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The Passions of Brexit

By Anthony Barnett

For me the year 2018 ended with a vivid illustration of the pains and passions of Brexit on the Remain side.

Good friends of mine have a bright young daughter who is just turning 12. All three of them came round early on New Year's Eve before going on to another party. She had put on lipstick for the first time. As we sat around the fire her mother, who is Spanish, told me she'd finally met two people who voted for Brexit. Both were women. Then one of those married couple discussions broke out. Was it accurate or not to say they were badly educated (one probably was), or upper class (the same one

probably was), or well off (both were)? To break the pattern, I asked their daughter whether she and her classmates talked about Brexit.

'We do', she replied, firmly, and paused. Are you for Remain or Leave? I asked. 'We're all for Remain. Many of us have parents from Europe. But what none of us like and we all talk about much more, she said emphatically, 'is the way our parents just go on and on about it. They have the same conversation over and over, even during breakfast. They just repeat themselves. They work themselves up about it again and again and even start to cry. But they don't do anything. We wish they'd stop',

A number of immediately recognisable processes and sentiments can be witnessed in this cameo. There is a powerful desire for the whole thing to end, cease and go away. There is a compulsive sense of helplessness. There is disbelief, for example in the way the parents talked about the two Brexit supporters, in order to explain their affiliation to Leave in terms of their lack of education, so that the issue does not have to be engaged with as a judgment. There is also the generational response which suggests Brexit has no claim on the future. There is the evident 'tribal' nature of our gathering.

In short it was typical Remainers, Brexit hubbub – except that the daughter called us out.

I am no expert in psychology let alone psychoanalysis. But the behaviour the schoolchildren observe in their parents is a form of mourning. It is similar to a death they are not willing to accept but seem helpless to do anything about. Denial, compulsive grief, self-anger, that feeds itself on the hope that the death will disappear and the past will be restored. Scathing rejection of the other side as inhuman and plain wrong.

It surely means that something is taking place which most Remainers refuse to recognise. It was put very well by a member of the audience at a talk Mike

Rustin gave to an Oxford meeting of specialists in psychoanalysis. He said that the behaviour of many of the Remain side of the Brexit argument showed a classic form of denial, namely: 'a failure to take responsibility for the unacceptable parts of yourself'.

'It surely means that something is taking place which most Remainers refuse to recognise.'

It is this painful complex on my side of the divide over EU membership that I most want to address, to help identify the unacceptable part of ourselves that Brexit should force us to confront. It needs time and sympathy. Impatience and an urge to move on and 'get it over with' preserve the forces at work and deepen the negativity.

This is true for both sides of the deepening divide in the UK. I'm not saying that Brexiteers don't also have unacceptable parts they seek not to acknowledge. These may indeed be even more unacceptable. But on the Remain side we can't expect them to recognise their faults if we refuse to recognise ours.

While my emphasis will be on examining the inner flaws of Remainers, I want to emphasise that this is only an emphasis! For this is a shared crisis in terms of stay or leave, an impasse we have in common, despite sharply different responses to it.

This is underlined by polling which shows that, overwhelmingly, no one has changed their minds. The latest estimate by John Curtice as of March 2019 is that 85% are sticking with their 2016 referendum decision. Even more striking, people are defining themselves in terms of whether they are Leavers or Remainers much more strongly than as Tory or Labour supporters. Brexit has in effect become a source of primary self-definition.

Which means that Brexit has become a pathway for people's sense of agency rather than just a passive identity of affiliation. And having made a rare executive decision in the referendum itself, they are sticking to it. The consequences are personal. The Daily Mail ran an alarmist article in January based on a survey of 2,000 people about how Brexit was affecting their relationships. It concluded by way of extrapolation that 1.6 million relationships had broken up across the UK, 2.5 million families had quarrelled and over 10% of young people had reported family strain.

In order to understand the inner nature of the breakdown that is taking place,

we have to situate it within the larger social breakdown. This is operating at two levels at least: that of the political or constitutional system, the 'old regime' with its uncodified system of conventions, and that of political society at large, ie all of us as we relate to public life. The latter has been distinguished by a long tradition of what is called 'losers' consent' with respect to the regime's government of the day. Even when elections under the winner-takes-all system were numerically unfair, the losers accepted the legitimacy of the outcome and waited to win their term. Good referendums generate similar acceptance among the losers. The Scottish independence referendum of 2014 is an example of such a 'good referendum'. But as we can observe, the 2016 one lacks this quality. Instead it has generated deep and lasting division.

We are in a breakdown of the political system internally and in terms of the relationship between the regime and the people.

How you see the breakdown is of fundamental importance with respect to how you respond to it. A good part of the bewilderment, disorientation and rage stems from a lack of understanding about what is going on: in particular, the natural belief that the tensions can be solved within the existing framework rather than by seeking a genuine exit from it.

What I mean by this is that none can deny the evident crisis of the parliamentary order. A concentration of unprecedented events is taking place, any one of which our greatest experts would only recently have deemed as being between the inconceivable and the unheard of.

‘We are in a breakdown of the political system.’

The first thing you have to take a view on is whether this is like an accidental car-crash. I mean literally. A relatively healthy and well-functioning family can be hit perhaps by a lorry going out of control (and not a drunken family member). The grief will put pressures on previously existing weaknesses in loyalties and relationships that may then worsen the pain and even generate chronic reactions. Nonetheless, the cause was external. Without the crash all would have been as well as could be expected.

If this is the case with respect to the UK’s current travails, then Brexit is the external car-crash. It is itself the cause of the crisis. If only David Cameron had not called the referendum, or if only two per cent of the population had voted differently, or four per cent more had turned out and voted Remain, then all would have been OK. Seen

like this Brexit, even if it now demands change to the way we are governed, brought about a breakdown in a system that was fundamentally in good shape until it happened. In technical terms it was an externality.

I take a different view. I am confident that Brexit is a result of internal failures that generated the massive accumulation of distrust across all classes and sectors which then burst into the open with the Brexit vote. This may still be a minority view, but I am hardly alone. In a forceful polemic the Guardian’s Gary Younge put it well: ‘This is a crisis in our polity – the norms of our political and electoral culture that has parties at its centre. It is now approaching full-scale collapse. Conventional wisdom has it that Brexit has precipitated this crisis... It’s not Brexit that’s caused the crisis in our politics; it’s the crisis in our politics that’s made Brexit possible’.

So all of us have to make a call on this, something which the media is set against our doing. Are we looking at a crisis within the system that the system can and should solve? Or are we living through a crisis of the system itself that demands a radical or transformative alteration of some kind in the way we govern ourselves?

It is surely the latter. But this is one of the great pains of Brexit. For what is the system change that is needed? How can

it be achieved if the system itself blocks it out of self-preservation? Are we simply out of our depth, with no party or network of organisations capable of proposing a solution?

I’m not being reductionist when I say that the breakdown we call Brexit is caused by ‘the system’. The still unresolved Brexit process has its own surprising form and will shape the country in unpredictable ways. I don’t claim that Brexit is a ‘mere’ expression of underlying causes. I’m saying that it came about thanks to pre-existing, unacceptable sources of the way we govern ourselves in the United Kingdom. Sources that most of us are deeply reluctant to recognise. And it will continue in one form or another until these are confronted.

Brexit is generated by a deep breakdown. Most of the explanations for it have projected their explanations onto those who voted Leave. Among a wide variety of explanations, one common theme is the charge of a profound nostalgia for a time when Britain was a great world power. There is some truth to this, especially with respect to the political leaders of the Leave cause. But it ‘blames’ Brexit as the function of a perverse loyalty to an out-of-date past.

This is a grave misreading which in effect goes along with the notion that Britain is in the grip of decline. Neither the country nor the public passions of its people can be

understood from this perspective. The UK is in the grip not of decline but of failed renewal.

The furies and energies that have been released by Brexit are not the expression of accumulated disappointment with what has been a long retreat from world power and its exceptional wealth, generating an unquenchable desire to return to those days. Rather, the forces at work express frustration at the way often immense efforts at renewal have not delivered what they promised. Indeed, Brexit itself can be seen as the latest effort to effect change. For those who voted for it, it was, and for many still is, a brave act of collective defiance.

The same can be said for the demonstration on 23 March this year in support of a People’s Vote. We witnessed – in Britain! – the largest demonstration of pro-European sentiment in the entire history of the continent.

It may seem a paradox but both the Brexit vote and now the resistance to it are rooted in British confidence that the country can reinvent itself. Not without reason. The country has attempted more than one far-reaching effort to update itself that has reshaped every corner of the land and its way of life. 1945 saw the remarkable creation of a British nation under Labour that was more of a warfare than a

welfare state, as recently argued by David Edgerton. In 1979 Thatcherism undid that post war, national consensus to unleash her neoliberal transformation. Then, in 1997, with the advent of New Labour, Thatcherism underwent a far-reaching effort to humanise it before it crashed in the double catastrophe of Iraq and the financial crisis.

‘Brexit is generated by a deep breakdown. Most of the explanations for it have projected their explanations onto those who voted Leave.’

This is why, in my view, Brexit is creating a needed further opportunity to rethink the nature of the country, its democracy and economy, this time from the left. An opportunity that should be seized. It’s an argument that Yanis Varoufakis has made well, emphasising the eight fold nature of the combined national, democratic, constitutional, financial and economic crunch. His advice is not to try and ‘stop it’ but to bring it on and work through it.

But if this is the case, why is there such a profound sense of malaise? Something is happening that few are facing up to. We can all see that a breakdown is happening but few are looking forward to its resolution, to what lies on the other side.

My explanation for this may sound strange (unless you are Scottish, Irish or Welsh).

We English are having to face up to the fact that we must lose our special privilege and become a normal nation. A Scottish commentator, Mike Small, has just reminded his readers of the sense of privilege we have enjoyed south of the border. It goes back to the 17th century, when Milton wrote in *Areopagitica* that when ‘God is decreeing to begin some new and great period what does He then but reveal Himself ... first, to his Englishmen?’ And in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, he wrote: ‘We have the honour to precede other nations who are now labouring to be our followers.’

We were indeed the ‘first nation’. Others, from America and France and from to India and China, had to fight us to become modern nations. We had no such need, for we were the prime movers. We had no need, that is, to aspire, for we already were. We set the standards and others aspired to be like us.

This deep, underlying experience is laced through our literature and culture and

continues to give a privileged aspect to our nationalism. We express it by saying we have no need for it. We English are the only nation whose intellectuals do not ‘feel’ they belong to a nation. While they love English literature and countryside and towns, they deny any expression of it politically. No other country or culture has this gift, of just being.

However, implicit in it is that the rules do not really need to apply to us.

Now they must. We have to become a normal nation.

Brexit saw clear national differences in voting patterns. It expressed a process that is underway: the separation of the nations of the United Kingdom. This need not mean that breakup is inevitable. We can join in a united federation... provided the English accept that they are like the Scots or the Welsh or the Irish, only more numerous.

Separately or together, within or without the EU, England is becoming England.

Neither Remainers nor Leavers wish in their hearts to embrace this. What I see as a gain, to become a normal European country, is experienced as a discomfiting and threatening loss. If you are a Brexiteer, it is the loss of Great Britishness; if you are a Remainer, of a kind of internationalism untainted by bellicosity.

For both it means abandoning a very special form of our civilisation.

