Revisiting the lost considerations of the prolonged grief disorder debate

Debates surrounding psychiatry are multifaceted, yet at their core lies a shared concern: how to understand and manage profound human suffering. Despite this common ground, discussions are often marked by polarized rhetoric and persistent misunderstandings. A recent and pressing example is the debate over grief as a psychiatric diagnosis, where clinical imperatives and philosophical concerns appear to be in tension.

This presentation proposes a reframing of how critical psychology can intervene more productively in such debates without adopting an antagonistic stance. Drawing on the concept of institutional kinds, I argue that controversies in psychiatry primarily hinge on disputes over what counts as a mental disorder and interests involved. Recognizing this can help clarify the structure of disagreement and open space for more targeted critique.

Building on this analysis, I suggest that critical psychology must more explicitly articulate which interests are being contested when advancing critique in order to gain traction within psychiatric discourse. Finally, the presentation explores whether Mouffean concepts such as pluralistic agonism and dissensus can foster more constructive engagement in debates about mental disorder.