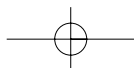
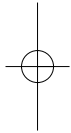
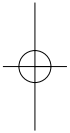
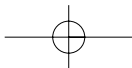
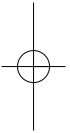
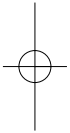




Part I

Psychotherapy in the political sphere





1 Politics on the couch? Psychotherapy and society – some possibilities and some limitations

Andrew Samuels

As Robert Musil (1937: 17) put it:

I am convinced not only that what I say is wrong, but that what will be said against it will be wrong as well. Nonetheless, a beginning must be made; for the truth is to be found not in the middle of such a subject but around the outside, like a sack which changes shape every time a new opinion is stuffed in, but grows firmer all the while.

The intention is to test and explore the boundaries that exist (we have been told) between therapy and politics, between the inner world and the outer world, between being and doing and even between what people still call 'feminine' approaches to life and 'masculine' approaches to life, no matter how problematic those words are.

This chapter is divided into a number of sections. It begins by addressing the questions, Why me? Why here? Why now? Then there follows a discussion of how, particularly after the 2004 US presidential election, politics in the west can be understood as changing in the direction of what I call 'transformative politics'. Third, the question, 'Can therapists really make a difference in the world today?' is asked. Fourth is a markedly experiential section entitled 'The inner politician'. I conclude with a few reflections on therapy, politics and spirituality.

Introduction: why me, why here, why now?

The bases for these remarks, which are grounded in clinical work with individuals, also lie in my involvement with a number of political organizations and recent political developments. I have carried out consultations and conducted workshops in Britain, Europe, the United States, Japan, Brazil, Israel, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. These activities are designed to see how useful and effective perspectives derived from

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psychotherapy may be in forming policy, in creating new ways of thinking about the political process and in resolving conflict. It is difficult to present therapy thinking so that mainstream politicians, for example, a senior US Democrat senator or a British Labour Party committee, will take it seriously. And the problem is only slightly reduced when the politicians and organizations are alternative or activist.

I have also been involved in the formation of three organizations in Britain that are relevant to the themes of this chapter. One is Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility, an organization intended to help therapists and counsellors use their knowledge and experience to intervene as professionals in social and political matters. The second organization is Antidote, a psychotherapy-based think tank co-founded with Susie Orbach. It fosters multidisciplinary work and links are sought with people working in fields other than psychotherapy. Antidote has undertaken research into psychological attitudes toward money and economic issues and is also involved in trying to apply ideas about emotional literacy/intelligence to politics.

The third organization is called the St James's Alliance. Based at a beautiful Wren church in Piccadilly in central London, it consists of individuals from fields as diverse as politics, economics, ethics, religion, nongovernmental organizations, activist and pressure groups, the media and psychotherapy. It attempts to incorporate psychological, ethical and spiritual concerns into the political agenda and to facilitate dialogue between various single-issue and pressure groups. In the past, these groups were unsympathetic to other groups' goals – poverty workers did not have time for animal rights activists, for instance, and neither group seemed interested in the problems of the Middle East. But in a suitably facilitated environment, it has been possible to find whole areas of common ground in relation to politics and there are so many emotional and spiritual similarities to share. This is an experiment in gathering and using the shards of political energy that are normally split up and dissipated.

Politics in many western countries is broken and in a mess; we urgently need new ideas and approaches. Psychotherapists, along with economists, social scientists, religious people, environmentalists and others, can contribute to a general transformation of politics.

Today's politicians leave many with a sense of deep despair and disgust. They seem to lack integrity, imagination and new ideas. Across the globe and in response to the challenge, a search is on to remodel politics. Psychotherapy's contribution to this search depends on opening a two-way street between inner realities and the world of politics. We need to balance attempts to understand the secret politics of the inner world of emotional, personal and family experiences with the secret psychology of pressing outer world matters such as leadership, the economy, environmentalism, nationalism and war.