Fintan O’Toole opens *Heroic Failure*, his book on Brexit by describing how joining the EU in the 1970s was experienced, and not just by opponents of EU membership, ‘not as an act of collective will but as a collective surrender of will’. Since then, membership has been projected as a form of victimhood.

There is a very important point to register here. One of the myths of EU membership reproduced by those who oppose it is that the UK joined only a ‘Common Market’ and was never engaged in an exercise of sharing sovereignty back in the early 1970s.

In fact, the issue of sovereignty was much debated, and more importantly all the language of the European project being Hitlerite, and ‘we had not won the war to be told what do to by foreigners’, was in the air.

This experience of membership as being a loss of the vital spirit of the ‘country’s will’ led to a chronic condition in which the ‘suffering’ of being a victim of EU membership generated and perpetuated a form of self-pity.

This functioned to preserve a belief that Britain’s inner qualities of world leadership called out to be ‘released’ from the ‘shackles’ of Brussels.

The culmination (I hope) of this Anglo-British pathology of hatred NOT of 'Europe' but of 'membership' of European institutions can be seen today in descriptions of the Prime Minister's Withdrawal Agreement as 'vassalage', and the loss of 1,000 years of history. There is a direct line from this to Boris Johnson saying that if May's original proposal, agreed at Chequers, was adopted, 'it would mean that for the first time since 1066 our leaders were deliberately acquiescing in foreign rule'.

It took Private Eye to point out that King Harold hardly 'acquiesced' at the Battle of Hastings.

What concerns me more, however, is the shuffling silence, the inability to generate an alternative patriotism that would have seen off such nonsense. What I am trying to identify is the shared sense of loss that prevented the Remain side from advocating any counterforce to Johnson. It is always hard to see an absence, so comparison may help. For most (not all, but most) Irish, or Italians, or Germans, or French, or Spanish, or Polish, or Dutch, feel more and better Irish, Italian, German, French, Spanish, Polish or Dutch as members of the European Union. It enhances their sense of significance and the positive nature of their nationality and dampens the bad parts.

This is what it means to be a normal

European country. The EU has 'rescued' and now enhances the member states.

I'm tempted to say that 'only Britain' feels existentially threatened by EU membership. But that would be untrue, as no nation is monolithic. Clearly there are Europeans across the continent who feel their nation is under threat from the EU and not without some reason. But overall, Europe has allowed and encouraged a good patriotism to flourish in its member countries.

But not in Britain – or rather not in Anglo-Britain; it certainly manages this in Scotland.

What I'm trying to get at is an absence. There are many English UK citizens who will deny Johnson's vapid claims by saying they are Europeans first and foremost. What is missing is a strong, clear voice of Englishness saying it is enhanced by EU membership.

'This is what it means to be a normal European country. The EU has "rescued" and now enhances the member states.'

This has to change if we are to sustain a role in the EU. We will have to change.

In 2018, A C Grayling, a leading supporter of the People's Vote, tweeted: 'If Brexit isn't stopped, its effect on British society will be like the effect of the Dreyfus Affair on France. If it is stopped, it will have been a nasty temporary hiccup, soon forgotten.'

This is an example of what I mean by denial. It implies that Brexit is like a minor disease or discomfort. The arrogance and dismissal of the desires of the 17.4 million make Remainers complicit in the existence and determination of Brexit.

It is humiliating to realise that the need to change has been brought on by Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. Hence the sense of rage, helplessness and even tears – witnessed in their parents by the 12-year-olds.

To gain our place in the world we will have to let go what has been part of ourselves.

Tavistock Relationships

The BPC is delighted that Tavistock Relationships has been awarded the contract to deliver psychotherapy from a brand new mental health centre in the City of London. The charity will be providing short- and long-term analytic psychotherapy to individuals, couples and groups, with a particular focus of the centre being the delivery of free and very low-cost treatments to people who live and work in the City of London and neighbouring areas.

Andrew Balfour, Chief Executive of Tavistock Relationships, commented:

'We're thrilled that the City of London has chosen Tavistock Relationships to run its new mental health centre. The Corporation's vision for a centre which can provide longer term analytic psychotherapy alongside a range of other approaches, is both radical and far-sighted, and we are very much looking forward to working with the City to make this new treatment centre a success for the people who live and work in this area.'

Editorial

New beginnings at New Associations

By Helen Morgan

Since its first edition in Autumn 2009, New Associations has been managed and edited from the BPC office first by Malcolm Allen and, since 2012, by Gary Fereday with Leanne Stelmaszczyk and later Daniela Pasquini. With its focus on the application of psychoanalytic thinking to contemporary concerns within society and culture, it is a magazine which has a wide appeal amongst many psychoanalytically informed clinicians and trainees as well as academics and students. During my three-year term as chair of the BPC I received many positive comments throughout the country about the quality and depth of the articles, and it is evident what an excellent job the BPC editorial staff team has done over the last ten years.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the magazine, the BPC Board are keen to build on the achievements to date and to formalise and develop the system of support and advice for the production team. Subsequently I have

been asked to take on the role of Editor and to set up an Editorial Advisory Group and I am delighted to announce that we now have appointed the initial group. The membership, along with myself and Gary, includes: Andrew Cooper, Professor of Social Work, Tavistock Centre and University of East London, Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist; Maxine Dennis, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Psychoanalyst; Johnathan Sunley, Psychodynamic Psychotherapist; and Candida Yates, Professor of Culture and Communication at Bournemouth University. We have established a new role of Reviews Editor, which Johnathan has agreed to take on. Richard English, the recently appointed Communications Manager for the BPC, will be acting as Co-Editor.

With Richard coming into post and the Editorial Group in the process of forming, this current edition was put together under a transitional system. We wanted to address the political turmoil and the splits and divisions we have been experiencing in the UK following the Brexit

referendum, but had to face the dilemma of how to bring this focus to a magazine with a long lead-in time when things are constantly changing. Indeed, I write this editorial in early May just before the European elections, and who knows where we will be by the time you are reading this? Nevertheless, I believe the articles offer thought-provoking perspectives on the troubled states underlying and resulting from the situation in which we find ourselves. I was intrigued to note how many of the themes resonated with the article on homelessness as well as the reviews.

The new group is working on the Autumn edition which, as well as being an anniversary edition, will focus on environmental issues, which are belatedly coming more to the fore in society, prompted by such events as the recent UN report and the Extinction Rebellion action over the Easter period.

We have already had some stimulating discussions about how we can build on the last ten years and take the magazine into the next decade. To ensure we include

views of the readers, over the coming months Richard will be conducting a survey to gather thoughts, opinions and ideas on improvements for the magazine, which the Editorial Group will use as a basis for further thought. We want New Associations to discuss current thinking and address those difficult conversations – as well as being an enjoyable read!

‘...the articles offer thought-provoking perspectives on the troubled states underlying and resulting from the situation in which we find ourselves.’

Brexit

Brexit – Trauma, Identity and the Core Complex

A version of this article was published online by Open Democracy in February 2019

By Susanna Abse

It's a cold Thursday in February and I am sitting in my consulting room with a couple in the process of separating. Nigel Leaveson and Anna Romaine are angry and uncompromising despite my best endeavours to help them mourn their relationship. They cannot agree about anything: who will live where; how often each of them will have the children; and even how they will tell their seven-year-old daughter of their decision to part. It seems hopeless – we are stuck. This is not a particularly unusual scene – every week, in my consulting room, I am witness to these kinds of intransigent states of mind. Many couples, and particularly those who come

for help during or following a separation, seem unable to make any concession or to shift from their fixed positions and the more uncertainty there is in their lives, the more the couple behave as if to give any concession would lead to utter annihilation. What is striking however is that this kind of extreme state of mind is now not confined to my consulting room, I can witness it daily both in myself and in others, in the whole, sorry, Brexit mess.

Many writers, such as Anthony Barnett (2017), have observed that betrayals of trust are at the root of Brexit. Deep and lasting wounds arising from such betrayals as the deceptions around the Iraq war, the

2008 financial crash, and the 2009 expenses scandal, have led to a loss of faith with the status quo. Compounding this, since 2010, austerity economics has led to much greater hardship for many families. Money has been short, job insecurity rife and services that previously could be depended on have disappeared. All in all, could the sum of these events be understood as amounting to large group, national trauma?

My couple Nigel and Anna also had experienced considerable trauma in their lives. This early adversity had, no doubt, weakened their capacity to manage later challenges, leaving them fragile and mistrustful. They shored up against their fragility with a shared hatred of dependency or weakness. Nigel expresses this by being dismissive and cold while Anna defends herself against her fear of dependency by being controlling and manipulative. She is very scared of losing him (though much of that is projected into the children), he is consciously very desperate to get away.

'...trauma isn't good for people. It unsurprisingly generates mistrust; it

creates fear and then anger. Trauma increases our wish to be self-sufficient and not depend on others...'

We know trauma isn't good for people. It unsurprisingly generates mistrust; it creates fear and then anger. Trauma increases our wish to be self-sufficient and not depend on others – it can distort our relationship to reality and make it hard for us to work out where our best interests lie. Trauma makes us retreat and avoid collaboration. We pull the drawbridge up, fearing others as a potential threat. We find it harder to share or to tolerate ambiguity. Trauma can engender paranoid-schizoid states of mind, where idealisation and denigration predominate and where empathy and concern can feel hard to access.

Underpinning this less empathic and more rigid state of mind is a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity. When we feel we have little ourselves or feel under threat, sharing with others can become tricky. And while the consequences of the global 2008 crash were very serious, what followed was worse. Just when

people needed to feel secure, government enacted policies which did the very opposite, cutting services and undermining institutions that people had become reliant on and which supported family stability (the central source of human security being, of course, the family).

When I talk about security here, I'm emphasising that we cannot separate seemingly external pressures such as financial security and physical safety from the internal feeling of emotional security. When we feel insecure, we need a sense that there is someone to turn to who will take care of us. Government can provide that underpinning confidence and good leaders can serve as parental figures who, in times of heightened anxiety, we can turn to in our minds. Governments can help people accept suffering; they can encourage us all towards the common good and can create solidarity around hardship. But when we feel that the common good is replaced by self-interest and manipulation, then trust is lost and the establishment becomes not a protective parent but rather a rapacious and neglectful one to be distrusted and resisted. This blending of inner and outer realities is going on all the time inside each of us, and when we are calm and secure, we can usually distinguish between the two. However, when times are not calm, nor secure, helping people to distinguish what is real and what is felt is

the task of mature leadership and this kind of leadership is something that seems to be sorely lacking.

David Tuckett (2008), in his work on uncertainty in the financial sector, describes how, when faced with doubts, people may become highly attracted to certain kinds of conviction narratives and Phantastic Objects, which can in turn fuel paranoid-schizoid mental states. Phantastic Objects are subjectively very attractive 'objects' (people, ideas or things) which are highly exciting and idealised. These Phantastic Objects seem to provide a solution to uncertainty, providing some belief that this will satisfy our deep desires. One might postulate that the idea of Brexit is suffused with this kind of manic idealisation, and that the sense of certainty and conviction that surrounds its promotion by the 'hard Brexiters' is Phantastic. James O'Brien, the broadcaster, says Brexit is a 'unicorn', something mythical, magical and unreal. Nevertheless, Phantastic Objects can seem to provide a deeply longed for solution to the trauma of hardship, anger and suffering.

Thinking about the way trauma affects whole societies is a relatively new concept in public health. Mostly, it has been applied to more grossly traumatising experiences such as slavery, war and genocide. Perhaps however we need to understand that the undermining of felt security also has an

impact on whether we remain tolerant, inclusive, and yes, sane as a society. Politicians, in my view, have in the last decades undermined felt security and we are now in the midst of its consequences.

