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Discussion of Nancy Hollander's 'Psyche, Ideology, and the Creation of the Political Subject'

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ABSTRACT *The paper consists of the online discussion of Nancy Hollander's 'Psyche, Ideology, and the Creation of the Political Subject', summarized. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

Key words: psychoanalysis; ideology; hegemony

The discussion of Nancy Hollander's paper 'Psyche, Ideology and the Creation of the Political Subject' began with a preplanned discussion by Stephen Hartman.

From Stephen Hartman:

I got charged up reading Neil and Nancy's papers as I flew across the American heartland on a trip from New York to San Francisco. I checked the impulse to wave my hands around and emphatically agree out loud (as I confess to doing at home when I am excited by what I'm reading). I felt trapped in my window seat as I often do in America and occasionally do in my position behind the couch. Looking over the shoulder of America at problems that I cannot magically solve, I was moved to think about psychoanalysis as an act of resistance to our individual and collective tendencies to submit to terror.

I am reminded of David Shapiro's claim that neurotic character styles (rigid character) coalesce in acts of self-deception. Neil and Nancy approach different aspects of the wish not to know and not to know one's self. In the wake of 9/11 and a war against 'terror', Neil focuses on our relative ability to tolerate the pain and suffering of others when we do or don't compute the consequences of war. Nancy asks us to contemplate our lack of critical capacity before and after jolts of terror and awareness. Both Neil and Nancy want to find a way, as David Shapiro says, to introduce the patient to him or herself that entails, to differing degrees, bringing the political realm into the consulting room. Nancy is more so an activist, wanting us to encourage the patient to act in the political arena. Neil is perhaps

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more restrained, asking us to contemplate the patient's ability to tolerate suffering. Lynne has asked us to consider the patient's and our complicity in the splitting that separates the psychic from the social as if they were unrelated things.

Nancy helps us see how splitting is used to isolate us from the complexity of the political situation as a defence against internal states of fragmentation, collective fragmentation, and responsibility in respect to the reality of violence issued at home and abroad. In the most stunning of reminders, she alerts us to how we have repressed the history of American complicity in The Defining Moment of 9/11 (2001 and 1973). She turns to Klein to help us understand how splitting is deployed to deny our own aggression (and the aggressive history of our national myths). She uses Lacanian concepts to help us visit the hyper-real quality of our dissociation in the presence of ideological structures that would discipline our resistance.

Terror has the inverse structure of what Foucault called 'heterotopia'. Queer theorists used Foucault's term to define spaces where sexual and political subjectivities come into spatial and temporal relation. Imagine a cruising area where men go for sex in a public park: relations of private and public, polite and perverse, dangerous and playful, personal and political collapse as the normative structure that binds these binaries tumbles in illicit embrace. Heteronormal is no longer operative. The policeman who turns up in time to chase away the lovers, interpellating them as Nancy suggests, fails in this heterotopic environment to capture them. Nancy cites Zizek: the subject emerges when and insofar as interpellation fails. As the Rosa von Prunheim film of the same name suggests, born is an 'Army of Lovers'. Two men flee the park aware that their desire is a political act. Perhaps they will never see each other again. Perhaps they will marry (illegally). Whatever the outcome, the space they have inhabited has politicized their bodies and minds in relation to power.

In contrast to heterotopic space, terror is rigid and homogenizing. Enemies are out there but always here and yet never here because here and there are kept separate. Iraq is the Soviet Union is North Korea is the Axis of Evil is not the American Heartland. This justifies the argument, 'better to fight them there than here' as if the most necessary thing the State can do is enforce the splitting of there and here, now and then, diminishing the complexity by which here and there are inextricably bound and obfuscating the reality of otherness. Again, as Nancy shows us, the historical interaction between there and here collapses into one big now.

Heterotopias are Other spaces where 'there' exposes itself as a displaced 'here'. In psychoanalytic jargon, splitting becomes transparent. Its spatial aspect, its projective quality, can be seen. It seems to me that Nancy has taken a serious step toward thinking about clinical work as a kind of heterotopic space. She helps her patient 'see that his subjectivity has historical and cultural specificity while simultaneously it is also a particular instance of a general phenomenon related to familial interpellation … (whereby) under extreme social situations, the family allies with the state and shores up its interests.' She uses historical and contextual insight to help the patient act more freely now.

In a dream my patient reports, 'I am an airplane reeling out of control flying over a arachnid filled with oil.' As he realizes that the spider is an 'Iraq-nid' we discuss being tangled in a web and feeling unable to speak our minds. Much like Nancy's patient, my patient (who is the nephew of a very senior Bush administration official) feels he has no language to express his opinions in the halls of power that his family occupies. Routinely,

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he finds himself in a quasi-depersonalized state, an airplane crashing. Following Nancy's example, I asked him to imagine what it would be like to confront his relative who appears at family gatherings wearing a tiny foetus pinned to his lapel. He explains that speaking against power is unimaginable. It is only possible to describe here. Not there. As Orna Guralnik writes of depersonalization, he feels holographic to himself. The plane crashes. He decides that it has crashed because he wasn't able to speak. He tells me that the next time he sees his uncle, he will try to break the silence.

Nancy and I, and I suspect all of us agree: 'psychopathology is revealed in the political self-policing functions by which individuals agree to take their place within the socio-symbolic order, doing it without knowing it.' Nancy guides her patient toward political action in solidarity with grass roots organizations in protest of American policies. While I would certainly do the same (or follow Lynne's lead in the paper we read last year and support the patient's engagement in political action), I tend to focus more so on acts of resistance that are already latent in the patient's complicity with power – moments where interpellation, once dissociated, is dis-closed and where the patient's subjectivity can itself become a political force. I think these two approaches go hand in hand, and deal with different aspects of power in its relationship to subjectivity. Both are necessary if we are to imagine social change.

From Andrew Samuels:

My travel plans and the schedule for our discussions have not fitted together well. Hence, I have to post this comment on Nancy's paper without having seen anyone else's feedback. It makes sense for me to take some time to give a bit of background. I realise that, in the one (over)long post to which my itinerary limits me, I cannot really express myself nor do justice to the paper.

There are inevitable penumbrae from the discussion of Neil's paper. I want to flag up two items. The first is the way in which we all seemed to be slightly missing each other over what one could call in shorthand 'the clinic/politics dichotomy'. Trying to absorb what the discrepancies might mean, I came to the reflection that it is OK to have many different takes on this issue. I've been trucking a paper round called 'Seven types of politics and psychotherapy' (after William Empson's brilliantly entitled book *Seven Types of Ambiguity*).

The other penumbra has to do with how we handle the Americanocentric perspective. Nancy addresses this in her paper so it is not something only a non-American might have concerns about. This was actually why I posted my questions about some of the American Jewish references and commented on the exclusivity/inclusivity aspects of the matter. To be specific and in the hope of stimulating discussion, what does it mean if people who are not American do not resonate with the overwhelming political and psychological centrality of the attacks on New York and Washington DC in 2001?

