Psychotherapy and Politics International
Psychotherapy and Politics International, 11(1), 40–51. (2013)
Published online in Wiley Online Library
(wileyonlinelibrary.com) **DOI:** 10.1002/ppi.1291

A Body Politic: The Political Writings of Nick Totton

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ABSTRACT *This article reviews Nick Totton's writing on psychotherapy and politics, and draws on his identification of four aspects of the interface between these two fields, that is, psychotherapy in politics, the psychotherapy of politics, the politics of psychotherapy, and politics in psychotherapy as a way of framing the ground and practice of politically informed psychotherapy or "psy" practice – and, potentially, of psychotherapeutically informed politics. The article then discusses what the author identifies as five central themes regarding the relationship between psychotherapy and politics which are apparent in Nick Totton's writings: the critique of professionalisation, the significance of language, the centrality of power, the inseparability of the political, and the movement beyond dichotomy.* *Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

Key words: Nick Totton; politics, psychotherapy; professionalisation; power; language; beyond dichotomy

I am delighted to be offering this review article of Nick Totton's work on psychotherapy and politics. It is, of course, difficult, even invidious, to distinguish and, therefore, separate Nick's "political" writings from his other writings as, in many ways, all his writing is political in that it is informed by an analysis of power and the inseparability of relationships – both of people with each other, and between people and the polis or society. Indeed, and as the play on words in the title of this article acknowledges, much of his writing on the body and body psychotherapy is also political. That said, as I have the privilege of writing in the context of this special, themed issue of *Psychotherapy and Politics International* devoted to reviewing and honouring different aspects of the body of Nick's work, and in the knowledge that other colleagues and contributors are discussing other, political aspects of his work, including the founding of the Independent Practitioners' Network (see House, with Maidman & Scurfield, 2013), I have distinguished and, therefore, focused on what we may consider as

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Nick's more overt treatment of the *interplay* between psychotherapy and politics. As Nick (Totton, 2000, p. 1) has put it himself, citing Samuels (1993, p. 4): "politics also refers to a crucial interplay between these two dimensions". That "interplay" also contains the word "play" is, moreover, highly appropriate as Nick himself is somewhat playful and, indeed, this emerges in some of his writings such as his latest book *Not a Tame Lion* (Totton, 2012), which I review in a separate contribution (Tudor, 2013).

In the first part of this paper I review, in chronological order, the development of Nick's ideas on psychotherapy and politics and, in the second part, summarise what I consider to be the central themes of this body of work to date. It is interesting that one of these themes is the significance of language as, in this article, I make two changes to the usual convention of the language of such articles: the first, in response to the fact that I am principally reviewing Nick's work, as distinct from formulating an academic argument with reference to source material, is the (greater) use of the present tense, as distinct from the past tense; the second, in response to the fact that this article is written in the context and spirit of a *festschrift/commentarium amoricum*, and as I know him, is the fact that I refer to Nick Totton as "Nick", rather than "Totton". Just as the personal is political, so too is the political personal.

THE BODY OF TOTTON'S WRITINGS ON PSYCHOTHERAPY AND POLITICS

In this first part of the article I review Nick's writings on politics that appeared in *Implausible Professions* (House & Totton, 1997), and his book on the subject of psychotherapy and politics (Totton, 2000), as well as a later, edited book on the subject (Totton, 2006e).

Implausible Professions (House & Totton, 1997)

In the first of his four individual contributions to this book, Nick addresses the medical model and professionalisation (Totton, 1997a). In it he takes issue with what was to become one of his key concerns, that of "business-oriented discourse" (p. 109) – in this case, about self-improvement which, in the words of the author (Fenwick, 1996) he critiques, is couched in terms of people's ability or inability to "run" their own lives, like a business. Nick goes on to discuss briefly professionalisation, making the point that Freud (1927/1959) himself opposed the idea that, in order to be a psychoanalyst, one had to have medical training; the difficulty that therapists who work in medical settings have working within the medical model, specifically with regard to outcomes, measurement and brief therapy; and the implications of managed care, that is, care "managed" by insurance companies which demand definitions of clients' problems in terms of diagnostic codes based on the medical/disease model, and that practitioners deceive their clients (at least by the sin of omission) by not informing them of alternative treatment options.

