

## Editorial

Politics and spirituality are too often seen as polar opposites. But history suggests otherwise: many, perhaps ultimately all, political movements and innovations have had at their heart some sort of spiritual inspiration, a ‘breathing-in’ of transpersonal energy. The plausibility of this perspective depends on a broad definition of spirituality, one that encompasses Marxist-Leninist visionary materialism, for example. As Andrew Samuels suggests (2001, Ch. 8), a key element of spirituality is a sense of ‘human connectedness’. He also writes of ‘democratic spirituality’: all are equal in spirit, and this *experienced* equality, whatever its ideological sources, was the engine of bourgeois revolution everywhere.

The relationship between spirituality and religion, however, is a complex one. In some ways this is much more of a genuine opposition than that of spirituality and politics. Rather as revolution is followed by new institutional forms of control, so spiritual explosions are soon bound and channelled into new religious structures (‘binding’ being the probably etymology of ‘religion’). If we think of spirituality as daring to open up to what is new and strange, then conversely religion tends to act as a defence against novelty and strangeness. The mushrooming of fundamentalism around the globe is a frightening example of this; yet it also underlines people’s very real need for something apparently certain and reliable in the face of the massive fluidities of the twenty-first century. The waters are rising – of global warming, of often savage conservative fundamentalism – and, perhaps the waters of transformative spirit?

As it works out, this issue of PPI presents two substantial papers on the theme of politics and spirituality. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, a respected writer on themes of embodiment (also often, and mistakenly, seen as the opposite of spirituality), here takes on the large themes of religion, spirituality and self-knowledge in the context of Jung’s thinking and argues that ‘ignoring the challenge’ of self-knowledge ‘comes at a socio-political-ecological price’. She quotes Jung in support, in a passage that more or less equates the unconscious with the spiritual:

And when the whole thing blows up and an indescribable hell of devastation is let loose, nobody seems to be responsible. It simply happens ... But since everybody is blindly convinced that he [*sic*] is nothing more than his own extremely unassuming and insignificant conscious ... nobody is aware that this whole rationally organized conglomeration we call a state of a nation is driven on by a seemingly impersonal but terrifying power which nobody and nothing can check. (Jung, 1970, 231–2)

One of the fundamental messages of spirituality: see things as they are. The failure to do so sets up a state of spiritual and material evil, which perhaps must be opposed by spiritual as well as political means. And this renewal is the subject of Mick Collins’s paper on ‘spiritual emergency’, an involuntary and demanding experience of transformation that, he argues, needs support and acceptance to fulfil its social-political potential for ‘cultural

renewal'. If, as Andrew Samuels has repeatedly argued (for example, Samuels, 2001, 1), politics in the West is broken, then these two very different papers offer tools for mending it. A short article by Jocelyn Chaplin, 'The inner rebel', also takes up the theme of spiritual and practical equality.

This issue of PPI inaugurates our second five years in a new and updated format, which we hope you will enjoy and with a newly enlarged publisher behind us in the shape of Wiley/Blackwell, for whose support we are grateful. As well as the two papers on spirituality, it completes the material from the special issue last time on 'Ideology and the clinic', edited by Stephen Soldz and drawn from an online discussion hosted by PsyBC (<http://www.psybc.com>). Last issue focused on a paper by Neil Altman; this issue includes a summary of the complementary paper by Nancy Hollander, 'Psyche, ideology and the creation of the political subject', followed by a symposium discussion of the themes raised. It has been a privilege to publish this material.

In this issue we also say goodbye to James Taylor, who has been PPI's reviews editor since it began and who has facilitated a constant supply of always stimulating and often surprising reviews, the last, or almost the last, of which appear below.

## REFERENCES

- Jung CG. Civilization in Transition, 2nd edn. Collected Works Vol. 10 (Bollingen Series XX). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Samuels A. Politics on the Couch: Citizenship and the Internal Life. London: Profile, 2001.