This paper of Nancy's seems to me to have its downbeat and its upbeat aspects, at least in my reactions to it. Downbeat: the paucity of either the Kleinian or the Lacanian ideas, derived as they are from thinking about individuals, to illumine the issues that Nancy, with her habitual articulacy and learning, had nominated. To be specific, if there are mental representations of the Id, and if there is only a perennially split self that deludes itself over its unity, then the language of these 'facts' cannot be merely the language of affect and

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experience. It would most likely be a language of images, wouldn't it? Collective imagery shared by many, hence partaking in a *mundus imaginalis,* a world of images. And maybe abstract and inchoate imagery, not only the stuff of which art therapy is made. This is not to privilege images over emotions or relationships, but said in a spirit of enquiry as to how 'persecutory states of mind and unconscious defences' are carried. (Not 'archetypal' images but the archetypal way images function in the collective, in society. What a *Zeitgeist* is.)

The upbeat aspect of the paper has to do with Nancy's assumption or, perhaps, her faith in the possibility and reality of resistance (in its political and historical sense) to hegemony. Nancy suggests that even overwhelmingly powerful ideological, political and economic forces cannot cover over or bind all aspects of a polis. Hence, our sense of split and rupture may be seen as curative as well as damaging to our political sanity. The angst is where the action is. I think that many activists share this viewpoint without putting it so explicitly. In 1993, I wrote: 'Let us take our sense of fragmentation, fracture and complexity as healing as well as wounding to a sense of political and social empowerment. It follows that we have to try to engage with a diverse and fragmented culture by means of an analysis that sees through its own fantasy of homogeneity, is already diverse and fragmented, and seeks out complexity. Rousseau referred to 'the language of the heart' and I suppose that, in our day, we have to begin to speak the languages of the hearts.'

Picking up on the idea of the heart, I wonder if we have paid enough attention to what one could call 'the citizen's body'. There are a lot of aspects to this that have been well researched but not pulled together. I am thinking of environmentally stimulated illnesses, the phenomena of stress and psychosomatic illness in Western societies, and the ways in which the great psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety are generated by non-personal fields of emotional distress.

I am interested in accessing what the citizen's body tells us about the society, whether the citizen is in therapy or not. Maybe out of that exploration we can learn more about political resistance. If it seems apt, I like to allow my curiosity about the client's bodily reactions to the politics of the day (nothing more sophisticated). It is interesting that, in almost every instance, the client will describe a somatic response in terms of particular parts of the body and via a somaticized language: 'I feel red hot sensations in my belly when I think of the imminent extinction of the Mountain Gorilla', 'When I try to understand the rules for world trade, my head feels like it is flying off my body.' (These are examples from clinical work this past month.) Of course, this hardly ever leads immediately to a discussion about the politics in more accessible language but, in time, which does often happen. The thing is, the physical exploration or even exercise leads to a different kind of discussion. This is one small place where I see the political resistance arising – as a result of the introduction by a facilitating analyst of a new trope of expressing and working the political for the client's consideration. What I like about this is that the content is less important than what happens when the client and the analyst try this out.

I guess what I am saying is that most clients don't know that they are allowed to do this kind of thing in therapy.

Of course, the body is not a source of foundational wisdom. As we know, it is an always-constructed body. But this academic and philosophical point really strengthens the utility of the body as an arena for opening up exploration, testing out the possibilities and limitations of working in areas where the sutures are fraying or unraveling.

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[Recently, here in London, at a conference where Jessica Benjamin, Susie Orbach and I spoke], the question of political 'seamlessness' came up. Why, we wondered, were the powerful often so seamless in their presentation and functioning, and the resistance so woolly, frayed and unravelled.

In similar vein to this political bodywork, one can use imaginative 'techniques' to help coalesce the doubts and uncertainties many citizens feel about such issues as foreign policy. Getting the client to move or draw, or to play with the political material might also be possibilities.

Considering Nancy's client, I decided to put myself in his shoes for a moment. On one level, this was easier than I had thought it would be because I, too, have been accused of anti-Semitism when the action was in fact one that was critical of Israeli government policy. (This was in connection with university teaching in the US.)

Anyway, I took up a pad and some crayons and waited to see what would come up. What came up was a large baseball bat and I coloured it in mainly in black and dark brown. I am not 100% sure what a baseball bat is like in any detail as I have never handled one so maybe my association to a missile was easier than other people's might have been. I fell to wondering about the role of baseball in world politics (seriously!) and it led to a lot of ideas about sadistic and competitive play. It also led to reflections whose relevance remains unclear to me about the role of what we call sport and Americans call sports in the cultural life of Jews. In this country, Jewish passion for soccer, even though (or maybe because) the games take place on Saturday afternoons, is legendary. Not many players, though.

Now I would not say that the baseball bat in and of itself did much for social justice! Nor was it the client's baseball bat, it was mine. But I could imagine a client like the one Nancy describes responding quite well to an invitation to draw something in response to the feelings of frustration and impotent rage he was expressing. He might even have responded to an invitation to speak the body response as well as I outlined above.

OK, these are just the clinical ravings of a Jungian. But being a Jungian gets me some space to try this kind of thing and I am doing it more and more. But, worldwide, there are probably nearly as many therapists doing things like this (though not regarding the political) as there are doing psychoanalysis. If we really want to challenge clinical neutrality and abstinence, then surely we would want to consider adding these kinds of approaches to our existing clinical repertoire. Let me say what I say in the Layton, Hollander, Guttwill book: doing the political stuff in the session does NOT mean one has forgotten everything one was taught about timing, chiming, attunement, acting out, enactment and so on. In our field, innovations have usually been optional add-ons and not leading to a product recall.

The word 'repertoire' that I just used leads me to the final segment of this long one-time post. One can clearly see the predicament of Nancy's client as he and his friends and family struggle to find a mode of political expression that meets their needs whilst not putting them in danger of social and business ostracism. This client really interested me because of his awareness, at least as it comes across in Nancy's text, of what I call 'political style'. He refers to his colleague's 'tirade' and a tirade is certainly one kind of political style. And when he says 'Shhh' you can see this as an existing style in his mind for it means speak quietly but not don't speak at all. In principle, whatever we name them, there as many styles of doing politics as there are of conducting relationships and, in both areas to be sure, there

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are constraints on what style a person is free to use. (I think one can celebrate the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in terms of their brilliant innovation of a political style.)

Anyway, to get back to Nancy's client, I think he probably knows that there are many stylistic ways of expressing political viewpoints and that 'tirade' is but one of them. What are the others that might do the business? I cannot say for sure, of course, but they might include a more 'philosophical' style in which the whole question of being tagged anti-Semitic like that is explored with others as deeply as possible for mutual satisfaction and support. However, there might also be something more extreme even than a 'tirade', a 'terrorist' style, or a 'warrior' style in which the issues are confronted squarely without fear of consequence. He might have to mourn this latter, more outspoken style but he can at least be clear about what he has had to let go.

This idea of clinical exploration of political style can be added to what I've suggested about physical exploration and about creative/imaginative expression as ways of honouring the incorrigible capacity of the human soul to generate from within itself and/or in the comradely company of others the new shapes, smells and systems that resistance will need.