Vamik Volkan, a Turkish Cypriot psychoanalyst who is internationally known for his work on bringing together conflictual groups for dialogue and mutual understanding, has described (2014) how after large group societal trauma individuals can feel a sense of victimisation together with a sense of being dehumanised. As a result of trauma, people can, at first, feel humiliated, with hidden shame about their circumstances and, in this situation, people can find it difficult to be appropriately assertive. It is interesting to note therefore how little overt protest we saw after the 2008 crash and how

long it took for a sense of injustice to crystallise. Perhaps, many people felt more ashamed than angry about their reduced circumstances, and the rhetoric about 'the undeserving poor' compounded this.



Volkan also says that in response to large group trauma one can see an increase in projection. In the face of the shame and humiliation that is created (such as when you need help from a system that is contemptuous and toxic towards that neediness), projections that blame 'others' can increase as a way of protecting and defending oneself against a pervasive feeling of failure. The sense that 'others' were bringing the nation down and were the source of individual and societal problems was most stark in the increasingly hostile attitude to immigrants, minority groups and refugees.

'... trauma also increases the need for an investment in a large group identity as a way of shoring up the inner sense of fragility.'

Volkan reminds us, too, that trauma also increases the need for an investment in a large group identity as a way of shoring up the inner sense of fragility. The feeling of being small and powerless can be eased by identifying with a large group and this

large group can then be invested with strength, nobility and pride. In the Brexit propaganda, it is clear that Englishness becomes the repository for all the good, and 'others' (immigrants) may carry the unwanted and discarded 'bad'.

So, we could simply surmise that the vote for Brexit was a reaction to trauma and that those most traumatised were susceptible to the promise of the Phantastic Object of leaving the EU. Can we, however, leave it at that? Does this satisfy our curiosity around the utter stand-off that we are seeing? Or does this simply pathologise Brexiters, leaving Remainers as those who are functioning in the depressive position? It is clear to me that many (I include myself) on both sides of this debate are in the grip of something very powerful.

Insight into this stand-off might come from psychoanalytic therapy with couples. One of the universal issues that couples bring when they come to see me is the often challenging struggle between dependence and independence. This struggle which is universal involves how we manage the dichotomy between our need for, and dependence on, others, and our need to be autonomous and self-governing. Mervyn Glasser (1979), described this as the 'core complex'. Other clinicians have described a similar idea as the 'agoraphobic-claustrophobic dilemma', outlining how the deep-seated longing for intimacy and

closeness and the need for autonomy and separateness are in constant tension. The pulling away from the other to become separate arouses fears of abandonment and survival anxiety (Remain voters?), which then pushes us back towards closeness. But the experience of closeness invites claustrophobic anxieties and fears of losing control (Leave voters?), so we pull away again.

Whilst I believe these tensions are universal in relationships, in my practice it is clear that those couples whose individual identity is fragile and whose sense of self is poor, struggle with this dilemma more acutely. To be comfortable with being dependent and close to another, one has to have a sense of confidence in oneself and a feeling that one's individuality is secure. Primal fears are easily activated when identity and selfhood are weak, and trauma and uncertainty can make them even harder to manage. Couples who struggle with this most profoundly can come to the conclusion that separation is the only solution. Ironically, however, in the emotional maelstrom of divorce and the uncertainty it generates, paranoid processes, rather than diminishing, often increase, leading to even more bitter, polarised arguments and enactments.

In the political writings of Anthony Barnett and Fintan O'Toole (2018) they have argued that the English identity

has been denigrated and devalued. The changes wrought on English identity by the loss of Empire and the moves towards independence within the Union have perhaps led to what Volkan calls 'exaggerated largegroup narcissism', denoting a process where a large group shores up its identity by a belief in its superiority. The Brexit rhetoric has been full of this narcissism, perhaps to counter the sense of loss and fragility. The push from all parts of the Union other than England towards greater autonomy and separation has, no doubt, depreciated the sense of English specialness and pride.

In this context, did England then need to assert itself and is this fragility at the heart of that compelling call to arms to 'take back control'?

In couples where identity is weak, we see both a particular terror about colonisation and a corresponding fear of separateness. In the bitter arguments between Nigel Leveson and Anna Romaine I could see that both felt that it was a 'winner takes all' situation. If either gave ground they would be routed, taken over and subdued into utter submission. Divorce lawyers were enlisted so each of them could establish a sense of 'taking back control' in the face of their polarised anxieties.

As we know the slogan to 'take back control' was deeply potent during the

campaign, playing on fears around colonisation. This anxiety has been stoked over many decades as successive politicians have come back from negotiations with the EU as if they are conquering heroes, who have triumphed (or not) over a bullying and controlling other. Politicians on both sides of the House have compounded the EU in our imagination as an enormous, faceless and rigid bureaucracy shaping our daily lives and from whom we have to constantly wrestle back concessions and agreements.

‘As we know, the slogan to “take back control” was deeply potent during the campaign, playing on fears around colonisation.’

But once again, I am focusing on Nigel and his fears, losing what Mary Morgan (2018) calls my ‘couple state of mind’ in which my attention is given to the shared aspects of Nigel and Anna’s differences. After all, the Remain voice is equally shrill and full of feeling - feelings that are, I suspect, fuelled by acute anxieties about going it

alone; Remainers fear that the UK is not viable without the EU. And feeling alone and very vulnerable in this aloneness, perhaps to the extent of being in the grip of survival anxiety, makes Remainers fight tooth and nail to stay attached.

This issue with national identity has also been evident in other parts of the Union. Scotland’s push for independence shows this clearly. The core complex and the drive for autonomy has been at work in both countries, though, perhaps, the perceived solution to this problem of fragile identity has been different?

This difference is expressed in how a sense of separation and autonomy is being developed by Scotland and England. In developmental terms, adolescence is usually the time when we forge a separate identity and adolescents generally do this in a state of opposition. We define ourselves by being different from our parents and establish our separateness by resisting their values, beliefs and injunctions. For Scotland therefore, perhaps identity is forged in opposition to England? The wish to stay in the EU could be understood as separating from the ‘family’ union with England and defining Scottish identity as separate from England’s via its imagined relationship to the EU. For Scotland, the feared claustrophobic control doesn’t come from Brussels but from Westminster. Indeed, Scotland seems to

experience the EU as the protector, not the controlling, dominating parent.

In contrast, England’s uncertain identity, though also leading to a preoccupation with autonomy, is forged in opposition to the EU. For England, it is Brussels that raises the spectre of domination and control.

So, in relation to our current divisions, can we think about this as a couple problem? At the risk of being heteronormative and reinforcing gender norms, let’s remind ourselves that Nigel Leaveson desperately wants autonomy; he fears being colonised and prizes his independence and hates to feel needy and out of control. Anna Romaine, on the other hand, wants to stay close and fears he will abandon her and the children. She is convinced unless she nails him down with financial and child contact agreements, her survival is at stake. This kind of split, and the fight and acrimony it can generate between couples, is what I feel I am witnessing in the divisions we see between Leave and Remain supporters. Between couples, this kind of difficulty can feel like a fight to the death and it seems that the current strength of feeling in the country is similarly polarised and desperate. Further, as we get closer to leaving without any plan or guarantees of security, unsurprisingly, difficulties with rational and calm thinking seem to be getting worse.

Helping couples to become less angry and polarised is hard, requiring the psychotherapist to tolerate and survive substantial destructiveness. This destructiveness can include sadistic attacks on both the partner and the therapist as well as the potential for the couple to engage in mutual destruction; mutual destruction can feel preferable to any compromise in ‘winner takes all’ states of mind. The capacity of the couple psychotherapist to contain these attacks is central to the work and can sometimes require a more active, authoritative stance than might ordinarily be used in couple psychoanalysis. Often, the couple psychotherapist has to try and manage highly aroused affective states because without this considered thinking cannot take place. Couples, when aroused, are not necessarily available for interpretative work, so interventions need to be clear and simple. Interventions need to acknowledge the subjective experience of each member of the couple, but will also be directed at engendering curiosity about feelings in themselves and in their partner. This work is of course aimed at generating an encounter in which the couple begin to recognise the other as a real person, not just a bundle of projections. These moments of recognition, though often fleeting, can enable couples to compassionately acknowledge each other’s suffering.

Does this lead us to any conclusions about the task of leadership in our current circumstances? Whilst politicians cannot provide the close, attuned attention of a psychoanalytic treatment, leaders should, in my view, attempt to actively address anxieties rather than provoke them. Feeling states are running high at present and can be worsened by politicians who do not engage in active listening; who do not use language very carefully; and who do not manage process in a way that provides a clear sense of a way forward. Further, at times such as these, leaders might need to speak directly about the limitations of what is really possible, helping both Leavers and Remainers to mourn the impossibility of the Phantastic Object. Sadly, however, politicians, unlike couple therapists are aligned to a particular standpoint and are also in the business of creating hopes and dreams, rather than telling people about painful realities. It would be woefully naive to imagine this might change. Nevertheless, we should hope that our leaders can at least remember the universal human need for containment and security, so we can begin the process of really understanding each other and concern and empathy can re-emerge in our country.

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Brexit

The Passion of Brexit (comment)

By Andrew Cooper

How to make sense of Brexit? Does the psychoanalytic community have anything useful or distinctive to add to the daily avalanche of commentary? For 20 years Tavistock Policy Seminars have tried to offer an alternative model of policy analysis by insisting that the audience, rather than the speakers who open these events, ultimately take centre stage. The method is dialogic and deliberative, not adversarial, didactic or 'expert dependent'. Anthony Barnett's and Susanna Abse's articles are based on one of these seminars, held in January 2019. So, how did this one go, perhaps the most risky and challenging we have attempted?

Certainly it was the most popular ever, and the space was full to capacity. The seminar was promoted as a 'non-partisan' event. In advance I found myself worrying about what the balance of Leavers and

Remainers in the audience might be, whether or not (were it up to me) I would 'call this out', and what tensions might be produced by doing so or not doing so. In the event, Anthony Barnett tackled it head on and early, having declared his own position as a 'Remain' voter. There were about 12 in the room who had voted Leave, and around 85 Remain. Would anyone vote differently now? he asked. Not a single hand was raised. I think this move settled everyone, and enabled exactly the right kind of atmosphere for the later dialogue. If psychoanalytic thinking and other modes of therapy have anything to contribute to social and political process, I have increasingly come to the view that it is less through generating theories, models or explanations about 'what is going on', and more through our capacity to promote different ways of engaging, relating, talking and acting in conflictual, anxiety-laden and controversial circumstances.

The 'different' ideas we might bring to the table are important, but secondary. If the seminar achieved something, it was that it created and sustained, for a couple of hours, a space where people could safely think, speak, listen and engage with one another. That sounds a bit like what we aim at in 'doing therapy'.

