

Discordant Trump ; Dissenting Psychiatry

Peter Henrick (*MetroTalk* Wednesday 22/4/26) makes two statements that I agree with; both deserve further comment.

The first is ‘psychiatry is not an exact science’. This should not be a demeaning or triumphant accusation; it should be acknowledged as an inescapable predicament. Psychiatry is essentially about distressed experience and behaviour, either of the self or others. Experiences are elusive to direct measurement and control, yet both are fundamental to applied science. Physical medicine, by contrast, deals with disrupted functions and structures of the body — these are much more clearly and directly observed, measured, and controlled. This is easier scientific territory.

The serious problems psychiatry is charged with thus have to make do with a cobbled mix of different disciplines: various psychologies, sociology, neuroscience, medicine and many more and then attempt, with scientific attitude, a holistic, humane judgement. Dissent here is — should be — an inevitable feature of this riddled responsibility.

The second of Peter Henrick’s statements, ‘Trump is a narcissistic megalomaniac, pathological liar and demonstrably unfit for office’ , seems indisputably clear to all but a large section of the bewilderingly enthralled US electorate and the embattled Nethanyahou government . Could any of this be changed by any ‘eminent psychiatrist’ ? Would Trump cooperate ? Neither are feasible. So psychiatry here can offer only its own scholarship: it has no functional use.

We are faced, rather, with a massive moral and cultural problem that extends far beyond Trump. It must include all the expedient sycophants in government and the vast entranced electorate who, gullibly or cynically, believe in this grotesque, perverse and myopically self-interested development of The American Dream.