I am now off to Brazil where I am scheduled to do a political clinic on the very day of the second round of the presidential election. As voting in compulsory in Brazil, I wonder who on earth is going to come! I feel there is a message in this somewhere …

From Jennifer McCarroll:

I have read some of the ideas of Gramsci, Althusser, Jameson, Laclau and Mouffe and Zizek but it has been a while and I must admit to some rustiness. I'm grateful to Nancy for bringing some of these thinkers together with Klein and Lacan in a very intelligible way. I also know about the alignment of capitalist 'democracy' and multinational corporations in the meddling of Latin American economies and governments. I'm afraid the quote of Einstein's applies to me fully: the world is a dangerous place because of those who look on and do nothing. As Phil said, doing therapy isn't enough. And because I'm such a bystander, I know this trickles into my therapy work as well. I don't know how to talk to my patients about being bystanders, even when it's clearly at issue.

Nonetheless, I'm trying to think about it now. The patient I spoke of in my last post comes to mind. A young woman in her 20s, an illegal immigrant from South America, she was working on a cash basis as a nanny when we started her therapy. One of her strongest initial complaints was that she was enraged at the interpellative hailing of her as 'nanny'. For her nanny = servant = illegal immigrant = less than = not worthy of love and acceptance. We worked for four years to help her in struggle to get a green card and have an on-the-books career – in her struggle to resist being hailed in a way that felt stifling to her. Now she has a job, a career, paying taxes and she has a green card. This has all happened recently, over the last few months, but I can see that she is so happy to have escaped her previous designation that her achievement is cementing her in a new place in the social order, complacent bystander. So she slips out of one role and happily accepts another. Or not so happily. She is learning the woes, the driven anxieties as Neil put it, of those who feel they can keep up with a state of privilege. Will she resist the hail of bystander, too? Will I? Will our profession?

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From Anne Stopford:

I enjoyed Nancy's paper for many reasons, both emotional and intellectual. A lot of the psychoanalytic literature I read, while clinically useful and valuable, just doesn't do what I felt Nancy did, and that is unapologetically and passionately employ psychoanalytic theory as a socially transformative or liberatory tool. When I've tried to grapple with Lacan's work in the past I have been really turned off by his neglect of maternal subjectivity and mother-infant relationality, and with his concomitant contempt for affect, and while I think this neglect is a serious defect in Lacanian theory, reading Nancy's way of engaging with Lacanian work and hearing about the courageous work of Latin American analysts gave me much more of a sense of why politically 'left' analysts find a Lacanian framework so useful. It makes me wonder whether the possibility of a significant number of American (or Australian) relational/self psychological psychoanalysts taking an active role in confronting bystanderism in the wider social and political arena might be contingent to some degree on a much more dynamic engagement with both Lacanian and Kleinian psychoanalysis.

I found the phrase 'the creation of the political subject' in Nancy's title very powerful – the creation of the 'less neurotic' subject, or the 'capable-of mature-object-relations' subject doesn't necessarily equate with the creation of the political subject in the sense that Nancy seems to be signifying. I must say I feel quite a split still between the more overtly 'political' or activist dimension of my life and my profession as a psychotherapist, and I could really relate to Jennifer's questions about her role, and our profession as a whole. And for me that relates partly to something that Neil addressed and Lynne Layton also talked about in one of her postings – the question of privilege, and how on the one hand I'm reluctant to relinquish my privilege but at the same time it makes me anxious and guilty. Whenever I travel overseas to go to a conference, I am so conscious of the stark difference between my immense privilege to travel the globe while so many others have so little freedom of movement and/or have to take life-threatening risks to try to get access to the resources of the West. Psychoanalysis is more often interested in the symbolic than the material yet when it comes down to it the huge gap in material privilege between the haves and the have-nots continues to be one of the most urgent issues confronting our world, and guilt is probably a very appropriate response if there's more I could be doing, which there doubtless is. Thanks Nancy; your article has helped energize me to keep trying to find ways of working and living that are less complicit …

From Neil Altman:

I am grateful to Nancy for such a clear and consciousness raising paper. The question arose for me of what we feel the liberatory action is when we think psychoanalytically about the political world. I know that when I write and when I read a paper like Nancy's it raises my consciousness and is a way of holding onto a heightened awareness of the hegemony into which I was born and bred. But, parallel to how we now think insight isn't enough to change on the individual level, I wonder if consciousness raising is enough, or if understanding how it is that we have such a hard time holding on to a raised state of consciousness, isn't itself enough. Here I think its important to acknowledge our unwillingness to give up our privilege, to a greater or lesser extent. Slavin and Kriegman have written about the conflict of interests in the analytic situation, how the interests of the analyst are not always in synch

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with the interests of the patient. Not acknowledging that leads to mystification of the patient, which is itself pathogenic. Similarly, I think maybe it would be helpful to be up front with ourselves, anyway, about the conflicts of interest we face in becoming political subjects. There are self-interested motives and there are more communal and other-centred motives and we need to be aware of the whole picture. However transcendence and liberation occur, I think they must rest on willingness to acknowledge all those crosscurrents.

From Lynne Layton:

Thank you Nancy for such a stimulating paper. Your work always manages to face squarely what we're all up against and yet hold on to hope. I'm sorry to have been out of communication this past week – I'm still catching up from being away at the APCS (Assoc. for the Psychoanalysis of Culture & Society) conference, where I heard several papers that bear on what we've been thinking about together. One panel, featuring Jim Glass, Michael Diamond, Cynthia Burack, and Fred Alford, took up the question of how the left conceptualizes and reacts to collective forms of (disavowed) hatred. I was taken by Burack's work, which focuses on the religious right's way of drawing a boundary around who or what is worthy and unworthy of love, particularly with regard to homosexuality. As an example: within the boundaries they draw, they offer love and compassion to those with same-sex desire who don't act on it. Her research suggested that they don't experience themselves as hating homosexuals but rather as full of love and her conclusion was that when the left focuses on them as haters, the left gets nowhere (because, in terms we've been using, they don't recognize themselves in that interpellation and can just blow it off). Her thought was that a focus on the harm done to those excluded from the love might get better political results. But I think this work complicates perhaps even the notion of bystander – when you look deeply enough, you find, as Neil said, so many complex motivations in any piece of behaviour/action/understanding of why we do what we do.

I also had an experience that might relate to Andrew's thoughts about the citizen's body – what political events make us feel in our bodies. On the way home from the conference, I sat in the train in seats that faced each other, with, just by chance, three therapists of middle age and a law student of about 25 who was reading *Middlesex*. When the student was buying food, we got into a conversation about how our own physical vulnerabilities and confrontation with mortality have coincided with new (for us in the privileged sector of the US) feelings of political vulnerability. I wondered if some of the body experiences that I think, for me, have something to do with post-9/11 political realities might be due to that particular intersection of generation and the realities of the current moment. So one of the therapists asked the law student how he experienced 9/11. He said it didn't have much impact because he was away at college. He seemed to feel that life is just like that, people can get hit by a car crossing the street, etc. But then he said that perhaps he isn't typical of his generation – he elaborated that he's not very emotional. The whole exchange reminded me of one of the things that this conversation we're having evokes for me: on both the individual and the communal level, it seems that the way vulnerability is 'managed' is key to understanding destructiveness, apathy, disavowals of hatred, and many other reactions to the world around us. Sometimes I feel that loss gets a lot more airplay in some versions of psychoanalysis than does vulnerability but, in my experience, identification with aggressors derives less from a denial of loss than from the hope that such identification will pre-

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serve one from future hurt and humiliation. One way we become complicit is by dissociating or disavowing experiences of being needy, dependent, and hurt.

