

Performing as a Firefighter: Reconstruction of Donald Trump's Speech on the Storming of the Capitol Through Depth Hermeneutics

Hans-Dieter König

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Abstract: TRUMP's speech of January 2021, by which he moved his supporters to storm the Capitol, caused wide-spread concern. However, the psychological mechanisms that enabled him to mobilize the audience in the service of his agenda are not sufficiently understood. Employing depth hermeneutics, a psychoanalytic method based on examining the effects of the speech on a group of researchers, I reconstruct TRUMP's address to reveal tensions between its manifest and latent meanings and account for its effects. I argue that his systematic use of falsehoods results in a reversal of the everyday relationship between manifest and latent meaning: In everyday life, socially acceptable wishes and fantasies are given voice and reprehensible ones are relegated to a latent level. TRUMP, conversely, relies on falsehoods to fire up his supporters by evoking socially objectionable concepts of life and to make fact- and reason-based objections to his claims unconscious. The fears and aggression fueled by the dramatization of the current political situation affect particularly, though not exclusively, those listeners who, due to traumas experienced in childhood, are susceptible to TRUMP's coping strategy of authoritarian conformity.

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"Fair is foul, and foul is fair"
(SHAKESPEARE 1972 [1606], p.4).

1. Research Design¹

Within the framework of a qualitative-interpretative research project on the depth-hermeneutic reconstruction of political stagings, selected political speeches in Germany and the USA (KÖNIG, 2001, 2008, 2019a, 2019b, 2022a) have been analyzed for years in the tradition of the Frankfurt Studies on Authoritarianism. LÖWENTHAL and GUTERMAN (2021 [1949]) and ADORNO, FRENKEL-BRUNSWIK, LEVINSON and SANFORD (2019 [1950]) already showed that the fascist agitators, in their speeches, do not appeal to reason but to repressed urges, unfulfilled longings and deep fears. However, their studies were limited to examining the propaganda techniques used by fascist agitators, which could be grasped by drawing on *theories* of psychoanalysis. They did not yet make it possible to grasp how populist politicians concretely address and assimilate the conscious and unconscious experience of the subjects through their speeches. This research gap is to be closed by the present research project, in which I applied the *method* of psychoanalysis used in clinical practice to the research field of the social world located beyond the couch. The methodologically enlightened approach of depth-hermeneutic cultural research opens up the affective content of texts and images by having recourse to a group of researchers who subject themselves to its effect on their own experience. [1]

How this research project proceeds is illustrated based on an exemplarily selected speech that Donald J. TRUMP gave in front of the White House on January 6, 2021 to incite the crowd to storm the Capitol. My depth-hermeneutic reconstruction of the speech is structured in the following way: First, I summarize the rules to be followed when applying this method of data analysis (Section 2). Then, the meaning of TRUMP's speech, which unfolds in the tension between a manifest and a latent meaning, is examined (Section 3). The manifest meaning is derived from TRUMP's intention to "save" democracy, an enlightenment claim that is understood as a discursive symbol system addressing the consciousness of his followers. Next, selected scenes from the group discussion are reproduced to exemplify how researchers tap into the affective content of the speech by understanding the text as a pictorial-presentative edifice of symbols and developing associations, irritations and initial attempts at interpretation on the basis of their experience of the text. This group interpretation forms the starting point for the scenic reconstruction of the latent meaning of the speech, which is determined, on the one hand, by the arousal of feelings of powerlessness and rage as well as by calling up fears of castration and death, and, on the other hand, by making people unconscious of TRUMP's lies, his attacks on democracy and the swamp of filth and corruption for which he is responsible as president. The conclusions that can be drawn from such a reconstruction of the case are revealed by the socialization-theoretical reflection of the interpretation (Section 4): First, it is clarified that the use of psychoanalytic concepts necessitates their

1 I would like to thank Georgia CHRISTINIDIS for critical proofreading.

social-scientific reformulation, as FREUD wrote his theories in the scientific language of the 19th century, which today is easily misunderstood in physicalist, biologicistic and sexist terms. Then, with recourse to ADORNO et al. (2019 [1950]), it is explained to what extent TRUMP's political speech can be understood as an element of an authoritarian socialization of his supporters. And finally, the comparison of the qualitative-interpretative case reconstruction with various quantitative contributions to TRUMP's mass effect shows not only the latter's weaknesses, but also the necessity of no longer understanding authoritarianism as a manifestation of a social character. Rather, the authoritarian syndrome is to be understood as an expression of a widespread coping strategy to which subjects always resort to in times of crisis when they react with fear and aggression. [2]

2. On the Method of Depth Hermeneutics

The political psychological question of how TRUMP's speech led his supporters to angrily occupy the Capitol will be examined using the method of depth hermeneutic cultural analysis developed by Alfred LORENZER (2022 [1986])². This qualitative-interpretative method of psychoanalytic cultural research differs from the naïve application of psychoanalysis to politics, which reaches a dead end, for example, when examining the question of how presidents affect their people. When Lloyd DeMAUSE (1984) put Ronald REAGAN on the couch or Justin FRANK (2004) did the same with George W. BUSH, they psychologized and pathologized the political-psychological question of how presidents gain power over their compatriots by interacting with them. The authors of such studies commit the methodological error of applying concepts developed in psychotherapeutic practice to political events (KÖNIG, 1995, 2007). Researchers who conduct studies based on depth hermeneutics avoid this error by modifying the method of "scenic understanding"³ developed in clinical practice (LORENZER, 1970, pp.138-194; see also KÖNIG, 2014, pp.99-135) in a way that does justice to the requirements of research in political psychology beyond the couch and is suitable for discovering something new in accordance with a qualitative research practice. [3]

Anyone who uses depth hermeneutics as a research method has to comply with a series of rules that I have already described elsewhere (KÖNIG, 2019b, pp.26ff.). While in the following, I outline the methodological rules to be respected in the scenic interpretation of a political speech, the outlined procedure is also transferable, albeit in a more or less modified form, to other protocols of social research, such as narrative interviews, group discussions or participant observation: [4]

2 See also BERESWILL, MORGENROTH and REDMAN (2010), KÖNIG (2004, 2019c), KÖNIG, KÖNIG, LOHL and WINTER (2020), KÖNIG, BURGERMEISTER, BRUNNER, BERG and KÖNIG (2019), LEITHÄUSER (2012), SALLING OLESEN (2012), SALLING OLESEN and WEBER (2012), SAUVAVRE (2022), STEPHENS (2022).

3 All translations from non-English texts are mine.

1. *Horizontal hermeneutics*: In the course of what LORENZER (1974, p.114) called "horizontal hermeneutics," as a first step the researchers need to reconcile their own understanding of the text with that of the audience enthused by TRUMP. Therefore, the researchers experimentally insert various presuppositions into the scenes of the text until the subjective meanings that TRUMP sought to arouse in his listeners through his words can be grasped.

Vertical hermeneutics: Then, in the course of what LORENZER called "vertical hermeneutics" (ibid.), conscious and unconscious elements of the text need to be understood in their own right and in relation to each other. This can only be achieved if the following rules are observed: [5]

2. In order to understand how a text is interpreted in depth hermeneutics, it is important to distinguish, with Susanne K. LANGER (1984 [1942]), two forms of cultural symbol formation: First, rational processes of understanding that rely on the exchange of arguments, making use of the "discursive symbolism" of language and utilizing a generally comprehensible vocabulary whose independent and delimitable units of meaning are translatable and conform to the rules of a syntactic order. Second, in contrast, rituals and myths, but also works of art, that prove to be the precipitate of a "presentative symbolism," which is composed of meaning elements that cannot be translated individually and cannot be isolated from each other, which combine to form a holistic structure of meaning. However, there are also borderline cases: Just as pictograms are an example of how images are used discursively, literature is a case of the presentative use of language. In the case of TRUMP's speech, it is true that the initial concern is a cognitive understanding of the text as a discursive symbol system. But the affective impact of his speech on the audience is only revealed when this text is understood as a presentative symbol system. This becomes possible to the extent that the researchers allow TRUMP's words to have such an effect on their own experience from the first reading of the text, as if they were emotionally engaged, similar to a theater audience's engagement with the performance of a play. [6]

3. As soon as the researchers have agreed on the interpretation of a scene in the group interpretation, they represent the text passage to themselves in its scenic concreteness. The text is performed as if on stage with divided roles. In the present case, one participant in the group took on TRUMP's role by reading out his words, while another participant put herself in the role of the audience experiencing the relevant passages of the text being read out. Through this kind of re-enactment, the practice of life⁴ objectified in the text is actualized⁵: What

4 Practice of life is here used to translate the German term *Lebenspraxis* which is objectified in interactions not only by means of language, but also through tone, facial expressions, gestures, and atmosphere. Its counterpart is the term *Lebentwurf* [concept of life], which is used, in the context of depth hermeneutics, to denote a subject's conscious and unconscious impulses, wishes, fantasies, interests, and ideas.

5 The central role played by actualizing the meaning of the text in the present through re-enactment and affective experience is expressed, in this study, through the use of the present tense wherever the latent meaning of the text thus actualized is under consideration. The manifest meaning that is rationally considered from a distance, on the other hand, is discussed using the past tense.

happened in the past becomes a living present in which the researchers are immersed in the affects that were acted out at the time in the interaction between TRUMP and the audience. [7]

4. The practice of life that touches listeners, readers, or researchers emotionally can be put into words by following FREUD's (1999a [1900]) method of dream interpretation. Just as FREUD understood the dream as a "picture puzzle" whose meaning is opened up (p.284), practitioners of depth hermeneutics understand the text in its sensual-pictorial meaning and thus reconstruct it as a presentative edifice of symbols. This process captures the "intrinsic values of the imagery" (LORENZER, 2022 [1986], p.77) in which the audience's unconsciously held concepts of life are expressed. [8]

5. The wealth of impressions, which arise from letting the text affect one's own experience and understanding it as a presentative assembly of symbols, can be captured by following FREUD's (1999b [1912]) advice with regard to psychoanalytical understanding: On the one hand, one should adhere to "not wanting to remember anything in particular" and adopt an attitude of "evenly suspended attention" (p.377) towards the text. On the other hand, one is encouraged to follow the rule of free association and "say everything that comes to mind" about the text "without criticism or selection" (ibid.). Thus, one's personal ideas direct one's attention and, ultimately, one's understanding. [9]

6. Because it is understood as a presentative system of symbols, a political speech can be analyzed as an ambiguous structure of meaning that, like the dream, is composed of "two different languages" (FREUD, 1999a [1900], p.283). Like the dream, which consists of "manifest dream content" and "latent dream thoughts" (ibid.), the meaning of the text unfolds in the tension between a manifest and a latent meaning. While on the manifest level, social action allows subjects to communicate about socially accepted concepts of life, socially objectionable concepts of life are banished to and enacted on the latent level of meaning. [10]

7. Inconsistencies and contradictions in the data material trigger what LORENZER (1990, p.267) called irritations (see also KÖNIG 1996, pp.353-356). These provide access to the latent meaning hidden behind the manifest meaning. [11]