Our inner worlds and our private lives reel from the impact of policy decisions and the existing political culture. Why, then, do our policy committees and commissions not have psychotherapists sitting on them as part of a range of experts? This is not a call for a committee of therapists, but just as a committee will often have a statistician present (someone whose role may not be fully appreciated by the other members), there should also be a therapist at the conference table. We expect to find therapists offering views on social issues that involve personal and familial relationships or matters to do with mental health but they may also have ideas to contribute on the 'hard' issues of war, violence, poverty and the economy.

Is it possible to imagine a world in which people are encouraged to sharpen their half-thought-out, intuitive political ideas and commitments so as to take more effective political action? There are probably buried sources of political wisdom in many people, particularly those who do not seem likely to function in such a way. I have come more and more to see that one does not have to be politically active or knowledgeable and talkative about politics to have something creative to say. Poets and mystics, introverts, those who eschew politics and those who are ashamed at what they take to be their own ignorance often know something that the more overtly political do not. These anti-political citizens are a great aid in finding out how secret things, childhood experiences, intimate relationships, fantasies (including sexual fantasies), dreams and bodily sensations, may be reframed and turned to useful political ends.

Thinking about those who usually do not say much, I find that they make a profound contribution to what I call 'political clinics'. These are large-group events, often composed of persons who have nothing to do with therapy and psychology at all but come together to explore their emotional and feeling-based reactions to major political themes such as terrorism, the troubles in Northern Ireland, the conflict in the Middle East, racism and homelessness. I have discovered that those who say 'I am not interested in politics' are often deceiving themselves, caught in a reaction formation. As the political clinic unfolds, it becomes clear that they are indeed extremely interested, knowledgeable and wise about politics but have always doubted, because they have been taught to doubt, that the emotional reactions they are experiencing are a legitimate part of political process. We in western countries are taught, not to deny that we have emotions about politics, because that would be impossible, but to put those emotions rather low on the scale of what we value in official political debate and political discussion.

Sometimes at the conclusion of these political clinics, we start to talk in terms of citizens as 'therapists of the world' who have a large set of usable countertransferences to the political cultures in which they live. This idea constitutes an intellectual challenge to much psychological theorizing about citizens, especially in psychoanalysis, wherein the citizen is regarded

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as a kind of baby, who has a transference and a collection of fantasies toward the 'parental' society in which he or she lives. Turning that around, so that the citizen is seen as a kind of therapist or parent figure for the society, can have a radical, uplifting and empowering effect, overturning the tradition especially in psychoanalysis (for example, Richards 1984) in which the citizen is seen as the baby and society as the parent. This claim, that the citizen is capable of being the therapist (parent) of the world, is one that embodies many possibilities as we struggle to work out what functions citizens might perform in a society in which their voices are distorted by the mass media and their internal lives unfold in a highly fraught political climate dominated by corporations and cartels.

Transformative politics

Politics is slowly changing in western countries and we are at a very interesting moment in political consciousness. What used to be an elitist insight about how everything is secretly political is now becoming an element in mass awareness. For years now, feminists, academics, intellectuals and some therapists and analysts have lived happily with the idea that our personal, psychological and private worlds are full of political tensions, dynamics and energies. But, actually, this has been a superior form of knowing, a political gnosticism. We knew that politics has expanded its definition to include all the private stuff, but the masses did not. They have continued to be taught (but many now accept it less) that politics means official politics, party politics, congressional or parliamentary politics, power politics, the politics that money can buy and so on. What helped to accelerate the democratization of the personal-is-political insight were the huge eruptions of feelings about certain events or political trends in recent years, turning those events into what can be called archetypal or at least numinous experiences: I am thinking of disparate phenomena, ranging from grief at the death of Princess Diana, to global anger at the role of the United States in world politics, to intense debates about the role of women in societies across the planet. The most ruthlessly successful contemporary politicians (such as Tony Blair) have perceived this move into general awareness of the elitist, gnostic, private knowledge about how politics has changed and they now couch their utterances in the language of the emotions.