From Susan Gutwill:

Responding to Neil and Nancy's papers and the discussion. I have been following the discussion as I have had time. I am grateful for the discussion and want to comment on the combination of these two papers and different kinds of responses they have evoked among all. First of all I began by being moved by Neil's openness and resonated with the Buddhism, with the very real destructiveness that is caused by our inability to live with our own destruction. Psychoanalysis and Buddhism have each given me so much I this regard. Neil's tone, his willingness to be thoughtful and personal allowed a kind of space that we don't often enough have, especially in more formal forums. For example in her remembering her Workman's Circle Rosh Hashanah music and the Phil Och's song, *When I'm Gone*, Lynne reminded me of my similar service, that very moving song that has had so many meanings in my life and more. How to open up and move from complicity to a space of compassionate responsibility – both personally and as nations and groups – is at the heart of our discussion. You can't do that without affect – the despair, the longing, the confusion, the anger that everyone began by being able to bring out.

Nancy then made another kind of contribution helping us think about the specific history of American capitalism and the socio-symbolic world it makes for us and out of us, in that we are not separate from it. Her use of the psychoanalytic categories to help us understand – with compassion but not complicity – how and why people close down on their capacity to understand, remember and be responsible for the group of which they are a part is rich indeed. And we have, I am grateful to say, thought many years together about these ideas together, I always learn from Nancy further about the integrations of psychoanalysis and political economy. This learning inevitably helps break defensive and destructive boundaries and always stimulates the kind of rich and important thinking exhibited in the comments discussing her paper.

The combination of the two papers is what I have been thinking about, in some sense in tune with some of Andrew's meaning. We live in overlapping systems. Within ourselves psychoanalysis offers us many routes in to develop that capacity for compassionate responsibility that is our goal. Freud, Jung, Klein, object relations theory, Lacanian theory – and from my perspective, trauma theory based on the dissociative understanding of mind, affect and action and the body – are all like spokes of the wheel that we can use to take a journey with ourselves, our patients and our world. Buddhism is another spoke along which to travel in and out. Nancy and I have been focusing for years on bringing in political economy and how it defines the historical moment, in other words the large group, that we find ourselves having to be and act within. American psychoanalysis, at least after the Second World War and the 1950s was closed to the enormity of the influence of politics and economics. Everything does not go back to childhood alone as Stephen Mitchell understood when, from an Interpersonalist position, he criticized what he termed 'the developmental tilt.' Trauma is a social condition, an historical circumstance.

I feel that in regard to living in the maelstrom, it is our working along each of these spokes of the wheel to get to the centre, including, of course, as Andrew points out, the body, that matters. Coming out of the Women's Therapy Centre Institute, I have been for-

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tunate to have had a group of political analysts who in working with eating problems and then with trauma, began our work as therapists with an integration of psychoanalysis, culture and the socio-symbolic, and the political economic world influencing gendered subjectivity and its impact on the epidemic of eating disorders with which most women suffer at some level or another.

It seems to me that one simple way to say this is that the fluidity that we all seek to create, i.e. 'standing in the spaces,' can only come from the synthetic capacity of 'working through' offered by one spoke after another. For example, when I work with a person who grew up in and around an incestuous relationship, the identification with the parental introjects is often loosened if that woman can see, for example, the authoritarian leadership destroying the school system within which she works. Her commitment, let's say as a teacher, is maybe the one place she feels alive and able to do something to contribute to *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Here she may be more able to see how her young students are being hurt by the attack on quality education in her school. Here her introjects don't close out the space for observation. That political understanding helps her to develop a more observing ego for the little self that lived a situation similar but much worse that the school she meets up with (and sees change) as an adult. It gives, for example, a shot at a greater capacity to see compassionately what she disocciatively transmitted to her own children. Or when someone gets it intellectually, don't we always work to find the bodily affect and recognize that in our therapeutic relationship as well?

Earl Hopper talks about this, as a group analyst, in terms of the equivalences between the here and now, the there and then – in the person, the group and the surrounding society. What is going on in any one moment, he argues, in any individual, is going to resonate in the group as a whole and from the society as a whole in the here and now and in its there and then history, often the history of unresolved social trauma.

So, as I see it, going back to Lynne's reference to Phil Ochs – each spoke of the wheel of the bike allows us entrée – again to a moment of self and of other of wounding and of healing. But each of these spokes and its discourse gives us access to different affective responses. I am glad we have had different discourses in this forum. It gives us a chance to explore such different places of response. I will leave it up to someone else after this long one.

From Stephen Soldz:

I want to weigh in on Nancy's paper, which I thoroughly enjoyed. For one thing, it openly uses the 'C' word, one of the words usually banned in polite psychoanalytic discourse. That word, of course, is 'capitalism'. Thankfully, it goes far beyond what goes for much of 'left' discourse these days, focusing on the evils of the Bush administration, the neocons, and/or the Christian fascist movement (a.k.a., 'religious right'). Nancy clearly recognizes that we must look deeper, far deeper.

Let me first comment on a few phrases in the paper with which I especially resonated, and where I wanted to hear much more. One was her comment on how pathological narcissism and omnipotent strivings have converged with the 'manic logic of global capitalism'. I would argue that this is best seen in the now long past Clinton era. As Thomas Frank demonstrated in his (pre-*What's the Matter With Kansas?*) *One Market Under God*, the Clintonian 1990s saw the total victory of the free-market global market ideology with its

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Panglossian view that we have discovered the best of all possible worlds. I notice that the Greider book you cite on manic logic was published in 1997, during those heady days.

I would argue that the neocon revolution represents a tipping of that globalism mania into paranoia. The neocons, while having a fragile omnipotence, are aware that there is a THEY who will pose a threat to their fantasy of total control. They never really bought the fantasy that globalism will bring peace, prosperity and harmony to all. They knew in their bones that others would never accept American dominance except when dotted with bomb craters. Perhaps we should refer here to the 'paranoid logic of superpower capitalism'.

Another of Nancy's points that resonated with me was her statement: 'Contemporary late consumer capitalism … accentuates the psychic proclivity toward splitting and fragmentation precisely because it depends on the gap between need and demand and the experience of desire that can never be realized.' As analysts we focus upon desire. But we have been negligent in elaborating the extent to which, and the mechanism whereby our desires are shaped by the society in which we and our patients live. (Neil and others have referred to this.) We are not immune to this shaping. Most of the analysts I know are thoroughly middle class in their desires. As the discussion shifts from the conflict between one- and two-person psychologies, they shift effortlessly to the two-versus-three bathroom conflict in the home they either just bought or aspire to.

