

Raging at While Changing the Machine

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Regardless of the theoretical school of psychotherapists, all psychoanalytically oriented ones facilitate personal liberation. The internal dramas that populate the unconscious mind typically contain critical, persecutory themes that cause our patients to arrive inhibited, constricted, and emotionally distressed. Using transference and counter-transference, psychoanalytic psychotherapists help patients alter these subtle but powerful dramatic themes, freeing them to lead more authentic lives. Donald Winnicott believed that such work helps the *True Self* emerge from the *False Self*. Jacques Lacan quipped that psychoanalysts must be Marxists. Why?

Because you (as hypothetical patient) will learn more about your authentic nature (your *subject*), as distinct from your beliefs about who you think you are or you should be (your *ego*), through the psychoanalytic transformational process. Dangerously, you might develop attitudes that conflict with global capitalism. If you started in therapy feeling depressed, and believing you were happy as a Starbucks Barista making \$8 an hour, you may well realize along the way that you are a highly introverted person. This may help you understand why you despised the highly inter-personal nature of your job. Further, you may realize that you've always been fascinated with engineering, and enter graduate training in that field.

In 1875, Karl Marx wrote, "From each according to his ability; to each according to his need." I am not espousing communism, particularly in any form thus far implemented in human history. But, interestingly, Marx was interested in creating societies that honor subjectivity. Psychoanalytic psychotherapy helps persons claim their authentic being, balanced by a compassion for others, and thereby facilitates thriving selves that also care for others. The ever-growing international corporations care naught about your personal fulfillment. Au contraire, they wish you to subjugate your needs to theirs. To prevent workers from jumping to their deaths in China, Apple installed human nets.

Some months ago, I moved my routine medical prescriptions to Escripts, a huge affiliate of the even larger Blue Cross. Within a few months, what was initially convenient became a hassle. It later became abusive. The firm failed to process mail-in prescriptions rapidly, as it promised. It sent unrequested refills, charged to my credit card. When it failed to promptly fulfill my request for a Typhoid vaccine, Escripts lost me as a potential long-term customer. I took my business to my local Fair Oaks Pharmacy. Days later, a refrigerated box of the vaccine arrived from Escripts, causing me time and effort to safely dispose of it.

Similarly, but more locally, I was kept on hold a few weeks ago for two separate 15-minute periods at The Alliance for Digestive Diseases here in Pasadena. I sought only a routine colonoscopy. Both phone calls ended with my hanging up because my next patient arrived. During that total of one-half hour of wasted life, I listened to the dulcet voice tone of a female voice-over artist. I felt confused. Was I in a trance, waiting in line at Rite Aid? The voice advised me of the doctors, their address, and their responsiveness – directly contradicted by my immediate experience.

Despite humanity's likely permanent inability to escape the oppression of global capitalism, i.e. no local firms will ever sell the increasingly shrinking, claustrophobic seats on the airlines because they are *all* now massive corporations, you can still fight the ill effects of global capitalism. As I just noted, I already moved my prescriptions to the Fair Oaks Pharmacy, steps from my office, where actual human beings talk to you; if the GI doc for whom I left a message does not return my call soon, I will switch to a different one.

You can assert your personal agency over corporations that mistreat you and, eventually, they will take notice and change. Instead of buying Ivory, you can walk to your local farmers' markets and buy handmade soap. You can buy cat food at the locally owned pet shop, even though Petco is closer. As for me, I'm done with Starbucks, or even the Coffee Bean so conveniently located across the street. I frequent Busters' on Mission, owned by two sisters. I also hang out at Zona Rosa, right down the street from Rose City. It's been there for 20 years, is locally owned and operated, and shockingly has human persons serving excellent coffee with kindness and humor. If I perchance run into you there, perhaps we could enjoy a *real* conversation.