8. Since the text is envisioned as a living practice of life (Rule 3), which the researchers allow to affect their experience as a whole (Rule 2) and interpret as a presentative symbolic structure (Rule 4), scenic understanding begins with the interpretation of an interaction scene, which attracts attention due to both the associations and the irritations it precipitates. What remains disconcerting about a scene is explained by consulting other scenes that are either adjacent to it, or that occur at a completely different point of the text but generate comparable irritations. Based on this search for resemblances, it is possible to collate and relate to each other scenes that, when analyzed in depth, exemplify the same or

similar scenic interaction patterns. These sets of scenes can be assembled to form sequences based on the same situational structure. [12]

9. *The interpretation process within the research group*⁶: The search for latent meaning always starts from one's own experience, one's own associations and irritations. However, within the group, one exchanges ideas with others who experience the text differently and bring up further ideas and irritations. Through the discussion of the text, diverse readings are generated because the researchers sympathize with different aspects of the potential meanings contained in the text. An interpretation is then constructed that unfolds its facets in the tension between a manifest and a latent meaning,⁷ based on the different approaches to understanding the text that have emerged during the discussion. [13]

10. Openness to diverse approaches is ensured by beginning the group discussion with a so-called lightning round during which researchers briefly recount how they experienced the text, what it brought to their mind, what about it irritated them and how they therefore understand it. As very personal experiences of the text are exchanged among group members, a lively controversy about different ways of reading it develops. [14]

11. Competing and contradictory approaches to understanding generate conflicts, which are understood as scenes taking shape between the researchers within the group. From these, conclusions may be drawn about the scenic structure of the practice of life objectified in the text. The latent meaning of the text is therefore revealed both through its effect on the reader and through its effect on the group of researchers involved in the discussion. [15]

12. *Documenting the facets of textual meaning that unfold in the tension between a manifest and a latent meaning*: In a *research diary*, the researchers record ideas, irritations and approaches to understanding that determine their own working process, but also the emotions felt in encountering the text, including the fears and uncertainties experienced in the process. The records thus created document the researchers' personal approach to the practice of life enacted in the text through their own experiences and readings. Based on these diaries, how one experiences the text, consciously as well as unconsciously, and how this experience has changed under the influence of growing understanding can be systematically clarified in conversation with other researchers. [16]

13. After reading the text, the researcher makes a *memory log*: How did I experience TRUMP's words? Which statements did I experience as irritating due to contradictions and inconsistencies? What approach did I spontaneously pursue in construing his speech? To start off the group's evaluation of the data, all group

6 For an understanding of the group process in depth hermeneutics, see also KÖNIG (1993).

7 My (KÖNIG, 2019c, pp.38-61) reconstruction of Rainer Maria RILKE's poem "Der Panther" (2006 [1902/1903]), an analysis based on a group discussion that occurred at a meeting of the Depth Hermeneutic Research Workshop (see Note 11 below), showed how a depth-hermeneutic group interpretation developed and came to serve as the foundation of a depth-hermeneutic text interpretation.

members use the notes in their research diary and their memory log to recount how they experienced the political speech, what was disconcerting, and how they feel presenting their data for discussion. [17]

14. The group discussion is *recorded* in order to preserve the group's experience of the text and the interpretations thus generated for later use. [18]

15. *Evaluation of the data in two stages: Scenic interpretation* represents the *first stage* in a hermeneutic process of understanding that takes place through colloquial discussion. Even though researchers are guided by their experience when reading the speech, the recourse to subjective experience is not an end in itself; rather, it is employed in the service of the scenic interpretation of a presentative assembly of symbols, which is to be understood as a complex structure of sensual-pictorial scenes with numerous "nodes" (FREUD, 1999a [1900], p.289), in which manifest and latent meaning are interconnected in a variety of ways. Since the manifest and the latent are linked in the text, each element is "overdetermined" (ibid.). As a result of this "multiple determination" (p.301), scenic details allow for different interpretations.

In addition, scenic interpretation unfolds in the tension between three levels of interaction: 1. The text as the objectivation of a scenically displayed interactional structure. 2. Access to the ambiguous meaning of the text opens up on the basis of the text-reader interaction: The researchers, under the impression of the emotional impact of the text, react with different ideas and explore different approaches to understanding. 3. Through the conversation about different ideas, through the objections raised and through controversies about colliding approaches to the text, different scenes take shape in the research group, giving rise to conclusions about the significance of the text, which unfolds in the tension between a manifest and a latent level. The various elements of the text therefore also prove to be overdetermined in the sense that different recipients develop different facets of meaning, and the momentum that emerges in the group can open up further avenues of understanding. Of course, all these readings have to be checked for their validity with recourse to the text. [19]

16. The *second stage* of the hermeneutic process of understanding is constituted by the *theoretical understanding* of case reconstruction, in the course of which insights into the text's mode of action gained through interpretation are typified and discussed in conjunction with psychoanalytical and social science literature. In this way, it becomes clear whether political actors address reason through the text in order to enlighten, or whether they serve prejudices, xenophobia or conspiracy thinking by arousing negative affects. [20]

17. *Drawing and validating conclusions*: Unlike the analytical-empirical social sciences, where deduction and induction serve as forms of logical reasoning, depth hermeneutics, like ADORNO's methodology (1979a [1957], 1979b [1962], 1979c [1969], 1979d [1969]; see also BONß, 1983; KÖNIG, 1996), relies on what PEIRCE (1991 [1967]) called abductive reasoning, according to which new insights "strike us like a bolt of lightning" (p.404), because it is an "unconscious

process" "which is not sufficiently conscious to be controlled" (ibid.). As correct as it is when REICHERTZ (1993) stated that in abductive reasoning "the consciously working mind familiar with logical rules is outmaneuvered" (p.277), his conclusion that abductive reasoning is not a method but "the acquisition of an attitude of abandoning old beliefs and seeking new ones" (p.279) does not do justice to the matter.

I have investigated what is actually at issue (KÖNIG 1996, pp.356ff.) by reconstructing, following REICHERTZ (1993), the two situations which, according to PEIRCE (1991 [1967]), facilitate the occurrence of abductive flashes: Even if abductive flashes are not a method of logical reasoning, REICHERTZ (1993) overlooked the fact that FREUD elevated the abductive "attitude of actually wanting to learn something and not applying what has been learned" (REICHERTZ, 1993, pp.279f.) to a method. The rules of free association and equal attention, as well as the concept of interpretation based on the analysis of countertransference reveal that FREUD created a setting that allows for a systematic, abductive uncovering of unconscious webs of meaning. In depth hermeneutics, abductive reasoning comes into its own in two ways: on the one hand, in the course of scenic text interpretation, changing experimental arrangements are played out until, through abductive reasoning, the various scenes come together to form a scenic constellation that illuminates the enigma of the practice of life displayed in the text in a flash. On the other hand, the results of the depth-hermeneutic case reconstruction are considered in light of attempts at clarification based on socialization theory until the theoretical concepts placed in relation to each other come together to form a conceptual construction that does justice to the peculiarity of the text and, at the same time, reduces it to an idea that can be generalized. [21]

18. Formally, the "reliability"⁸ of the interpretation is ensured by the fact that the different levels of the construction of meaning are strictly separated. The practice of life objectified by the text is a first-order construction, from which scenic interpretation in colloquial language, as a second-order construction, must be distinguished. Theoretical comprehension as a third-order construction must be differentiated from either⁹. In terms of content, the reliability of the overall interpretation is guaranteed by the fact that the interpretations of individual scene complexes are checked and corrected on the basis of other scene contexts until the individual interpretations combine to form a coherent scenic constellation—an ambiguous signifying structure with numerous facets of meaning unfolding in the tension between the manifest and the latent. [22]

8 Although "validity" and "reliability" represent quality criteria comparable to those employed in the context of empirical social analyses, these terms have a different meaning in the qualitative-interpretative research of depth hermeneutics than they do in quantitative research.

9 The naïve application of psychoanalysis to culture described earlier subsumes the practice of life that is constituted at the level of first-degree construction under general concepts that have been developed at the level of third-degree construction. In this way, the second-degree construction, where the scenic peculiarity of the case structure is captured in colloquial language, is arbitrarily skipped. The data material is thus not reconstructed according to its own dynamics, but is misused as an illustrative foil for the validity of a theory that has long since proven itself in other contexts.

19. The "validity" of the interpretation depends first of all on the fact that the readings based on the group members' experiences of the text are checked against the scenically unfolded contents of the text to see how comprehensible and convincing they are. The interpretation thus starts from an affective understanding that is subsequently translated into cognitive comprehension, resulting in a scenic and conceptual construction that claims to represent reality in a coherent, plausible and convincing way. [23]

20. The validity of the interpretation is also ensured by the fact that various strategies of triangulation are inherent in the method, which will be briefly outlined following Uwe FLICK's (2004) presentation of the proposals developed by Norman K. DENZIN (2009): As described previously (Rules 9-11), an "investigator triangulation" (FLICK 2004, p.179) should be "carried out in groups, so as to expand, correct or check the subjective views of interpreters" (ibid.). This is achieved by ensuring that the text under consideration is evaluated by a group of researchers who discuss their different emotional reactions and approaches with each other and agree on an interpretation composed of a construction of different readings. A "triangulation of theories" (p.181) that opens up the object of research "from different theoretical angles, in order to uncover new facets of the theories in the data" (ibid.) also takes place in depth hermeneutics. As outlined above (Rule 16), the research results are to be understood from the perspective of psychoanalytic personality and cultural theory as well as from the perspective of critical social theory. In addition, a "methodological triangulation" (p.180) takes place in depth hermeneutics, according to which different methods are used in one method ("between-method triangulation") (ibid.). Since in depth hermeneutics content analysis is combined with impact analysis, the method is grounded in two different forms of understanding: The analysis of the manifest meaning of the text is based on cognitive understanding, concerns content and form, and it conceptualizes cultural objectivations, such as texts, as discursive symbol systems that follow the logic and grammar of a language. Latent meaning, on the other hand, is accessed through affective understanding and treats the text as a presentational assembly of symbols, a structure of scenes and images whose significance is grasped through their effect on one's own experience. [24]

Finally, it depends on the given research project whether a "triangulation of data" occurs (p.179). Where this is the case, data are linked that originate from different sources and are collected at different times, in different places or from different people. An example that fulfills this requirement would be my (KÖNIG, 2008) depth-hermeneutical reconstruction of two speeches by George W. BUSH, which were sampled at different points in time and whose results were triangulated with a secondary analysis of the data material of a biographical study on BUSH. [25]

3. Scenic Reconstruction of TRUMP's "Save America"-Speech

3.1 The manifest sense of the address

On the morning of January 6, 2021, TRUMP gave an outdoor speech in Washington.¹⁰ The official nature of this event was signaled by TRUMP speaking at a lectern framed with American flags bearing the presidential emblem. In keeping with the presidential occasion, he wore a white shirt with a red tie, a dark coat and black gloves. [26]

