

The intimate within the foreign – where? Gerhard Reichsthaler

In my view the psychoanalytic discourse in Austria has been destroyed twice. The first time it was in 1938 after the “annexation” of Austria by Hitler-Germany, when most psychoanalysts had to leave Austria. Those who stayed behind were willing to collaborate in one way or another with the new forces in power and found themselves incorporated in the “Göring-Institut”, as described by Laura Sokolowsky. “Psychoanalysts would have to renounce their magnificent isolation and begin to make the boundaries between the Freudian orientation and other schools porous”¹. This story is well known. The psychoanalytic discourse in this country is still suffering today from the consequences of that event.

Moreover, a second disruption of the psychoanalytic discourse in Austria has taken place, which might have been less conspicuous but has possibly had a greater impact. It happened in 1991 with the introduction of the psychotherapy law in Austria. The psychoanalysts of Austria chose to put themselves under the control of this jurisdiction. This law regulates the educational and working guidelines of over 20 different types of psychotherapy, psychoanalysis being regarded as one of those. The first paragraph of this law states that “The practice of psychotherapy [...] means [...] the treatment of behavioral disorders and states of distress, caused by psychosocial or psychosomatic factors, with scientific methods of psychotherapy [...] with the objective to ease or to eliminate the present symptoms, to change disturbed behavioral patterns and attitudes and to further the emotional maturity, individuation and health of the treated person”. Consequently, after 1991, psychoanalysis has ceased to exist in the land of its very origin. It does exist on paper, but in reality there is no psychoanalytic discourse, for it is psychotherapy. The heart of psychoanalysis, its most intimacy, which is located on the outside – its extimacy – has been abandoned in favor of a scientific discourse, which in turn now drives away the speaking subject. Instead a “pure subject to science”², as Lacan called it, has been established and Miller adds: “But being an immigrant is also the status of the subject itself in psychoanalysis. The subject as such, defined by its place in the Other, is an immigrant. [...] The Other is its only home”³. Then, as a possible conclusion, Psychoanalysis itself, is an immigrant and continually keeps becoming one, each time anew. “It is furthermore not without significance that psychoanalysis was invented by someone, who had an intrinsic relation with the status of the foreigner, with the status of social extimacy”⁴.

In 2009, Avi Rybnicki together with a number of interested colleagues founded the “New Lacanian Field-Austria”. This initiative operates with the support of the members of the Freudian Field. This foundation is also an attempt to make a contribution to the restoration of the psychoanalytic discourse in Austria.

- 1 Sokolowsky, L. : “Totalitarianism and Psychoanalysis: A little trip to the Land of Nazi Germany”, *The Lacanian Review, Segregations*, 2017, p.46
- 2 Lacan J., quoted from M. H. Brousse “Segregations/Subversion”, *The Lacanian Review, op. cit.*, p. 7
- 3 Miller, J.-A.: “Extimate Enemies”, *The Lacanian Review, op. cit.*, p.31
- 4 *Ibid.*