In his second chapter, Nick (Totton, 1997c) develops his critique of professionalisation, specifically by addressing the underlying assumption that psychotherapy is – and should be – a profession, arguing, firstly, that it is preferable to see it as a job, and, secondly, that, as it is not a branch of medicine, it is perhaps better viewed both as a spiritual or enlightenment

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practice, and as a political practice. In this chapter, Nick refers to psychoanalysis as an enlightenment practice and to free association as the analytic equivalent of a meditation "where one is required to attend closely to one's spontaneous process without changing it". (ibid., p. 133) – citing Phillips (1995): "the patient is not cured by free-associating, *he is cured when he can free-associate*" (p. 102). In an elegant argument, Nick links the necessary impossibility of free association with a similar impossibility, revealed in the attention given in Reichian therapy to breathing, of maintaining both consistency and spontaneity, with the result that the apparent distinction between "me" and "myself" disappears. In concluding this particular argument, Nick quotes Winnicott (1949): "Acceptance of not-knowing produce[s] tremendous relief" (p. 246), a sentence which Nick himself suggests could stand as an epigram to this particular paper. Turning his attention to the political dimension of psychotherapy, Nick identifies two distinct and opposed political dimensions of psychotherapy whereby psychotherapy engages with power: one "through its social role as bearer of a certain distribution of power through the psychotherapeutic discourse" (ibid., p. 136), and the second "through its clinical practice, as an often inexplicit deconstruction and subversion of power relations, including its own" (ibid., p. 136). Nick elaborates the first to the struggle psychotherapy has had to achieve a certain cultural hegemony, citing various and varying examples such as, in the 1950s (onwards), in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the incarceration of dissidents in mental hospitals; and, in the same period, in the United States, the pronouncements from ego psychologists about normality, abnormality, delinquents and homosexuals. Nick elaborates the second dimension with reference to the view that, insofar as the clinical practice of psychotherapy is concerned with the giving back of power, that this has "powerful implications for the client's relationship with the public world" (ibid., p. 137). He goes on: "Psychotherapy tends to change our political relationships – because they cannot ultimately be separated from any other relationships" (ibid., p. 137). Albeit a relatively short chapter, it is, nevertheless, an important one in that it sets out many of the concerns that Nick develops in his later writings.

Elsewhere in the book, he writes about the Independent Practitioners' Network (Totton, 1997d), and client–practitioner conflict in a self-regulated network (Totton, 1997b), both of which provide background to another article in this issue (see House, with Maidman & Scurfield, 2013).

The book as a whole – with chapters encompassing the politics of transference, accreditation, research, audit, the myth of therapist expertise, competence, accountability, the corruption of the training market, practitioner development assessment – was both ground-breaking and ground-affirming. As House and Totton (1997) state in their introduction: "The project of this book originated as one of *opposition*; but it has developed into one of *refoundation*, and then into one of *innovation*" (p. 1). It broke the ground of what had been a somewhat complacent monoculture of thinking in the UK at the time about issues of professionalisation; and it was affirming in that it presented, as its subtitle announced, "arguments for pluralism and autonomy in psychotherapy and counselling" and thus claimed and affirmed more critical ground and thinking about these – and other – issues. It supported, for instance, those of us who, while advocates of professional regulation, were never persuaded by the arguments for statutory regulation of psychotherapy and the state registration of psychotherapists, and was highly influential on my own thinking (see Tudor, 2011).

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Psychotherapy and Politics (Totton, 2000)

Although Nick shows some of his thinking about psychotherapy and politics in *Implausible Professions*, especially about professionalisation and alternative organisation, he was obviously brewing more as, only three years later, he published his major work on the subject. It is a book remarkable for and in its breadth and depth, and it demonstrates not only Nick's amazing knowledge of the history of psychoanalytic and humanistic psychotherapies, but also his ability to synthesise such a vast field of enquiry, and offer a coherent and manageable analysis.