Anthony Ryle, a moderately leftist British psychologist once told a story of being asked to do a series of workshops at McLeans Hospital in Massachusetts, back in its psychoanalytic days. He was scheduled to talk at the first of four talks on the physical arrangements of therapy. He told them that he knew little about this as he worked in the British Health Service and didn't control the physical arrangements. A senior analyst then got up and said 'In this country we believe a thing is worth what it costs. If we go to the store and see a $12 tie and a $20 tie (this was 20 years ago), we buy the $20 tie, because we know it's better.' At the end of that session this analyst told Tony, 'Sorry, Dr. Ryle, but we have no money to pay you for these seminars.'

I think we need to focus much more on ideology at this very fundamental level. How do we learn to view the world as commodities to be bought and sold, and that value is represented by cost (Marx's 'fetishism of commodities')? In addition to television and other marketing, the allowance we give to our children is an interesting place to look. What messages are we conveying? (My son just asked for a raise.)

We know that psychoanalytic knowledge was used to try and get people to buy products. Perhaps we have to use it to figure what it means to buy and to sell, products. And what does it mean that analysis is itself a commodity we sell? How little discussion we have of that fact, despite Freud's and Abraham's equation of 'money = shit'.

Nancy bases much of her thinking on the theoretical work of Lacan, Gramsci, Althusser, et al. (I leave out Zizek as I have never sat down and read him, so I can't comment). At least Lacan and Althusser are known for their structuralist denial of human subjectivity. As I understand Lacan (which is little), he argues that the essential alienation arising in the mirror phase is irresolvable. Identity is itself alienation. Althusser takes, I believe, a similar position.

It is not by accident that Lacanian psychoanalysis is inherently elitist, in which one plays the obscurantist game in order to achieve status. And both Gramsci and Althusser were Communists, as in members of the Communist Party. Their theories were a justification of

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the vanguard role of the Party [the name of the Father?]. Workers were irremediably captured by hegemonic ideology and by the ideological apparatuses. Only the Vanguard Party could somehow mysteriously avoid being caught in ideology and find the one true path to …

There are other traditions that, I think are potentially more valuable for engaging with social theory. For example the social history of E.P. Thompson (famous adversary of Althusser and author of *The Making of the English Working Class*) and others who emphasized how workers created a culture that both helped them adapt to the new industrial order while resisting it. That is, in contrast to Gramsci and Althusser, they preserved the agency of workers and other oppressed groups. The various libertarian socialists (including the French psychoanalyst Cornelius Castoriadis) also built on this concept of working class agency to try and envision a truly democratic participatory, communal society. (There! Now I've done it. I've gone beyond the 'C' word and used the 'S' word: 'socialism'. What's becoming of PsyBC?)

Another interesting stream of thought are those cultural researchers that focus on the liberatory aspects of popular culture. Did you know that the Three Stooges viewed their work as socialist propaganda?

The point is that society includes ideological mechanisms of social control, but it also creates opposition of various forms. We need to understand both. I'd love to see psychoanalytic studies of what happens to psychic functioning when workers go out on a wildcat strike that involves major mass mobilization. Freud said psychoanalysis can't compete with Lourdes. I suspect, at least temporarily, we can't compete with a good strike, rare as those are today. And why do the new communal insights and ways of functioning gained during the strike fade away at strike's end? How does the subject retreat from agency to normal everyday neurotic misery?

Somewhat related to this theme are some comments I wanted to make on Neil's comments. Neil questions if consciousness raising is enough. He then goes on to suggest that we also have to 'acknowledge our unwillingness to give up our privilege.' This is true. We all have privileges we don't want to give up. These privileges are not just material. They also include the privilege of being superior to others. After all, wealth is always relative. We have more than some and less than others. Research shows that upward comparison ('why do I have less than them?') is associated with unhappiness and, perhaps, pathology. Does enhanced self-esteem come from having more than others (those starving children in China)?

But, at the same time, I am nervous about Neil's comments. For they have, I think, an elitist potential that can create a new division between 'US' and 'THEM.' Neil makes a distinction between self-interested motives and communal ones. This distinction could lead to a new form of paternalism (not that I think in million years that this is Neil's intent) in dividing the world between the 'THEM' who pursue self-interest and 'US' superior beings who give up those self-interests to pursue communal motives. Remember that 'liberalism' (in the American sense, Andrew) got a bad name partly because of its paternalistic connotations. Those do-gooders who think they're better than us and want to help us (the latter two words spat out). I think a similar dynamic was involved with the creation of the various 'vanguard parties' that thought they were so superior to the rest of those dupes they would lead to the promised land (of Stalinist hell).

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While I heartily endorse the call to recognize the importance of communal motives, I would suggest that we remember that these motives are potentially present in all, including the 'unenlightened'. Studies have consistently shown that magnitude of tips people leave in restaurants is inversely proportional to the person's income and class. Economists would argue that this shows how irrational and ignorant of their true interests the unwashed masses are. I, and I suspect all of us, would argue that we have something to learn about communal motives from those poor in income high tippers.

But I would also argue that a more communal world is in all of our self-interests. We don't have to contrast self-interest with communal motives. That's the wrong way to phrase it. After all, as I keep on saying (broken record that I am), either we will find a way to create a more communal world that together can tackle environmental destruction and our potential to blow ourselves up, or our children and grandchildren will live, and die, in a world of dust and destruction. So communality IS our interest.

This has been a wonderful discussion. I hope this is evident from my comments. These papers, and the comments make me think. To my mind that is the highest compliment. Thank you all!

From Nancy Hollander:

I would like to respond to your very interesting comments in reaction to my paper and say that I appreciate all your stimulating thoughts and ideas. You have moved me to think about what I conveyed in my paper and how I might clarify ways to consider the themes I tried to elaborate.

I do want to confess at the outset that during this past week I have felt a little concerned by what seemed to be an erratic and slowly developing discussion compared to the intense and ongoing exchange we had based on Neil's paper. I have wondered if perhaps the analysis or tone of my paper may have inadvertently contributed. So, before I comment on some of the specific points others have made in this discussion, I want to say two things I thought that might have evoked some misunderstanding of the intent of my title/analysis/clinical case. As I read Steve H. and Andrew's initial comments, for example, I had the impression that each of them mistakenly thought I was talking about my intention to create a political subject in the treatment with my patient or that I see the proper work of the psychoanalyst to be the creation of the patient as a political activist. Implicitly, then, any analyst who falls short of this goal functions as a bystander and is thus (self) condemned. I worry that Jennifer and Annie's responses of painful awareness of what they see as their own bystandardism might have reflected this. Well, it grieves me to think that I might have communicated a kind of censorious, righteous and perfectionist expectation that might be felt as a superego injunction that can only end up producing guilt. So, to the extent that my fears are at all justified, I'd like to clarify the following points about my analysis:

1. My title was meant to refer to the entire process of subjectification, i.e., how, whether we know it or not, we are created from (even before) birth as political subjects of a particular, historically specific culture and society. I was interested in pulling together social theory and psychoanalytic concepts to account for that process of the creation of the political subject. I was suggesting that our not being aware of this truth of our political subjectivity hampers our vision, so to speak, everywhere, always. This includes

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the clinical encounter with patients, which means that our choices for intervening, for interpreting, are thus hampered and close down the potential space for raising the most elementary questions that are never asked about our conscious and unconscious lives. My title, to be clear, did not refer to my patient example and the idea that I was creating a political subject out of my patient. I don't think that is my role and it is not my goal. I did intend, by raising the questions I did based on the case example, to illustrate how I think we can encourage ourselves and patients to question certain assumptions that usually go unattended to given our training in American psychoanalysis. I was not arguing on behalf of getting my patient to become an activist or for him to get his son to do the same. I was interested in permitting him to explore the multi-determinants of his unquestioned conviction that his only option was self-censorship. Steve H. wrote that 'Nancy wants to encourage the patient to act in the political arena' and that 'Nancy guides her patient toward political action in solidarity with grass roots organizations in protest of American policies'; I hope I am clarifying that this was not my intention; in the questions I suggested we might raise I was illustrating ways to help the patient think through why he automatically chose self-censorship rather than finding ways to maintain his right to speak his mind that might open up rather than shut down dialogue with others. If that is to be considered political activism, it is only so in the most basic sense that the speech act, when freely chosen rather than inhibited, can represent a widening up of options in exchanges with others. I wasn't thinking of turning my patient into a political organizer! Andrew suggested that I 'have faith in the possibility and reality of resistance to hegemony', and he is right. Encouraging my patient to question the effects on him of his interpretation of the hegemonic position regarding the war and his conviction that he must say nothing different was a stab in that direction. Andrew is right in suggesting that the patient has to mourn the tirade (tyrant) within himself in order to find another way of expressing himself that authentically risks an encounter with otherness. I trust that is true for us all.

2. In a related vein, another concern is that somehow my paper came across like some kind of bellwether of 'political correctness', which most of us fail to live up to in our daily lives and choices. That is an interesting problem, because, again, this was not my intent. On the contrary, I believe we have to find a way to see things clearly and figure out how not to use insight as a way to flagellate ourselves. This admonition I am sure we find ways to utter to patients all the time. I suppose this has to do with Neil's comment about our ambivalent relationship to our privilege or perhaps our tenacious attachment to it emotionally even while we might intellectually critique the maldistribution of privilege materially and psychically. As Susan said in her post, we have to find our ways to an empathic understanding of how we can both embrace our lives of privilege with gratitude and simultaneously figure out what is possible to do beyond our commitment to ourselves, families, patients and way of life to challenge the institutional inequities that reward us.

I found Steve H.'s discussion of Foucault's heterotopic space fascinating, especially as it stands in contrast to the effect of terror, which is rigid and homogenizing. It is interesting to use the concept as another perspective on opening up the clinical space to see how much our subjectivity is rooted in historical and contextual specificity. With regard to Andrew's

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thinking about the political subject, I agree with him that language is but one dimension of the workings of the unconscious and that both image and affect are significant dimensions as well. Anthony Elliot, in *Social Theory and Psychoanalysis in Transition*, has a wonderful discussion of the unconscious not as language but as the core of imaginary experience. I appreciated Andrew's reminding us that the body is a central mode of experience; indeed, the rich interplay of psyche and soma are central to both Klein and Lacan, although my paper did not take up these aspects of their thought. Actually, the question of intensity of emotion and body experience as part of our political identity needs to be more examined. It shows up in any individual or group experience in response to overtly political events or threats, and I think Andrew's suggestions of how to help patients work with the body is stimulating of additional techniques we all might want to consider.

Jennifer, Annie and Lynne raised issues about our role as analysts and our profession in terms of how we might inadvertently be reenacting uncritically our own attachment to privilege and helping our patients to strive to do the same. Jennifer's case example was quite poignant in this regard. This is a fundamentally challenging dilemma. I recently had an experience with a patient that seems to be the opposite of Jennifer's, although it wasn't part of my therapeutic agenda in any way. An adult male with a history of academic and professional failures who has always felt like the excluded bad object of his extraordinarily wealthy family has, after years of treatment, finally achieved marriage and a stable work situation. A new father, he has for the first time in his life a sense that he is entitled to his recently-acquired ability to a modicum of professional success and a solid middle-class life style based on being able to feel entitled to accept financial help from his and his wife's families. This unprecedented satisfaction with life and acceptance of his privilege ('for the first time in my life I can feel fat and happy') have opened up a new space in which he is now wondering how his child will develop good values, leadership capacities and a commitment to giving something positive and useful to communities that are not so lucky. As he comes to realize he is speaking about himself and how he will transmit these capacities to his child, this particular patient shows that he needed to feel entitled to privilege before he could think about how others have the right to it too and what he might do in that regard. This latest concern has come as a surprise to me. But I do think Jennifer's case might be more typical in that what upwardly mobile patients find out is that the goal of middle-class success is in actuality filled with disappointment and stress. I guess the treatment has to continue to provide a space to think about this experience and the meanings they may make of it. The intersubjective dialogue surely provides minimally a shared complex experience of middle class privilege and perhaps fundamental questions about culturally determined desire that emerges in this context. The outcome of such a dialogue is unknown and different in each instance.

I like what Lynne suggests in her description of Burack's work on the compassion of the Christian right toward their own who 'suffer' same-sex desire, and I think she is right in reminding us of the complexities of motivation in any behaviour/action/understanding. I think this is true with respect to the phenomenon of the bystander, and beyond the theoretical discussion I tried to offer in my paper, I think our personal encounters with the bystander, whether in ourselves or others, has to take account empathetically of complex motivations so that dialogue and/or openings for options remain possible. I agree with the implicit suggestions in many of the posts to the effect that holding the position of the one

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who incarnates truth and the other who embodies the lie (or badness or reaction, etc.) closes down the avenues for speaking, listening and reflecting and winds up making of both sides one-dimensional cardboard characters. As I said in the interview with Annie, I suppose there are moments when openness to dialogue gets replaced by taking a confrontational stand, such as in an anti-war demonstration. However, even then there are better and worse ways to make slogans and political speeches that reach out to others rather than alienate.

