as a Source of Knowledge for the Humanities.]

1921


c. Beitrag zur «Tic-Diskussion». B. 2 Juin. I. Z., Jahrg. vii. Heft 3, October, S. 393–395. [Contribution to a Discussion on Tic, Selected papers.]

1922


b. Read in the Psychoanalytic Circle of Leipzig, 27 May.


1923


e. Der Kastrationskomplex in der Analyse eines Bisexuellen. B, 13 Mars.


g. Zum Introjektionsvorgang bei Homosexualität. B, 8 May.
h. (Con Dr Helene Deutsch) Über Phantasien der Kastration durch Beissens. B, 5 Juni.
m. Zwei neue kindliche Sexualtheorien. B, 6 November.

1924

d. Über die Psychologie der modernen Kunstrichtungen. Paper reading previously in the Círculo de Arte de Berlin.
f. Analyse einer Zwangsneurose. I German Psychoanalytical Kongress, Würzburg, 12 Oktober.
g. Über eine weitere Determinante der Vorstellung des zu kleinen Penis. B, 21 Oktober.
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1925


c. Paper reading in the Psychoanalytical Circle of Leipzig, 21 February.

d. Die Bedeutung von Wortbrücken für die neurotische Symptombildung. B., 26 February.


h. Die Psychoanalyse schizophrener Zustände. Leidsche Vereeniging voor Psychopathologie en Psychoanalyse, Leyden, 27 and 29 May.


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