He organises the material presented into four categories which, as he himself acknowledges, are somewhat arbitrary, although practically useful. These categories are presented here in Table 1, in and through which I also summarise the main content of the book.

I have found this framework useful both in terms of presenting the relationship between psychotherapy and politics (e.g. Tudor in Monk-Steel, Mazzetti, Rossi, Tudor, & Vgusakovski, 2011). Also, as it defines four key areas of the relationship between psychotherapy and politics, I consider it a useful framework by which we can locate and map relevant "psy" practice or, perhaps more accurately, "psy-pol" theory and practice, as well as gaps in such praxis. We might also consider this a useful framework for locating a psychotherapeutically-informed politics, for an example of which see "Notes from the Front Line" in this issue.

Between the publication of this book in 2000 (and before the publication of his edited book on the subject in 2006), Nick was not idle! At this time he began preparing for the establishment and launch of this journal, the first issue of which appeared in March 2003. In that same year he published two articles on psychotherapy and politics, one in *Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal* (Totton, 2003b) and the other in *Psychodynamic Practice* (Totton, 2003c). The following year he was invited to give a keynote address to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy on the subject of "Is Therapy the Future?" In a typical questioning fashion, Nick took issue with the title of the conference, preferring instead to ask – and answer – the question: "How can we, as people involved with therapy and counselling, help to make a future?" (Totton, 2005, p. 83). In the address (which was published the following year in this journal), he argues that therapy could contribute to a positive future but only if therapists recognise their "side-taking position". Drawing on earlier work (Totton, 1999), he goes on to elaborate a polarisation between therapy based on an "expert system" and that based on qualitative, "local knowledge"; and then outlines four fields in and by which, he argues, that therapy could contribute to a better future, namely: work with conflict, societal trauma, ecopsychology and power with the therapy relationship.

The Politics of Psychotherapy (Totton, 2006d)

Nick's next major theoretical contribution to this field was the publication of an edited book on the subject (Totton, 2006d) (four chapters of which first appeared as articles in *Psychotherapy and Politics International*). The book comprises chapters written by leading authors in the field which Nick again organised into four sections, which are similar but not quite the same as his earlier categories (though Nick neither acknowledges nor addresses this). Part I, Psychotherapy in the political sphere, includes chapters on the roots of conflict, social trauma and ecopsychology; Part II, Political dimensions of psychotherapy practice, includes discussions of discrimination, power, sexuality and postcolonial issues; chapters in

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Table 1. Four categories of the interplay between psychotherapy and politics with examples (Totton, 2000)