TRUMP used coarse language abruptly and repeatedly to give his audience the feeling that he is talking like everybody else. He angrily emphasized certain phrases, underlining the power of his whipping voice with abrupt arm movements and adopting a threatening attitude that demanded unconditional obedience from his followers. Scowling at the audience with half-closed eyes and speaking with his chin aggressively thrust forward, he resonated with the gloomy mood of his supporters and simultaneously expressed and heightened their anger about their own precarious social situation through his mordant description of the political situation. The fact that his sentences, delivered with defiant indignation, repeatedly elicited cheers reveals that he infected the audience with his desire to revolt against those up there and invited them to direct their anger against those he dubs enemies of the people. [27]

TRUMP's audience consisted of a "largely white crowd" (TAVERNISE & ROSENBERG, 2021, n.p.) in which several distinct groups stood out: His supporters, who wore his slogan "Make America great again" on their red caps and far-right protesters wearing crusader crosses "to show off their white supremacist beliefs" (BYMAN, 2021, n.p.). Some of the latter held up flags with "the Roman numeral III in place of the stars of an American flag, referencing the (false) belief that only 3 percent of Americans fought in the Revolutionary War and thus a vanguard is necessary to, again, liberate America" (ibid.). Jake ANGELI, a member of "the conspiratorial right," "who has pushed the false QAnon claims that Mr. Trump was elected to save America from deep-state bureaucrats and prominent Democrats who worship Satan and abuse children" (TAVERNISE & ROSENBERG, 2021, n.p.), stood out by wearing a Viking helmet and furs. The members of this motley crowd, who had in November 2020 (SNYDER, 2021) been told the "big lie" by TRUMP that the election had been stolen from him and his supporters, were now waiting for their president to tell them what to do. Some protesters expressed the feeling "that something would happen—something that was bigger than they were. What exactly it would be no one could say" (TAVERNISE & ROSENBERG, 2021, n.p.). [28]

What TRUMP then communicated to his supporters turns out to be ambiguous. The manifest meaning of his speech is revealed when it is understood as a discursive symbol system addressed to the consciousness of his listeners. His

¹⁰ His speech lasted one hour and thirteen minutes (TRUMP, 2021). It was composed of 78 sections, added to which were five sections in which the reactions of the audience are transcribed. Citations reference the timestamp (hr: min: sec) of the relevant section.

intention was announced by the title of his speech: "Save America." In his speech, TRUMP assumed that "we won this election [...] by a landslide" (2021, 0:04:42):

"This was not a close election. [...] I've been in two elections. I won them both and the second one, I won much bigger than the first. Almost 75 million people voted for our campaign, the most of any incumbent president by far in the history of our country" (0:04:42). [29]

Although "we" beat the Democrats "four years ago," this year "they rigged an election. They rigged it like they've never rigged an election before." But this is ignored: "All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical left Democrats, which is what they're doing and stolen by the fake news media" (0:02:44). [30]

TRUMP argued that the Democrats' manipulation of the elections was covered up by the press, which wanted to proscribe any criticism: "It suppresses thought. It suppresses speech, and it's become the enemy of the people" (0:16:25). Thus, he claimed the media strove to hide the Democrats' intentions: "They want to come in again and rip off our country. Can't let it happen" (01:10:52), for the audience gathered here are "American patriots" (0:02:44):

"As this enormous crowd shows, we have truth and justice on our side. We have a deep and enduring love for America in our hearts. We love our country. [...] Together we are determined to defend and preserve government of the people, by the people and for the people" (01:10:52). [31]

And "to save our democracy" (0:11:25), this crowd was now faced with a special task:

"[...] the constitution says you have to protect our country and you have to protect our constitution and you can't vote on fraud, and fraud breaks up everything, doesn't it? When you catch somebody in a fraud, you're allowed to go by very different rules" (01:03:56). [32]

For this reason, "we're going to, we're going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue [...] to take back our country" (01:12:43). Thus, by storming the Capitol, TRUMP wanted to force the congresspeople to deny the popularly elected President Joseph R. BIDEN official confirmation by the parliament. [33]

3.2 Irritations experienced by members of the research group

After the manifest sense of the speech has been outlined in order to capture its cognitive significance, the affective content expressed through the latent sense needs to be identified. For this purpose, I put the text up for discussion by a group of researchers who, in accordance with the depth-hermeneutic method, took the effect of the text on their experience as their point of departure. This group discussion occurred in the context of the conference of the Research Workshop on Depth Hermeneutics¹¹, which took place in Frankfurt am Main, Germany in autumn 2021 and was attended by researchers who teach at various universities, work on doctoral projects in the social sciences, or work as psychoanalysts in their own practice. [34]

First, the nine participants in the group interpretation agreed on the overt message of the speech addressed to reason. Then the task was to talk about their own experience of the text in order to gain access to the affective content of the speech by producing ideas and irritations. The following excerpts from the group discussion illustrate how emotional reactions bring to life the social practice objectified in the text and serve to flush out latent meanings. [35]

Several researchers felt that the speech, with its fragmented sentences and endless repetitions, was boring and tiring. Other participants felt confused and helpless after the speech, while still others said that TRUMP's words made them angry and furious. Following these initial impressions, a wide range of irritations were identified. One participant explained how alienated she was by TRUMP's constant babbling about how the election had been stolen from him, even though he had lost it. Another researcher followed this up by saying how irritating it was that TRUMP constantly railed against fake news, even though he was constantly lying. A third group member was puzzled by his comparison of Americans with headless chickens, running around in confusion with their ballot boxes. Just as irritating, added one participant, was how TRUMP described his party members. Although the strength of politicians lies in the fact that they debate with each other and negotiate compromises, TRUMP described the Republicans as boxers whose hands are tied behind their backs. What nonsense! Looking at TRUMP's angry face and combative posture behind the lectern during his speech, another seminar participant added that his supporters who stormed the Capitol afterwards were just as grim and angry. What was striking about this group discussion was that no one sided with TRUMP; rather, understanding was entirely based on the negative emotions triggered by the speech. [36]

11 The members of the Depth Hermeneutics Research Workshop, which interested researchers can get to know every year as part of the methods workshop held at Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, have been meeting three times a year for fifteen years—alternating between Frankfurt, Magdeburg, and Vienna—for two-day events in order to scenically interpret interviews, group discussions, participant observations, historical documents and cultural objectivations such as literary texts and images.

3.3 The inconsistencies of the speech that irritate the research group but do not bother TRUMP's enthusiastic supporters

The examples hitherto set out illustrate how group interpretation unleashed a variety of ideas, irritations and different approaches. But what was discussed in the group left much open and undetermined. Only once the interpretation was put in writing could the significance of the different affective reactions and the contradictory interpretations be reconstructed while taking recourse to the speech. [37]

Since access to the latent meaning of the speech was gained through irritations, the first step was to verify whether the assessment made by several group members that one could see from the beginning of the speech that TRUMP's sentences were incomplete, contradictory and erratic was correct by examining TRUMP's first statements. Therefore, to begin, it is important to re-present to oneself how TRUMP (2021) opened his speech:

"[1] The media will not show the size of this crowd. [2] Even I, when I turned on today, I looked and I saw thousands of people here, but you don't see hundreds of thousands of people behind you because they don't want to show that. [3] We have hundreds of thousands of people here, and I just want them to be recognized by the fake news media" (0:02:44).¹² [38]

As the very first glance at these three sentences reveals, they are incomplete, inconsistent, and full of contradictions: In the first sentence, he starts talking about expecting only negative things from "the media." He interrupts this view in the second sentence by describing what he saw on television. In the middle of the sentence, he abruptly shifts to the perspective of the audience, who cannot gain a clear view of the entire crowd behind them during his speech. At the end of the sentence, TRUMP explains the fact that those in attendance cannot see the people behind them by claiming that the media do not want to show that. Just as TRUMP dissolves reality into a media event in this sentence, so he entangles himself in an irresolvable contradiction in the third sentence: He asks the media to report objectively on the assembled crowd, even though he has expressed his expectation in the first sentence that they will not. This confused way of speaking continues in the sentences that follow:

"[4] Turn your cameras please and show what's really happening out here because these people are not going to take it any longer. [5] They're not going to take it any longer. [6] Go ahead. [7] Turn your cameras, please. [8] Would you show? [9] They came from all over the world, actually, but they came from all over our country. [10] I just really want to see what they do. [11] I just want to see how they cover it. [12] I've never seen anything like it. [13] But it would be really great if we could be covered fairly by the media. [14] The media is the biggest problem we have as far as I'm concerned, single biggest problem, fake news and the big tech. [15] Big tech is now coming into their own" (0:02:44). [39]

¹² All sentences in this and the subsequently quoted passage have been numbered by me for easier reference.

The fourth sentence begins with a request directed at the journalists to pan the cameras to show the crowd standing behind the first rows of spectators. The second part of the sentence interrupts this appeal with a statement about the mood TRUMP attributes to his supporters. Namely, their patience is exhausted. He emphasizes this thought by repeating it in the fifth sentence. The sixth changes the perspective again: TRUMP now asks the journalists, in three short sentences, to swing the cameras to the back so that the size of the gathered crowd becomes visible. The ninth sentence interrupts this perspective with TRUMP's remark about the journalists who had come from all over the world. In a contradictory way, he introduces the second part of the sentence, that they had also come from the United States, with a "but." In the tenth and eleventh sentences, TRUMP expresses curiosity about the near future: What will the journalists do and what will they hide? The twelfth sentence abruptly changes tense to communicate TRUMP's astonishment at what he sees ahead. In the thirteenth sentence, TRUMP returns to the wish expressed in the third sentence that the media report fairly. But he shatters the hope expressed in this way in the fourteenth sentence with the gloomy assessment that the media producing fake news are the biggest problem. In the fifteenth sentence, he voices his concern that new technologies like Twitter are being hijacked by Democrats. Since TRUMP does not develop his thoughts step by step, but rather constantly interrupts himself, changes perspective, and becomes entangled in irresolvable contradictions in the course of his fragmentary reflections, under circumstances other than those of preaching to the converted, one would expect the crowd to react in an alienated manner and distance themselves from these confused utterances, sentences seemingly strung together without rhyme or reason. The audience reacts quite differently, enthusiastically, to TRUMP's statements, indicating that the speech does not achieve its effects through persuasive argument, but solely through the arousal of emotions. [40]

3.4 The latent meaning of TRUMP's speech determined by tapping into unconscious desires and fears

But what emotions does TRUMP appeal to in his listeners? How does he specifically address their unconscious? These questions can be answered as soon as one allows the practice of life contained in the text to come alive and exposes oneself to the effect of the sensual, pictorial scenes that take shape in TRUMP's speech. The point is to understand the text as a presentational edifice of symbols and to be guided by the scenes that particularly irritated the participants of the group interpretation. [41]

3.4.1 The shame of defeat

The question raised by one participant, what TRUMP's remark that Americans are comparable to chickens with their heads cut off might mean, drew the attention of the research group to the following scene of the speech:

"There's never been anything like this. You could take Third World countries. [...] Their elections are more honest than what we've gone through in this country. It is a

disgrace. It's a disgrace. Even when you look at last night, they're all running around like chickens with their heads cut off with boxes. Nobody knows what the hell is going on" (0:06:08). [42]

The words that "nobody knows what the hell is going on" reflect the confusion TRUMP puts the audience in by saying that "everybody [...] is running around like chickens with their heads cut off with [ballot] boxes." The notion that this sets up, that Americans no longer know what they are doing after the election fraud, is explained by TRUMP bringing up a total of three times the "shame" that the Democrats supposedly rigged the U.S. elections worse than dictators do in "Third World countries." The manifest sense of this scene, therefore, boils down to the fact that America has disgraced itself because election rigging perpetrated by Democrats would be more serious than the crimes perpetrated in military dictatorships of silencing opposition figures through murder and torture. But behind the manifest sense of this troubling scenery lie gloomy fantasies that arouse even deeper fears in TRUMP's supporters, because the sentence about the headless chickens running around presents itself as overdetermined in a special way: [43]

First of all, TRUMP displays his own experience to his listeners because, on a latent level of meaning, he also tells them that the electoral defeat has triggered in him an experience accompanied by fear of death, namely, that the Democrats are nothing but murderers who have cut off his head as president. In the face of this execution, he expresses his own feelings of confusion and despair by saying that "nobody knows what the hell is going on." However, when he fights back by delivering a blazing speech in front of the White House, he comes to resemble a fairy-tale hero who puts his head back on and strikes terror into the hearts of his enemies by calling upon his followers to march on the Capitol. [44]

Then, by imagining everyone running around like decapitated chickens with ballot boxes, TRUMP expresses his anger at the allegedly fraudulent election workers whom he has already executed through his indictments but who continue to run around zombie-like rather than remaining dead as they ought to. Finally, the headless chickens scuttling around with ballot boxes stand for TRUMP's compatriots who, under BIDEN's presidency, are becoming the feathered fowl of the farmer who takes away the eggs lying in the coop every morning. In this way, TRUMP sensuously and metaphorically depicts the Democrats as having "stolen" the election and wanting to "rip it off" (01:10:52). Like headless chickens, Americans get caught up in the fear that the Democrats are robbing them of the due reward for their labor (eggs). [45]

The image of feathered fowl running around with (ballot) boxes—insinuating that due to the chaos, nobody could be sure where the ballot boxes were, where they came from, where they went—and, with their heads cut off, also dramatizes the situation faced by Americans in terms of being trapped because of the rigged election. It should be noted that the way TRUMP describes his supporters reveals that he is addressing a male audience: When he talks about Republicans being "warriors" (0:23:59) who are "fighting" (0:2:44) in the Capitol against the "radical

left democrats" (0:12:34), when he talks about how the Republicans are actually "boxers" who are "going to have to fight much harder" (0:16:25), and when he addresses the audience as "American patriots" (0:02:44), to whom he says "you have to show strength, and you have to be strong (0:16:25), so that they fight like Hell" (01:11:44) against the "suppression" (0:27:57), it becomes clear that he sees tough men locked in a battle to the death against the alleged enemies of democracy. Nevertheless, when he compares his compatriots not to proud fighting cocks but to headless chickens, he suggests that his supporters have forfeited their masculinity. Thus, he stirs up the fearful fantasy that the Democrats are cruel torturers who will deprive TRUMP's Americans of their manhood and castrate them. At the same time, by designing this scene TRUMP awakens the notion that the Democrats have turned America into a slaughterhouse through election manipulation, where citizens in fear of their lives wander headlessly. In this way, this scene evokes the sinister idea that the Democrats are bloodthirsty executioners who cut off the heads of Americans through electoral fraud and thus drive them out of their minds. [46]

Furthermore, by repeatedly claiming that what is happening in America is "a disgrace" (0:06:08), TRUMP, on a latent level of meaning, also picks up on the sense of powerlessness, shame and anger felt by the socially weak whose hopes have been dashed and who feel that they have achieved less than others who do not deserve it at all. [47]

The relationship between the manifest and the latent sense is thus as follows: The manifest sense, determined by TRUMP's accusation that the election manipulations perpetrated by the Democrats were "totally illegal" (0:34:34), gains an uncanny power over listeners because behind this manifest sense lies the latent message, addressed to the unconscious, that the Democrats, on the one hand, resemble farmers who despise Americans as chickens whose eggs can be stolen, and, on the other, act like executioners who castrate or behead men fighting for their country. [48]

3.4.2 *The tied-up boxer*

Due to the irritation of a seminar participant that TRUMP described his party members in a strange way, the research group highlighted the following scenario:

"The Republicans are constantly fighting like a boxer with his hands tied behind his back. It's like a boxer, and we want to be so nice. We want to be so respectful to everybody, even bad people. We will have to fight much harder [...]" (0:16:25). [49]

The manifest meaning of this image amounts to comparing the political arena to a boxing match: The Democrats had defeated the Republicans because the latter had tied their hands behind their backs in an unfair fight for political power, leaving the Republicans helpless against the blows of their political opponents. This weakness was due to the fact that the Republicans, as "American patriots" who "stand up for the honesty of our elections and the integrity of our glorious republic" (0:02:44), believed so much in the good that they were too "nice" and

too "respectful" when dealing with the Democrats, even though they were "bad people." There was therefore no alternative but to break the shackles of deference and "fight [them] much harder." [50]

The fact that TRUMP called for a march on the Capitol raises the question of whether the image he chose is meant literally on a latent level of meaning: The fight for political power is no longer to be left to the speakers in the Capitol who have been trading arguments for too long. Rather, the Republicans are to free themselves from the shackles of democratic rules of the game and enter the fight for power as boxers who hit so hard with their fists that the political opponent ends up knocked out. [51]

3.4.3 Fight against the Democrats

By manifesting a message to stop the steal (0:04:42) because the Democrats have committed "the most brazen and outrageous election theft [...] in American history" (0:14:39), TRUMP appears as the avenger of the disinherited who, through the image of helpless feathered fowl, awakens in the unconscious experience of his audience the idea of no longer wanting to be at the mercy of the farmer who steals their eggs, like chickens. Through the manifest accusation that the Democrats are guilty of a "criminal enterprise" (01:03:03), TRUMP presents himself as a president defending the Constitution, who, through the scenery surrounding the chickens wandering around in confusion with ballot boxes, triggers in the unconscious of the listeners the sensual-imagery idea that the Democrats are nothing more than bloodthirsty executioners who must be killed if TRUMP's supporters do not want to be emasculated by them. The injunction, added to the speech on a manifest level of meaning, that one must now "fight like hell" (01:11:44), not only confirms the reading that "American patriots" should revert to making use of their fists like boxers in the fight for power when marching on the Capitol. Rather, the invocation of the feathered fowl with their heads cut off also generates, on an unconscious experiential level of the audience, the idea that it is a fight to the death. [52]

These attacks on the Democrats culminated in TRUMP's dramatic call to arms against the corruption for which they are claimed to be responsible:

"Together we will drain the Washington swamp and we will clean up the corruption in our nation's capital. We have done a big job on it, but you think it's easy, it's a dirty business. It's a dirty business. You have a lot of bad people out there" (01:09:10). [53]

TRUMP thus evokes the prejudice that in the federal capital "a lot of bad people" are in power, enriching themselves at the expense of the little man. Therefore, politics represents "a dirty business," according to which those up there enrich themselves and practice nepotism. On the manifest textual level, this was about TRUMP styling himself as an enforcer of law and order by declaring that he would take up the fight against "corruption" and "drain the Washington swamp." [54]

On a latent level of meaning, the image of the "Washington swamp" once again presents itself as overdetermined. On the one hand, some blood might flow in draining this swamp, making it a "dirty business." On the other hand, the image of the "Washington swamp" evokes the idea of morally objectionable urges that Democrats act out in the capital. TRUMP thereby accommodates the conspiracy fantasies of the QAnon movement, "according to which the Democrats are part of a satanic criminal ring that kidnaps children in order to obtain a rejuvenation drug from their blood" (HÖHNE, NEUKIRCH, PFISTER, ROJKOV & SAROVIC 2020, p.17). Thus, one can speak with FREUD (1999c [1933]) of TRUMP staging himself as an enlightened president who, as a politician, is doing "cultural work" comparable to the analyst's "draining of the Zuyder Zee" (p.86). Just as analytic work treats neurosis by making the unconscious conscious, TRUMP's (2021) goal of "saving our democracy" (0:11:25) connects to the latent notion of draining the swamp of the libidinal through reason-guided purges: "Where id was, there ego shall be" (FREUD, 1999c [1933]), p.86). [55]

3.4.4 The fascination with TRUMP's power

One of the anonymous reviewers noted that in the course of the textual analysis, I had not addressed the fact that "no one took sides" with TRUMP in the group discussion. This objection suggests that, despite their efforts to expose themselves to the effect of the speech in an unbiased way, the group participants may have censored some ideas because they viewed TRUMP's performance with ideology-critical distance from the very beginning. As soon as I reflected on my own share in this collective defensiveness of the group, I realized that when I had first watched the video of TRUMP's speech, I had felt for a moment that I was impressed by him—this president who stands up to the establishment and has so much power that he uninhibitedly says what he thinks and feels, without regard for anyone. When I think about this idea, I come across an abyss within me that is determined by a painful childhood memory¹³. It is about the verbal and physical violence of a father who terrified me as a child. While the father exerted an uncanny power over me then, because although he hurt me, at the same time I was dependent on him. Thus, as an adult, I detest political leaders like TRUMP in a special way (manifest sense). But the fascination I felt watching the video reflects that against my own will, I was momentarily attracted to TRUMP's sinister power because it unconsciously revived the paternal violence I experienced in childhood (latent sense). [56]

Thus, my own emotional reaction taps into another experience by virtue of which Americans may be attracted to TRUMP: They love and fear him as a strong president whom they unconsciously perceive—for example—as a re-enactment of an overbearing father against whom they were defenseless in childhood conflict situations. If they identified with the fear-inducing aggressor back then and did not come to terms with this painful childhood experience, as adults this

¹³ In a narrative interview I conducted, a sociology student grappled with the depths of his soul. He was irritated to realize, after watching a film, that he was momentarily fascinated by a neo-Nazi who gleefully visited Auschwitz to deny the Holocaust. In the course of telling his life story, the student became aware of how this fascination was related to his unresolved relationship with his choleric father (KÖNIG, 2019d).

leads them to idealize TRUMP as a savior rather than perceive him as a neoliberal president who makes the rich richer at the expense of the poor. [57]

3.5 The latent meaning of TRUMP's speech determined by making reality unconscious

The irritations and interpretations brought up in the deep hermeneutic group discussion have given us access to the latent sense of the speech that is hidden behind the manifest meaning and that allows us to understand which conscious and unconscious concepts of life TRUMP awakens through his words. However, there are further irritations that are triggered by the fact that TRUMP repeatedly disregards reality in his speech and denies real events. Undoubtedly, TRUMP's lies have become so familiar to us that they have hardly irritated us in recent times.¹⁴ But beyond this perception, which has become routine in everyday life, it should not be overlooked that many people are irritated by the permanent lying of a president in a Western democracy. What consequences this lying has for the effect of the speech on TRUMP's supporters is illustrated by the following reconstruction:

1. By frequently repeating that the media spread "fake news," TRUMP hammers into his supporters that they must not believe television and newspapers. The irritation of TRUMP accusing the media of constantly producing fake news reveals how he makes unconscious the enlightening function of the serious media in his interaction with his audience. He also accomplishes this by asking the journalists to document "the size of this crowd" with their cameras. Thus, the manifest sense that the president is standing up to the "fake news media" by asking journalists to do camera pans could obscure the latent sense that TRUMP is lying and manipulating his audience by railing against the mainstream media.
2. By saying he is "honest," TRUMP invites his audience to trust him. And he presents this 'honesty' as an expression of his respect for his audience, who are 'cut from the same cloth' as he is: "Hundreds of thousands of American patriots are committed to the honesty of our elections and the integrity of our glorious Republic" (2021, 0:02:44). The populist attitude with which TRUMP suggests that he alone is honest with his people is alienating because it serves to obfuscate that his neoliberal policies make the rich richer at the expense of the socially vulnerable. The manifest meaning of his words, to represent the interests of the people, raises the question of whether TRUMP does not thereby render unconscious his deception of his audience in order to push through the interests of the economically powerful in society as a whole.
3. The enthusiastic statement that the election gave him a "landslide" victory with "75 million voters" (0:04:42) is contradicted by the fact that BIDEN won the election with 81 million (RÜESCH, THELITZ, KOHLER, KELÉN & KARAVIA, 2021). The manifest meaning of the message that the Democrats

¹⁴ By the end of TRUMP's presidency, KESSLER, RIZO and KELLY (2020) had collected over 20,000 lies. The New York radio station RADIO FREE BROOKLYN (2020) had a thirty-meter-long "Wall of Lies" erected in Bushwick on October 3, 2020, on which all the falsehoods from TRUMP's first term in office were emblazoned in different colors as a colorful mosaic.

systematically rigged the election, an assessment TRUMP tries to back up with a long list of statistical data,¹⁵ disguises the latent meaning that TRUMP himself tried to rig the election by lying and by deceiving the public through over fifty lawsuits filed by his lawyers in federal courts and the Supreme Court (2021, 0:04:42).¹⁶

4. TRUMP's claim that "the most corrupt election in history" (01:05:43) was the result of the "criminal enterprise" perpetrated by the Democrats (01:03:03) is consternating because he destroys democratic processes by calling BIDEN an illegitimate president who should be denied formal confirmation of his election victory in the Capitol. The question arises whether the manifest sense of the narrative that an "egregious assault on our democracy" (0:16:25) is taking place and that "our country will be destroyed" (0:11:25) does not hide the latent sense that TRUMP, by talking about election fraud and by agitating against the popularly elected president, is violating democratic rules of the game and thus endangering democracy as a whole.
5. The charge that Democrats stole the "election victory" (0:02:44) also seems odd because TRUMP stole from the poor what he gave to the rich through "the biggest tax cuts in history" (0:19:03). This raises the question of whether TRUMP, by talking about stealing elections, does not obscure the fact that the economically powerful have caused the economic and social decline of classes and regions primarily through the globalization of markets.
6. The declaration of intent that "we will drain the swamp in Washington and [...] will clean up corruption in our nation's capital" (01:09:10) is perplexing because TRUMP, as president, has violated unwritten laws as well as established law in several ways. Just as he has appointed friendly real estate entrepreneurs as ministers (SCHEUERMANN, 2017, p.11), he has combined "business and family like a mafia godfather" (p.14) by appointing his daughter and son-in-law as special advisors in the White House (p.11). As research by the *New York Times* suggests, TRUMP has cheated the state out of hundreds of millions of dollars in tax payments, hiding his income from numerous companies by claiming huge losses and therefore, paying income tax in only five of the last fifteen years. In addition, he has made money from businesses that have brought him into a conflict of interest with his job as president (BUETTNER, CRAIG & McINTIRE, 2020). Entirely in the interest of these illegal business practices, TRUMP fired "five independent controllers who were supposed to fight nepotism and corruption in ministries and agencies" during his time in office (HÖHNE et al., 2020, p.12). Thus, the manifest meaning of the words that TRUMP wants to "drain the Washington swamp" makes unconscious the fact that TRUMP's conduct in office has entangled him in an inextricable quagmire of nepotism and corruption.

15 Already during the election campaign, TRUMP had questioned "the legality of absentee ballots" (NEUKIRCH, PFISTER & ZÖTTL, 2020, p.9) which were used by a majority of Democratic voters because of the pandemic (p.11). When TRUMP seemed to win in many places at the beginning of the vote count, but the absentee ballots were far from being counted, he tried to manipulate the election results by prematurely declaring himself the winner and "brand[ing] the further counting of legitimately cast votes as 'fraud'" (GEBAUER et al., 2020, p.11).

16 All of these lawsuits were rejected by the courts and, in two cases, by the Supreme Court for lack of legal argument, an assessment confirmed by TRUMP's own attorney general (RÜESCH et al., 2021).

7. While TRUMP was initially ahead in the vote count, BIDEN overtook him as the absentee ballots were tallied. Hence, TRUMP's question of "where the hell" so many votes from Republicans disappeared to (2021, 0:46:29) is consternating, and his question "where the hell" so many votes for Democrats had come from (0:47:37) is disconcerting. By saying that "nobody knows what the hell is going on" (0:06:08), the president obfuscates the state of affairs and arouses panic that something sinister is happening and thus evil is doing its thing. The manifest message that the Democrats "cheated like hell" through a "rigged election [...]" (0:29:29), vilifies the political opponent as the devil who made such a mess that everyone would be "running around like chickens with their heads cut off with [ballot] boxes" (0:06:08). The question is whether TRUMP does not thus relegate to a latent level of meaning the fact that he himself is causing unholy chaos by invoking the devil to get the crowds to storm the Capitol. He also creates confusion by once portraying the Democrats as the devil to be fought, and the other time TRUMP sees his supporters as the force that, like the devil, should resist the Democrats' election fraud. The impression is that TRUMP renders the arousal of anger and hatred unconscious by invoking God to bless America and his supporters determined to occupy the Capitol (01:13:19). He thus styles himself as the charismatic savior of his people. By saying that "we fight like Hell and if you don't fight like Hell, you're not going to have a country anymore" (01:11:44), he calls for a life-and-death battle of his heavenly hosts against the devil, whom his followers, inspired by him, then actually saw embodied in Nancy Pelosi, the majority leader in the House of Representatives (BUSE et al., 2020, p.61). [58]

In this way, another facet of the latent level of meaning hidden behind the manifest sense of the text becomes tangible: While the manifest sense of the speech is determined by the spreading of lies, the truth is relegated to the latent level of meaning. This means, however, that the relationship of manifest to latent meaning familiar from everyday life is reversed: While, in everyday life, the manifestation of wishes and fantasies that are considered reasonable and morally acceptable is made manifest, the manifest meaning of TRUMP's speech is determined by the mobilization of socially objectionable affects. When TRUMP claims that conditions in America are worse than in a Third World military dictatorship, he arouses a powerless rage and destructiveness in patriotic Americans. When he derides American men as agitated chickens with their heads cut off, he strips them of their manhood by fantasizing that they are not belligerent fighting cocks, and at the same time arouses fears of death. And when he compares the Republicans to a shackled boxer who gives far too much consideration to political opponents responsible for all ills, he arouses the hostile impulse to break the shackles, drop moral inhibitions and pound the hated political opponent with fists. While such negative affects are relegated to a latent level of meaning in everyday life, it is the "common sense" that TRUMP renders unconscious in his speech. [59]

Without using theoretical terms, the meaning of TRUMP's speech, unfolding in the tension between manifest and latent meaning, has been reconstructed on the

basis of the effect of the text on the experience of a group of researchers. In this way, it has become possible to tap into a lived experience of the thing itself without proceeding according to a logic of subsumption, as happens in the case of the naïve application of psychoanalysis to culture described in the beginning. [60]

4. Socialization-Theoretical Apprehension of the Impact of TRUMP's Speech

4.1 Excursus on the socialization-theoretical understanding of psychoanalytic terminology

However, if I now fall back on psychoanalytic terminology in order to theoretically contextualize the scenic case reconstruction, there is a danger of considerable misunderstandings. While I would argue that FREUD's texts are very readable, the exact meaning of the terms he uses often eludes readers because they do not have the clinical practice upon which the founder of psychoanalysis draws. A proper comprehension of FREUD's texts is impeded, above all, by the fact that he wrote his clinical discoveries in the scientific language of the 19th century and that biologicistic, patriarchal and sexist prejudices and ideological fragments were incorporated into the formulation of his psychoanalytic concepts. However, if one does not want to give up FREUD's insights into unconscious processes, then one must abandon the history- and society-blindness of psychoanalytic concepts. For this reason, it is necessary, with LORENZER (1972), to reformulate psychoanalytic metapsychology (with which FREUD tried to grasp unconscious dynamics) in terms of interaction and socialization theory, in order to understand the psychic structures described by the drive, the id and the ego as socially produced. [61]

In doing so, LORENZER (1972, pp.16f.) rightly assumed that the psychoanalytic concept of drive should not be misunderstood as a biological disposition. Given that FREUD (1999d [1905], p.214, 1999e [1914], p.156) distinguished between animal instincts and human drives, drives are to be understood as forms of interaction produced in early childhood, the inner precipitate of sensory-immediate interactions. The latter are determined by the physical needs of the infant which are, in their turn, shaped in content by the primary caregivers' interactions with the infant. Forms of interaction, then, are not interactions between persons, but their internalization in the individual. The drive matrix that constitutes the unconscious is therefore the result of the affective structure that is socially produced during the first six years of life, which has a lasting influence on how the adolescent and subsequently the adult thinks, feels and acts throughout subsequent individuation and socialization processes. [62]

The first organizational form of the ego is the preconscious, the realm of the imagination, in which drive impulses are translated into "sensual-symbolic forms of interaction" (LORENZER, 1981, p.162) through the playful handling of objects (by means of which the child often reenacts family interactions) from around the age of eighteen months. The second organizational form of the ego is conscious in the narrow sense, composed of "linguistic-symbolic forms of interaction"

(LORENZER, 2006 [1983], p.21) due to the verbalization of drive impulses. From the socialization-theoretical reformulation of psychoanalytic developmental theory, a critical theory of the subject emerges, which is needed to typify and conceptualize the meaning of social interactions unfolding in the tension between a manifest and a latent level of meaning. [63]

