

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

I have just had a look at the latest *Self and Society* and want to congratulate you on the great job you are doing in raising standards in all possible respects.

On the subject of the very first peer-reviewed paper, however, I was surprised that neither Ernesto (Spinelli) nor, apparently, his peer reviewers, made any reference to Jerome Frank, who was saying many of the same things as long ago as 1961. Since the first publication of his landmark book, *Persuasion and Healing*, Frank's ideas have been periodically updated, and I've been using his material in my lectures on integration and common factors for years. In essence, Frank proposes that from historical and cross-cultural perspectives, psychotherapy can be seen as a healing practice on the same continuum as witchcraft, shamanism or medicine. He concludes that all healing practices have in common the following: a socially sanctioned healing place (magic tree, shaman's hut, hospital, therapist's office); a socially sanctioned healer who is known to have undergone a lengthy training or apprenticeship, from the mysteries of which non-initiates have been excluded (vision-quest, medical school, psychotherapy training); a set of healing practices or rituals (potions, prayers, incantations, spells, osteopathy, psychoanalysis, examination, diagnosis and prescription); a theory of health and illness that both justifies the practice and fits the prevailing cultural or sub-cultural world-view reasonably well (witchcraft, religion, science, scientology). Taken together, these evoke powerful expectations of healing on the part of both practitioner and patient which mobilise the patient's self-healing capacities and motivate beneficial change, perhaps in the direction of addressing any perceived rift between the patient and her social/cultural context. This is a very distilled version of Frank's account

of the placebo effect at work.

It is always tricky telling final-year students who have invested a lot of time, resources and hope, that perhaps they might just as well have trained in something else, and that in all probability they are not doing what they thought they were. I explain it in terms of the necessity for a long, demanding and costly initiation.

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Dear *Self & Society* folks

Thank you, again and again, for this journal. Living here in Canada I've found nothing remotely like it. I always particularly enjoy Jane Barclay's articles. I love the way she lays out her own struggles and how she works with it and through it, and uses it in her work. So contrary in style to the peer-reviewed scientific articles that feel more academic and at a distance from life, from our work on ourselves and from our relationships with our clients/students/colleagues/patients/friends. I kept saying 'Yes! Yes!' to Tom Feldberg, as well as to Jill Hall. And then there's Annie Spencer, refreshingly and inspiringly out on a limb in the woods.

Great stuff.

Jen Turner