Another way in which politics has changed is that it has become more of a transformative process. By this I mean that engagement in political activity and processes of personal growth and development are seen increasingly as the same thing, or at least as the two sides of a coin. If one interviews people active in post-Seattle politics, in the environmental movements, in certain sectors of feminism or the men's movement or in ethnopolitics, one sees that what they are doing is in many respects self-

healing in a positive sense that is familiar to psychotherapists. So politics starts to carry an overtly psychological, transformative burden. Sadly, this kind of transformative politics is not only progressive and left leaning, but it can also be spotted in many right-wing and reactionary movements, as the recent US election showed.

A third way in which politics has changed is that there is now something that can be called 'political energy' to be considered along with political power. Political power is what you would imagine it to be: control over resources such as land, water, oil – or indeed, information and imagery. Especially today, the issue of who controls information and imagery (for instance, on the internet and on television) is almost as important as the issue of who controls oil or water. Political power is held by those you would expect to hold it: men, white people, the middle and upper middle classes and those who run the big institutions of finance, the military and the academic and professional worlds, including the world of mental health.

Political energy is different. It is almost the opposite of political power. Political energy involves idealism and an imaginative and visionary focus on certain political problems with a view to making a creative impact on those problems (not necessarily with the goal of solving them). Political energy seeks more political energy, attempting to build to critical mass. It is different from political power because those who have political energy, imagination, commitment, idealism and real compassion almost by definition lack political power. Conversely, in contemporary societies, those who have political power tend to lack political energy. This is a fundamental and radical claim that I am sure will be much disputed.

Indeed, the very idea of political energy will upset some intellectual appercarts, because most analysts cannot entertain this notion. In their view, energy does not exist; it is only a mechanistic 19th-century way of looking at things. But there seems to be a possible middle position in which energy, in the sense of psychic energy, is maintained simultaneously both to exist and not to exist.

Jung suggested that, contra Freud's conception of libido, there is a neutral form of psychic energy that can run down various biological, psychological, spiritual and moral channels. My proposal is that there is also a social channel and that a subset of the social channel will have to do with politics and political energy. As indicated just now, I use the term energy in both a metaphorical and a literal sense.

Jung's idea that there is a specifically moral channel for psychic energy is extremely interesting, resonating with much evolutionary, ethological, genetic and psychoanalytic thought – Klein's idea of an innate superego; Winnicott's insistence that children have an inborn sense of guilt and hence are not born amoral; Milner's counsel that we stop seeing morality solely as something implanted in children by parents and society. Freud

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foreshadowed this train of thought with his remarks about the innate disposition of the self-preservation instincts to become more socially oriented (Freud 1905: 176). (See Samuels 1989: 194–215 for a fuller discussion of ‘original morality’.)

People with political energy are doing something rather new and different in the western world today in comparison with what those who have political power are doing. This thought can be liberatory if you are working in a small neighbourhood group, in a social and political project with limited resources and support or with people who have been abused or if you are trying to build an environmentally informed movement for sustainable development and worldwide economic justice. If you are doing any or all of these things, then you probably do not have much power and it is very easy to judge yourself the way that the conventional political world might judge you: as a waste of time and space when it comes to real politics.

But the very notion of political energy is intended to shift this way of thinking. Very often when I talk about this, people say (as they did, for example, at a conference in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in 2000), ‘Yes and we wonder what would happen if our country valued political energy as much as it values political power.’

If political energy is not to be found in the sites of official politics, then where may we find it? Politics has left its home base and gone out into the world to redefine itself and find other and new places to settle. I am not advocating removing political energy from moribund formal institutions; this has been happening in western societies anyway over many years in one of the most significant sociocultural and collective psychological shifts to take place in the developed countries since the end of World War II. A striking feature of the past 20 years in such societies has been the spontaneous growth of new social and cultural networks. More and more people are now involved in such networks, increasingly aware that what they are doing may be regarded as political. The contemporary elasticity in our definition of politics is not something that has been worked out by intellectuals. Neither has there been a concerted effort to achieve such a shift, because the new social movements operate in isolation from each other. Yet, as we have found in the St James’s Alliance discussed previously, they have something psychological in common. They share an emotional rejection of big politics – its pomposity and self-interest, its mendacity and complacency. They share a *Weltanschauung* and set of values based on ideas of living intelligible and purposeful lives in spite of the massive social and financial forces that work against intelligibility and purpose. Such new social changes include environmentalism; the formation of groups working for the rights of ethnic and sexual minorities, animal liberation, complementary medicine; spiritual and religious groups devoted to paganism and neo-paganism; rock and other kinds of music and art; finding God in the

new physics; an explosive growth in the participation in sports; organic farming; and psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and counselling.