Both speakers handled their presentations with great skill, cutting across the binary lines and anxieties in the room with arguments and analyses that challenged everyone to think fresh thoughts. Anthony Barnett focused on Brexit as a crisis of identities, proposing that Brexit UK is a Union of five countries – Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, London and the rest of England. Wales voted narrowly to leave, while London and Scotland voted heavily (60/40) to remain. He also introduced fascinating data from two comparator cities with similar demographics and histories of decline, one of which voted heavily to leave and one to remain; also of significant shifts in alignment among some minority ethnic communities, towards remain and away from their original voting pattern. The messages took root. There is no single Brexit, but many; however, England outside London is a special case. Brexit can be seen as a crisis of English identity in particular, a theme developed by Susanna Abse in interesting ways in her piece, as

she explores how identities are formed in opposition to fantasised others, or on the basis of a more inherent and substantial sense of self-worth and internal security. Susanna's metaphor or analogy for Brexit as a high conflict divorce process helped direct everyone's attention 'below the surface' towards an exploration of the dynamics of insecurity that generate rigid (red) lines and positions, and reciprocal intransigence. But amidst all this, Anthony insisted 'the Leave vote is an authentic vote' and Remainers need to embrace that.

**'... in times
of radical
uncertainty and
anxiety, we need
a story to make
sense of things.'**

An early contributor to the open dialogue reflected that it was true she found her English identity hard to feel proud of, given England's history of colonialism, aggressive nationalism and racism. Later a French woman reprised her country's own record of oppression, adding she would nonetheless never think of identifying as anything other than French. More than one Irish person affirmed Anthony's belief that being part of Europe enhanced

rather than diminished their sense of national identity. Leavers spoke at some length, articulating the particularities of their experience, and the roots of their position. The hour long conversation was always thoughtful, interactive, sometimes surprising, and crucially 'contained'. Perhaps, had it continued, it would have become edgier and more difficult, and maybe it needed to be?

We all probably have our favourite Brexit theory or analogy. As Susanna suggests, in times of radical uncertainty and anxiety, we need a story to make sense of things. One of my own stories is that the crisis reminds me strongly of Britain in the 1640s and 50s when King, Parliament and (numerous stances among) the 'people' were pitched into a complex and destructive civil war, as each fought for supremacy in a period of national breakdown. Families divided between Parliament and King, ordinary people developed new ways of doing politics and early forms of communism and socialism were forged. As I write, and the first phase of Brexit moves towards its uncertain conclusion with Parliamentary votes on a continual knife edge, I repeatedly sense that real and frightening public disorder, driven by the multiple 'passions of Brexit', is only just being 'contained'.

Anthony Barnett observed at one point that in Britain a crisis is only seen as

bad; other countries and cultures would recognise it as an opportunity and a challenge, much as psychotherapists see a therapeutically supported breakdown as an opportunity for breakthrough. Brexit is the symptom of something deeper, more profound and more complex than its surface manifestations; to work it through we do need new and different conditions in which to relate, think, talk and find a way forward. Maybe this seminar, for a brief but intense two hours, offered a glimpse of such a possibility.

SCoPEd project update from BACP, BPC and UKCP

Thank you once again to all of you who took part in our recent joint consultation on the draft SCoPEd framework. We hugely appreciate the time you have taken to respond and for your suggestions. We fully acknowledge that for some members this process has been concerning, and we may not have been clear about every aspect of the project.

First, we want to clarify the reality of SCoPEd: it is the coming together of three leading counselling and psychotherapy organisations to collate, agree and set out what is happening currently at entry level according to the evidence we could find.

We also want you to know that every single one of the over 3,000 comments we received in our initial consultation, which was responded to by over 7,000 members, will be carefully considered and reflected in our next actions – collectively as a collaboration of three organisations, and individually where it appertains to a specific membership body. This will take some time, but we are committed to this.

Our organisations united in 2017 with the goal of providing clarity for the profession and the public. Very soon an additional

shared overarching goal emerged: the project could enable us to promote the very high level of expertise of our 60,000 practitioners, a wholly underutilised workforce within a profession that is too often misunderstood or ignored by policymakers.

This is critically important planning and policy work that we have the best chance of achieving together, not separately. More than anything, the framework is intended to make explicit the sheer skill and ability of all our members, when they enter the professions, to undertake highly complex work within a range of employment settings. That's even before our registrants have undertaken the considerable development and supervision that typically characterises a lifetime's work in our profession. Our aim is to promote our 60,000 practitioners by showing what you are, not what you are not, with the aim of maximizing employment opportunities.

Times have changed and there is an opportunity for the counselling and psychotherapy professions to demonstrate and establish the considerable benefits we can bring.

We want to reassure you that the draft framework – and it is very much a first iteration – will absolutely be reviewed. Our intention was to set out the existing agreed training levels, research and published standards. We will now look at all aspects of its production and content in close consultation with our respective memberships.

We hope to create a framework that will help to ensure that your skills are valued and utilised to their full potential by employers, commissioners and the public.

Andrew Reeves, Chair, BACP

Susanna Abse, Chair, BPC

Martin Pollecoff, Chair, UKCP

Hadyn Williams, Chief Executive, BACP

Gary Fereday, Chief Executive, BPC

Sarah Niblock, Chief Executive, UKCP

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Brexit

Brexit: Northern Ireland

By Brent Thomson

Northern Ireland is situated in a unique geo political position, particularly following Brexit, in that it shares a significant land interface/border between the UK and the EU. Discussions, political and otherwise, are in agreement that a 'hard border', that is something physical at this interface, is not wanted and could potentially destabilize the Peace Process within Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is still attempting to mourn a period of civil unrest known as The Troubles, which incurred violence throughout the country with significantly at the border and other interfaces within communities. The Troubles resulted in a death toll of just under 4,000 from the late 1960s until their official ceasing in 1998 following the Good Friday Agreement which initiated the Peace Process. The psychological fallout is difficult to quantify and painful memories persist, both old and new, and intergenerational trauma

and identity issues have given much to be discussed and thought about. Identification and counter-identification with the aggressor remain an issue and cause of violence within certain sub-cultures within Northern Ireland, not to mention the general level of denial and normalization of violence across the culture of Northern Ireland.

‘The psychological fallout is difficult to quantify and painful memories persist, both old and new...’

Popular psychological theories have recognized the importance of identity at the heart of Brexit. Not surprisingly, and in line with the rest of the UK, identity

and identification are central to the issue of Brexit within Northern Ireland, where the search for identity whether British, Irish, European or otherwise is complex and multidimensional. For some sub-cultures, this is expressed through monuments such as strong political ideology and division, flags, territory, other cultural expressions and for some, anti-social and violent behaviour. Pre-Brexit, some application of object-relation theory had been attempted to understand the conflict of The Troubles and the associated mindsets underpinning the violence (for example, see Kapur & Campbell, 2002), in terms of the externalization of violence and associated splitting processes. Threats to the Peace Process are unfortunately nothing new within Northern Ireland since its implementation in 1998. Periodically, violent incidents have occurred and have been attributed to the same political motivation which fuelled The Troubles. Brexit has potentially added more pressure to the political mind of Northern Ireland regarding a heightening of a possible threat of regression from relative peace to increased violence. This fear regarding a temporal and topographical regression links well to Winnicott's concept regarding the fear of breakdown, through the form of a fear that the political structures will indeed completely fall apart. Indeed the compulsion to repeat with regards to certain socio-political issues and also

violence is ever present. Orbach (2016) described the similarity between the UK leaving the EU and that of a parent initiating a divorce. This analogy rings true to the current political context of Northern Ireland, whereby by the main political parties who are meant to be responsible for a devolved government have not officially convened together for over two years. The political parents of Northern Ireland cannot stand to be in the same room as each other, bitterly feuding with one another. This may represent an uncreative resentful couple who are ultimately responsible for abandoning their hypothetical political children, the people they were elected to represent. Lipczynska's (2017) editorial comments regarding the famous phrase 'Keep Calm and Carry On' in relation to not coping with, or rather a denial of thinking about, current socio-political events, I believe speaks also to a certain Northern Irish mindset in relation to the missing 'parental' government. Adding to this a speculative stoic-apathetic mindset as a way of understanding certain social defences in relation to anxiety and conflict evoked in the context of political abandonment. This political abandonment seems somewhat of a paradox given the relative centrality of Northern Ireland within Brexit negotiations. However, it seems for the time being that the political state of affairs will remain apathetic, stagnant, impotent,

without change and all that can be done by citizens is to stoically get on with things.

‘Brexit, and anxiety relating to it, often take the form of being humorously mocked or made fun of.’

The omnipresent quality of Brexit in our minds is perhaps connected to dominant discourses within news and social media sources. These sources may have the propensity to heighten anxiety and subsequent ego regressive and splitting processes (Thompson, 2016). Certainly, we have heard of such influences becoming problematic in the political context and the influencing of the individual, in terms of how they vote via using attentional biases to certain discourses, including the phenomena of fake news. These discourses can affect how people identify with certain political ideologies, which carries within it a note of caution for us all, particularly clinicians, to be mindful of our own identifications and the interplay of such in the consulting room. News reports from within Northern Ireland to the outside world often present a part of the picture,

usually The Troubles-related side, but that is not the entire picture. For the majority in Northern Ireland it is business as usual and anxieties relating to Brexit and other political matters will not result in violence. Brexit, and anxiety relating to it, often take the form of being humorously mocked or made fun of - no doubt expressing anxiety and possible aggressive feeling towards the issue of Brexit through sublimated means, but also as a way of dealing with anxiety by making it a commonality, a commonality between the self and other, an ‘in it together’ mentality. Uncertainty and anticipatory anxiety are common when it comes to Brexit. The consequences of Brexit are unknown and they will be unlikely to be known for quite some time. As with most things, only *après-coup* will we find out the consequences and a fuller meaning of Brexit.

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Homelessness

PA Thinking and the Unhoused Mind

Gabrielle Brown reflects on editing a collection of papers that respond to society's difficulty in offering containment and care for the homeless and the reciprocal problems individuals may have in feeling settled and well 'housed'. Gabrielle currently works as a forensic psychotherapist at the Portman Clinic, Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. She was previously a psychotherapist in the Lifeworks team at St Mungo's homelessness charity.

By Gabrielle Brown

‘If the House of Commons was a homelessness hostel,’ suggests a survey by a housing charity, half of the 650 MPs would have slept rough (St Mungo's, 2014). About 450 MPs would be in poor physical and mental health. One in ten would have grown up in care, half struggle to read or write and more than a third have been imprisoned. St Mungo's punchy appeal to the ‘House’ of political power, presents familiar, home-grown vulnerabilities to social exclusion and homelessness – poverty, early trauma, violence in the home, mental distress,

institutionalisation. Such surveys point to long chains of unmet needs and disentanglements stretching back not only to childhood, but often through several generations of transmitted trauma. The message is that for many people, homelessness is about much more than the essential issue of accommodation. Being homeless, analogously perhaps to being very thin, has a multiplicity of causes, which range from economic, socio-political factors to ones that are psychological or even constitutional.

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‘The message is that for many people, homelessness is about much more than the essential issue of accommodation.’

The appeal to take the long view of the homeless individual and think about how a person’s internal world has been furnished over time can seem a luxury in the face of a housing emergency. Suggesting psychic determinants of homelessness, rather than simply psychological effects of it, may even appear to be victim blaming, letting off the hook galloping social inequality and commodification of basic needs in the housing and rental market. In response, I believe that it is a citizen’s duty to advocate and protest the multiplicity of socio-political issues which lead to homelessness and exclusion – for example, it is a duty to shout for universal entitlement to affordable housing and against the ‘Hostile Environment’ in immigration control, which deprives many people of even basic shelter, healthcare and education.

