Editorial

Ecopsychology has existed as a discipline within the psychotherapy world for at least 14 years, since the publication of Roszak and his colleagues' trailblazing work (Roszak et al., 1995), with many precursors before that. It has taken a long time to become widely known and widely influential; but now that the realities of climate change are finally making themselves felt, many are turning to a psychologically inflected account of what has gone wrong and what might be done about it.

Psychotherapy and Politics International has published several important papers in this area, beginning in its inaugural issue with Hilary Prentice's 'Cosmic walk: awakening the ecological self' (Prentice, 2003), which ends: 'I don't believe any of us have yet dreamt of what role the tribe of listeners, the counsellors and psychotherapists, could play if we were to fully take our power, and rise to meet the challenge, and play our role in the "Great Turning"' (Prentice, 2003, 45). Despite the recent flurry of conferences, workshops and articles, to some extent I think this challenge is still unmet. As a community, we have not fully taken up this issue; and if we look into our own history, there are good reasons for our hesitation, reasons that go to the heart of psychotherapy's ambivalence around issues of will and spontaneity.

The concept of 'wildness' is central to ecopsychology. Ecopsychologists suggest that our fear of wildness and what it represents for us is at the heart of our destructive treatment of the other-than-human world, which now begins to rebound on humanity. A part of what clients encounter in therapy is their own wildness: the spontaneous complexity and creative energy of their unconscious process, as it manifests for example in dreams, in bodily experience and in relationships. This can be intensely frightening: the realization that most of our self is happening *of its own accord,* while in some ways exhilarating*,* is not easily tolerable and gives rise to all sorts of anxious fantasies of destructiveness and transgression. Many of us as clients feel, at one point or another, that to let our feelings run wild would be to risk serious harm to ourselves and others.

Therapy, therefore, can often confront us with a sort of gamble or wager: can we take the chance of letting things happen of their own accord, letting ourselves run wild, in the hope of finding a deeper meaning and order? Similar things happen in therapy groups: there is a need for the group to descend in to chaos to find its creativity, and the onset of chaos often produces panic and desperate attempts to take control of the process.

Interestingly, these issues were always present in Freud's language and imagery, which identify wildness with the unconscious ('a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations' – Freud, 1933, 106) in very ambivalent ways. Freud many times describes the relationship between conscious and unconscious as a struggle for power – 'the unconscious has no other

endeavour than to break through the pressure weighing down on it and force its way to consciousness or action' (Freud, 1920, 289). The unconscious, for Freud, is in many senses primitive. 'All…which is old and infantile and was once dominant, and alone dominant, must today be ascribed to the unconscious' (Freud, 1915, 248). Some of the metaphors Freud uses to describe this are explicitly colonial. Regions, provinces, realms, he points out, may have a mixed population of different ethnic groups (Freud, 1933, 105). He compares unconscious contents to 'an aboriginal population in the mind' (Freud, 1915, 199); and describes certain repressed phantasies as like 'individuals of mixed race who, taken all round, resemble white men, but who betray their coloured descent by some striking feature or other, and on that account are excluded from society and enjoy none of the privileges of white people' (Freud, 1915, 195).

Far more consistently than Freud, Jung aligns himself with this classic colonial view, which is amplified in his descriptions of the trips he made to Africa and to the United States (see Hill, 1997). 'The different strata of the mind correspond to the history of the races', he writes, and although 'in the collective unconscious, you are the same as a man of another race…he probably has a whole layer less than you [the white reader]'(Jung, [1935] 1977, 460). This layer which people of colour lack is the layer of civilized consciousness; non-whites are identified by Jung, as by Freud, with the wild, archaic, unconscious aspects of the psyche.

The wildness of Jung's vision of black people is brought out vividly in his account (1963, 253–4) of an incident while travelling from Kenya to the Sudan, when some African men – 'the blackest Negroes I had ever seen' – began singing in the firelight and dancing fiercely with their weapons. At first Jung and his friend joined in, Jung swinging his rhinoceros whip above his head. The Africans 'beamed', but as the dancing and drumming became more energetic and 'their excitement got out of bounds', Jung, frightened that 'the dancers were being transformed into a wild horde', tried to persuade them to go to bed. When this failed, 'I swung my rhinoceros whip threateningly, but at the same time laughing, and for lack of a better language, I swore at them loudly in Swiss German…General laughter arose; capering, they scattered in all directions and vanished into the night.'

As Michael Ortiz Hill (1997) points out, the Africans showed a highly 'civilised' tolerance of an absurd, interfering, threatening colonialist. Jung's anxiety at their 'wildness', which he links with animality, simplicity and childlikeness ('beaming', 'capering', 'roaring'), was founded on his belief that it was contagious. 'In 1925 Jung hallucinated a whole continent of instinctual "others" and called it "Africa." The African "other" whom Jung did not know accompanied him to his deathbed. Like the rest of us, it seems he was wedded to what fascinated him and what he least understood' (Hill, 1997).