Finally, I appreciate Susan's integrative comments about seeing Neil and my papers as different approaches to similar questions. It is true that Susan and I have tended to focus more on how one might integrate political economy that is the context of our terrors and psychoanalysis that addresses our experience of them. In that regard, Steve S.'s final comment urges the same. I just wanted to say that he and I read Gramsi and Althusser differently. For me, their theories (as well as Lacan's) provide for the possibility of challenging hegemony. Gramsi argued that there is no such thing as complete hegemony and that not only are there contenders within the hegemonic powers that compete with one anther (as we see today among different sectors of conservatives and between conservatives and neoliberals) but that there is always the possibility for the development of oppositional ideological movements. I appreciate Steve's raising the question of the elitist nature of Lacan; elitist in the sense of the enormous (worth the struggle?!) difficulty of understanding them, but I suppose also from Steve's read because the Lacanian discourse doesn't provide for the possibility of agency or human subjectivity. My read of them is different. From Lacan, Althusser emphasizes that the desire for a sense of completeness that is only provisionally sutured over by the identity provided by interpellation always leaves a gap, and it is in the gap that a critical consciousness or a new form of subjectification can emerge that challenge hegemony. And unlike Marx's notion of 'false consciousness' that will someday be eliminated after the successful achievement of a classless society, for Lacan, and Althusser, the end of ideology can't ever come to be and thus agency will always be reflected in the inescapable dilemma presented to the human being whose history from birth on produces an unsatisfiable need to recapture a lost sense of completeness. I completely agree with Steve when he reminds us that society includes ideological mechanisms of control but creates the potential for opposition as well. We have only to see the current state of affairs in this country and compare them to a short five years ago to see how oppositional movements have provoked a challenge to the hegemony of Bush's post-9/11 terrorific discourse that has moved much more to the centre. If our society is split more-or-less in half today, that is testimony to human agency and oppositional capacities. Now let's see if we can buck the voting machines and get to the real truth telling after November 7!!!!!

Again, thanks to all for a stimulating exchange about our political psyches!!!

From Phil Cushman:

I imagine we all have our own reasons for responding slowly to your paper, Nancy. For me, besides some personal time problems that arose, your paper forced me into deep thought. As Stephen wrote, that is the highest compliment to your paper. I didn't find your paper self-righteous, shaming, radically politically correct, or anything like that. I also didn't find it unbalanced or advocating too much for a political interpretation of the patient or a

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political indoctrination of the patient. I thought the paper attempted to discuss in psychoanalytic language the age-old lefty puzzle: 'since our ideas are correct, why the hell doesn't the working class (or substitute here the appropriate groups) use the ideas we discuss in order to rise up against our oppressors and emerge triumphant?'

Isn't that what we are always trying to figure out? Yes, once 'false consciousness' was the answer but philosophically (and especially politically) that didn't work out so well. So we search on, as we must. Is this elitist? I thought Nancy did a good job of thinking through these issues and applying analytic ideas to the question. Especially those of us in the U.S. are confronted anew with this problem. These last few years have been a steady march into a horrific set of political acts that resemble nothing so much as a train wreck in slow motion. I will not list them because none of us need reminding and because I can't stand to see them in print. We must ask how all this came about, why we were unable to stop it, and what can we do now to reverse it. And I don't mean just the war. Because we have not been able to make much of a dent in it all. I think we must face the fact that in regard to recent political issues public education has been a tremendous failure and I suppose we should include psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in that assessment as well.

Nancy's paper helps conceptualize answers to the above questions, and I am grateful to her for that. I am especially appreciative of Nancy's clinical example about the man who returned from Latin America and became afraid of speaking up. I thought your solution was sensible and helpful. The political struggles in Israel/Palestine are extremely complex and upsetting. Although I suspect I don't fully agree with you on this particular issue, judging only by your use of certain words or phrases, your overall point is well taken, politically and clinically. We must find ways of speaking – speaking up, speaking with others, expressing ourselves and listening to others.

Breaking through the bystander position, both in the clinical hour and in the rest of our lives, seems to me to be the most important issue facing us today. I would like to see therapists work on that in both realms much more than we do. For instance, I wish we could speak up as a group much more directly about current political issues, for instance managed care, standardized testing in the schools, tax cuts for the wealthy and, of course, the war. These are all issues that have enormous psychological ramifications and I think we should be able to figure out how to speak much more effectively than we do now. The same psychological processes that Nancy discussed undoubtedly affect us and disable us from being more active in the public commons. Maybe we can use them to help us release ourselves into a more public – and effective – voice.

From Andrew Samuels:

I have just got back from Brazil and the election. I have made a slow and jet-lagged start on reading the discussion, which is a really gritty and important one. I just wanted to say that I am very sorry that my post appeared so early. I had not expected this and, prior to leaving on my trip, had asked that the post be sent by the organizers at a time that seemed appropriate – and right after the lead-off was too soon. I think there was a misunderstanding somewhere and maybe what I asked for was not clearly enough expressed but I thought I should explain.

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From Stephen Soldz:

I want to comment on some aspects of the discussion. A couple of themes that have come up have to do with the roles of 'privilege' and of being a 'bystander.' I think we've assumed that we know what these are. But I don't think they are that simple.

First, let's look at 'bystander'. As I thought about it I came up with quite a number of potentially different [not necessarily mutually exclusive] aspects of this phenomena with different dynamics.

1. 'Kicking down,' as in disdain for those just below one. The working class disdain for the sufferings of the poor, for example. After all, I'm fighting off awareness that 'there but for fortune go I', in Phil Ochs' words
2. Powerlessness and or hopelessness. 'It's so awful, what's the point of thinking about it and going crazy. What can one do?'
3. Denial of reality of suffering. The 'welfare queen driving a Cadillac' myth is one version. Another is the 'they're probably used to it anyway' as in 'Easterners aren't as bothered by death as we are'.
4. Then there's the 'diffusion of responsibility' phenomenon identified by social psychologists. The more people there are around when a person suddenly falls, the less likely someone will help. Each assumes someone else will do it. The horrifying Kitty Genovese case (a woman raped and stabbed over an hour and none of 40 people who heard her screams did anything, even call the police – the stimulus for Phil Ochs 'Small Circle of Friends') may have been at least in part, an example.
5. Then there is fear. 'If I speak up, it'll happen to me' that characterizes dictatorships and forms such a large part of the reason for torture.

So there are at least five different aspects of being a bystander. I'm sure there are more. If we want to combat it, we have to figure out what we really are dealing with in each instance.

I haven't thought as much about privilege, but let's see what I come up with:

1. To the manor born: the 'natural' superiority of the old upper classes to their 'inferiors' below.
2. What I got through in my hard scramble up the ladder, as in the newly rich businessman.
3. That of an American 'middle-class' family, which is comfortable.
4. That of the middle-class family that is struggling but, objectively, has so much more than most people in the world.
5. The upper 80% of Americans, who, however difficult life is, are objectively better off than 80% of the people in the world.
6. The 'selfish privilege' of the teacher who strikes for higher pay, leading to a loss of schooling by his students and a greater strain on the rest of 'us taxpayers'.
7. The privilege of the homeless person who gets that last shelter spot, causing those after her to sleep out on the streets.

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Thus, I wasn't sure just what was going on with Nancy's case. Was it 'feeling entitled to privilege' or was it not feeling like a failure as he compared himself to the American self-made ideal? Perhaps he realizes that we all need a little help, that the self-made ideal is a fantasy, and wants his child to realize this.