In summary, LORENZER's theory of forms of interaction shares with the intersubjective understanding of psychoanalysis, as developed, for instance, by ALTMAYER and THOMÄ (2006), the conviction that the psychic structure is constructed from the outset as a precipitate of interactions with primary caregivers, which form the basis for the internalization of social interactions as an adolescent and as an adult. One difference is that ALTMAYER and THOMÄ considered FREUD's intrasubjective perspective on the drive structure, the structures of id, ego and superego, antiquated, and replaced them with the intersubjective understanding of psychoanalysis based on psychoanalytic object relations theory and taking into account the findings of empirical infant research. The weakness of intersubjectivity theories, however, is that they isolate a single concept from the weave of psychoanalytic theory and absolutize it. In contrast, I share with LORENZER (1984, p.14) the assessment that psychoanalysis is oversimplified when one or two concepts are knocked loose from the delicate relational structure of drive theory, ego psychology, object relations theory and narcissism theory as if it were a quarry, in order to modernize psychoanalysis. [64]

In LORENZER's theory of the forms of interaction, on the other hand, the different concepts of psychoanalysis are integrated and the findings of metapsychology understood in terms of socialization theory. Both the drive structure and the psychic structures of the id and the ego are constituted from the outset on the basis of the internalization of social interactions. Another important distinction from intersubjectivity theories is that they misunderstand the nature of early childhood interactions. Since, according to classical German philosophy, there is a subject only in connection with consciousness, it is not yet possible to speak "of an infantile subject" either in relation to the prenatal interaction of the embryo with the maternal organism or in relation to the sensory-immediate interaction of the infant with the mother who breastfeeds or bottle-feeds it (LORENZER 1974, p.249). However obvious it is that two persons cooperate with each other after birth, there is still only one subject here. In this case, "the mother-child dyad itself functions as the subject" (p.250), in which the infant becomes a subject to the extent that it begins to speak and symbolize everyday experiences through play. In theories of intersubjectivity, therefore, the fact that the id is produced through the internalization of sensory-immediate interactions, and that one can only speak of two subjects once the ego is produced through the internalization of symbolic interactions, is overlooked. [65]

4.2 TRUMP's speech as a medium of political socialization

The effect of TRUMP's speech on his enthusiastic supporters can be understood theoretically if one considers with FREUD (1999f [1921]) that the individual in a crowd "feels, thinks and acts quite differently from what would be expected of him" (p.76). The fact that a mass is "impulsive" and "irritable," "extraordinarily impressionable," "credulous" and "uncritical" (p.82) reveals, according to FREUD, that the individual "in the mass encounters conditions" which "allow him to throw off the repressions of his unconscious impulses" (p.79) and to enter into new "emotional bonds" (p.100). Just as a child loves and admires its father, the mass individual is enthusiastic about the leader and idealizes him or her. This interactional dynamic is evident in the scene where TRUMP talks about the need to protect the US Constitution from those who have allegedly stolen his electoral victory. As he goes on to thank his supporters for "the extraordinary love" (TRUMP 2021, 0:09:08) with which they rallied to join him in keeping him president, the crowd responds by chanting the phrase: "We love Trump! We love Trump! We love Trump" (0:09:44). Drawing on FREUD's (1999f [1921]) concept of mass psychology, these words can be said to reveal the emergence of a libidinous attachment to TRUMP in the crowd. His supporters feel helplessly at the mercy of the political crisis invoked by TRUMP, because they believe the Democrats to have endangered America's democracy through the alleged manipulation of the elections. Due to the fears triggered by this, they come to experience a rapturous infatuation with TRUMP, who promises to handle the crisis decisively and confidently. Narcissistic longings for greatness and power are thus transferred to TRUMP, who comes to be loved as a big brother and idealized as a unique leader in the surf of an impending catastrophe. Thus his followers gain support and orientation by introjecting TRUMP into their ego ideal as a savior in times of need (KÖNIG, 2022b, p.121). [66]

But the libidinous attachment to the president is only one side of his effect on the crowd. The other side is that he stirs up the fears of the citizens through his aggressive demeanor. FREUD (1999g [1912-1913]) already described this behavior of a mass leader in "Totem and Taboo." In this book, FREUD projected into the darkness of prehistory the psychic structure of paternal violence that he had grasped, as it still prevailed in the Danube monarchy and the German empire at the beginning of the 20th century. Because he lacked a methodology and method appropriate to the social sciences, FREUD was, however, unable to unravel the social significance of the subjugation of the sensual concepts of life inherent in the mother-child dyad to the dictates of patricentric norms, which he figuratively transposed into the myths of the primal horde and the primal father who ruled tyrannically over women. The primal father figure was an "overpowering and dangerous personality" against whom "one could only take a passive-masochistic stand" (1999f [1921], p.142). [67]

The drama thus outlined by Freud anticipates the fascist mass mobilization described decades later by both LOEWENTHAL and GUTERMAN (2021 [1949]) and ADORNO et al. (2019 [1950]) in their studies of authoritarianism conducted in America. Since the authoritarian leader demands ruthless obedience from his

or her followers, he or she is introjected into the forbidding superego by mass individuals as a strict father figure (KÖNIG 2022b, p.122). At the same time, the strict authority calls for the displacement of the aggressive impulses that arise against it onto its enemies. [68]

How this happens in the interaction between TRUMP and his supporters is illustrated by another scene from the speech, in which he inspires the audience in the following way: The fact that his political opponents talk about him losing the election even though he won it is "a disgrace," revealing that things are worse in America than in Third World countries. When he then adds that at the moment "nobody" knows "what the hell is going on" (2021, 0:06:08), his compatriots angrily chant: "Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump!" (0:07:11). The scene reveals how TRUMP directs the aggression he unleashes against the Democrats, who are responsible for a "criminal enterprise" (01:03:03), by dramatically portraying the outcome of the presidential election as a threat to American democracy. The aggression that TRUMP is able to instigate through his agitation is illustrated by the storming of the Capitol. [69]

This means, however, that the affects of his supporters are not only based on the libidinous attachment to TRUMP, whom they idealize as a big brother and who becomes their collective ego ideal. Rather, part of this love of mass individuals for TRUMP is that they introject him into the superego as an angry father figure and allow themselves to be infected by his aggression against his political opponents. [70]

How TRUMP gains power over his supporters can be more precisely grasped with the help of the construct of the authoritarian syndrome developed by ADORNO et al. (2019 [1950]), which has the following characteristics in particular¹⁷:

- *Conventionalism*: TRUMP's (2021) words about wanting to "save democracy" (0:11:25), although he flouts the rules of democracy by denying the legitimacy of the popularly elected president, turn out to be authoritarian because he only superficially appeals to conventional values, but he abandons them "in good conscience" for the sake of power (ADORNO et al., 2019 [1950], p.230).
- *Authoritarian submission*: By claiming that the mainstream media have become the "enemy of the people" through the suppression of thought and speech (TRUMP, 2021, 0:16:25), while he, unlike them, is "honest" (0:02:44), the president demands from his audience a wholehearted "submission to authority" (ADORNO et al., 2019 [1950], p.231), "which the crowd readily complies with, enthusiastically chanting "We love Trump!" (TRUMP, 2021, 0:09:44). In this way, his followers regress to the experience of children, who cathect TRUMP as libidinally as they once did their father.
- *Authoritarian aggression*: As TRUMP berates the Democrats as a "radical left" who have "stolen" the "election victory" from him by manipulating the election

17 That TRUMP socializes audiences somewhat differently under different circumstances is illustrated by an analysis of his televised inaugural address, which shows how authoritarian behavior mixes with postmodern language games in this public production (KÖNIG, 2019a).

(0:02:44), and the crowd then supports him by chanting the slogan "Fight for Trump!" (0:07:11), one can speak with ADORNO et al. (2019 [1950]) of the fact "that in authoritarian aggression, hostility that was originally aroused by and directed toward ingroup authorities is displaced onto outgroups" (p.233).

- *Power and toughness*: By emphasizing that "we are the greatest country on earth" (TRUMP, 2021, 01:10:05), and claiming that "over the last four years, we built the greatest political movement in the history of our country," even that "there's never been a movement like that" (01:06:37), TRUMP addresses narcissistic fantasies of power and greatness with superlatives, under the impression of which the audience feels strong and unique. Thus, TRUMP's authoritarian approach to his audience finds expression in what ADORNO et al. (2019 [1950]) called "power complex" that simultaneously exhibited "exaggerated toughness" (p.237). By saying that in the long run one had "to get rid of the weak congresspeople [...] that aren't any good" (TRUMP, 2021, 0:44:39), but wanting to back them up right now by marching to the Capitol to "give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country" (01:13:19), TRUMP subsumes "all relations among people in terms of such categories as strong-weak, dominant-submissive, leader-follower, 'hammer-anvil'" (ADORNO et al., 2019 [1950], p.237).
- *Destructiveness and cynicism*: When TRUMP talks about "Third World" (2021, 0:06:08) as in the Cold War era, his point is that the mainstream media manipulate freedom of speech and press in the U.S. worse than military dictatorships do, silencing opposition figures through torture and murder. With ADORNO et al. (2019 [1950]), this misleading statement can be understood as an expression of strong "primitive aggressive impulses" not inhibited by moral scruples. Destructiveness and cynicism therefore mean "that the hostility is so generalized, so free of direction against any particular object, that the individual need not feel accountable for it" (p.239).
- *Projectivity*: By claiming that the Democrats have only come to "rip off our country" (TRUMP, 2021, 01:10:52), TRUMP projects onto his political opponents that the office of the president only serves him to enrich himself and the rich. ADORNO et al. (2019 [1950]) can be used to comprehend the power that projection unleashes in the course of an authoritarian mobilization of the masses: When he brands BIDEN "an illegitimate president" (TRUMP, 2021, 0:40:50), TRUMP claims the president-elect "to have usurped power and to have entrenched [himself] dictatorially" (ADORNO et al., 2019 [1950], p.685). In doing so, TRUMP and his supporters accuse the Democrats

"of the very thing which they would like to do, and they utilize their indictment as a pretext for 'throwing the rascals out'. They call for the defense of democracy against its 'abuses' and would, through attacking the 'abuses', ultimately abolish democracy altogether" (ADORNO et al., 2019 [1950], p.686). [71]

Realizing how TRUMP refers to the *conventional values* of democracy in order to undermine them, how he demands *unquestioning submission* to his opinions, how he invites the *displacement of aggression* against Democrats thereby aroused, how he stimulates *destructive power fantasies* of America's unique

greatness, and how he speaks of rigging elections worse than in a "Third World country" to *project* onto political opponents the criminal acts for which he himself is responsible, it is reasonable to assume that he is, above all, addressing himself to the fears and aggressions of those who have grown up under certain family conditions: However different the parenting styles may have been—strict, neglectful, overprotective—what is decisive in modern times is whether in situations of conflict, the parents tended to react to their children in an authoritarian manner. [72]

