

Editorial

It was in 2023 that ‘traditional’ therapy and counselling finally became illegal under the new Social Fraud Act, leaving New Therapy in command of the field. Looking back, this had probably been inevitable since the state regulation of psychotherapy and counselling in 2014 (delayed from 2010 by the inevitable hitches and glitches): once the state took on the job of policing therapy, its definition of what was acceptable was bound to become increasingly draconian, as therapy was adjusted to fit concepts and standards that the civil service could comprehend and administer.

Perhaps ‘procrustean’ is a better word than ‘draconian’: gradually, all the bits of traditional therapy that could not readily be assessed or measured were lopped off, while simultaneously therapy was stretched to accommodate tasks that the state assigned to it. After the definition of successful therapeutic outcome was settled on as ‘satisfaction of clients with their life, career and relationship status as it presently exists’, the rest was inevitable: all of the required competencies of New Therapy tumbled into place, from psychopharmacy to neuropsychology. In practice, of course, the requirement for both New Therapist and client to fill in forms at the start and the end of each session, as well as after each moment of insight, meant that there was rarely time for the competencies to be exercised. However, this gave assurance that the competencies would not be exercised abusively and the installation of CCTV cameras in every consulting room guaranteed that New Therapy was fully safe, while confidentiality was preserved by the fact that, because of financial constraints, no one was watching the CCTV footage and only a software programme was analysing the audio for Danger Words like ‘bomb’, ‘unconscious’ or ‘desire’.

The regulatory process was complemented by an ongoing redefinition of mental health, perhaps best illustrated by the appearance in 2027’s DSMVI of new psychopathologies like Climate Change Neurosis (characterized by a phobic reaction to our wonderful new 50C summers and slug-killing -30C winters); Social Misalignment Syndrome (easily identified by unhappiness about anything); and Religious Mania (for example, being a practising Muslim). A generation of young New Therapists were trained, dedicated to helping their clients fit in, whatever the cost. As usual, the United States blazed the way, following the publication of a huge body of new material on AVCT (Augmented View-Changing Technique, popularly known as Guantanamo Two).

What happened to the discredited traditional therapists? Some of them had been more-or-less underground since the later 2010s, changing their name to ‘psychological helper’, ‘emotional supporter’ or some other dubious term before this option was removed by the Act of 2023. A very few served prison terms for illegal use of protected titles, or later for illegal practice of discredited techniques. But the great majority either silently retired or adapted to New Therapy – demonstrating, as the state saw it, the feebleness and fraudulence of their practice: if they were not even prepared to stand up for the value of their own work, then why should anyone else take them seriously?

In 2025, of course, the Revolution began...

Meanwhile, back in 2008, things are very different (or are they?). This issue of PPI assembles a rich and varied body of work, addressing a wide range of issues from the standpoint of several different modalities and in styles ranging from the academic to the relatively colloquial. Mary-Jayne Rust kicks us off with her 2007 lecture to the Guild of Psychoanalysis in London, which has already achieved legendary status and has helped to bring the attention of many therapists to the critical issue of climate change. We are proud to have the opportunity to make this available to a wider audience. The first half of Sue Cowan-Jensen and Lucy Goodison's magisterial paper on narcissism contributes to what is essentially the same project, a therapy-based understanding of the cultural neurosis that has already come within inches of irretrievably blighting the biosphere.

Stephen Frosh, who like Mary Jayne Rust is a member of PPI's editorial board, is a distinguished veteran of the psychotherapy and politics field: as far back as 1987 he published *The Politics of Psychoanalysis* (Frosh, 1987), a classic work both of historical retrieval and of critical analysis. His paper here is a provocative study of the 'neighbour' who is both close and other; Frosh applies this concept in exciting ways to thinking about large group process, a central concern of politically oriented psychotherapy.

From its first issue, PPI has welcomed contributions from Process Work (Process Oriented Psychology), currently the only internationally well-known modality to carry political awareness at the heart of its theory and practice. We are therefore very pleased to have not one but two contributions from Process Work in this issue. Mick Collins, a past contributor, writes about 'Politics and the Numinous', exploring the key connection between the political and the spiritual (Samuels, 2004); while Amy Mindell, who has presented Process Work in many countries for a number of years and who coauthored with Arnold Mindell a piece in PPI's first issue, writes with great clarity and warmth about the concept of Deep Democracy and its application on macro- and micro-levels. We hope that readers enjoy this issue and are stimulated to action on whatever level is appropriate for them.

REFERENCES

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Samuels A. A new anatomy of spirituality: clinical and political demands the psychotherapist cannot ignore. *Psychotherapy and Politics International* 2004; 2(3): 201–11.