Psychotherapy *in* politics	Psychotherapy *of* politics
i.e. the range of interventions by psychotherapists in the political process, through: (1) therapists acting as therapists on the basis of clinical experience and concluding that a political programme or action is required; and (2) therapists acting as citizens, using their therapeutic understanding and skills at the service of a political goal	i.e. "a range of attempts to *understand* and to *evaluate* political life through the application of psychotherapeutic concepts" (Totton, 2000, p. 6)
The "Left Freudians" (Ferenczi, Fenichel, Federn, Nunberg, Simmel) Wilhelm Reich and sexual politics The repression of radical psychoanalysts (Ferenczi, and Reich) Jung and the Nazis (Germany) May 1968 (France and elsewhere) and after, including Lacan stopping a public seminar to observe a strike call New age psycho-politics (Schutz, Rogers, Mindell) (USA) Radical therapy, *The Radical Therapist* and *Rough Times* (USA) Marie Langer working with the Sandinistas (Nicaragua) Social action neighbourhood) psychotherapy (UK) Social therapy (USA) Anti-psychiatry (Laing, Cooper) Encounter (see Rogers) Worldwork (Mindell) 1995 Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility (PCSR) (UK) Emotional literacy (Steiner, Antidote) Therapists and analysts against the bomb Ecopsychology	Culture on the couch: *Civilisation and its Discontents* (Freud), *Eros and Civilization* (Marcuse), *Life Against Death* (Brown) Power (Rogers, Steiner) Psychohistory and the family: *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (Reich), and Marcuse, Fromm, and Erikson Gender and sexuality: psychotherapy and feminism (Lacan, Mitchell), conservative views on gender, Homosexuality and perversion Permissiveness The roots of hatred Racism (Fanon, Kovel) Power (Steiner)
Politics *of* psychotherapy	**Politics *in* psychotherapy**
This includes: (1) the power relations and structures that operate within psychotherapy; and (2) the effect that political systems have in the ways in which psychotherapy as an institution functions	i.e. "the various ways in which political concepts and viewpoints are used to criticize or change the theory and practice of psychotherapy" (Totton, 2000, p. 7)
Psychotherapy under totalitarianism: 1920s USSR, 1930s Nazi Germany, 1970s Argentina Psychotherapy in the public sector (the medical model, managed care, moral panics) The institutions of psychotherapy: the International Psychoanalytic Association, and the exclusion of Jacques Lacan, institutionalizing psychotherapy and counselling in the UK Challenging the institutions of psychotherapy: 1967 The *Passe* (France), 1969 The Platform Group (Switzerland, Argentina, Austria and Italy), 1994 The Independent Practitioners' Network (UK)	Challenging bias and ideology: feminist and gay critiques, social critiques, anti-racist critiques psychotherapy, the power of the therapist Challenging the therapeutic relationship: mutual analysis (Ferenzci), person-centred therapy, leaderless groups (e.g. Red Therapy, UK), feminist therapy Beyond therapy: co-counselling, transcending the nuclear family (e.g. Actions-Analytical Organization for Conscious Life Praxis, Austria)

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Part III, Psychotherapy, the state and institutions, encompasses questions of values, ethics and the law, the institutions of psychotherapy, and politics and psychotherapy in the context of healthcare; and Part IV, Working at the interface, comprises examples of psychotherapy in political action from Croatia, Israel/Palestine, the UK and the USA.

Nick himself contributes three chapters to the book. In the first, on conflict, competition and aggression (Totton, 2006b), he discusses the question of whether aggression is an innate human trait or the product of certain conditions, contrasting the positions of Reich and Freud; whether it is wholly negative or has positive aspects and expressions; and whether therapy contributes to minimising aggression or (also) to supporting its positive aspects. He also looks at the application of answers to these questions to destructive "isms" such as racism and sexism, by means of the concepts of projection, projective and identification, the Jungian Shadow, the Lacanian Other and "segregated mental essences" (Kovel, 1995, p. 218). Having offered these theoretical perspectives, he then identifies three roles for psychotherapy: to provide a model of how we project our traumatic experiences onto others and how this is transmitted down the generations; to help survivors manage and heal their traumatic experience; and to develop group process methods that enable conflict to be handled and resolved, with regard to which he cites, approvingly, Rogers' approach to encounter groups, Peck's community-building and Mindell's Worldwork.

In his chapter on power in the therapeutic relationship (Totton, 2006c), Nick argues that the very structure of psychotherapy "builds in stubborn problems of power and control" (p. 83) and that, rather than trying to eliminate power struggles from the therapeutic relationship, we should make the struggle about and over power the central focus of the therapeutic encounter – and suggests, echoing the language of Rogers, that this may be a "necessary condition" for a positive therapeutic outcome. After outlining the extent of the abuse of power in therapy, and detailing a number of structural problems of the therapy relationship (the transferential power imbalance, the different rules of conversation, the conviction of expert knowledge, the privilege of interpretation and the defining of subjectivity), he highlights the programmatic aspect of therapy and the inevitable influence of the therapist's beliefs and values – and the importance of recognising and owning these as such. He then discusses certain attempted solutions to addressing power relations in therapy, such as Ferenczi's mutual analysis and Langs' communicative psychoanalysis, and goes on to draw an analogy between the encounter between therapist and client and that between peoples from two different language groups:

> If the members of one language group are considerably more powerful than the others – for example, if they have guns and the others don't – then the second group simply learns the first group's language. But if they are roughly equal in power or if each wants something the other can provide, a new form of communication develops between them: what is known as *pidgin*, an artificial medium using a simple syntax and a vocabulary drawn from both languages. A pidgin is not a natural language: it cannot develop, generate new words and concepts, become a medium for poetry. However, once children are born who grow up speaking it, a pidgin is transformed in an extraordinary way: it becomes what is called *creole*, a new natural language, as creative and infinite in potential as any other language on earth. (ibid., p. 92)

This is possibly one of Nick's most exciting – and radical – contributions to the issue of power in the therapy: that therapy, "a practice of truth", as he puts it (ibid., p. 93), also deconstructs, constructs – and, I would say, "co-creates" – the very language we use to speak that truth.

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In his third contribution to the book, on the institutions of psychotherapy (Totton, 2006d), Nick makes a good and poignant opening point: that "What is striking about psychotherapy's institutions is their remarkable unwillingness to apply to themselves what psychotherapy knows about group dynamics" (p. 108). He identifies problems of the malfunctioning of institutions, and the propensity within the therapy world for competition, rivalry and dominance, as well as splits and exclusions, and offers some analysis as to why this occurs: the positioning of psychotherapy as a profession, the particular stresses of the occupation of psychotherapy, issues of training and transmission, and the particular functions that psychotherapy has for society. The first two "factors" reprise and apply arguments familiar to readers of Nick's work; in his discussion of the third, he critiques the institutional role of the training analyst. Although this role is less widespread and influential these days than in the heyday of the psychoanalytic training institutes, Nick makes some important points about charisma, discipleship and closed systems (see also Robertson, 1993; Kirsner, 2000). Training in psychotherapy in institutes is, of course, a relatively recent phenomenon in the history of psychotherapy; early training focused on personal analysis/psychotherapy, and the reading and presentation of papers. Some approaches, notably transactional analysis, have promoted an apprenticeship model of training whereby, to paraphrase Goulding and Goulding (1978), the power is with the student/trainee – to choose their trainer or principal supervisor and training course and to change this. This promotes an open system and process in education and training. With regard to the fourth factor – how the wider social context reinforces and amplifies some of the weaknesses of therapy institutions – Nick briefly explores the (dominant) role in society of the concept of "cure", as well as its mistrust of therapy's insight, complex interpretation, acceptance of regression and highlighting of sexuality; and gives two examples of challenges to the institutions of psychotherapy: the Platform movement and the IPN.

In the same year as the publication of *The Politics of Psychotherapy*, Nick also wrote a short article on "Democracy and Therapy" (Totton, 2006a), in which he makes a connection between direct democracy (as distinct from free representation) and therapeutic group work, and Mindell's (1992) "deep democracy", and uses this to challenge us to consider how democratic our therapeutic practice is. He also discusses "inner democracy", the work of allowing the contradictory elements of our plural personality to have a voice; and deepening democracy, the work of negotiating with ourselves. The article is a gem, not only for its content but also in the way that it shows Nick's maturity as a thinker and as a writer: clear, succinct and accessible, his creativity and playfulness engage the reader so that they can more easily accept the explicit – and even the implicit – challenges of what Nick presents. His is, indeed, a rare skill in this field.

Since the publication of the book, Nick has continued to write and publish, including a chapter on the social and political context of therapy (Totton, 2008b), though it is apparent that, in the last five years, his attention has turned more to the politics of ecopsychology and "wild" therapy.

CENTRAL THEMES IN TOTTON'S "POLITICAL" WORK

It is clear from this relatively brief summary of just a part of Nick's body of work that he is a widely read, intelligent, thoughtful, politically conscious and passionate man. The influence

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of his original Reichian training is evident in his work, but he encompasses more than that and has an excellent grasp of both psychoanalytic and humanistic traditions. He has written very little about behaviourism or the behaviourist tradition, I imagine because that is antithetical to Nick's more holistic and embodied view of human nature and the person.

