

Dear Jany and Paola,

Here are some pretty random thoughts, apologetically sent in the 11th hour, after reading “Summary of Selected Content from the Rundbriefe and Our Response” and mulling it over for the last few weeks.

Thinking about psychoanalysis, 2020’s, USA, the image that won’t go away is of a straight jacket. The training, the practice. The expense, the population served. The expectation that one buy into ideas that have a definite Eurocentric origin. The racism. The paternalism. The classism. The unacknowledged toxic individualism. The rigidity of the instruction and the assumed parameters of practice. This for a discipline supposedly dedicated to freedom.

Psychoanalysis is a definitely capitalist enterprise; health care is a commodity; The institutionalization of this. Five years of very expensive training, taught by people who can afford to be paid nothing.

There are ostensibly now efforts to change that, at various institutional levels, but how much is actually real, how much performative? Can you actually make change if you continue the same structures? The issue of when/how does change come from within and when/how from without.

What is true, important and useful in psychoanalytic ideas anyway? The existence of the unconscious? Transference? Countertransference? Defenses? Projection? Important: being able to hold different ideas in mind at the same time; call out and resist authoritarianism in all its forms. This moment: the transition from Jews being forced to leave the established analytic institutions in Europe to now being a dominant group and many now not hearing, not allowing Palestinian voices.

How model and create safe space and the courage to challenge authority? One way (as you are): create communities of practitioners of various fields to work with these ideas and support each other. (Maybe get someone from the NRA to come and talk about phallogocentric aggression, masochism and the American Way. )

The paradox of the apparent goal of individual change in psychoanalysis, along side the resistance to institutional change.

Training per the IPA/APA provides an interesting (if arrogant) academic pursuit. How to apply this as a healing, enriching process is something separate. The institutionalization of five years of very expensive training, and the focus on the individual in theory and the inevitability of that in practice, to the neglect of the importance of group. This fraction, this bit of fractal: the critical import of community.

Small group meeting in institutes and associations probably a good stab at this. Extra-institutional organization probably more important

The Rundbriefe. Fractals. Break away. Repeated processes, but different. Cycles. Evolution. Beginnings and endings. Reich: suffering comes from society; who has an interest in what.

Not interested in pure Freudianism, as Fenichel was, but very interested in changing what is taught, how, and how applied. Opening it up, refuting previous claims of universalism and supplying context and comparison.

The current structure of psychoanalysis seems to me largely morally and ethically, not to mention financially for those so inclined, untenable.

Thanks for all your work on this.

Best,

Deb