However, in my day job as a psychotherapist, my duty is to the rights

of the mind – the right to feel settled and enjoy one’s own company in good communication with others and to meet the constant need for psychological experiences that sustain and repair the internal world throughout the life course. Respecting these non-material rights means offering mental hospitality, understanding and responsiveness to people whose longstanding adverse experiences manifest in homelessness. In terms of access to psychological support, the notion that homelessness is a state of crisis and not a suitable time for reflective functioning continues to exclude many individuals from psychotherapy provision. A ‘crisis/resolution’ understanding of homelessness equally deters professionals from formulating homelessness as expressive or symptomatic of states of mind. When an individual moves indoors or into a tenancy or is incarcerated or sectioned, they are easily assumed to have ‘moved on’ psychologically as well as physically from an ‘unhoused state’, much like shaking off a cold. At one level, psychotherapists know that all experience of physical space is highly subjective and deeply historically determined: ‘a person may be in solitary confinement, and yet not able to be alone. How greatly he must suffer is

beyond imagination’ writes Winnicott, (1990/1958 p. 30) in considering problems in the development of psychic security and interiority. On the other hand, the meaning of states of housing distress, housing refusal, alienation and claustrophobia in patients’ histories has received only sporadic attention.

In *Psychoanalytic Thinking on the Unhoused Mind* (Brown, Ed., 2019) the authors look beyond the indisputable and universal right to be housed towards the difficulties that individuals face in feeling ‘at home’ and safe. The ‘unhoused mind’ denotes chronic distress in relation to experiences of containment and care, as well as a sense of non-belonging as the very condition of existence in society and social groupings. It follows that a large part of thinking about



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‘them’, the unhoused, involves paying attention to often unconscious exclusions enacted by the psycho-social dynamics and projective processes, in which we are all part. When Christopher Scanlon and John Adlam first coined the term ‘unhoused mind’ in 2005, they described psycho-social dynamics of reciprocal hostility, misunderstanding and ‘dis-memberment’. ‘Homelessness’ they proposed ‘is... both symptom and communication of unhoused and dismembered states of mind’ (2005, p. 2).

‘Homelessness is... both symptom and communication of unhoused and dismembered states of mind.’

Homelessness manifests as a physical plight and the book’s chapters gather psychoanalytic perspectives on the unhoused body’s meaningful communication. We describe the homeless body as inscribing unarticulated distress: ‘for these women’, writes Anna Motz, ‘their own bodies become the site of experience and self-expression, while their minds feel unstable, volatile and, at times explosive’ (p. 71). In Chapter 3, I consider

the significance of failure to wash the body and being malodorous. In Chapter 9, Margot Waddell reads King Lear’s inability to ‘embody’ the role of King and father as somatically expressed on the cliffs of Dover, where Lear’s internal mental structures are laid bare as his body battles the elements. Waddell’s chapter also details scenes from the life of a woman with dementia, with interpretations inspired by psychoanalytic techniques of ‘baby observation’. As the mind abandons the well-mannered, genteel body through cognitive decline, Waddell suggests the ‘camouflage’ is removed from the intensity of emotional experiences: ‘those of projective identification, of reverie and of container-contained (processes and mechanisms that belong quite as much to the last year of someone’s life as to the first)’ (p. 133). By contrast, the intensity of physical hardship in rough sleeping can provide triumphant sensations of resilience and self-sufficiency as solutions to histories of profound maternal absence or neglect, as both John O’Connor and I explore. Chronic rough sleeping can be seen as a perversion of the instinct to shelter the body and, as such, serves as an ersatz solution to fragmenting and suicidal states of mind. Here we are thinking of homelessness as a ‘communication’ to which therapeutic understanding may be a far more relevant first response than simply putting the person indoors.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, human growth and development is both an embodied and relational process. Klein states this very simply: ‘the good breast is taken in and becomes part of the ego, and the infant who was first inside the mother now has the mother inside himself’ (Klein, 1957, p. 179). The subsequent resilience of internal mental structure depends on psychic defences that enable potentially traumatic experience to be integrated and metabolized. Anna Freud and Joseph Sandler described the dynamic functioning of defences in terms of managing the inhabitants of a house: ‘If you haven’t built a house you can’t throw someone out of it... nor put them in the basement’ (cited in Alvarez, 2012, p. 8.). The idea of the mind as house or ‘tenancy’ is more than simply a metaphor of psychic dimensionality. Many of the homeless individuals June Campbell worked with responded to the physical containment of a house with terror and violence. Liz Greenway, reporting from her consultation to a homelessness hostel, also notes enactments of painful ambivalence towards ‘indoor’ space and its constraints – a compulsion to bring in found items from the streets, for instance. The essential human inability to fully know, recognize and remember ourselves through conscious awareness alone, means that the ‘safe houses’ of our minds always confront us with uncanny inhabitants from

the unconscious, as if from the ‘basement’ (Campbell, Chapter 2). If, alternately, we resort to Sandler’s defences of eviction and ‘throwing out’ – splitting and projection – we create around us an external world that feels littered with dangerous parts of the self that is chronically threatening, and an internal world that feels impoverished and hollow. Motz illustrates the way in which severely deprived homeless women become caught in cycles of victimization and destructiveness: ‘a more or less constant state of refusal. She could not integrate her own destructive feelings and so she evacuated them, projecting them into those abusive and cruel partners and parents who, in turn, enacted them, often against her’ (Brown, Ed., 2019, p. 74). Psychoanalyst Henri Rey formulated a resulting ‘claustro-agoraphobic dilemma’ – alternating feelings of impingement or abandonment that render unsettled, transitory and liminal existence the only bearable solution (Rey, 1994). Rey’s important concepts are extensively explored and illustrated in our book.

The reciprocity of social relations of exclusion, stigma and dread inform our understanding of the ‘unhoused mind’ within the community. Henri Rey himself wrote a paper on ‘The Scapegoat Motif’, noting it as ‘a psychosocial disease with a potentially high mortality rate.’ (1994, p. 288). John Adlam and Christopher

Scanlon have repeatedly written that it is impossible for the homeless to become less excluded and fragmented while their role in society as a whole is to hold projections of all that is precarious, disturbed and unsavoury: 'as a consequence of complex psychosocial processes of projective and introjective identification, many in these overlapping categories of outsiders – labeled 'untreatable', 'unreachable', or 'unteachable' – come to see themselves as such, and so have little alternative but to occupy the border country of any organisation that tries to help them.' (2005, p. 7). In this context, John O'Connor's work in Dublin with multiply scapegoated and stigmatized survivors of institutions (of the Industrial Schools), suggests that safety needs to be provided at the edges of services. He suggests enabling a sort of 'secured homelessness', where classical, boundaried psychotherapeutic work can be offered without demanding that an individual first 'settles in'.

'This occurs in social policy when, periodically, the urban homeless figure as a stain upon the UK self-image as

an hospitable and prosperous nation.'

In previous work with colleagues, John Adlam and I have explored the dynamics of hospitality when providing psychological containment and understanding for those considered both 'offensive and offended' (Brown et al., 2011). I return to concerns with hospitality because they are current in the zeitgeist, resonating with urgent political dilemmas on commonality, independence, mutuality and porousness of communities and boundaries, etc. 'Hostipitality' is the term philosopher Jacques Derrida uses to denote inherent contradictions in the principle of hospitality (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 1997/2000). Hostipitality indicates that there is always something undecidable in the drive to accommodate the Other: 'Hospitality limits itself at its very beginning, it remains forever on the threshold of itself (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 1997/2000, p. 13). As a neologism, 'hostipitality' highlights the inevitable hostility within inclusive gestures and the need to allow this tension to become a means of mutual understanding. The tension is constituted, on the one hand, when the host who offers an unconditional open door risks losing control of the essential qualities on offer.

An overcrowded hostel or jail, a therapy group without ground rules, no longer offers the intended safety and opportunity for mutual acknowledgment. On the other hand, more practical and limited hospitality risks constraining the principle of generosity with exclusion criteria and demands for conformity upon the 'guest'. In this latter 'hostility', one is 'xenophobic in order to protect one's hospitality' states Derrida (1997/200, p. 53).

To place these concepts within the homelessness field, hospitality, as an aim, is readily dogged in practice by coercion. When the host becomes narcissistically preoccupied with the perfection of their own hospitality and identity as host, the potential guest is deprived of recognition and agency – the offer of hospitality is no longer an open negotiation with the needs of the Other. This occurs in social policy when, periodically, the urban homeless figure as a stain upon the UK self-image as an hospitable and prosperous nation. They are violently coerced or 'cleared' from the streets – for example, around celebrations of national identity such as weddings in the Monarchy (Sherwood, 2018) or, as Liz Greenway details, via the 2012 Olympics displays of sporting prowess. At a more particular level, the marketization of care in service provision results in an audit culture that 'evidences' good hospitality in hostels, hospitals or even 'outcome

measures' to be completed in therapy sessions. In order to demonstrate quality to interested parties, such as commissioners or inspectors, responsiveness to the actual recipients of hospitality falls from the agenda. The very relational climate of an institution may become inscribed with coercive housing practices, Greenway argues. For instance, lack of support for hostel staff to reflect on their transference and countertransference responses to residents ultimately 'evicts' these residents from accommodation in the mind of the team. In familiar repetition of earlier deprivations axiomatic of the experience of child neglect (Music, 2019), 'being housed' then becomes the site of again being 'overlooked', and fundamentally 'un-enjoyed'.

Psychotherapy offers itself as a practice of mutual hospitality between minds in which the experience of mental cohabitation with abandoning, abusive or engulfing internal objects can be safely negotiated. In order for the patient to retrace their steps from neglect towards survival, the therapist may find their good intentions cruelly misunderstood in the transference, representing a nightmarish object, not a saviour: 'By the very fact of making ourselves therapeutically available to the patient, as clinicians we put ourselves in the position of inevitably being identified with the disappointing,

neglecting, abusive internal figure... This figure is considered to threaten the patient because inevitably they will let the patient down and, worse, they invite closeness and intimacy only then to betray the patient.' (Ruszczynski, 2010, p.28). Countertransference experiences of humiliation, misunderstanding, rejection and suffocating loneliness may actually constitute moments of deepest attunement with patients and residents. Derrida attests that we can also understand and respond to those who do not meet our psychic hospitality half-way: 'Does one ask the name of the other in hospitality or give it anyway? Which is more loving?' (1997/2000, p. 29.). Nor is responsiveness the preserve of individual psychotherapy alone; psychologically informed (PIES, PIPES) and enabling environments (EEs) (Greenway, Ch. 7) provide 'collective discussion and thinking about patients who, as infants, had little place in the minds of others, even if they received enough physical care to survive' (Brown, Ed., 2019, p. 37). If the House of Commons was a homeless hostel, recognition that 'there are parts of all our minds that remain insecure, un-housed and intensely fearful' (Adlam & Scanlon, 2005, p. 11), would direct resources to increase understanding of the internal psychic states that unhoused bodies are seeking to manage and resolve.

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BPC Scholars Network

BPC Scholars Network launch

In February the BPC launched a major new initiative at the Freud Museum London. The Scholars Network will encourage cross-disciplinary practice and research and foster collaboration among scholars and clinicians. Here the Network's Founding Chair, Professor Brett Kahr; founding Scholar, Professor Candida Yates; and BPC Chief Executive, Gary Fereday, share their thoughts about the network, its origins and their hopes for this unique collaboration.

By Brett Kahr

Sigmund Freud and scholarship: The scholars network of the British Psychoanalytic Council

Sigmund Freud loved scholarship. His mother reminisced that, from early childhood, her son used to lie on the floor of the family apartment with his head stuck in the pages of a book. Indeed, the young boy spent most of his time in a little cabinet, crammed with bookcases, immersing himself in history and literature.

