

Chapter 21: Horst Kächele: Bringing research, practice and people together<sup>1</sup>

Bernhard Strauss

It is almost self-evident that the German speaking countries have a positive tradition of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and psychodynamic psychotherapy research. Otto Fenichel (1930) was one of the first documenting the effectiveness of psychoanalysis in a systematic “statistical report about the therapeutic work of the Berlin psychoanalytic institute between 1920 and 1930”. More than 30 years later, an influential report by Annemarie Dührssen (Dührssen & Jorswieck, 1965) indicated positive long-term effects of twice a week psychoanalytic treatment in a controlled follow-up study of 1004 patients treated in Berlin. In retrospect, this study has had tremendous influence on the political decisions to include psychotherapeutic treatment as a standard insurance benefit within the public and private insurance system in the German health system (Kächele, 2001). Until today, psychodynamic treatment (including long-term psychoanalysis) as well as cognitive behaviour therapy are parts of the standard covered by the insurance system.

It is not surprising that such a positive environment has favoured many activities of researchers in the field of psychotherapy within psychology and medicine. Today, there are many active research groups within international networks distributed over the entire country. This was not always the case: only two decades after world war II German some departments of psychotherapy and psychosomatic medicine initiated such collaborations in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy research.

The research group at Ulm, the place where Horst Kächele would spent most parts of his professional life, reached specific importance among these German research groups at least with regard to two respects: one is the intensive and ongoing effort to contribute to the development of psychoanalytic treatment based upon theory, clinical work and empirical research, the other is the early attempt of Horst Kächele and Helmut Thomä, the former head

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of the department of psychotherapy, to bring researchers and research approaches from around the world together through international collaboration and organization, especially within the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR).

This chapter primarily aims at describing how Horst Kächele achieved his two major contributions, i.e. (a) advocating empirical process and outcome research within psychoanalysis, and (b) developing international collaborations in psychotherapy research and professional practice.

### Summary of Major Contributions

Having served first as the head of the Ulm Department of Psychotherapy and later also as head of the combined Departments of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy and as well as the director of the Center for Psychotherapy Research in Stuttgart, psychoanalytic process research always has been Horst Kächele's primary passion. His work using qualitative and quantitative approaches to the understanding of psychodynamic treatment has been fundamental for the profile of the entire Ulm research group. His and Helmut Thomä's attempts to integrate these research findings into a teachable theory of psychoanalytic therapy has been summarized in many translations of their textbook on "Psychoanalytic Practice" (e.g. Thomä & Kächele, 1987, 1991; Kächele et al. 2009). In addition to his work related to a model of process research to describe psychoanalytic treatment, he was a very successful initiator and stimulator of research projects – in many specific fields of psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy, motivating young researchers to establish and to continue scientific work in these fields.

Horst Kächele always was a cosmopolitan within the psychotherapeutic world. Accordingly he was very active in trying to establish clinical and research cooperation with South-American and Eastern European countries, and he is considered as one of the god-fathers of the Latin American chapter of the SPR.

### Early Beginnings

Born 1944 in a peaceful Tyrolean village, where his father administered the production of motors for Heinkel airplanes until the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, Horst Kächele then grew up in Stuttgart. His father worked as a public attorney in the de-nazification campaign for awhile after the war later to return to his first profession as a manager. This political interlude in the career of his father probably had an impact on Horst Kächele's choice of his profession that values empathy and social justice, and also on his continuous political activities that aimed in abiding the memories on the dark chapters of German history (he, e.g., was very active in a committee promoting a memorial for the concentration camp "Oberer

Kuhberg” in Ulm, situated closely to Kächele’s department).