In anxiety-provoking situations in childhood, the tendency "to achieve [one's] own social adjustment only by taking pleasure in obedience and subordination" (ADORNO et al., 2019 [1950], p.759) leads to directing aggression against oneself and introjecting it into the superego, where it triggers feelings of guilt. TRUMP's defiant and angry words awaken in his listeners aggressive instincts of the id that flood the ego, while his demanding voice simultaneously appeals to the superego. Moreover, the ego makes all objections of reason unconscious. FREUD's enlightenment goal, that where It was, I may come to be (1999c [1933]), thus turns into a manipulative appropriation. The quiet voice of reason is made unconscious in the noise of the aggressive affects awakened by TRUMP's speech, which flood the I and urge it to march on Capitol Hill: *Where ego was, there id shall be*. Thus, like the fascist agitator, TRUMP acts not "by means of rational convictions" (ADORNO, 1979e [1951], p.416), but through a "largely associative speech," by means of which he is able "to express without inhibitions what is latent in them [the mass members]" (p.427). [73]

With LORENZER (1981) it can be understood how the personality-structural problem (regression to infantile mode of experience and authoritarian turn of aggression against the leader's enemies) is linked by ideological propaganda to a "special form of socialization" (pp.118-119). TRUMP authoritatively seizes on drive conflicts to subject his audience to a particular political socialization through the Republican ideology. As his version of the Republican ideology champions a neoliberal economic policy, it defames political opponents as criminal left-wing radicals (2021, 0:02:44) who would ruin America by cutting jobs, weakening the military, and opening borders (0:13:45). At the same time, this ideology is directed against black people, although TRUMP only implicitly mentions them in his speech. Namely, insofar as he speaks of "alleged irregularities" and "disputed states" (SNYDER 2021, n.p.), insinuating election fraud, he refers to those cities in which particularly large numbers of black people live and vote: "At bottom, the fantasy of [election] fraud is that of a crime committed by Black people against white people" (ibid.). [74]

TRUMP's ideology thus contains a conspiracy theory that belies the fact that both in 2020 and in all U.S. election campaigns before, the opposite was true: "Black people waited longer than others to vote and were more likely to have their votes challenged." Thus, this ideology espouses the racist notion of white American supremacy, "interested, as Trump openly declared, in keeping the number of voters, and particularly the number of Black voters, as low as possible" (SNYDER, 2021, n.p.). [75]

In summary, TRUMP socializes the audience in three ways, performing a contradictory role akin to that of the firefighters in Ray BRADBURY's (1953) novel "Fahrenheit 451":

- By sending the message that American democracy must be saved from being taken over by his political opponents, TRUMP performs as a firefighter who fights fires on the manifest level of his speech. In this way, he addresses the consciousness of the listeners, who react with shock and, in their fear, believe him unconditionally.
- By saying that Americans are confused chickens with their heads cut off and boxers with their hands tied behind their backs, that they have to take up the fight against the dirty swamp in Washington, which is determined by the elites acting out their instincts in a disgusting way, TRUMP presents himself on a latent level of meaning as a fireman fighting for life and death. In this way, he addresses the unconscious of his supporters, who react with fears of death and destruction, castration fears, rage and revenge to the fact that the fire is blazing. [76]

And just as it is the job of the firemen in "Fahrenheit 451" to seek out and destroy books in order to create social conformity by banning reading and destroying independent thought, so TRUMP's struggle culminates in him, as a fireman, burning knowledge of the truth. For none of the listeners believe that this financially and politically powerful man represents the interests of the economically powerful against the majority, and that he has entangled himself in a quagmire of nepotism and corruption during his time in office, indeed that he subverts democratic rules of mirrors by talking about electoral fraud, and that he ignites fires of fear and aggression by spreading lies and railing against the media or outgroups. In this way, TRUMP gains power over the consciousness of his audience by authoritatively interacting with them, relegating objections of reason to the unconscious and thereby to a latent level of meaning in speech. [77]

4.3 Prejudice, xenophobia, conspiracy fantasies and the authoritarian coping strategy

After reflecting on the scenic interpretation of TRUMP's speech in terms of socialization theory, the question arises how the results of this research relate to empirical findings on TRUMP's electorate. Thomas F. PETTIGREW (2017) concluded that TRUMP's voters were less educated than the general population (p.108). Contrary to widespread prejudice, they were less frequently unemployed, but often disappointed in "their hopes and expectations" (p.111). Growing household costs destroyed their savings and with them any hopes that their children would be able to attend college and move up the social ladder or at least maintain their parents' status. This "relative deprivation" expressed itself in the feeling of having achieved less than those groups who, in their view, actually "deserve less" (ibid.). Because they were aware of the precarity of their position, they reacted to social change with anxiety; they were susceptible to TRUMP's

slogan "Make America great again," which many supporters wore on their caps. These words represent

"[...] a brash reactionary call to return to an earlier time when America's position in the world was unchallenged, when American presidents and Supreme Court justices were all White males, when immigration was restricted and widespread racial segregation persisted, and when the government's affirmative action programs largely helped White males" (PETTIGREW, 2017, p.112). [78]

Considering that his supporters were also responsive to TRUMP's conspiracy thinking, the representative study by Daniel FREEMAN and Richard P. BENTALL (2017) conducted nationwide in the United States is also interesting. They argued that conspiracy theories tend to be held by individuals who are more likely to be male and less educated. They have lower incomes and fewer social networks, feel they belong to a lower social status compared to others, distrust authority more, and are more likely to carry a gun on the street. They feel less comfortable, suffer from lower self-esteem and difficult childhood experiences, and therefore tend to have less secure attachments. [79]

The comparison of the two studies suggests that the group of people with a propensity for conspiracy theories studied by FREEMAN and BENTALL overlaps with the group of TRUMP supporters studied by PETTIGREW (2017). However, as FREEMAN and BENTALL (2017) stated that their work did not clarify whether the conspiracy theories constitute a response to difficult life circumstances or their underlying cause (p.601), it becomes clear that from the perspective of political psychology, there are missing links: It is to be assumed, after all, that difficult life circumstances trigger increased insecurity and anxiety in this group of individuals, under the influence of which they tend to solve current crisis situations in an authoritarian way. But when they do so, they are susceptible to the conspiracy theories that a political leader like TRUMP offers them to explain the crisis situation. In support of this assessment, ADORNO et al. explicitly discussed projection in relation to the aggression of the authoritarian personality:

"If an individual insists that someone has hostile designs on him, and we can find no evidence that this is true, we have good reasons to suspect that our subject himself has aggressive intentions and is seeking by means of projection to justify them" (2019 [1950], p.249). [80]

If TRUMP and his supporters accuse the Democrats of exactly what they themselves intend to do by storming the Capitol, namely undermining the democratic rules of the game by illegitimately seizing power, then this conspiracy theory leads to the political opponents being vilified in such a way that the ingroup feels persecuted by the outgroup. From a political psychology perspective, this means that the projection of aggressive impulses transforms the Democrats into dangerous criminals, to whom the people mobilized by TRUMP now react with paranoid fear. [81]

If one compares my remarks with PETTIGREW's (2017) study in more detail, one is struck by the different ways in which the concept of authoritarianism is used due to the different methods employed. PETTIGREW aimed to show that TRUMP's supporters could not be adequately described by one factor, but only by a set of factors: Authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, prejudice, relative deprivation, lack of intergroup contact. Thus, in his quantitative study, PETTIGREW operationalized the abstract category of authoritarianism into a social psychological variable that he isolated from other variables such as social dominance orientation and prejudice. In my qualitative paper, on the other hand, I use a broader concept of authoritarianism that is more in line with the definition used by ADORNO and his associates (2019 [1950]). This is because the variant social dominance orientation so described by PETTIGREW (2017) represents a feature of the authoritarian personality that ADORNO et al. (2019 [1950]) described as "power and 'toughness'" (p.237). I also assume that the "prejudice" variant is inherent in the authoritarianism concept – after all, ADORNO et al.'s "The Authoritarian Personality" was published as a social psychological contribution to the "Studies in Prejudice," edited by Max HORKHEIMER and Samuel H. FLOWERMAN (1949-1950). [82]

Moreover, PETTIGREW used the authoritarianism concept superficially because he supposed that there was no need to argue "whether authoritarianism is a personality construct or a political ideology," i.e., "Authoritarianism begins early in life as a personality orientation [...]. And later this orientation typically leads to some form of a right-wing political ideology" (2017, p.108). With this assessment he overlooked that this development is not inevitable. Authoritarians can also be democrats or leftists or completely apolitical individuals. PETTIGREW missed the fact that susceptibility to right-wing extremism depends on complex educational and political socialization processes that individuals go through after childhood. Just as adolescence represents a second chance during which personality traits acquired in childhood are reinforced or revised, adulthood represents a third chance in the course of which behavioral traits socialized in childhood and adolescence are reinforced or personality-shattering crisis experiences are reflected upon and lead to a reorganization of subjective structures. [83]

For answers to the question of how individuals react to the prejudices stirred up by TRUMP and his incitement against strangers, two other contributions are interesting. Katherine B. CARNELLEY and Elle M. BOAG (2019) reviewed research articles from 2001-2016 that used attachment theory to experimentally examine individual differences in prejudice (p.110). They concluded that individuals who can self-soothe and have high social competence because they were securely attached through empathic care in early childhood are unlikely to develop prejudice and therefore accept members of outgroups. In contrast, those who tend to be prejudiced and discriminate against ethnic and gender outgroups would be those who have low self-esteem, view others as dangerous, and tend to make stereotypical judgments because they either developed attachment anxiety in early childhood due to inconsistent and overprotective care or they avoided attachment due to neglect and rejection. These findings turn out to be incomplete from the perspective of my political psychology approach, because they overlook

a crucial intrapsychic response: Those who develop attachment anxiety or avoid attachment in childhood are not able to deal calmly with a threatening crisis situation as adults. Rather, their fears and insecurities intensify to such an extent that they react in an authoritarian manner and therefore readily resort to prejudice and discrimination against outgroups. [84]

Felix BRAUNER (2018) also referred to attachment theory when he concluded, from the perspective of a psychoanalytic theory of intersubjectivity, that the extent to which children visualize mental processes through mentalizing and thus develop the ability to control their own emotions depends on the way mothers regulate their children's emotions. Since especially mothers with a low social status raise their sons less sensitively than their daughters, these male children develop a lower mentalizing ability and therefore have less empathy, "which is why these individuals represent a risk group for the formation of xenophobia" (p.238). Undoubtedly, BRAUNER thus made some contribution to understanding xenophobia. However, like CARNELLEY and BOAG (2019), he overlooked the fact that lack of empathy only turns into xenophobia when an anxiety-provoking crisis situation is triggered in an authoritarian way by shifting aggressive impulses onto a foreign group. [85]

