

Editorial

The major psychopolitical event since our last issue, in the UK at least, has certainly been the decision of the Department of Health not to proceed with statutory regulation of psychotherapy and counselling. While part of the context for this is undoubtedly the new coalition government's ideological antipathy to regulation, a major factor has certainly been the willingness of thousands of practitioners to make their opposition publicly known. Without this political activism, the whole deal would have been done and dusted by bureaucrats long ago, perhaps even without really drawing the attention of ministers.

This outcome is important in several ways. Firstly, of course, it is the right result for our profession, lifting the threat of irrelevant and destructive monitoring and control of what we do by people who know very little about it. More generally, it is a step in a much wider struggle against the trend to control and surveillance which has become so powerful in Western societies. It has been said that the Left wants to control everything except the bedroom, while the Right wants to control nothing except the bedroom. There are a number of fallacies in this, especially since the rise of the neocons, but it does highlight the way in which psychotherapy and counselling overlap the public sphere on the one hand, and the private and intimate sphere symbolized by the bedroom on the other. If we really think about psychotherapy and politics, it seems to me that we are ineluctably drawn back to the old slogan: 'The personal is political' – and of course (though less often stated), 'The political is personal.'

But the third and in some ways most greatest significance of what has happened is that so many practitioners in the UK have been willing to take a public political position at all. Traditionally this has been anathema: our politics was taken to be as private and intimate as our sexual habits. That this no longer stands is an indication of how far the psychopolitical tendency spearheaded by Andrew Samuels and others has moved the discourse – which is also, of course, why this journal is flourishing.

One of the important things about PPI for me has always been its breadth; and this is very well exemplified by two pieces in the current issue on the trafficking of women: Katarzyna Zentner's paper on Germany and Eastern Europe – qualitative research employing discourse analysis; and Indhushree Rajan's paper on India using Jungian depth psychology – enormously different approaches to the same theme but each enriching and balancing the other. I feel very pleased and proud to be publishing these two together.

First, though, there is Chris Robertson's paper on ecopsychology – very different in tone and content from both Zentner and Rajan. Robertson uses the lovely analogy of 'the stem cells of the psyche' to suggest how the 'passage through shadow lands that harbour the potential held in the penumbra of our consciousness' can 'catalyse the regeneration of our collective story'. This is an example of the next phase of ecopsychological thinking currently under way, which *integrates* psychotherapy and ecology rather than merely bolting them on to each other.

In fact, every piece in this issue is significantly different in approach from the others. Victor Seidler's profound paper on 'ways we can think relationships between the psyche and

the social in a globalised world' is philosophical in its orientation; while James Horley's campaigning paper 'The tyranny of professional labelling' draws primarily on sociological and psychological modes of thinking. In the final paper, Lawrence Alshuler again demonstrates his unique brand of Jungian psychopolitical analysis in relation to Islamic fundamentalism. This completes a set of papers which is broad not only in approach and subject, but also geographically: the UK, Germany, India, the USA, Canada and Switzerland. We are delighted finally to have a Reviews Editor again, in the capable form of Keith Tudor, now in New Zealand; please read and respond to his invitation to review. The issue ends with an eloquent and challenging letter from Dick Blackwell.

Nick Totton