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## Cremerius: Psychoanalysis as Illumination. An Obituary

On the 20th of March 2002, the Freudian psychoanalyst Johannes Cremerius, whose life and scholarly contributions had a great historical importance, sadly passed away in the Rhineland where he was born in 1918, and from whence his family originated. It was a place, as he liked to recall, where the Germanic races and the Romans had lived in peace for centuries, and in fact his own existence was, for various reasons, Italo-Germanic, such that he defined Italy as his “second fatherland”.

In 1939 he took refuge in the Collegio Ghislieri of Pavia, in order to study medicine without having to suffer the interference and commands of Nazi culture. Forced to return to Germany, he was sent to work as a doctor on the Western front, and during the retreat he was among the few survivors of a shipwreck in the strait of Skagerrak. His medical training involved specializations in psychiatry and internal medicine as well as psychosomatic and psychoanalytic training. In 1950 he was sent to the United States and got to know the most important psychoanalysts who were exiled from Europe for political and racial reasons, such as Alexander, Kris, Loewenstein, Horney, Rado and Deutsch. On his return to Germany, the Rockefeller Foundation gave him the funds for opening a psychosomatics department at the Polyclinic of Munich, where he carried out important research on the psychodynamics of diabetes mellitus. He went on to obtain a teaching position at the University of Giessen, and then at Freiburg. In those years, psychoanalysts with university posts were strongly committed, according to the ideals of the Frankfurt school, to promoting, against residual authoritarianism, the spirit of criticism and democratic activism.

The fruitful meeting in Italy in 1966 with Gaetano Benedetti and Pier Francesco Galli, the founders of the Milanese group for the development of psychotherapy, and the well-known publication *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, was based on these affinities. Following this meeting, Cremerius collaborated with other similar centres, the last of which was the School of

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, which publishes the journal *Setting*. Cremerius' numerous works deal, always from a psychoanalytic point of view, with themes ranging from history to sociology, from clinical practice to theory, education, literary criticism, aesthetics and the professional training of analysts.

In a recent interview—published here—with Marco Francesconi, one of his most careful and attentive Italian biographers, Cremerius affirms that the aim of therapy does not consist in healing understood as an adaptation to social needs or norms, since “the way is the aim”, and the psychoanalytical way involves an experience of “illumination” of the Self and the world. But this can only take place if the search is conducted in full liberty, outside bureaucratic rules and institutional conditioning. The patient is not a sick person, but a man committed to a difficult existential undertaking. As such he should not be modified, but should rather be understood and accompanied because life is creation, not adaptation in order to conform. “I believe—says Cremerius—that only a person who has fully entered into the Freudian philosophy can be recognised as an analyst, since only he will have entered into the fight for liberty, against antisemitism and the oppression of the weak, for the rights of children, for the respect of women and the recognition of their value”.

His spiritual heritage concludes with the words: “Note that I am an enpassioned Enlightenment thinker, although I have had to suffer some defeats”. For us, however, the worst defeat is his death, the impossibility, from now on, to listen to such a noble and strong voice. Among his principal works are: “Education and

Psychoanalysis”, “Neurosis and  
Genius”, “The Analyst’s Trade”, “Clinical Psicomatics”, and “The Future of Psychoanalysis” (see the  
section CONTRIBUTORS in this same issue).