Elsewhere (Samuels 1993) I referred to the social movements as participating in a 'resacralization' of politics. Sacral means holy and the intent was to pick up on the attempt to get a sense of purpose, decency, aspiration and meaning back into political culture. When I consider attempts by analysts and psychotherapists to do their bit, I have no alternative but to count us as part of this general, worldwide resacralizing movement. Psychotherapists may want to be different and special, but in our attempts to work the borders between psychotherapy and society, we are part of something bigger, even if the rhetoric sometimes feels too New Age-y. Psychotherapists tend to share with other resacralizers a sense of disgust with present politics and politicians. In political clinics, this is often an actual physical disgust involving the gagging reflex, an ancient part of the nervous system that is absolutely necessary for survival in a world full of tangible and metaphorical toxins.

Let me conclude this section by accepting that a transformation of politics is not going to happen in any kind of simple or speedy way and, indeed, may not happen at all. There is an impossibility to the whole project because the social realm is as inherently uncontrollable as the drives and images of the inner world and the unconscious. Once human desire enters a social system – as it always will – that system cannot function predictably. There are no final solutions to social questions. The social issues that face western societies are as incorrigible, as unresponsive to treatment, as the psychological issues that individuals face.

Moreover, many will dispute that the cumulative public significances of these movements is positive. It can be argued that the proliferation of new networks and cultural practices is merely a further symptom of social malaise, a selfish retreat into personal, individual preoccupations, reflecting an abandonment of the aspiration to truly political values. It can also be pointed out that reactionary, fundamentalist, religious movements can be seen as attempting, in their own rather different terms, a form of resacralization. But what gets highlighted when religious fundamentalism is brought into the picture is the vastness of the energy pool available for the political reforms that are urgently needed.

Can therapists really make a difference?

Although I am enthusiastic about psychotherapy's role in the refreshing of political culture, I am also somewhat sceptical. So my answer to the question 'Can therapists really make a difference?' is both 'No' and 'Yes'. Let us deal with 'No' first, with the pessimism. James Hillman and Michael Ventura (1992) wrote a book called *We've Had a Hundred Years of*

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Psychotherapy – and the World's Getting Worse. It is fairly clear what they were getting at: that psychotherapy makes little or no impact on an unjust world and that persons in therapy are cut off from taking responsibility for ameliorating injustice (cut off from their political energy by therapy, which takes all available psychic energy for its own project of personal exploration). Yet I think that a much more accurate title for their book would have been *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy, Trying to Improve the World, but the World has Stayed Pretty Much the Same*, because it is not new for psychotherapists to want to do something in relation to the world (Foster *et al.* 1996; Totton 2000). Freud wanted it, Jung wanted it and the great pioneers of humanistic psychotherapy, such as Maslow, Rogers and Perls, all wanted it as well. All these people and their followers invited the world into therapy, but the world didn't show up for its first session. There are good reasons that the world didn't show up, other than mere resistance. One reason is that therapists so much want and need to be right. (Me, too – this shadow issue of the analyst's maddening rectitude is not one I pretend to have fully dealt with.) Therapists want to reduce everything to the special knowledge that they have. This kind of reductionism gives therapy a bad name when it comes to political and social issues. For example, I remember reading in the *Guardian* an article, later the object of intense ridicule, by a Kleinian psychoanalyst about the phallic symbolism of cruise missiles going down ventilator shafts in Baghdad. My Jungian colleagues are just as bad when they tell us that the military-industrial complex is all the responsibility of the Greek god, Hephaestos. The world will not listen to that level of explanation from psychotherapists and is right not to. The priority for psychotherapists is to embark on multidisciplinary work.