A salient feature of his life trajectory was a rather early imprint caused by meeting psychotherapists of various convictions already as a student at the high school (gymnasium) in Stuttgart. His idea to move into the direction of psychoanalysis was set around seventeen/eighteen, since he thought that this profession could be a synthesis of art and science. But, if a young man already knows with the age of 18 that he wants to become a psychoanalyst, he has to suppress this drive for quite a while. Horst Kächele decided to bridge the time until the start of his psychoanalytical training with a medical education (at the universities of Marburg, Leeds [U.K.], and Munich) instead of a psychological one due to his affinity to a helping profession. He received his M.D. in 1969 for a thesis entitled “The concept of psychogenic death within the medical literature”. This is doctoral dissertation – published as his first paper (Kächele 1970). - was related to an issue that - today - in psychoanalytic circles would be called “conceptual research”. He was screening the literature for the psychophysiological mechanisms involved to explain this surprisingly common phenomenon.

When he had finished his doctoral thesis, he deliberately chose Ulm University for his professional career: At that time, Ulm University was newly founded and the Medical Faculty was built up based on a number of reformist ideas, amongst them the inclusion of a Department of Psychosomatic Medicine (chaired by Thure von Uexküll, who has been one of the most influential mentors of this medical discipline in Germany), and a Psychotherapy Department lead by Helmut Thomä, who already was a very well-known psychoanalyst at this time.

Between 1970 and 1975 Horst Kächele obtained a German Research Council funded research position in Ulm. At the unusually young age of 32 years he became “Privatdozent” following his postdoctoral lecture qualification (including a thesis on “Computer assisted Content Analysis within Psychoanalytic Process Research”). He was then appointed as an Associate Professor of psychotherapy heading a section on “psychoanalytic methodology” for the coming 13 years at the Ulm Department of Psychotherapy. During this time, his major achievements were the implementation of a large scale funded multidisciplinary research cooperation on psychotherapeutic processes (1980-1989), and the establishment of the “Ulm Textbank” together with the computer scientist and later SPR president Erhard Mergenthaler. The textbank is a computer based system, enabling the administration and analysis of huge amounts of psychotherapy related transcripts. In 1990 Horst Kächele followed Helmut Thomä to become the head of the entire department that, a few years later, had been combined with

the psychosomatic department.

### Accomplishments

When Kächele was hired by Thomä at the psychotherapy department of Ulm University, it was for working to resolve the very specific problem of handling and analysing tape recordings of psychotherapeutic sessions. Thomä became his mentor from that moment - it is told that Thomä handed a can opener to Kächele when he began to work to symbolize the wish that he would succeed in opening the many preserves he had collected!

The relationship between the two was always complementary, sometimes controversial (especially when Thomä and Kächele talked about patients, many colleagues might remember brilliant disputes), but mostly friendly, and resulted in a large number of publications of which the textbook on psychoanalytic therapy (see below) undoubtedly is the most important one. A highlight of their long time cooperation was reached in 2002, when they together received the Sigmund Freud Award of the city of Vienna and the M. Sigourney Award of the American Psychoanalytic Association in 2004. Until today, the two have a very productive friendship with each other and, as such, their collaboration is central to Kächele's research contributions.

Research studies: When Horst Kächele was the first no-Anglo-American president of the SPR in 1991, he presented a programmatic presidential address that advocated for the intensive analysis of narratives generated in psychotherapy using qualitative and quantitative measures. His likewise early clinical practice sharpened his view of salient research issues (e. g. the urgent need to overcome the "fairytale culture" of clinical reporting).

When the Ulm group began its systematic work on psychoanalytic processes in the early seventies, it mainly focussed on the extensive analysis of single cases that were treated by H. Thomä. The rationale for intensive case studies was to bridge the gap between the clinical and the scientific approach and to keep qualitative and quantitative approaches combined to each other. Therefore, this strategy first involves investigation within the single case where narrative accounts of the therapists were available. Next, cases are aggregated when the research team felt safe enough not to violate the specifics of the single case: "We comprehend the transference neurosis as an interactional representation in the therapeutic relationship of the patient's intrapsychic conflicts, the concrete arrangement of which is a function of the analytic process. This is unique for each dyad, and thus psychoanalysis can legitimately be called a historical science; on the other hand, at a higher level of abstraction it permits the identification of typical patterns of the course of analysis (Thomä & Kächele, 1987, p. 331 ff.)

