

Tom, Jackie, Betty, Hina, Marjorie, Yola, Deborah, Nick, Sally.

It's nine years since I last had the privilege of addressing the graduating group of therapists. As the CTP approaches its 25th anniversary, we can celebrate with joy the strength of a school that can help to bring to the world nine such vital, competent and diverse psychotherapists. I say 'help to bring' because the central achievement here is *your* doing – the countless hours of personal therapy, therapy in the training group, experiential learning, study and writing, supervision and the first years of your practice in this strange and wonderful art.

Four years ago Cathleen Hoskins addressed the graduates about the courage required to be a therapist in our tradition. It was a splendid talk and well worth another look on the website. I wish to talk about something similar from a slightly different direction. I've become aware over the last few years that our psychodynamic psychology treats very differently the developmental story of those two great energies of all sentient-moral life, *eros* and *aggression* .

We have become accustomed to the picture of *eros* expanding from the earliest forms of individual desire and relational connectedness into all the complexities of bodily life in community and into the highest forms of human love for others.

However, in the face of our species' history of war, murder, hatred, greed, abuse and ecological destruction, it might seem naïve to imagine a similar arc of development for the human energy of aggression. In fact, I think our psychodynamic tradition has been daunted both theoretically and clinically by the magnitude of this problem. Clinically I think we tend to settle for the honest acknowledgment of repressed anger and the goal of managing anger so that when expressed it is proportionate and 'useful'. I think we mute or fail to imagine the maturation of aggression into all the tissues of

human life as patience, perseverance, firmness in face of oppressions, courage in crisis, sustained detachment and objectivity. I see all these as transformations of aggressive energy.

The irony is that we strive to attain to these maturations of aggression in our own presence and work as therapists. We hold ourselves to a high standard of patience, perseverance, firmness, non retaliation, steady hope amid turmoil. If our clients see themselves and present themselves as dead inside, radically unlovable, terminally depressed, we strive to treat them with non-judgmental respect and hold for them not only our own hope, but theirs too, the hope that sleeps buried in their inner core. This striving and this hoping too are maturations of aggressive energy.

I find this therapist in your wonderful case studies. How honestly you write. How aware you are of your mistakes. How precious to you are these clients in all their particularity. How aware you are of the steady strengths you need for this work. You already articulate the need for lifelong learning.

Sometimes it is argued that our kind of therapy is a luxury society cannot afford—that the effort and energy towards liberation of an individual in their lifetime, should be better spent in fighting for structural social changes for the many.

My response is that you therapists are a visible enactment and a symbolic representation of society's care for individual persons in their own lifetime--- a small piece then, of that liberation that is the aim of social action. I've always understood the social meaning of our work this way. I would add, following tonight's theme, that you therapists also instantiate and sustain hope in, the possibility that human beings can move towards mature forms of their energy of aggression and help create a non-violent world.

In the name of the CTP faculty I congratulate you, welcome you as colleagues, and ask that the Spirit of love and unflinching courage be always in your hearts and in your work.