But other issues besides therapy reductionism have stopped us from being useful outside a few specific areas such as psychoanalytically influenced social casework or, in some countries, child welfare legislation. Overall, there is a fairly bad record to own up to. Psychotherapists have colluded with oppressive regimes in Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, Argentina and South Africa. We have been involved in dubious activities such as sending soldiers suffering from shell shock and battle fatigue back to the line of battle in both world wars. There is also the ever-present collusion of many psychotherapists with all manner of normative and oppressive practices, ranging from the psychopathological stigmatization of lesbians and gay men (which still continues in many implicit ways in a wide range of locations: Davies and Neal 2000; Magee and Miller 1997). And therapists all over the world easily join in right-wing politicians' attacks on father-lacking lone-parent families. According to the right-wing reading, these families, totally responsible for spoiling our wonderful world, only need a father or father figure to come back and sort them out. I love fathers and was one of the first to write about what good-enough fathers actually do, especially with their bodies, to further the sexual, aggressive

and spiritual development of their children (e.g. Samuels 1986, 1989, 1993, 1996, 2001). But I utterly loathe the damaging idealization of fathers that so many western politicians have gone in for, backed by complacent analysts, therapists and other mental health professionals.

Then there is the problematic matter of psychotherapy's implicit claim that western androcentric, middle-class values and ways of thinking hold and have value universally and are superior to/should be imposed on the values and ways of thinking of non-western cultures (M.V. Adams 1996; Kareem and Littlewood 1992; Luepnitz 1988). Clearly, these unspoken assumptions reflect the typical caseloads of analysts and therapists, especially in private practice, in many countries (but see Altman 1995). The treatment of women in much psychoanalytic thinking and practice has also been damaging to some. The rise of feminist and gender-sensitive psychotherapy has had an important impact in ameliorating this situation (for example, Eichenbaum and Orbach 1982). And what a lot of therapists and analysts say about men is also beginning to receive the same kind of critique that definitions of and generalizations about women used to receive.

Another reason that people are not so likely to listen to therapists who want to make a difference in the world is that therapists are completely crazy in their own professional politics and the way they organize themselves radiates that craziness. No profession has been quite as subject to splits as the therapy profession; no profession has so frequently used personal demonization and pathological pigeonholing to deal with and get rid of troublesome outsiders and those who question from within (Turkle 1979).

As I continue to look at why we world-oriented therapists do not have a client, I note that – for reasons I do not fully understand even now – the therapy world has tragically split its clinical project off from its sociocritical project. Frankfurt school writers and Lacanian theorists rarely talk of clients or in an ordinary way about people: mothers, fathers, families, marriages, dreams, symptoms, sexuality, aggression, the inner world of the imagination. And when we read most clinical texts, the external world is hardly mentioned. Much therapy still seems (or claims) to take place in a political vacuum. There are several delusional aspects of this virginal fantasy about what we do. One delusion is that there are no politics going on in the session itself, whereas many clinicians know how the power dynamics and imbalances of the typical therapy setup cannot be wished away by reference to parental transference or the law of the father. These power imbalances often involve the denial of difference of any kind between therapist and client, the bending of the client to the moral will of the therapist and the ongoing scandal of sexual misconduct (Samuels 1996).

Another delusion is that it is not possible to find a responsible way to work directly with political, social and cultural material in the clinical session. There is not sufficient space here for a full discussion of this topic

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(but see Samuels 1997, 1999a). Succinctly, my position is that it is time to think *together* about how we can change our practices and our thinking about clinical work in order to incorporate these taboo themes. To explore empirically what has been happening at the interface of psychotherapy and politics in the actual session, I surveyed 2000 analysts and therapists of many schools worldwide about which political issues their clients mentioned in therapy, how frequently the clients raised such issues, whether such mentions were increasing or decreasing and how the therapists reacted. Approximately 700 responded. I also asked the respondents about their own political views and histories. The survey revealed that the therapy profession is far more politically sensitive than one would think and that politics is a welcome theme in a significant minority of clinical offices. (It underlined the importance of shopping around for and interviewing a potential analyst or therapist.) The answers to the questions about which political and social issues are raised (published in Samuels 1993, 1994) also made it clear that clients are raising economic, environmental and gender-political issues (including issues that do not seem to affect them personally) in their therapy sessions much more than they used to. The respondents clearly wanted to honour and respond to this development, but almost all admitted that they lacked training, helpful texts and general encouragement to do it on a regular, professional, reputable basis. In fact, many felt that it would be regarded as bad practice, even though they wanted very much to engage more expertly with such material when clients bring it to the session.