Both authors, Thomä and Kächele, continuously reflected on aspects of methodology and the philosophy of science related to psychoanalysis and intensively discussed critical arguments against psychoanalytic theory (e.g. Grünbaum, 1984) by demonstrating the usefulness of empirical research methods to support the validity of psychodynamic constructs. A basic essay on the philosophy of science in psychoanalysis from the year 1973 has recently been commented and revised in the third volume of their trilogy (Thomä & Kächele 2006a, b, c; Kächele et al. 2009).

The leading idea of the Ulm research program on psychoanalysis was to use descriptive data of different quality to examine clinical process hypotheses. The basic methodological conception was inspired by Helen Sargent's (1961) recommendations for the Topeka project consisting of a four level approach; on each level, different methods with appropriate material representing different levels of conceptualization should be worked on:

- I clinical case study
- II systematic clinical descriptions
- III guided clinical judgment procedures
- IV computer-assisted and linguistic text analysis

The long-term goal of Kächele's work has been to establish ways of systematically describing the various aspects and dimensions of the psychoanalytic processes. This entailed the generation of general process hypotheses as well as the specification of single-case process assumptions. "Specifying how a psychoanalytic process should unfold must go beyond general clinical ideas by considering the kind of material brought forth by each patient and the strategic interventions most appropriate to achieving change in the dimensions of theoretical relevance specified for each particular case. Although our approach excluded the use of non-clinical measures to limit the intrusions on the clinical process, independent psychometric pre-post outcome data were used to assess the effectiveness of the psychoanalytic treatment, and have been published" (Thomä & Kächele 1987, pp 458).

The first case to be treated by such comprehensive clinical description, Christian Y, was a collaborative endeavour that included the treating analyst, a second psychoanalyst and a clinical psychologist in a group discussion working style. Later, a similar description was prepared for a second research case, Amalia X, which has become a "specimen case" of psychoanalytical single case research and still is the subject of intensive research (Kächele et al., 2006): Amalia X (born 1939) suffered from body image difficulties and was in psychoanalytic treatment (517 sessions) during the early 1970s with good results. Some years later she returned to her former therapist for a short period of analytic therapy because of

problems with her lover, many years her junior. Twenty-five years later she consulted a colleague as her final separation from this partner had caused unbearable difficulties and again asked for circumscribed help.

The case of Amalie has been analysed with a variety of objective and standardized methods that have been described in a series of publications (for a summary cf. Kächele et al., 2006; for the detailed exposition see Kächele et al. 2009). The group studied (a) change of emotional insight, (b) change of self-esteem, (c) types of subjective suffering, (d) change in dreams, (e) focal model of process assessed by the Core Conflictual Relationship Theme (CCRT) method, (f) breaks between sessions and the analytic process, (g) the ‘unconscious plan’ in terms of Control-Mastery theory, (h) psychoanalytic technique as assessed by the Psychotherapy Process Q-Sort method.

The next level of data analyses, computer aided text-analyses, were used with the goal of extending the descriptive power of these observational methods toward narrative efforts that would bring enriched meaning to the lexical analyses from the Ulm Textbank. The following list summarizes the single approaches developed in the Ulm Textbank to analyse verbal material from psychoanalysis and that have been comprehensively used in a variety of studies: Verbal activity, longterm transference trends, personal pronouns, redundancy in patient’s and therapist’s language, classification of anxiety themes, emotive aspects of therapeutic language, change of body concepts, cognitive changes during psychoanalysis, changes of latent meaning structures, affective dictionary, parts of speech, core conflictual words.

All results on psychoanalytic dialogues studied by these techniques underscore the dyadic nature of the process. “Whatever microsystem is analyzed, one finds dyadic dependencies and specifics within dyads. This has been one of the reasons why the Ulm research paradigm has been so intrigued by the study of single cases” (Kächele, 1992b). One of the fruits from Kächele’s initiative which is closely linked with the “textbank” is Erhard Mergenthaler’s “Therapeutic Cycle Model” describing the changing ratio between abstraction and emotion and their connection during the psychotherapeutic process.