In addition, there is another objection to both studies. BOWLBY (1969) introduced the concept of attachment in order to translate the concepts of psychoanalytic object relations theory into observable and measurable variables. In this way, he demonstrated how the development of adult relational capacity depends on the form of attachment established in the mother-child dyad. However, attachment theory oversimplifies the psychoanalytic notion of object relations, which is based on the fact that drives produced in early childhood are repressed, sublimated, or acted out in a symptom-like manner due to their incompatibility with the prevailing morality. In addition, from the perspective of FREUD's metapsychology, the ability to mentalize represents nothing more than a function of the ego controlling the drive excitations of the id. This means, however, that people suffer from a cultural development that is built on the "suppression of drives" and on their "sublimation" (1999h [1908], p.149). Finally, conflicts also result from the fact that the drive structure is composed of a conflict of libidinous drives, which, like sexuality and love, urge connection with the other, and aggressive drives, which serve self-preservation and entail a functional desire whose sublimated expression is play and work (HARTMANN, KRIS & LOEWENSTEIN, 1949; KÖNIG 2014, pp.44-54). [86]

What is specifically meant by the socialization-theoretical reference to the drive conflicts that enter into interacting was revealed in a classic contribution by PARSONS (1964 [1947]). He explored how xenophobia in modernity can be described as the consequence of the structuring of aggressive drives by functional contexts determined by the kinship system, the occupational system, the process of dynamic change, and institutional structures. He took as his starting point the kinship system, which in Western industrial societies is determined by "the relatively isolated conjugal family" (p.303). Undoubtedly, one can object to PARSONS' analysis that as a result of the emancipation of women

in today's nuclear families, mothers work just as much as fathers, but often in less qualified and lower-paid jobs. And even in emancipated populations where mothers and fathers share family responsibilities, mothers usually feel more responsible for the household and children, while for fathers, careers remain more important. But especially in families of conservative populations, the mother has remained the emotionally significant adult for the "children of both sexes [...]" (pp.304-305). Therefore, in these families, not only the girl but also the boy develops in early childhood "a direct feminine identification, since his mother is the model most readily available and significant to him" (p.305). When he discovers his male body, however, he develops "a kind of 'compulsive masculinity'" (ibid.) and refuses "to have anything to do with girls" (ibid.). He is "interested in athletics and physical prowess, in the things in which men have the most primitive and obvious advantage over women" (ibid.). His toughness is "a defense against a feminine identification" (ibid.). The social role of the mother being "the principal agent of socially significant discipline" (p.306) for the boy under these circumstances is then continued by governesses and teachers. When the boy violates the "'good' behavior" which women urge him to display, "he revolts against identification with his mother in the name of masculinity" (ibid.). For the boy "unconsciously identifies 'goodness' with femininity, and [...] being a 'bad boy' becomes a positive goal" (ibid.). [87]

PARSONS then argued that success in the occupational system depends on the personal performance through which one competes with others for a job. "A man has to 'win' the competition for selection, often repeatedly, in order to have an opportunity to prove his capacity for the higher achievements" (p.312). True, "the wide field for competitive activity provides some outlets which are constructive for sublimating aggression by harnessing it to the motivation of [...] 'winning'" (ibid.). But since the number of those who have to resign themselves "to being 'losers'" is probably larger, the occupational system generates the "tendency to feel unduly inadequate or unjustly treated" (pp.312-313). Thus, PARSONS portrayed the very mood that PETTIGREW (2017) described as typical of TRUMP's voters. Under the pressure "to be a 'good loser' and take one's misfortunes and disappointments with outward equanimity," "the need to repress feelings of resentment against unfair treatment" intensifies (PARSONS, 1964 [1947], p.313). The aggressiveness with which boys establish their masculinity in childhood in order to rebel against their mothers and repress female identification is thus reinforced by the occupational system, in which the experience of injustice, as well as one's own failure to compete for better jobs, is combined with the feeling of having "been treated unjustly" (p.314). [88]

PARSONS also considered the occupational system as the most important institutional expression of the rationalization process studied by Max WEBER. Rationalization means a process of change set in motion by scientific and technological progress that dissolves both symbol systems that integrate social life and the socio-cultural context of action which provides people with security and a stable orientation. According to PARSONS, this dynamic change, to which many individuals react with insecurity and fear, is largely responsible for the development of aggressiveness in Western industrial societies. Indeed, the

process of rationalization polarizes according to sociocultural differences as conditioned by the opposition of "rural and urban elements, capital and labor, upper and lower class groups" (p.317): Those segments of the population that feel threatened by the process of dynamic change develop "a fundamentalist reaction" (p.316), according to which they compulsively exaggerate traditional values such as family, religion, class attitudes and traditions of popular culture. The fundamentalist reaction opposes the Enlightenment ideas of science, atheism, liberal rationalism, and the relaxation of traditional sexual morality advocated by those who, like the academic professions, belong to the emancipated groups. [89]

PARSONS thus described in an explosive way how the aggressive drive of (white) men develops out of unresolved interaction conflicts of childhood and is intensified in adulthood by being defeated in the economic competition. If these men then also react with fear to processes of social change, in the course of which their traditional ideas are called into question, then, modifying ADORNO et al.'s (2019 [1950]) concept of authoritarian personality, one can speak of their tending toward an authoritarian coping strategy (a "fundamentalist reaction," PARSONS, 1964 [1947], p.316), which makes them susceptible to (sexist and racist) prejudices fomented by TRUMP and his agitation against strangers (women, people of color, immigrants). [90]

But this also makes it clear that I am giving a new twist to the authoritarian syndrome described by ADORNO et al.: In the present, one can no longer speak of an "authoritarian personality" common to most members of society, as it was during the Third Reich or the McCarthy era. Rather, it is natural to speak with BECK (1986) of a disenchantment of traditional certainties of belief and a release from the socio-moral milieus of class and stratum, which result in an individualization of life situations and a pluralization of lifestyles. Since family socialization processes vary greatly due to these individualization processes—there can be strict, spoiling, achievement-oriented or neglectful parenting—the development of the child's drive structure is shaped very differently. But across different parenting styles, parents who feel overwhelmed often react in an authoritarian manner. In this way, the drive impulses are already shaped in childhood by the authoritarian coping strategy. And when adolescent subjects get into a critical situation in which they can neither fulfil their own desires and expectations nor meet the demands of their professional and private lives, the authoritarian coping strategy often habitualized in childhood helps them to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety-inducing complexity of these situations at one fell swoop. However, just as adulthood forms a third chance to question and overcome the authoritarian coping strategy practiced in childhood and/or adolescence, it is also possible that after a happy childhood and successful adolescence, the pressure to perform becomes so great due to the competition and constraints experienced in the world of work that the authoritarian coping strategy is habitualized in stressful situations during adulthood. Under the right circumstances, the authoritarian mode of social adaptation may be reflexively resorted to even when such affective behavior contradicts one's own liberal or anti-authoritarian convictions. [91]

Undoubtedly, those who are susceptible to the authoritarian conflict management strategy that TRUMP uses to enlist his compatriots for his fundamentalist variant of the neoconservative worldview¹⁸ have squandered the third chance presented by adulthood. The mechanisms that TRUMP uses in the course of this ideological agitation are illustrated by his words that everyone is running around like headless chickens with ballot boxes: TRUMP appeals to feelings of shame and powerlessness as well as fears of annihilation through this phrase, thus addressing an early infantile unconscious that is typical of the mother-child dyad.¹⁹ This infantile unconscious is accompanied by narcissistic rage that can turn, in adulthood, against all people who are somehow foreign and different. TRUMP's ideological agitation has two effects: On the one hand, he solves an affective problem by inviting his followers to act out their impotent rage. For the irrational rage that isolates the individual in his or her everyday life is, by TRUMP declaring the Democrats to be enemies of the people, "filled with worldview" (LORENZER, 1981, p.121). "Now the individual is embedded in the organized consciousness of a mass and thus redeemed from his asocial isolation" (p.122). On the other hand, TRUMP's worldview serves as the (apparent) solution to a political problem. Social problems are to be solved not by social change but by fighting and destroying the Democrats who have been declared criminals as alleged enemies of democracy. And when TRUMP addresses castration fears and male feelings of inferiority by talking about headless chickens, then he awakens an unconscious determined by the Oedipal hatred of the father, which in the course of ideological indoctrination again fulfils two functions: On the one hand, TRUMP promises his supporters the solution to an affective problem, because the hatred of authority, which makes the individual unpleasantly conspicuous in contact with others, is given a "socially recognized name" by TRUMP's complaint that BIDEN stole his election victory (LORENZER, 1981, p.122). Individuals thus no longer experience themselves as isolated in their hatred, but feel connected to all of TRUMP's supporters who share this hatred of the new president. On the other hand, TRUMP's ideological agitation promises to answer social questions. For however neoliberal TRUMP's policies are, he suggests that the social issues at hand can be solved if one only rebels against the establishment and ousts BIDEN. When LORENZER added that the linking of the "wrong answer to the social problem [...] with the wrong name for the drive conflict" takes place via "templates as the core of a false ego" (1981, p.122), he described in terms of socialization theory that the ideological agitation is aimed at listeners from whom TRUMP demands a tough and combative masculinity. They are supposed to return to being America-loving "patriots" who are determined to free themselves from the shackles imposed by the Democrats, to fight "like hell" against the enemies of democracy and to land hard punches as if they were boxers. [92]

18 It is beyond the scope of this article to explain in detail why one can also speak of a postmodern authoritarianism in relation to TRUMP's productions (KÖNIG, 2019a, pp.79-85).

19 When "mother" is mentioned here, it means the primary caregiver, who could also be the father if the mother is working. When "father" is mentioned, it means the secondary caregiver, who could also be the working mother. Or there could be two mothers or two fathers who divide the maternal and paternal tasks between them.

As a political psychology-counterpart to a social-critical analysis of the political situation that would examine how right-wing Republicans under TRUMP's leadership seek to maintain their power after losing the election to BIDEN, this depth-hermeneutic reconstruction shows that TRUMP's speech is not based on a symbolic interaction with the audience, in the course of which desires for social change are translated into arguments that appeal to reason. Rather, the speech violates democratic rules of play because it amounts to a symptomatic interaction that latches onto personality defects of TRUMP's supporters and enlists them in support of a political message that declares the truth to be a lie and lies to be the truth. This happens through the drama of a sensual, pictorial language that awakens such fears of death and annihilation, such feelings of male inferiority and impulses of hatred in the unconscious of male and female listeners, that rational objections fall silent and the audience is transformed into an angry crowd storming the Capitol. [93]

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Author

Prof. Dr. *Hans-Dieter KÖNIG*, a founding member of the Research Workshop Depth Hermeneutics and a permanent fellow of the Hans Kilian und Lotte Köhler Centrum at Ruhr-Universität Bochum, works as an analyst in a private practice in Dortmund. He was awarded the title of professor of sociology by Goethe University Frankfurt/Main and has held the post of visiting professor at the Department of Education of the University of Vienna. His research interests are the methodology and method of depth hermeneutics, psychoanalytic social and cultural research, educational and socialization research, political psychology, and psychotherapy research.

Contact:

Prof. Dr. Hans-Dieter König

Practice for psychoanalysis and psychotherapy,
Cobbenheimweg 18
44388 Dortmund, Germany

Tel.: +49 231 6904248

Fax: +49 231 9633566

E-mail: h.d.koenig@web.de

URL: <https://www.koenig-psychoanalyse.de/>

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