There is a big difference between a mutual exploration of some huge external event that has dominated everyone's lives (such as the terrorist attacks on September 11 2001) and struggling to develop ongoing, ordinary ways of working in the session with the client's political selfhood (and that of the therapist) as it has evolved over a lifetime. Although it can be a fascinating and important moment in any therapy, responding to the impact on the analysis of a moment of high political drama that has affected everyone is not the same as extending what we regard as contemporary good practice to include all aspects of work on the political dimensions of experience. For example, the Psychoanalytic Dialogues' symposium entitled 'Reflections on September 11, 2001' (2003), although moving and insightful, did not refer to an ongoing need to develop clinical principles by which to explore the transformative aspects of what I call political discussion within the sealed vessel of an ordinary therapy relationship. Such work might include (but not be restricted to) the following:

- 1 exploration of the role played by the joint immersion in the social order on the part of analyst and client in making relationality possible in the first place, whether at a conscious level or at that of unconscious-to-unconscious communication: citizenship facilitating countertransference

- 2 considering the functioning of nonpersonal fields that cause distress in individuals who are not personally affected, for example, economic injustice, species depletion, domestic violence (my experience being that the strongest imaginable affects, disturbances in self-image and psychological conditions such as depression involve aetiologies at least partly rooted in such nonpersonal fields)
- 3 refining technique so as to work out ways of managing states in the analyst that are difficult to manage due to the presence of political viewpoints in the client that feel offensive, upsetting or disagreeable to the analyst (we all work with people whom we sometimes find unpleasant and we can build on this capacity so as to encompass our responses to what we find personally unpleasant in the political positions held by the client).

The inner politician

Where did your own politics originate? I think this is a question worth asking. What influence did your mother have on the politics you now have? Or your father? And what about differences between your parents in political outlook? Some people have been influenced in their political development by significant others in their lives, such as teachers, clergy, older friends at school. Were you? Your gender is really very significant in the kind of attitude to politics that you have and your sexual orientation is equally important. Lesbians and gay men live more closely to the political aspects and nuances of life than straight people do. Class and socio-economic factors are obviously central, too, and so is ethnic, religious and national background. In western societies, the feeling of being oppressed by a domestic tyrant, whether male or female, or of seeing other family members as oppressed, can give rise to a sharp sense of injustice and embryonic revolutionary feelings.

Sometimes when I talk to people about what has formed their politics, they start to speak about an event or moment that they remember, their first political memory, the first time they became aware that there is a political system with power at its core, including disparities of wealth and influence. Did you explore these first political memories with your own analyst?

Another way to look at the notion of the inner politician is to imagine a political energy scale on which 10 stands for political fanaticism, even martyrdom and zero stands for absolute passivity, a total lack of interest in politics. Where would you place yourself right now in your life – what level of political energy do you have? Play around with the scale. When you're with people of the same sex, does the energy level go up or down or stay the same? Is it higher at home or at work? Are there some issues that send it skyrocketing and some that bring it down? Think of the last big

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interpersonal disagreement or fight with someone you love. Could it be that there was a different level of political energy at work in each of you?

Let us take this thinking right into the traditional heartland of psychotherapy. What was your mother's level of political energy compared with yours, or with your father's? What was your level compared with the typical level of those from the street or neighbourhood where you grew up?

