

Editorial

Victor Jeleniewski Seidler's paper in this issue on remembering 1968 has many resonances for this writer, and probably for a whole generation of psychotherapists. Seidler rightly speaks of a necessary work of mourning for those of us who shared the enormous aspirations of that period, and the enormous disappointments that have followed. Without wanting to sound too romantic, the generation of 1968 lost a war. But although there were some deaths and wounds, few of them were direct and obvious; the war itself was mostly indirect and invisible to many, the defeat slow and imperceptible. All of which has made it hard to mourn, to recognize our status as traumatized survivors.

It would be absurd to claim that the fate of the losers of the 1960s culture wars is to any degree as grim as that of the losers in most shooting wars. But so far, all the exaggeration has been in the other direction: pretence that it was all for the best, that Thatcher and Reagan brought the West to its senses, that really we just 'grew up'. And of course it is in many ways about 'growing up'; but one important aspect of the 1960s, in the field of therapy as elsewhere, was to put into question the automatic privileging of the grown-up over the child, the assumption that young people's idealism and demands for justice are something they can and should grow out of. From the viewpoint of the 1960s, all the ex-hippies who are now pillars of the establishment are just so many political prisoners.

Of course the 1960s and 1970s were full of contradictions, riddled with sexism and patriarchy while preaching 'liberation'. We were naïve and ignorant in many, many ways. But we tried; and Seidler's paper usefully reminds us of many of the good things that have come out of our trying. Among these is the transformation of psychotherapy which took place during this period, and without which this journal would surely not exist. Although much of the radicalization of therapy has since been rolled back, much of it still stands. And as the wider social struggle was gradually crushed, therapy and counselling became a place of refuge for many survivors, a cultural space where it was still possible to maintain some of those values – in particular, that 'the personal is political'.

Alongside Seidler's splendid work of remembrance, this issue offers a wide range of important material. Sandra Bloom has contributed greatly to PPI over the years, in particular a four-part epic paper on societal trauma (Bloom, 2004, 2005a, b, 2006). Now she brings us a two-part paper on art as a healing cultural response to trauma. Originally written 15 years ago, the paper reads completely freshly. Despite the age of the references, Part I in this issue stands as a clear and eloquent summary of the key elements of emotional trauma. Part II, which we will print in the next issue, explores important territory about the role of art, which is still novel.

Asaf Rolef Ben-Shahar wrote in the previous issue of PPI about a moving piece of therapeutic work with a male client. Now, in a second paper derived from his PhD thesis, Rolef Ben-Shahar tackles crucial controversies from the early history of psychoanalysis around the relationship between body, trance and psychoanalysis, arguing that Freud's

abandonment of touch and hypnosis were not simply technical developments but 'politically and socially embedded'. In exploring this Rolef Ben-Shahar guides us through the whole fascinating maze of early psychoanalytic thinking.

Psychotherapy and Politics International is always seeking more good material on sexual-political issues in therapy; so we are delighted to publish Jane Dudley's paper on transgender. This is a highly controversial issue in the therapy world, and a disturbing one for many, partly because it throws into relief the confusions and incoherences in mainstream views of gender. Dudley is not afraid to grasp the nettle and consider the possibility of 'breaking out of the binary', the either/or straitjacket of traditional gender identifications.

Denis Postle's paper applying catastrophe theory to the issue of state regulation is almost unique – at any rate outside the Lacanian field – in its combination of mathematical concepts with therapeutic ones. It probably is entirely unique in employing a political frame of reference. It was extraordinarily difficult to find referees for this paper; which is in itself a recommendation, showing how path-breaking Postle's approach is. Tom Strong's paper also addresses the field of practical politics, examining the implications of the recently adopted Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists. Anything with the word 'universal' in its title immediately raises relativist hackles, and rightly so; but Strong makes a powerful case for the value of such a cross-cultural document, pointing out that 'the principles involved translate differently to different cultural contexts. Despite its title, no universal claims or expectations are asserted in any absolute sense', and arguing that the UDE is best understood as 'inviting ongoing dialogue' between practitioners with different values and practices.

We hope that you enjoy this issue.

REFERENCE

- Bloom SL. Neither liberty nor safety: the impact of fear on individuals, institutions, and societies. Parts I–IV. *Psychotherapy and Politics International* 2004; 2(2): 78–98; 2(3): 212–28; 2005; 3(2): 96–111; 2006; 4(1): 4–23.