Resistance is the way to prevent going mad

This essay examines the interplay between social disruption and psychological distress, and argues that contemporary ‘madness’ is not primarily individual, but collective and contextual. In an era of constant exposure to violence, disinformation and structural inequality, a state of apathy, cynicism and learned helplessness emerges. People know what is wrong, but fail to act, trapped in psychological defence mechanisms such as denial, splitting and emotional numbness. This leads to a vicious circle in which inertia and pain reinforce one another.

Psychiatry, it is argued, inadvertently contributes to this impasse by individualising psychological suffering and disconnecting it from its socio-political context. In doing so, it pathologises justified reactions to a disrupted world. The article argues for a repoliticisation of psychiatry, in which context and the psyche are recognised as inextricably linked, and in which practitioners also assume an ethical and social role.

As a simple counterbalance, allowing and acknowledging feelings is proposed as a necessary starting point. Emotional confrontation can lead to insight, the restoration of agency and, ultimately, to collective resistance. In this way, psychiatry is reimagined as a space for emancipation, in which individual and societal healing coincide.