Continuing to sketch the inner politician, I come to the question of political style. I have noticed in my conflict resolution work that those in conflict are often operating not only with very different levels of political energy, but also with very different political styles. Hence, in my work as a political consultant, I am using the idea of conflicting political styles in many settings. My inspiration in overall terms was Jung's model of psychological types: extroversion, introversion, thinking, feeling, sensation, intuition. As in life generally, for a variety of reasons (some having to do with personal backgrounds, some with inborn political constitutions), people live out the political aspects of themselves in different ways. Some are violent terrorists; some are pacifists. Some want empirical backup for their ideas; others prefer to fly by the seat of their pants. Some definitely enjoy cooperative political activity; others will suffer the nightmare of working in a group only because they passionately believe in the ends being pursued. As we begin to work out a psychologically driven transformative politics, let us not make the mistake of insisting that everyone do it in precisely the same way. If we are to promote political creativity, we need to value and honour diverse political styles and types and to think of ways of protecting such diversity. (I am indebted to Muriel Dimen [2002, personal communication] for the observation that political style and self-state have something in common as approaches to the diversity of personality.)

As I mentioned, the notion of political style is useful when addressing conflict, whether interpersonal or within organizations, or even between nations or parts of nations. Just as introverts and extroverts suffer from mutual incomprehension, people who employ a particular political style often have very little understanding of how others or other groups are actually doing their politics. This is not to say that political content *per se* is irrelevant, only that there may be more that divides opponents than their different views.

One might list words that evoke images of differing political types as follows, in a spectrum ranging from active styles to passive ones: warrior, terrorist, exhibitionist, leader, activist, parent, follower, child, martyr, victim, trickster, healer, analyst, negotiator, bridge builder, diplomat, philosopher, mystic, ostrich.

When working on questions of political style, it is not necessary to encourage anyone to stick to just one style. In fact, the opposite is true. The context in which the politics in question is taking place needs to be borne in mind. Some people will use one political style in one setting and quite

another in a different one. A negotiator at work may be a terrorist at home. Some may have a superior political style, an inferior political style and auxiliary styles, to borrow the words of Jung's typological schema. Thus, a warrior may have neglected her philosopher or a diplomat his activist.

This approach was partially fashioned on the basis of my work with a mixed group of Israeli Arabs and Israelis of Jewish background in Jerusalem in the early 1990s. It became clear that, aside from the obvious irreconcilable differences in how the Middle East political scene was understood, there were individuals on both sides of the divide who were participating in the group in very similar or identical ways. I pointed this out and reorganized the spatiality and seating plan of the group along style lines rather than content lines. There were discernible improvements in comprehension and even, to a limited extent, in goodwill. The warring factions were presented not with an analysis of what they were saying (that came later), but with a panorama of the ways in which they were saying it, that is to say, with the style of politics they were using.

I have also found the same approach useful in addressing organizational and theoretical disputes in the psychotherapy field and, most recently, in work with senior administrators in Britain's beleaguered National Health Service.

Psychotherapy, politics and spirituality

Attempts are constantly made to improve things in the political world, usually by redistributing wealth or changing legislative and constitutional structures or defusing warlike situations. It is not that nothing is being tried to make things better. Equally vigorous attempts are made to resist and to contest such changes and most social systems have a gigantic, impersonal capacity to resist change anyway. But projects of reform are valuable and necessary and generate their own psychological changes. For example, the consequences of fair and effective minimum wage legislation or devolving power to the regions of a country or amending the constitution would have effects that would show up on any national emotional audit.

But a materialist approach deriving exclusively from economics or one that depends solely on altering the structures of the state will not refresh those parts of the individual citizen that a psychological perspective can reach. Our disappointment at liberal democracy's failure to deliver the spiritual goods and our growing realization that there are limits to what can be achieved by economic redistribution or altering constitutional structures, strengthen my overall argument: something is missing in contemporary western politics, something that involves a calamitous denial of the secret life at its core. We can change the clothes and shift the pieces around, but the spectre that haunts materialist and constitutional moves in the

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political world is that they only ruffle the surface. They do not (because alone they cannot) bring about the transformations for which the political soul yearns.

The perspectives advocated here may never, ever be applied to our political culture. Everything psychotherapists and analysts have said or done may fail to make one iota of difference in the condition of the world. So I conclude with a few words about failure by Samuel Beckett, who lived and struggled as intensely as anyone with what it might mean to be a good-enough citizen, involving a profound acceptance of the need to go on in the face of not being able to go on: 'No matter. Fail again. Fail better.'