Unsurprisingly, this intellectual prodigy

earned a place at the Leopoldstädter Communal-Real-gymnasium in Vienna where he devoured the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, the history of Rome by Titus Livius and the writings of Cicero, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Homer, Horace, Plato, Sallust, Tacitus, Xenophon and, of course, Sophocles.

With such foundations in place, Sigmund Freud became the first member of his family to attend university and soon distinguished himself as a promising young researcher. Freud's love of learning became so profound that he eventually developed a new field of study, namely that of psychoanalysis.

One need but glance at the titles of Freud's publications to appreciate the breadth of his scholarly interests, which he investigated through a depth-psychological lens: whether the secret meaning of the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, or the sculptures of Michelangelo Buonarroti, or the origins of religious belief, or the very state of civilisation itself. In this respect, Freud became a true student not only of medicine but of the humanities and of cultural studies as well.

But Freud loved not only scholarship, he also loved scholars. And although the very first members of his Wednesday-night study group, at which he expounded upon the foundations of psychoanalysis, shared a background in medicine, Freud soon began to invite non-physicians to participate in these discussions. In 1902, the noted Viennese publisher and man of letters, Hugo Heller, joined Freud's meetings and sat alongside the physicians. Heller would eventually come to publish Freud's works, including *Der Wahn und die Träume* in W Jensen's *Gradiva*, known in English as *Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's Gradiva*.

In 1904, a musicologist, Max Graf, became an early participant in Freud's psychoanalytical gatherings. Freud knew Herr Graf, having already analysed his wife, Olga Hönig Graf. In 1908, Max Graf became distressed as his young son had begun to express a fear of horses, and so

he took the little boy, Herbert Graf, to Freud for a consultation. As a result of Freud's discussions with both father and child, and based upon his knowledge of the mother, he eventually enshrined this young phobic lad as the famous 'Little Hans'. One might thus argue that through an unusual and pioneering collaboration with a musicological scholar, Freud helped to give birth to child psychotherapy.

By 1908, Freud had founded the Wiener Psychoanalytische Vereinigung – the very first psychoanalytical membership organisation in world history – and, although two-thirds of its participants prior to the Second World War had, like Freud, trained as medical practitioners, one-third had specialised in other branches of endeavour such as law, philosophy and physics. In due time, a whole range of intellectuals from divergent backgrounds entered the fold, including Anna Freud who, unlike her father, never attended a university.

In the early days, scholars and clinicians would often collaborate on research projects. Most impactfully, the Hungarian-born psychoanalyst, Dr Franz Alexander, joined forces with the criminologist, Dr Hugo Staub, to campaign against the cruel punishments inflicted upon prisoners, lobbying for the creation of psychoanalytical criminology, the forerunner of the field of forensic

psychotherapy. It soon became quite clear that collaboration between clinical practitioners and academicians and scholars could yield rich discoveries.

Although some of our more conservative colleagues might argue that psychoanalytical knowledge belongs exclusively to clinical practitioners, such a position can no longer be justified, as tens of thousands of scholars worldwide have embraced the study of Freudian texts. And in view of the fact that anthropologists, archaeologists, economists, film scholars, historians, lawyers, literary critics, medical humanists, psychologists, religious studies scholars, sociologists and theatre scholars, not to mention nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and innumerable other healthcare specialists, have become increasingly appreciative of psychoanalysis, we now have a rich opportunity to forge further collaborations.

Aware of the creative potentiality of clinicians and scholars working side by side, the Board of the British Psychoanalytic Council approved the new Scholars Network. On 21 February 2019, approximately one hundred clinicians and scholars gathered at the Freud Museum London to launch the new endeavour. Many of the scholars hold eminent positions in academia, such as endowed professorships; others serve as directors of postgraduate degree programmes in

psychoanalytical studies or as heads of departments; while others have founded periodicals or edit journals. We hope that the scholars will propose ideas for collaborations with BPC registrants and will make further contributions to the advancement of psychoanalytical knowledge across numerous disciplines.

'... the Scholars Committee will endeavour to bring the best people into the BPC community...'

In a world marked by increased splitting and exclusionism, the Scholars Committee will endeavour to bring the best people into the BPC community to stimulate rewarding interchanges. In doing so, we hope to continue in the extremely welcoming and open-minded tradition of Sigmund Freud and his early medical and musical colleagues. Such intercourse has already given birth to both child psychotherapy and to forensic psychotherapy. We can only begin to imagine what other bountiful creations might lie in store.

Professor Brett Kahr, Founding Chair, BPC Scholars Committee

Response from Professor Candida Yates

There is a long tradition of applying psychoanalytical theories of the unconscious to social and cultural phenomena outside the consulting room that today include a range of academic disciplines such as history, philosophy, sociology, literature and the arts, film and television studies, media and cultural studies, psychosocial studies, politics and postcolonial studies. For many of us who have been engaging with psychoanalysis through our teaching, publishing and research and also through artistic and cultural practice, this new community of BPC Scholars provides a potential space for us to come together to think creatively about the ways in which we can develop the psychoanalytical field through our various disciplines. In a neoliberal climate, where traditional 'hard' scientific subjects are often promoted in universities because of their association with measurable outcomes, psychoanalytical scholarship nonetheless continues to flourish. The latter can be seen as a response to the 'emotional' or 'affective' turn within the humanities and social sciences, where the scholarly focus on affective experience and the seemingly irrational forces of the unconscious can be seen to constitute a response to the complexities of the late modern world and a need to understand

the interrelationships between subjectivity, culture and society in that context. We hope that this new Scholars initiative will enhance the work of the BPC and the communication of psychoanalysis and its meanings – both as a practice and as a body of ideas to colleagues and students within universities and beyond, capturing the imagination of those who, as the next generation of thinkers, may also perhaps become future trainees.

Setting up a visible list of BPC Scholars will enable them to forge relationships with BPC clinical registrants in order to work together on research projects and other related activities - from conference panels and workshops, to publishing and teaching opportunities. Some BPC registrants and scholars already know each other as colleagues and friends and work collaboratively across the boundaries of analytic and academic practice in different settings. One can cite many instances past and present of such collaborations, including for example, Psychoanalysis and the Public Sphere conferences, The Squiggle Foundation public lectures, The Tavistock Policy Seminars, and The Media and Inner World research network. We aim to continue in that tradition by hosting an annual research event on themes that enable the psychoanalytic analysis of different aspects of history, culture and society.

In the past, many of these shared gatherings between clinicians and academics have taken place in the Freud Museum and so it was fitting that we hosted the launch of the BPC Scholars Network in that setting. Most who were present agreed that the atmosphere of that gathering was very positive and the evening provided an enjoyable and stimulating opportunity for scholars and analysts to come together as a community at a time when throughout the UK and beyond the mood is one of uncertainty and risk. A wider sense of foreboding is felt and articulated in different contexts – from the narratives of patients on the couch who are anxious about Brexit, through to the anxieties of university students who are under pressure to succeed in a world riven by precariousness. At the time of writing, for example, there are numerous pressing social and political issues such as climate change, the international plight of refugees, the ongoing fallout about Brexit and a widespread crisis of political leadership. New Associations will continue to provide a home for the discussion of such topics, and these themes can also potentially provide a focus for the research activity of both BPC scholars and clinicians who can share insights into the affective dimensions of such phenomena and the psychic drivers that underpin them.

Hence, there is a sense of urgency regarding the wider socio-political and cultural scene that constitutes a backdrop for the work of BPC scholars who can together and individually draw on their research in order to shed light on the unconscious dynamics of issues and events within the wider socio-political and cultural context. Hannah Arendt's work is often cited as being relevant for the psycho-political dilemmas that we face today and contemporary analytic scholars have turned to her writing for inspiration (Rose, 2014; Stonebridge, 2018). In Arendt's 1968 essay, 'Men in Dark Times', she said: 'Even in the darkest of times we have the right to expect some illumination.' In that spirit, we hope that the new community of BPC scholars will use their psychoanalytic scholarship to contribute to that process of illumination today.

Professor Candida Yates, Bournemouth University, Founding Scholar and member of the BPC Scholars Committee

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The Scholars Committee

Professor Caroline Bainbridge (Founding Scholar), Department of Media, Culture and Language, University of Roehampton

Professor Lesley Caldwell (Registrant), Psychoanalysis Unit, University College London

Professor Brett Kahr (Registrant), Tavistock Institute of Medical Psychology and Faculty of Media and Communication, Bournemouth University

Dr Poul Rohleder (Registrant), Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies, University of Essex

Professor Neil Vickers (Founding Scholar), Department of English and Centre for the Humanities and Health, King's College London, University of London

Professor Candida Yates (Founding Scholar), Faculty of Media and Communication, Bournemouth University

Reflections from BPC Chief Executive

The Scholars Network is an important development for the BPC. Psychoanalytic thinking is not just about providing theory to enable the provision of treatment but provides a way of understanding human relationships. The network will provide a much-needed conduit between BPC Registrants and academics around the world to foster dialogue and promote greater collaboration.

The network was very much the idea of BPC Registrant, Professor Brett Kahr. Brett was a member of the then BPC's Future Strategy Working Group that was tasked with creatively thinking of how the BPC could grow and develop to ensure in turn we advanced psychoanalytic psychotherapy and theory to support better mental health and wellbeing in society; support better understanding of unconscious processes and human relationships; support the development of more creative and impactful public policy; as well as foster the better understanding of psychoanalytic theory in the wider society. The role of academics particularly in the latter aim was not lost on the Future Strategy Working Group and so the idea of a network was born to develop links between the BPC and academia.

‘The Scholars Network is an important development for the BPC. Psychoanalytic thinking is not just about providing theory to enable the provision of treatment but provides a way of understanding human relationships.’

The level of interest has been very encouraging. The Scholars Network Membership Committee was created and quickly got to work to develop a comprehensive list of fellow academics they felt could be interested in membership to become the founding scholars. In the coming months we will be working with founding scholars to develop the activities of the network. Already a

group of academics have come forward to help edit a termly newsletter, another group of academics are considering the possibility of a series of seminars and others are involved in our flagship conference PP Now that takes place later in the year.

It's early days but already there is a sense that we have started something that academics who use psychoanalytic theory in their research, teaching and writing are keen to engage in and develop. I look forward to seeing it flourish.

Gary Fereday, BPC Chief Executive



Review

First Black First Lady

*Marian O'Connor reviews Michelle Obama's autobiography *Becoming* and finds an intimate, honest and reflective journey.*

By Marian O'Connor

Michelle Obama has followed in the tradition of seven of her eight immediate 'First Lady' predecessors by publishing a memoir. *Becoming* tells the story of her life so far, from growing up in a rented, one-bedroom apartment in South Side Chicago to the first months after leaving the White House.

Having had no desire to read the offerings of her predecessors, I started this one reluctantly after a friend thrust it upon me as a Christmas present, insisting I read it. I now know why *Becoming* is set to be the most successful memoir in modern publishing history, having sold more than 10 million copies in five months: I have since bought three copies as 'must-read' presents.

First, it is extremely well-written: pacy, vibrant and engaging. Obama's description of the 2008 election had me on the edge of my seat waiting for the result, and tearful with wonder and excitement at the news that Barack had won.