In this part of the article, by way of summarising his contribution to the field, I identify what I consider to be five central themes – or, to quote Nick (Totton, 2012) himself, "favourite riffs" (p. viii) – in and of Nick's work and his contribution to the interface between psychotherapy and politics: the critique of professionalisation, the significance of language, the centrality of power, the inseparability of the political and the movement beyond dichotomy.

Critique of professionalisation

This is the theme for which Nick is most and best known. From his earliest work on this subject (Totton, 1997c) and, notably in his article "The Baby and the Bathwater" (Totton, 1999; see also Fay, 2013, in this issue), and, no doubt, influenced by his early "training" in libertarian socialist, and post-situationist political activities and radical anarchism (see Totton, 2008a), Nick has consistently presented a critique of the professionalisation of psychotherapy. This is based on a number of arguments, but notably: (1) that psychotherapy is not – or should not be – based on the medical model; (2) that, while in some ways psychotherapy is a job, it is not just a job, and is more usefully thought about as a spiritual and political practice; and (3) that, in order to free clients from internal(ised) and external constraints, therapists need to be able to associate freely.

The significance of language

In appreciating his skill as a writer, I have always been aware of Nick's use of language but, rereading much of Nick's writings on politics for the purposes of writing this article, I have been reminded of his close attention to language, his obvious knowledge of etymology and his considered use of words. I think his interest in language, again no doubt influenced by his early studies in language and literature, is linked to his concern about power and, thus, the power of language. In an early paper (chapter), he discusses a way that psychotherapy engages with power "through its social role as bearer of a certain distribution of power through *the psychotherapeutic discourse*" (Totton, 1997c, p. 136, my emphasis) and critiques the increasingly "business-oriented discourse" in and of psychotherapy. In doing this he not only draws our attention to the significance of language but, I think, also offers us a challenge to be both congruent (therapeutically and politically) and judicious (politically and therapeutically) in our use of language. Nick also uses the language of political discourse. In a discussion on the medical model and professionalisation (Totton, 1997a), he likens the strategy of counsellors working in general (medical) practice to that of entryism, a political concept and strategy which has its origins in debates on the political Left with regard to "entering" or joining the Labour Party in order to influence and change it from within. Nick's interest in language is perhaps most apparent, most creative and most therapeutic when he develops the analogy of pidgin and creole as a way of thinking about the therapeutic relationship (Totton, 2004, 2005, 2006c).

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The centrality of power

In one of his early contributions on psychotherapy as political practice (Totton, 1997c), and in what was to become a central theme in his analysis, Nick goes straight to the question or issue of power (see also Totton, 2009). Politics is fundamentally about power; and psychotherapy as a social force, both is a distributor of power – as Cecchin (1993), whom Nick (Totton, 2006c) quotes, put it: "a dominant discourse of oppression" (p. ix) – and has the potential to help subvert power. Clearly influenced in this by both Foucault and David Cooper, Nick also assumes that power will always be present as a principle of interaction between people, and that it has a directly productive role – and, therefore, that it needs to be addressed directly in therapy, suggesting:

> that instead of trying hopelessly to eliminate power struggle from the therapeutic relationship, we place it dead centre, highlighting the battle between therapist and client over definition of reality, baring it to the naked gaze and making it a core theme in our work. (Totton, 2006c, p. 91)

Nick's analysis of the centrality of power to an(y) understanding of the therapeutic relationship and to therapy itself is manifest throughout his work and underpins his ideas about local knowledge and its polarization with expert systems (Totton, 1999, 2004, 2005, 2011a); conflict, competition and aggression (Totton, 2006b); as well as his and others' extensive and successful challenges to the institutionalisation of "psy" practice.

