

HOWARD H. COVITZ

PAX PSYCHOANALYTICA in Our Time: Dream, Wish or Potential Reality?

100 years ago, (October 30/November 6 1907) Freud and Adler were already picking at each other during a Wednesday meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. Indeed, now a century later not only have many institutes and societies and schools been founded, but these institutes and societies remain prone to schismatic splitting. Arguably, the existence of a congeries of warring schools bodes poorly for the attainment of Pax Psychoanalytica in our times.

For much of the Century of Psychoanalysis, the organizing principle about which psychoanalytic theory coalesced was the Oedipus Complex and the dominant picture of the Good Life was one in which oedipal crises were resolved. Alas, looking at the manner in which psychoanalytic disputes were/are resolved, this period could have as well been named after the Hundred Years War, making one wonder about the successes of training analyses. The author argues that a family whose individual Oedipal crises were solved along the lines of its resolution in the psychoanalytic world would not be much of a family. Suggestions are made for modifying our understanding of the Oedipus complex to include a central notion of conflict resolution leading to principles for accepting otherness or Thirdness.

This paper will attempt to add to a discussion of the manners in which we might proceed to lessen these tensions and to apply what we may take from the experience of these Psychoanalytic Wars to group schisms and intergroup tensions, in general.

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