Implications of Kächele’s research on clinical practice can mostly be seen as the continuous attempt to sensitize therapists for specific aspects or variables of the therapeutic process such as language, emotion and conflict, and to relate these variables to an operational model or system. Although Horst Kächele was not directly involved in its development, it is not surprising that the leader author of the “Operationalized Psychodynamic Diagnosis” system (OPD working group, 2008), Manfred Cierka, studied with him in the Ulm

department.

Stimulated by his visits of colleagues in the US such as Lester Luborsky, Hans H. Strupp, or Hartvig Dahl, Horst Kächele imported a variety of measures and approaches into German psychotherapy research, such as the Core Conflictual Relationship Theme (CCRT), the Frames of Mind-method, Plan-Analysis and others. Together with Klaus Grawe, he founded the project “PEP” (Psychotherapeutische Einzelfall Prozessforschung, or, in English “SPR” [!]: Single Case Process Research). The idea of PEP was to collect a large number of process researchers who were experts in a variety of measures/approaches and to initiate comparative research related to just two single cases. The verbatim transcripts of two short term psychotherapies (one psychodynamic performed by Kächele himself, the other one cognitive behavioural by a Bernese junior college) provided the basis for PEP. Kächele and Grawe succeeded in bringing more than 40 different researchers together, all working intensively with the material. A large number of publications resulted from this project describing the process of the two therapies on a linguistic level, using hermeneutic and specific (process) measures such as SASB, the Vanderbilt Scales, the CCRT and many others (Kächele, 1992a).

*Other contributions:* Although process research, narration and observation represent Horst Kächele’s primary interest, he also has initiated research in a wide variety of other fields within the disciplines of psychotherapy and psychosomatic medicine. In his function as the chair of the Stuttgart Center for Psychotherapy Research (between 1988 and 2004), he was successful in getting a huge grant from the German research ministry to run a 5 year research project consisting of a multi-site study of the effectiveness of an inpatient psychodynamic treatment of eating disorders (e. g. Kächele, Kordy, & Richard, 2001). The study investigated factors determining the length of treatment and the effect of treatment duration on treatment outcome among patients with eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia nervosa). It consisted of an observation of the symptomatic status of 1171 patients who were assessed for 2.5 years after their admission to one of 43 participating hospitals. Treatment modalities, especially length and intensity, varied considerably between and within hospitals, but were related to patient characteristics to a very small degree. At 2.5 year follow-up 33% of patients with anorexia, and 25% of the patients with bulimia were symptom free. Across the whole sample length of treatment showed weak effects on outcome and interacted with other patient characteristics of relevance, whereas treatment intensity was not clearly related to treatment outcome. This project (TR-EAT) initiated a similar study on a European level and has contributed to the implementation of patient focussed treatment research as one major

fields of Horst Kächele's team in Stuttgart, with Hans Kordy, another influential person within SPR, being the major representative (e.g. Puschner et al., 2007).

Horst Kächele also stimulated in Stuttgart research on the screening and utilization of treatment in mothers suffering from postnatal depression (e.g. von Ballestrem, Strauss, & Kächele, 2002), a study that was part of his research team on perinatal medicine. In his Ulm perinatal group, a variety of well-funded projects dealt with the determinants and consequences of premature birth (e.g. Brisch et al., 2005; Buchheim et al., 1999). Research on attachment was part of these projects, as well as in his work with adults (cf. Strauss, Buchheim, & Kächele, 2002), and psychoanalytic single case research (e.g. Buchheim & Kächele, 2003).

Among a wide variety of other research fields (e.g. music therapy, ethics in psychotherapy, psycho-politics, neurobiology, service and training research, cf. <http://www.horstkaechele.de>), one important field in Horst Kächele's work that needs to be mentioned is psycho-oncology. From 1985 onwards he succeeded to establish a research group collaborating with the department of hematology and oncology in Ulm comprising three generations of young researchers. Research on coping and determinants of survival in patients undergoing bone marrow transplantation has been a major concern in his medical part of his professional life (e.g. Grulke, Bailer, Hertenstein et al., 2005).