The inseparability of the political

Nick is both libertarian and insistent! He talks and writes about the "interplay" between psychotherapy and politics; and, at the same time, insists that therapy is political, and that it should be, at least in part, a conscious power struggle (as noted above). Since his early writing, he has insisted on the inseparability of the political and the personal, because, à la Aristotle, he argues that both people and relationships are inherently political, and because all psychotherapy rests on theories about how people should be. In a recent article "Psychotherapy and politics: Is there an alternative?" (Totton, 2011b), he suggests that the key question has changed from "Can therapy be political?" to the question "Can therapy be apolitical?" – to which he responded by arguing firstly, that as therapists are working with values, and as values have an inherent political quality, therapy is inherently political; and, secondly that, in effect, that there is no such thing as being apolitical, as he put it (p. 18): "Ultimately, there is no neutrality." Although Nick clearly has and is explicit about his own politics, he is more interested that therapists own, examine and process their own values, beliefs and influence, and that psychotherapy is the site of the contestation of such matters.

Movement beyond dichotomy

This brings me to a fifth theme that I identify in Nick's writings: his refusal to dichotomise and polarise. Just as we think that he is becoming insistent about a particular view or position – and, as those who know and read him know, he does have particular

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views – he surprises us with a critique of having holding a particular position. He is critical of totalitarianism in all its guises, whether "Right" or "Left"; in his chapter on conflict (Totton, 2006a), he challenges the dichotomies innate/acquired, original sin/free will, nature/nurture, negative/positive, suggesting that one of the key contributions therapy can make is "to *affirm* aggression, to *support* conflict, to *speak up for* competition – while also affirming, supporting and speaking up for the victims of alienated and destructive expressions of these qualities" (p. 36) Elsewhere, he is even-handed in his criticism of the Right and the Left, and of psychoanalysis and humanism. This insistence on moving beyond dichotomies makes him open to pluralism and diversity, about which he writes a short chapter, entitled "Both/And" in his latest book (Totton, 2012).

WITH THANKS

In just 15 years, Nick Totton has made four major contributions to the field of psychotherapy and politics (in the specific way I have defined this in the context of and for the purposes of this article): *Implausible Professions* (House & Totton, 1997), *Psychotherapy and Politics* (Totton, 2000), the establishment of this journal (in 2003), and *The Politics of Psychotherapy* (Totton, 2006d) – in addition to all his other writing, some of which is reflected on in other contributions to this special issue, as well as his extensive "psy-pol" activity. As he himself acknowledges in his introduction to his volume of writings, *Not a Tame Lion* (Totton, 2012), "In case you wonder, I am not sure where I found the time" (p. vii). Perhaps this is Nick's secret: in addition to being no Tame Lion, he is in fact a Time Lord!

In this article, I have concentrated on Nick's own enormous contribution to the development of a significant literature on psychotherapy and politics and the interface or relationships between the two (in, of, about, etc.). However, perhaps his greatest contribution is that – through his own writing; through the training he has developed; through his activism in the IPN (http://i-p-n.org/), PCSR (http://pcsr-uk.ning.com/) and the Alliance for Counselling and Psychotherapy (http://www.allianceforcandp.org/); and, not least, in establishing this journal – Nick has created a place and space for others to contribute to this field and endeavour. This was encapsulated in his first editorial in the first issue of this journal, about which he reflected:

> [This] is not the place to lay down some final editorial position about its subject matter: our intention is rather to use the journal to gather material that helps us to *find out about* psychotherapy, politics, and their various relationships. The hope is to build up a body of knowledge from which conclusions might eventually be drawn. (Totton, 2003a, p. iv)

As this article is written in the context of a *festschrift/commentarium amoricum*, all that remains for me to note and to offer is a profound thanks to our untamed friend Nick for all his work in this field, and for his contribution to building up what is now a significant body of knowledge about psychotherapy and politics. I also want to wish Nick well in his own spiritual and political practice, as well as a long and active life, not least so that we may have more of him to read, to be stimulated and challenged by, to learn from, to dispute with, to savour – and, of course, to review! Thanks, Nick.

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DOI: 10.1002/ppi

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DOI: 10.1002/ppi