Paradoxically, both Jung and Freud, simultaneously with their racist assumptions about wildness, were also profoundly in touch with its value as an inherent quality of the psyche. Consider one of the central images Freud used for the unconscious: that of a mushroom. In his first great work *The Interpretation of Dreams,* Freud says that:

> The dream-thoughts to which we are led by interpretation cannot, from the nature of things. have any definite endings; they are bound to branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought. It is at some point where this meshwork is particularly close that the dream wish grows up, like a mushroom out of its mycelium. (Freud 1900, 671–2)

A mushroom not only emerges out of mycelium, it is *made* out of mycelium, is literally a condensed and tight woven 'expression' of that underground mass of threads, the 'tangle' of dream-thoughts (Freud 1900, 282, 442, 525), which springs up overnight into the surprised daylight world – a phallic, sexual-smelling, mysterious mushroom, yet also an umbilicus joining us to the mycelium, the placental dream which feeds and twins us. Freud's use of this analogy connects us to his actual outdoor life which was intensely important to him. Many of his central ideas emerged on long country walks, first with his friend Wilhelm Fliess, and later with Ferenczi and other analytic colleagues. 'In Aussee,' Freud writes to Fliess in 1897, 'I know a wonderful wood full of ferns and mushrooms where you must reveal to me the secrets of the world of lower animals and the world of children' (Masson, 1985, 254).

From his different perspective, Jung is as alive as Freud to this wild aspect of the psyche (and at least as connected to the outdoors and the nonhuman in his own lifestyle). When a scholarly colleague wrote to him about their psychological crisis and shared a dream of a dark forest where a single bright star shone, Jung responded 'There is the star. You must go in quest of yourself and you will find yourself again only in the simple and forgotten things. Why not go into the forest for a time, literally? Sometimes a tree tells you more than can be read in books' (Jung, 1992, I, 479). He saw individuation as a natural process that could proceed just as well without consciousness as with it (Sabini, 2002, 10); for him, consciousness was overvalued, a 'Promethean conquest' (Sabini, 2002, 10).

This image of Prometheus – 'Forethought', who stole fire from the Gods and was eternally punished for it – in some ways sums up Jung's ambivalence in this whole area, which was partly a product of his inability to see beyond the primitive/civilized, nature/culture dichotomy that permeates his work. Although deeply drawn to and valuing of both the nonhuman and the nonrational, Jung's attraction always seems mixed with wariness, a fear of the collapse of 'civilized' values. However, if we translate out of his antiquated terminology, Jung says over and over again that reason and civilization need to be rebalanced, reconnected with something unreasonable and undomesticated; and that a part of what we have lost touch with is *connectedness,* between humans and humans and between humans and the rest of the world. 'There is nothing…with which I am not linked' (Jung, 1963, 225).

Both Freud and Jung realized that the unconscious – that central force in human affairs – is deeply bound up with non-rational, 'wild' modes of thinking, feeling and perception; and both of them felt an extreme ambivalence about this situation. Both that realization and that ambivalence are still operative in psychotherapy; a situation that mirrors that of our culture as a whole, and which perhaps gives us the potential to contribute to the cultural shift that now seems required for our survival.

Michael Guilfoyle's paper in this issue of PPI touches on this same issues when it analyses a CBT transcript and points out how the therapist is nudging the client into an absolute positive valuation of rationality – in Guilfoyle's Althusserian terms, an 'identification with the rational Subject position', which among other things obscures the role of social and political forces; and also, of course, devalues the client's emotional responses. 'The therapist suggests the instalment of a kind of internal hierarchy, in which disciplined thought processes enable domination over felt emotional needs.' As many ecopsychologists have suggested, this internal hierarchy has destructive external effects, as human beings assert the domination of rational order over ecological orderedness.

Guilfoyle's paper is a very welcome rehabilitation of Althusser's important work on appellation. It combines well with Jennifer Tolleson's eloquent and impassioned call for the rehabilitation of social and political critique in psychoanalysis – a call 'to restore history to our theorizing, critique to our praxis, and political resistance to our ethos.' Nissim Avissar takes a very similar view in his paper describing the results of a survey of Israeli clinical psychologists on their attitudes to political issues. (*Psychotherapy and Politics International* published a somewhat similar but smaller UK-based survey by Spong and Hollander, 2005.) Avissar suggests that a shift is going on from a traditional posture of neutrality and disinvolvement to a new openness to political engagement among younger practitioners.

Manuel Llorens continues the theme in the second half of his excellent paper on political engagement in psychotherapy, which is focused specifically on the situation in Venezuela. Echoing Guifoyle, he concludes that 'psychotherapy always runs the risk of turning into the place where non-conformists are sent to be pacified, calmed or "cured"', and argues for a 'politically reflective psychotherapy…aware of the wider political context where individual lives are framed' and 'continually reflect[ing] upon the ethical dilemmas that these circumstances bring up' – and moving from there to concrete 'micropolitical tasks'.

This is an issue filled with complex and satisfying analyses, which move freely between the concrete and the theoretical and which address a number of different models of psychotherapy to reach similar conclusions. The welcome attention paid in Guilfoyle's paper to the politics of CBT is continued in Sheila Spong's review of the recent collection *Against and For CBT,* which completes the issue and our seventh year of publication.

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