*Influences:* Horst Kächele's primary mentor was Helmut Thomä, but there were several others who continuously worked with him and largely influenced his theoretical thinking and the way he conceptualized psychotherapy research. North American colleagues have already been mentioned (i.e. Luborsky, Strupp, Orlinsky, Howard, Dahl and many others). Within the German speaking world, it was especially Adolf-Ernst Meyer, chair of the Psychosomatic department of Psychosomatic Medicine in Hamburg, with whom Horst was closely connected and with whom he shared not only scientific ideas, but also the enthusiasm for strict science. Meyer's conception of psychoanalytic research was very similar to Horst Kächele's, especially with respect to his request that psychoanalytical concepts (and treatments) always should be empirically supported.

Inversely, Horst Kächele has mentored a variety of researchers in his departments in Ulm and Stuttgart: Hans Kordy, Erhard Mergenthaler, Michael Hölzer, Anna Buchheim, Reiner Dahlbender or Dan Pokorny, just to mention a few, and he has significantly contributed to the development of a well functioning network of researchers/institutions active in psychodynamic psychotherapy research inside and outside of Germany.

Kächele had been visiting several early SPR meetings in England and the United



States. Following a first international conference on psychoanalytic process research at Ulm University in 1985 (published in an edited book entitled “Psychoanalytic Process Research”, Dahl, Kächele, & Thomä, 1988), Horst Kächele and his team finally hosted the 18<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the SPR in Ulm in the year 1987. This meeting has been the first international SPR Meeting in a non-English speaking country, the first ever in Continental Europe (many others, e.g. in Lyon, Geilo, Braga, Weimar and Rome were to follow). The Ulm meeting opened the gate to SPR for many Europeans (and also people from other countries). Accordingly, this meeting also contributed to the fact that several Europeans took responsibilities within the society during the following years. It is not surprising that Horst Kächele himself became the first European to be President of the SPR. Several other Europeans, i. e. Klaus Grawe, Franz Caspar, Erhard Mergenthaler and the author of this chapter were able to follow him.

### Conclusion

Even as retired chair of the Ulm department, Horst Kächele is still a very active researcher, and he is still trying to verify his idea to bring psychoanalytical practice and empirical research more closely together. In one of his recent articles he summarized: “We say this in order to encourage other psychoanalysts to open the privacy of their clinical work in the endeavour to improve clinical work by allowing others in the scientific community to carefully scrutinize their work. For this purpose, we recommend the training of researchers who are also trained as clinicians, and the training of clinicians who are also trained as researchers, so that they may learn to identify with both the clinical and research tasks” (Kächele et al., 2006, p. 824).

Although Horst Kächele also has actively participated in mainstream psychotherapy research, as the variety of his projects in Ulm and Stuttgart reflect, his legacy will be predominantly his specific efforts and approaches to validate the process of psychoanalytic treatment. Horst Kächele’s major interest was always directed to the empirically based development of psychoanalytic theory that can be used by practicing clinicians. This has found its condensation in the (meanwhile) three volume textbook “Psychoanalytic Practice”. This textbook, which was published in a German 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition in the year 2006, has meanwhile been translated into more than 10 languages (in order of appearance: English, Hungarian, Spanish, Italian, Tchechian, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Roumanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Persian)! The numerous translations of this textbook reflect Horst Kächele’s ability to bring the psychotherapy world together.

It might be at least two specific traits of Horst Kächele that made an extraordinary

psychotherapy researcher out of him: One is his ability to daydream. He once described himself as a daydreamer in the sense of Ernst Bloch, who conceptualized daydreaming as the anticipation of imagination instead of a regression to the past. Daydreams have undoubtedly quickened Horst Kächele's scientific imaginations.

The other trait is described within a virtual dialogue with his mentor Helmut Thomä. In this dialogue, Horst Kächele cites himself with the statement: "Not to be counted to the conformists is the precondition of creative beginning for me. This is always connected with the risk of a failure!"

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