I guess what I'm getting at is that privilege is an awfully moralistic concept that confuses rather than clarifies things. It's also a looser politically. Very few people consider themselves privileged and are willing to even contemplate giving up those 'privileges'. The Weathermen tried that in the 60s. They talked incessantly about 'White Skin Privilege' most manifest in the American working class who weren't willing to struggle and die for the Vietnamese. Eventually Mark Rudd, the Weatherman leader, wrote 'While 'Fight the working class' isn't a mass slogan, it sure has something to it!' As you can see, I have rather strong reactions to those ideas as I still remember these things almost 40 years later. The idea of the American working class as privileged, while in some objective sense true, was a non-starter.

I would rather argue that a more inclusive, communal society ('socialism' in some form, though these days I'd be happy to get some serious social democracy) is in the interests of most of the population. The issue isn't exactly privilege but realizing that we and those more unfortunate than us have a hell of a lot more in common than we have differentiating us.

These days, as many psychotherapists have rather brutally learned, we are all quite expendable. Many therapists still want to feel that they're different from those they 'treat' as the managed care companies and the fee-for-service fast treatment joints beat the crap out off them. I'd rather focus on how they, like those less fortunate, are getting the short end of the stick. I get afraid that focusing on privilege leads to dividing rather than uniting. To focus on giving up privilege can reinforce the paternalistic approach that is a negative aspect of the 'helping profession'.

This orientation also goes along with a point I was trying to make in my last post – that there are times when people spontaneously act collectively and that these times can transform consciousness, at least temporarily. I think, as psychoanalysts, we know little about these processes. After all, most of our thinking about groups is rather negative, based as it is on Freud's group psychology, and, ultimately, Le Bon's crowd psychology. We don't have concepts for understanding mass constructive activity, as, for instance, the civil rights movement. We don't know what helps these movements keep from tipping over into their negative, violent and destructive cousins. (Note: I am not saying that all violence is destructive.)

I did have one other point in Nancy's last post I wanted to comment on. Near the end she commented on Lacan and Althusser as believing that 'the end of ideology can't ever come to be and thus agency will always be reflected in the inescapable dilemma presented to the human being whose history from birth on produces an unsatisfiable need to recapture a lost sense of completeness.' I agree with this, and think it is one of the most important contributions of psychoanalysis. But I also think that it raises the question of utopia, a relatively ignored aspect of the modern world. Socialism/communism and labour unions, used to represent a striving for that need to recapture a lost sense of unity. They were something passionately to strive for. We have no utopias today to strive for. Without them, there can be little passion for social change. What are (the collective) 'we' for anyway? We need visions to strive for, whether or not, in the end, they can be accomplished.

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Part of the reason we have such a resurgence of religion in the world today is because of the failure of secular 'utopias'. I believe it was the *New York Times* last year that had a fascinating article reminding us that the 'Islamic' communities in France used to be strongly Communist. The Islamists couldn't penetrate the communities. As communism faded, Islamism rose. Similarly, Kansas used to be a strong centre of populism and American socialism before 'something was the matter with it' and the Christian right took over. Among its many other sins, for most, the neoliberal world provides little to strive for other than a bigger house and a second car.

I'll get off my soapbox now!

From Andrew Samuels:

I am ill with flu after travel so this will be even more incoherent than usual.

I've read through all of the posts and I wish that the entire thing plus what we also managed vis-á-vis Neil's paper could be published. Maybe in *Psychotherapy and Politics International*?

On reading the prolonged discussions about the bystander, I wanted to add just a couple of points. The first is that, in any listing of 'political styles', one should find the bystander (I call it the 'ostrich' style). Not always is the ostrich a bad way to express one's political subjectivity. Sometimes, it's a useful discipline NOT to rush to join in on the action. At times, I've been made uncomfortably aware of how my adrenalin addiction can get going. Then a little dose of the ostrich is a necessary antidote. Otherwise, I find myself fighting endless battles on the basis that someone else is getting a raw deal. I don't think the shadow element is as simple as just feeling good – it is really a kind of instinctual release. Confession over!

But there may be more to apparent political inactivity than we realize. I mean more in a positive vein. Over the years, I've come to see that people who say 'Oh, I don't know much about politics' turn out to know a helluva lot about politics. They know it in nonverbal and inactive ways. But they are often quite wise. Then there are the poets, mystics and introverts who don't join in the actions but have a deep knowledge of what is 'wrong' in a situation. Then there are women who still, in many countries, are forced to keep their political wisdom to themselves. And finally, there are the kids. It was an education to go on the Palestine Liberation Council marches here in London in August with a multi-faith bunch of kids that my two knew. Amazing exchanges.

Nancy: I don't think I understood you at all as trying to produce activists. What I sensed, and in part you confirmed, and this latest post from me seeks to clarify, is that politicality is a potential for us all and in many individuals it is not so much undeveloped (and needing an increase) but actually unrecognized (and needing acknowledgement and recognition). If this is in any way an accurate perception, then that dreadful cliché 'putting someone in touch with …' is what we have to think about in relation to therapy work and politics.

This is my last post on the discussion, I sense, so may I just send loving and comradely greetings to everyone and resume the horizontal attitude?

From Nancy Hollander:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants in this enlightening discussion. I very much appreciate everyone's close reading of both Neil's paper and mine and

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for your perspectives that expand the issues we both tried to raise. I would like to add a final comment as we end. First, I want to once again clarify what I meant by my paper's, 'Psyche, ideology and the creation of the political subject': that was meant to refer to how we are all political subjects, created by the convergence between unconscious desires, needs and defences and hegemonic ideology that situates each of us in the sociosymbolic order. That convergence is the process that creates the political subject. I didn't mean for it to refer to a psychoanalytic treatment that takes this dimension of our identity and experience as a core piece of what gets analysed or what gets brought into the intersubjective dynamics between analyst and patient. So the title does not refer to our creating political activists through psychoanalysis. Regarding the latter, I think it is an important challenge to find ways to invite patients to consider their thoughts and feelings about the social order that comprise the context of their daily experience as a legitimate aspect of the psychoanalytic dialogue; I think it expands their understanding of themselves, since much of this dimension of life is often unthought and thus unconscious. I do think that when we take our own and our patients' relationship to the political order seriously it allows for a richer and more thoroughgoing exploration of the unconscious. It also invites patients (and analysts as well) to deal with affectively laden perspectives that may illuminate differences as well as similarities between them precisely within a relationship that can 'hold' the tension of difference in a safe way.

Finally, with respect to what I said in my paper about the bystander phenomenon, which I argued constitutes, as Ervin Staub says, a 'deathly silence' that permits an authoritarian force to rule over others, I want to thank Steve Soldz for elaborating in such a detailed way the various fears, anxieties and threats that people experience that often inhibit their ability and/or willingness to oppose unjust situations. I dare say we all have experienced aspects of what Steve describes and can understand how people may be too intimated or disengaged to denounce or protest injustices. These are, indeed, specific examples of how individuals can wind up becoming part of a bystander population. Maybe Steve is asking us to be sympathetic to the conditions that might produce this phenomenon, which does wind up impacting on society (and ultimately these people's lives) in very negative way when authoritarian trends emerge during times of crisis. From my perspective, the good news is that today we have a much more hopeful situation in which many people are socially and politically engaged so that the threats to democracy that 9/11 enabled are being increasingly challenged.

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