

relationships to pleasure and desire but equally those we have with knowledge and power. When, she says, like Freud, we express our scientific appetites for parsimony, consistency and precision, we strip away something vital. For accounts of connectedness to be anything like true they are, of necessity, diverse.

*Sexuality, Intimacy, Power* is a remarkable document of recent Western intellectual and political histories. Via psychoanalysis, feminism and social theory, it attempts no less than to make some honest sense of what it is to be a person amongst people and how much we can know of such things. It is readable, brave, witty and in places, quite funny. Put simply, you'll struggle through shelves on these subjects to find anything better. Check it out!

Phillips A. Reasons for Living. London Review of Books, 12 November 1998.

Totton N. Psychotherapy and politics: a crucial link. *Psychodynamic Practice* 2003; 9: 3.

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## PSYCHOTHERAPY AND POLITICS

*Psychotherapy and Politics*. By Nick Totton. London: Sage Publications, 2000. 186pp. £18.99 pb.

This is one of the most comprehensive books that I have read that addresses the relationship between therapies, the social and the political. Comprehensive in the sense that it covers many areas in short but succinct chapters that focus on particular relationships in the field. It is, in some way, a textbook, rather than a monograph and I would imagine that students of the field would find it a useful source of reference

that they would return to time and again.

The book is organized around four clear but often overlapping relations between psychotherapy and politics: psychotherapy *in* politics; psychotherapy *of* politics; politics *of* psychotherapy and finally politics *in* psychotherapy. Thus the first section deals with psychotherapy in politics, which is, to quote Totton:

A range of interventions by psychotherapists in the political process itself. Some of these are by therapists *acting as therapists* rather than private individuals: saying in one way or another, 'Through our clinical experience we have concluded that the following political programme is desirable . . .' In other cases, the therapists are *acting as citizens*, and putting their therapeutic skills and understanding at the service of a political goal to which they give priority. (Totton, 2000, 6)

So, in the first part of the book Totton examines the work of psychotherapists who are activists as citizens, those who are politicized as therapists, and those who justify politics and therapy each in terms of the other. Examining the work of 'right' and 'left' therapists up until the postwar period, Totton provides an interesting overview of the work of Wilhelm Reich and a useful summary of Reich's career contrasting left and right political positions via Freud and Jung. Totton specifically concentrates on Jung's anti-Semitism and his relationship to the National Socialist Party in Nazi Germany arguing that 'If only Jung could have "openly admitted" his own errors, and asked himself how they came about, something useful might have emerged from this sad tale' (Totton, 2000, 21). Following on from this, the chapter 'Alternative realities' examines the events of May 1968 and the rise of Lacan and Lacanianism in France. The thought of Jacques Lacan became highly influential in Paris, and has remained so, spreading to

areas as diverse as literary and cultural criticism, particularly in North America. Of course, Lacan had his critics. As Lechte (1994) notes, Lacan was to change the whole orientation of psychoanalysis in France and elsewhere in his celebrated Seminar. Lacan is also well known for the controversy that often surrounded him. He was expelled from the International Psychoanalytic Association in 1953 for the use of unorthodox methods in analytic practice. Lacan re-interprets the work of Freud through the lens of poststructuralism, emphasizing the relationship between ego, the unconscious and language. Lacan achieved international notoriety with the publication of *Ecrits* in 1966 and *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* in 1973 (Clarke, 2003, 107). Totton, notably, draws our attention to some of the other projects going on in Paris at the time, particularly Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipe* and the work of Jean Laplanche.

Chapter 4 provides an interesting introduction to hands-on therapy, or *therapy for the people* through the work of Marie Langer who was regarded as a dangerous radical by the *junta* in Argentina for her work with the poor. Under the threat of death she moved on to Mexico, and then Nicaragua where she took a central role in developing the country's first national mental healthcare system (Totton, 2000, 31). Totton goes on to discuss social therapy and then the idea of neighbourhood psychotherapy in London, with reference to the work of Hoggett and Lousada (1985) in Battersea, noting that Langer, Hoggett and Lousada used a similar psychoanalytic framework with a strong Kleinian flavour. The final chapters in this section are devoted to critiques of psychiatry through anti-psychiatry and radical therapy in the US, conflict in the community, and the

influence of psychotherapy on governmental agencies and social policy.

The second part of this book was of most interest to me. Totton demonstrates an ability in his writing style to cover a wide range of perspectives, theorists and ideas in a fairly concise way without detracting from the centrality and importance of the work he is describing. 'The psychotherapy of politics' examines psychoanalysis as a theory of human nature and of a metapsychology, investigating the more philosophical and societal application of psychoanalysis through Freud, Reich, Klein and Norman O Brown. Chapters in this section range from the psychohistory of the family, through ideas about gender and sexuality to the roots of hatred. There is a particularly interesting section on the Fromm-Marcuse debate and the ideas of Erikson and Reich. Following on from this is a discussion of Lloyd deMause's novel contribution in the form of psychohistory and the psychogenic theory of history.