Secondly, she writes with a deft awareness of the social and political world around her while at the same time bringing her personal story to life. The first line, 'I spent much of my childhood listening to the sound of striving,' refers both to the plink, plink of students practising their scales on Aunt Robbie's piano on the floor below, and to the atmosphere generated by her parents, a working class black couple with strong aspirations for their children.

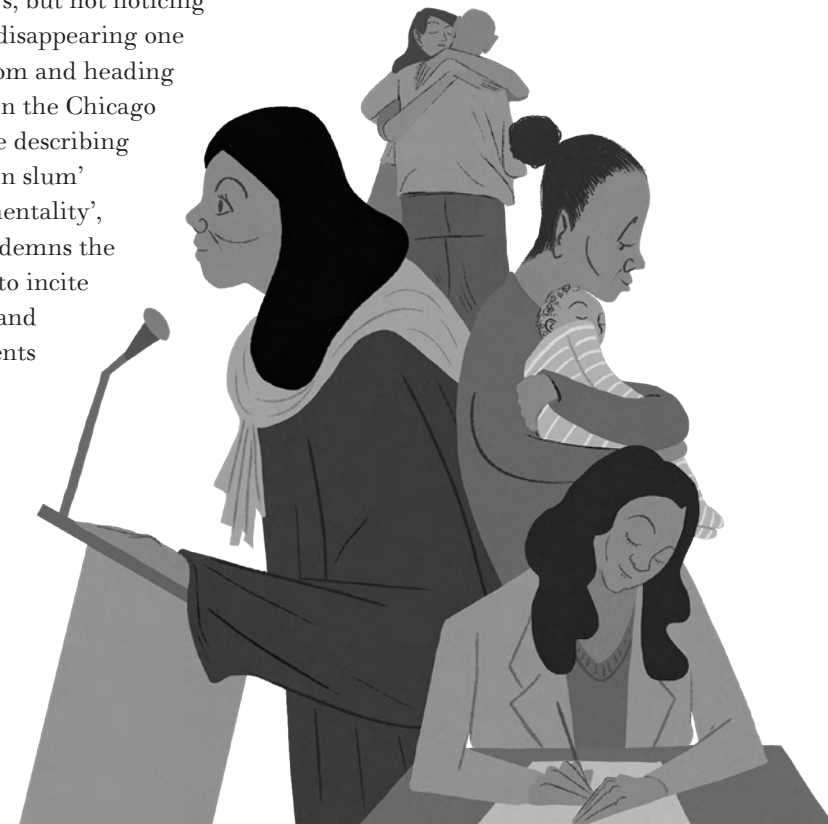
'... she writes with a deft awareness of the social and political world around her...'

We see Michelle in primary school, happy and smart, ruthlessly competitive in the spelling tests at school, keeping an eye out for her main competitors, but not noticing how the white kids are disappearing one by one from her classroom and heading for leafier suburbs. When the *Chicago Defender* runs an article describing her school as a 'run down slum' governed by a 'ghetto mentality', the school principal condemns the piece as a lie, 'designed to incite only feelings of failure and flight'. Michelle comments that 'failure is a feeling long before it becomes an actual result', attracting substandard teachers as well as a sense of hopelessness in pupils. She recognizes she is one of the lucky ones among her equally bright peers; her mother refuses to submit to the feeling of

failure and becomes an active member of the PTA, pushing for opportunities for her kids.

Thirdly, the book gives an intimate portrait of family life and couple relationships, warts and all, which is of interest to me as a couple psychotherapist.

Michelle's father had multiple sclerosis. He didn't talk or complain about his condition but his



physical deterioration meant that he needed crutches before his children reached High School. Michelle is happily absorbed with friends and books while her older brother, Craig, manifests the unspoken anxieties in the family when he develops OCD as a pre-adolescent.

As she grows into adolescence and womanhood, there is a sense of her enjoyment of her body and her sexuality; her father had made a point of saying that sex was and should be fun. The romance with Barack is beautifully written, funny and tender and engaging, but Michelle is also realistic about the difficulties in being in a relationship. After the couple get engaged, they take a trip to visit his family in Kenya. It is a difficult and fractious journey and on their first evening there, Michelle writes in her diary, 'I am so angry with Barack. I don't think we have anything in common!'

She writes later of their struggle to conceive – both their daughters are IVF babies – and of difficulties in the marriage which led them to couple counselling. She describes how the process enabled her to show her wounds rather than her weapons when she feels hurt or disappointed. I liked the way difficulties in marriages are normalized – at one point her mother says she considers leaving her husband every spring, that she needs to stand back and make a conscious

commitment to deal with the inevitable frustrations in marriage.

Becoming a couple with Barack makes Michelle question her self-designated path. He wants to succeed in a world as it should be, she has aspired to achieve in the world as it is – top law school, top law firm, top salary. Who is she? What does she really want? This self-questioning starts in childhood when one of her cousins asks, 'How come you talk like a white girl?' and continues into the White House, when she wonders what sort of mother, what sort of wife, what sort of woman she can be as 'First Lady' and especially as the first black 'First Lady'.

Ultimately it is this engagement with the world, her questioning and her curiosity about society, family, relationships, race, which drew me in as a reader and perhaps explains the book's enormous appeal.

Marian O'Connor is a psychoanalytic couple psychotherapist and Head of Psychosexual Training at Tavistock Relationships.

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Conference

Trainee conference

By Lee Smith

On Saturday 30th March, 100 trainees and recent graduates from the BPCs Member Institutes gathered at the Resource Centre in Holloway Road for the BPCs Conference, 'Starting Out'. The day was intended to inspire and inform people about to, or having just launched on their career as counsellors and psychotherapists. Susanna Abse, BPC Chair opened the day and introduced the main speaker Susie Orbach. Susie is best known for her first book, *Fat is a Feminist Issue* (affectionately referred to as 'Fifi!'), but also for co-creating the Women's Therapy Centre in 1976. Susie has continued her writing and campaigning achieving considerable public profile and establishing herself as someone whose preoccupation with emotional life, the establishment seems to take seriously. Knowing each other as they do, Susanna, in conversation with Susie provided an engaging and honest oversight of a career which has spanned 5 decades,

yet at the same time continues to engage with the issues of the moment; how we acquire a bodily sense of self, emotions in public life, and the dynamics of relationships. Another key theme was how to preserve the authenticity and discretion required by our practice as counsellors and psychotherapists, at the same time as taking seriously our roles as social activists.

The Conference continued with various breakout sessions, 'How to run a Successful Private Practice' (Pauline Hodson), 'The Ethical Code and the Complaints Procedure' (Kam Kandola and Ann Malkin), 'CPD: How can CPD help you develop as a clinician and the requirements of the BPC' (Jan McGregor Hepburn), and 'Insurance: professional indemnity insurance and related issues' (Jo Mountain).

The day concluded with a presentation from the BPCs survey of trainees and recent graduates. The survey was

undertaken by the Trainee Advisory Committee which represents the views of trainees within the Committee structure of the BPC and the results were presented by Rachel Dunkley Jones, a Trainee Analytical Psychotherapist from West Midlands Institute of Psychotherapy. As well as being extremely positive about their experience of training, the results revealed concern about the enormous financial burden of training, and the impact on personal and family life.

Given the scarcity of paid roles and the challenges of private practice, as well as concerns about the exclusivity and lack of diversity exhibited by the profession, Rachel said that serious questions have to be asked about the sustainability of the model of training as it is currently structured. Findings from the survey will be reported to other BPC Committees and have already sparked a discussion among Heads of Trainings about innovation in training. For the BPC, suggestions were made on how to support trainees and recent graduates. These included further conferences and events, opportunities for face-to-face networking, the development of online resources, bursaries and hardship funds. Gary Fereday, the BPC's Chief Executive was on hand and able to respond positively to many of the suggestions. The BPC is committed to ensuring the voice of trainees receives greater attention though the Trainee

Advisory Committee. Further trainee events are planned, and the website is in the process of a major overhaul.

'... suggestions were made on how to support trainees and recent graduates.'

Qualifying as a counsellor or psychotherapist is only the start of a process, rather than an event on its own. The need for ongoing support and professional development (generating referrals, articles from established therapists about their own career development, better engagement with digital platforms, raising our profile) has never been greater. In the past, the BPC has considered the introduction of a fee for some kind of Trainee category of membership. Encouragingly there seemed to be an acknowledgement among contributors to the discussion that the time may have come for Trainees themselves to contribute to this work.

Further thoughts welcome! Please email us at email mail@bpc.org.uk marked for the attention of Lee Smith.

Diary

For full event listings, visit the BPC's Event Calendar via their website: www.bpc.org.uk/events-calendar

JUNE

COMPLEX TRAUMA: WORKING CREATIVELY WITHIN A PSYCHOANALYTIC FRAME

June 8

Oxford, St Antony's College

Cost: £18 in advance/£20 on the door

<http://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/events>

This event is organised by the bpf Wessex.

JULY

AUTISM IN THE THERAPY ROOM

July 12

Cambridge, Postdoc Centre

Cost £115

<https://staff.counselling.cam.ac.uk/conference-2019-1>

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHOANALYSIS IN A CHANGING WORLD

July 23

Cost: £95, concessions £75

<https://psychoanalysis.org.uk/events>

SEPTEMBER

INFANT OBSERVATION TODAY CONFERENCE 2019

September 14

London, British Psychotherapy Foundation

Cost: Standard £70, student/trainee £40

<http://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/events>

ANTICIPATING SUICIDE WITH DAVID CAMPBELL

September 28

Oxford, St Antony's College

Cost: £18 in advance/£20 on the door

<http://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/events>

This event is organised by the bpf Wessex.

JUNG READING GROUP

September 19 – June 2020

London, British Psychotherapy Foundation

Cost: £325

<http://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/events>

OCTOBER

BOARDING SCHOOL SYNDROME: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA OF 'PRIVILEGED' CHILDREN

October 26

Oxford, St Antony's College

Cost: £20 in advance/£22 on the door

<http://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/events>

This event is organised by the bpf Wessex.

BPC'S PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY NOW

THINGS FALL APART: IDENTITY, INSECURITY AND FRACTURING SOCIETIES

Speakers include: Catherine Fieschi, Helen Morgan, Fintan O'Toole, Sasha Roseneil, Jonathan Sklar, Philip Stokoe, Gary Younge

November 16

London, The British Library

Cost: Standard Rate £160

Registrant Rate (BPC, ACP, BACP, UKCP) £135

BPC Scholar Rate £135

Trainee Rate £70

www.bpc.org.uk/ppnow2019

Review

A Play for Our Times

Johnathan Sunley reviews a powerful production of Shakespeare's *Richard the Second* that throws light on the complex inner worlds of rulers and ruled.

Richard the Second is a play about leadership and authority and how quickly a country that is misgoverned can descend into chaos. It ends with an aggrieved noble who has overthrown the King making populist promises to restore order and, as would be said nowadays, to revitalize the economy. But on the horizon is one of the bloodiest periods in English history – the Wars of the Roses.

Already this year there have been two sell-out productions of this play in London. No doubt it resonates with the times we are living in and the anxiety many people feel about a country so divided that it seems on the verge of tearing itself apart. Near the start of *Richard the Second*, the dying John of Gaunt voices the same fear in a speech which is often quoted, but which has rarely felt more relevant. Foreseeing what may become of 'This other Eden, demi-

paradise' if its slide into anarchy continues, he concludes angrily: 'That England, that was wont to conquer others/Hath made a shameful conquest of itself'.

So who is to blame for the mess England is in? Richard? His usurper, Bolingbroke? The warring aristocracy? The easily duped people?

Richard is frequently portrayed as a vain and capricious boy-king (he was ten when he came to the throne) who makes disastrous decisions but who thinks he can do no wrong because he has been chosen to rule by God.

Played by Simon Russell Beale, this is not the Richard who shuffles to the front of the stage at the beginning of the Almeida Theatre production. Instead we see a washed-up man in his late fifties. He wears a cheap black t-shirt and seems to

be talking nonsense: 'I have been studying how I may compare/This prison where I live unto the world'.

These lines actually belong to a soliloquy from the play's final scene in which Richard, now confined to the dungeon of a castle after being forced to abdicate, muses



on his fate. In this production, the set is the same throughout: an airless, featureless cube that could very well be a prison cell. Richard himself reminded me of several of the prisoners I have worked with as a psychotherapist, partly by his appearance but mainly due to his internal conflict, torn between feelings of remorse and an attitude of self-justification.

In this fast-moving and much-shortened version of the play, it is not long before we hear these lines again – and are back where we started with Richard pacing the floor of his cell. It occurs to us that everything we have watched in the interim – the confrontations at court, the battle scenes, the King’s humiliation as he is forced to hand over the crown – has been Richard playing over these events in his mind.

What we may feel almost certain about by now is that Richard’s mind is itself a prison. He speaks some of the most beautiful poetry that Shakespeare wrote for the stage. But it is invariably about himself – his moods, his thought processes, his special place in the world – and while acknowledging the tragedy of his downfall, it can be hard for audiences to find much sympathy for a character who seems not to have a shred of it for anyone else.

All the other parts in this production are played by just seven actors. Sidling about

the set in tightly-packed clusters, they convey a strong sense of Tarantino-style menace as they alternate between ganging up on the King and turning on each other. In analytic terms they could be compared to the pathological organizations and Mafia gangs that John Steiner writes about, offering the narcissistic Richard protection against feelings of vulnerability while all the time consolidating their hold over him. For some patients, whether prisoners or not, the only way out of such an impasse is death. Beale’s nuanced depiction of Richard made me wonder if the King doesn’t long for the murder that awaits him.

When Bolingbroke is told about Richard’s murder, he looks shattered. He has already been crowned Henry IV, but how secure can he feel now that enmity and paranoia stalk the land? Will he, too, soon need the ‘protection’ of those gangs?

‘Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown’, he will go on to say in Henry the Fourth – Part One, after surviving a rebellion similar to the one he led against Richard. That, too, is a line which is often quoted but which might have been written for the tumultuous period we find ourselves in today.

Johnathan Sunley is a psychodynamic psychotherapist who works in private practice and also the prison service

PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY NOW 2019

Things fall apart:
identity, insecurity and
fracturing societies

16 November 2019
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www.bpc.org.uk/ppnow2019

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From the Chief Executive

Strategic Developments

By Gary Fereday

After overseeing New Associations for the past six years, I'm delighted that we have appointed our first ever dedicated Editor and Editorial Advisory Group. I'm even more delighted that the Editor is Helen Morgan, former BPC Chair and prior to that, Chair of our then Future Strategy Working Group. Helen brings a wealth of experience and a deep understanding of issues that concern BPC registrants. The move marks another important development of the BPC as it matures as an organisation.

I wish Helen and the Advisory Committee well in their new role. Our new Communications Manager, Richard English, will be working with Helen and the Group to support the growth and development of New Associations in the coming year and I'm confident that it will go from success to success.

I will miss working on New Associations as it always reminded me of the extraordinary wealth of knowledge that our profession holds on human relationships and behaviour. The task of producing the magazine was always made easy and enjoyable because of the commitment and expertise of former colleagues, Leanne Stelmaszczyk and Daniella Pasquini, who both did much of the real work of putting New Associations together every term.

However, I will now have more time freed up for the strategic development of the BPC. The organisation has undergone considerable change in the last few years including increasing our policy and public affairs capacity, adopting new articles of association and applying for charitable status. These changes should help ensure the organisation is more outward looking, firmly placed in civic society and provide clarity to our governance arrangements.

'I will miss working on New Associations as it always reminded me of the extraordinary wealth of knowledge that our profession holds on human relationships and behaviour.'

We have a growing professional staff team and I feel lucky to have such dedicated colleagues working with me. Our new Chair, Susanna Abse, is providing strong leadership for the profession and Susanna and I have been working together with the Board to further develop the strategic direction of the organisation. Whilst it has not yet been agreed there are key themes emerging, that include:

- Ensuring we increase the understanding of psychoanalytic psychotherapy within the public, charity and private sectors

to increase availability of treatment, supported by a robust evidence base

- Establishing psychoanalytic theories of mind as a recognised body of knowledge in academia, research, education and public policy making, to increase understanding of human relationships and unconscious processes within civic society.
- Continue to support high standards of training and clinical practice through improving our regulatory framework and support the development of sustainable models of training to enable the long-term availability of treatment.
- Developing our collaborative work with other organisations to create a more unified voice for counselling and psychotherapy, ensuring a sustainable future and availability of all treatments with psychoanalytic psychotherapy a core component.
- Ensuring a long-term sustainable growth of the organisation and delivery of our charitable objects by increasing registrant numbers, networks and other income streams, alongside improved operational and risk management.

Continues on page 30

The external environment remains challenging. Whilst there has been good progress around removing the stigma of mental health, the reality is that many NHS services remain under-resourced and the uncertainty of Brexit is placing considerable financial strain on the charity and not-for-profit sectors. Meanwhile anxiety and distress within society is growing and the need for BPC registrants increasing without the necessary money in the system whether services are provided through the NHS, charities, private insurance or through independent private practice. It is a problem besetting our colleagues in the UKCP and BACP too and I'm pleased that our three-way collaboration continues with the BPC specifically representing psychoanalytic and psychodynamic work.

We are looking at how we best ensure that all NHS organisations, charities and private health insurers recognise BPC registration. We continue to be closely involved in the coalition to challenge NICE about the guidance for treatment of depression in adults. Discussions we have had with the City of London Corporation over the past year have finally come to fruition with the announcement of the creation of a

new clinic in the square mile to provide psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

In today's world, on-line presence is vital and we are acutely aware that the BPC web site is looking dated. A comprehensive upgrade is now being planned and you will have seen the e-mail from our Communications Manager seeking your views as to what you would find useful. We will be instructing a website developer soon so our website reflects the professionalism and high standards of our Registrants, makes it easier for potential patients find the right therapist and create space for other exciting initiatives such as our Scholars Network.

So plenty to do and the BPC will continue to develop to deliver as effectively as we can with the resources we have available.

Gary Fereday
Chief Executive



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Contribute to New Associations

We welcome your ideas for articles, reviews, and letters to the Editor. In particular we are looking for reviews of cultural events, books and films with psychoanalytic interest. If you would like to propose a topic for a longer article (up to 1,200 words), please contact Richard English at:
richard.english@bpc.org.uk.

Deadlines: The next issue of *New Associations* will be published in Autumn 2019. The deadline for the Autumn 2019 edition is 29 July.

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Autumn Conference

There's No Place Like Home

Save the date.

Saturday 23 November 2019

Tavistock Relationships, Hallam House,
56–60 Hallam Street, London W1W 6JL

At this day-long conference, we will consider the idea of home and what it means at this particular point in our history when British society feels fractured, and a binary politics of European identity has replaced the traditional political discourse. Many of us are wrestling with ideas about home and belonging, and wondering how to locate ourselves with our nation story.

This multi-disciplinary event will bring together speakers from psychoanalysis as well as related fields to consider the idea of home. We will address the myriad ways of conceptualising the homes we create in the mind, as well as in the consulting room, and the meaning of home for the intimate couple relationship, the institutional focus of Tavistock Relationships.

BOOK NOW AT
<https://tavistockrelationships.ac.uk/training-courses/cpd>

Tel: 020 7380 8288 Email: training@TavistockRelationships.ac.uk

Speakers to include:

Margot Waddell,
Child Analyst and Fellow of the
Institute of Psychoanalysis,
and

Catriona Wrottesley,
Couple Psychoanalytic
Psychotherapist and Head of Studies
at Tavistock Relationships

*See website for
latest information.*



Counselling and Psychotherapy Training



TAVISTOCK
RELATIONSHIPS

Practitioner Trainings in London

MA in Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy

This unique programme is a clinical training in couple psychoanalytic psychotherapy combined with an academic training to MA level, and is BPC accredited and UEL validated. Advanced standing may be available for qualified, experienced psychotherapists who wish to extend their clinical practice to the couple.

Starts: September 2019.

Duration: 4 years, but advanced standing candidates can complete in a minimum of 2 years.

Fee: £4,590 per year.

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The PGDip/MA in Psychodynamic Couple and Individual Counselling and Psychotherapy is a unique psychotherapy training that qualifies practitioners to work with both couples and individuals. It is UEL validated and the PGDip component is BACP accredited. Experienced individual or couple psychotherapists may be eligible for entry with advanced standing.

Starts: September 2019.

Duration: 3–4 years, but advanced standing candidates can complete in a minimum of 2 years.

Fee: £5,500 per annum in years 1 to 3. £1,000 for MA Module (Dissertation) in year 4 plus year 4 student fees of £683 per term.

CPD Courses

Shared Unconscious Phantasy: Perspectives from Object Relations and Link Theory

Date: Monday 22 July 2019, 9.30am–5.30pm

Speakers: Selected from Tavistock Relationships and COFAP (Committee for Couple and Family Psychoanalysis of the IPA)

Fee: £100

Rupture and Repair: Working with Negative Transference

Date: Friday 20 September 2019, 10am–4pm

Trainer: Jenny Riddell, Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist

Fee: £118 (£108 if booked and paid by 9 Aug 2019)

The 'Night-Side of Life': Working with the Effects of Long-Term Illness on the Couple Relationship

Date: Friday 4 October 2019, 10am–4pm

Trainers: Christopher Vincent, Couple Psychotherapist; Liz Salter, Psychodynamic Counsellor; and Andrew Balfour, Psychotherapist and TR Chief Executive

Fee: £118 (£108 if booked and paid by 23 Aug 2019)

Aspects of Love: Attachment-Informed Psychotherapy with Couples

Date: Friday 1 November 2019, 10am–4pm

Trainers: Dr Christopher Clulow, Consultant Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist and Senior Fellow, TIMP

Fee: £118 (£108 if booked and paid by 20 Sep 2019)

Diploma in Psychosexual Therapy

This two-year course, starting in January, is designed to provide knowledge, skills and opportunities for clinical practice in the area of psychosexual and relationship therapy. It qualifies graduates to practise as psychosexual therapists in statutory and voluntary sectors as well as in private practice.

Open to qualified therapists and counsellors of any discipline. Teaching modules will be delivered on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays monthly in year 1 and Saturdays monthly in year 2). Students will be offered a containing environment in which to weave together theory, practice, self-reflective skills and group supervision. Support from a personal tutor will be provided with opportunities to undertake clinical work at an external placement to broaden experience.

For full course details and clinical case requirements see website.

Fee: £5,900

Venue for courses and events:
4th Floor, Hallam House,
56-60 Hallam Street, London W1W 6JL

FREE LONDON OPEN EVENING, Friday 1 November 2019, 6pm–8pm
For qualified therapists and those interested in foundation study. [Register online.](#)

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