Probably the most useful chapter in this section, certainly from a psycho-social perspective, is the 'Roots of hatred' in which Totton explores numerous psychoanalytic ideas around racism, ethnic hatred, conflict and power. Totton focuses on the psychological mechanism of projection, which, he argues, 'is a powerful concept for understanding the form and function of sexist and racist beliefs, or indeed of any "ism" which identifies a dangerous and despicable "other"' (Totton, 2000, 88). Totton explores the contrasting positions of Reich and Freud before going on to talk about the Kleinian position and the emphasis placed on projection, or more specifically I would add, the emphasis on projective identification (Clarke, 2000). There is a particularly useful discussion of sexism in which Totton draws on the work of Dinnerstein (1978),

Mitchell (1975) and Jukes (1993). The chapter concludes with a brief look at the work of Frantz Fanon, someone who is undisputedly one of the most important figures in the psychoanalytic discussion of colonialism and post-colonialism and certainly one of the first people to recognize that there is both a political economy and a psychodynamics of racism.

Part three of this book confronts the politics of psychotherapy addressing such varied issues as psychotherapy under totalitarianism, public conceptions of psychotherapy, the institutions of psychotherapy and challenges to these institutions. Psychotherapy under totalitarianism 'brings together accounts of therapy in Nazi Germany, Latin American dictatorships, and the Soviet Union' (Totton, 2000, 101). Totton follows the path of psychotherapy under closed societies where he argues that it was able to continue with varying degrees of success and compromise. For example the consciously punitive regime in Soviet psychiatry was opposed by a small group of psychiatrists who were either imprisoned or had to leave the country. The chapter on psychotherapy in the public eye addresses psychotherapy as playing an important role on behalf of society. Totton discusses the relationship between psychotherapy and medicine – or the medical model, better still termed the medicalization of psychotherapy, which although having political and economic undercurrents is driven by the numbers, or lack of numbers of clients who are able to pay for therapy. Therefore, particularly in the US clients need to be deemed ill, rather than unhappy to satisfy insurance companies in order to seek payment for treatment. As Totton notes, the whole issue of diagnosis demonstrates the huge differences between psychotherapy and medicine and DSM IV has become symptomatic of this polarity.

Managed care in the US has its own version in Britain, argues Totton – the NHS. He doubts whether therapy can actually fit into the rigid confines of the current medical model.

The final two chapters of this section are dedicated to the institutions of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, including the structures of the IPA and exclusions from the IPA, in particular the exclusion of Jacques Lacan in the early 1950s. In fact, Totton provides a useful history of the development of the French schools, the splits and linkages and affiliations to universities. As Totton notes, there are struggles between different practitioners and struggles between different institutions – therapists are no less aggressive and power seeking than any other human group. Charting the growth of the IPA and its massive expansion in the US, Totton highlights some of the rifts and disagreements between different individuals and schools and the more recent trend towards pluralism and acceptance of difference. Totton then goes on to provide a history of psychotherapy and counselling in the UK since the 1970s, describing what Bob Young termed the 'shenanigans', denigration and remarkable feats of containment – it struck me on reading this book that this chapter and the one that follows it are by far the most political. I'll let the reader judge.

The final section of this book, 'Politics in psychotherapy' is important in that it highlights the challenges that have been made to basic assumptions in the psychotherapeutic model, particularly regarding what constitutes healthy/unhealthy – normal and pathological. Totton highlights feminist and gay critiques of therapy as well as social and anti-racist critiques, noting that the core of this critique often centres around the power, or the power relationship

between analyst and analysand. He then goes on to discuss some of the attempts to address this power imbalance through mutual analysis, person centred theory and group work. The final chapter gives examples of initiatives that have been inspired by therapy but leave the therapeutic arena all together, developing, argues Totton, a new sort of political practice.

This book is quite difficult to review because it covers such a vast area, and I suppose this would be one of the criticisms that we could level at Totton – too much breadth and not enough depth. I think this would be rather unfair. The book does offer soundbites in some areas and more depth in others, but even the shorter chapters are succinct and to the point, offering the reader avenues for further explanation. The advantage of this of course is that it can be used as a reference text as well as a monograph. The reader can dip in and out of subject areas and use Totton's pointers to further research. This book really does deliver what it promises, it is political and it addresses all angles of political action and awareness within the psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic community and discipline. As such, I feel that it will appeal to a wide audience, practitioners, academics and lay readers alike, and is both a readable monograph and a useful reference text.

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## A PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

*Organisations, Anxieties and Defences: Towards a Psychoanalytic Social Psychology*. Edited by RD Hinshelwood, Marco Chiesa. London: Whurr, 2002; 250pp, £22.50 pb.

Agoraphobia; anti-nuclear campaigners; bounded organism; dialectics of We; differentiated psychic space; Einstein; fraternity; household gods; human cloning; inner city schools; intrahospital clubs; modernism; semi-permeable membrane; Oscar Wilde; World War II: all these words, whatever they might mean, belong to the index of a book that is a prolegomena towards a psychoanalytic social psychology.

Everyday talk has it that we can feel lonely even in a crowd; psychoanalysis suggests we can feel crowded by ourselves. *Organisations, Anxieties and Defences* is a densely academic survey of psychoanalytic research into groupness since Freud's 1929 *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. Up until then, it is hinted, Freud dismisses the group in favour of a 'humanity' metonymically reduced to the neurotic individual: modern man in his singularity, dispersed, repressed, alone with fake memories of parents who betrayed him. With *Civilisation and Its*