

# THE UNCONSCIOUS IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

*Edited by*  
***David Morgan***

THE POLITICAL MIND



**PHOENIX**  
PUBLISHING HOUSE  
*firing the mind*

First published in 2019 by  
Phoenix Publishing House Ltd  
62 Bucknell Road  
Bicester  
Oxfordshire OX26 2DS

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A C.I.P. for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-1-912691-17-3

Typeset by Medlar Publishing Solutions Pvt Ltd, India



[www.firingthemind.com](http://www.firingthemind.com)

*Everything ends in the same way. With death. But before there was  
life, hidden beneath all the babbling and noise. Silence and feelings.  
Excitement and fear. The spare, unsteady splashes of beauty.*

—*From La grande bellezza (The Great Beauty)*  
*directed by Paolo Sorrentino, 2013*

*We never know how high we are  
Till we are asked to rise  
And then if we are true to plan  
Our statures touch the skies.*

—*Emily Dickinson, “We never know how high we are”, 1176*

## Front cover image

August Landmesser, the man who refused to salute

This photo was taken during a ceremony that was attended by Adolf Hitler himself. Within the picture a lone man stands bravely whilst everyone else obeys the power of the crowd and national hysteria by saluting and paying allegiance to the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler.

August Landmesser defiantly shows his disapproval. It demonstrates the protest of a single person in an authentic way. It is a symbol for me of the courage to stand out against cruelty and fundamentalism. Others who inspire us in these complex times could be Sophie Scholl and the White Cross, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Rosa Luxembourg, Jesus of Nazareth, Rosa Parks, or Marielle Franco, to name a few of my inspirations. We need great leadership at these times, otherwise the falseness of those who lead through bigotry and hate will triumph.

When going into exile from Vienna, before he was granted safe passage, Freud was paid a visit by members of the Nazi Party and was asked to write a reference to his persecutors attesting to their good conduct. He accepted, writing sarcastically, "I would recommend the SS to anybody!" Needless to say, his ignorant and humourless protagonists did not perceive the joke.

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# Acknowledgements

The Political Mind Seminars at the British Psychoanalytical Society have now been running successfully since 2015. They consist of a series of ten seminars presented by colleagues from the British Society with one or two expert external contributors.

I became increasingly interested in exploring the role of the unconscious and the political mind after the events of 9/11. I sat in my consulting room feeling overwhelmed by the horror traumatically unfolding. I felt helpless but thought perhaps psychoanalysis could provide some insight into what was happening in the USA on that day and elsewhere in the world.

What grievances with the West and what basis in religious fundamentalism could lead to this apocalyptic event? Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* was pessimistic about man's inhumanity to man and the tendency to obviate anxieties around life and death through war and power.

Similar feelings arose around the enormity of climate change and the terrible loss of life with immigrants drowning in the Mediterranean. I felt our lives, our allies' lives, and, indeed, everybody's lives were being bombarded by events that were difficult to comprehend and that turning a blind eye was dangerous and inhuman.

There is always something to be said for just concentrating on the microcosm of the consulting room and helping each individual patient develop internal resilience through understanding his or her internal world within



the security of the analytic setting. This extends to the families, workplace, and beyond. This is revolutionary in its way and I know that sometimes there is criticism from colleagues who feel that psychoanalysis is over-extending its remit when used to attempt to understand the wider world and the social unconscious. However, the consulting room can become a psychic retreat in itself when we are confronted by events that threaten our lives, our loved ones' lives, and the people we care for in our work. There has been a real hunger for psychoanalytic understanding from those attending the seminars. The content of the presentations has been very varied and the quality superlative. Each evening has attracted between 60 and 120 attendees, including a solid group of regulars who have come to all the seminars, plus new people every year.

This book is representative of the seminar series and I hope readers find the ideas helpful. We all need help in these complex times and understanding the unconscious is helpful.

I am extremely grateful to all who have provided their talks and time to this venture. I have been so impressed with the quality of the presentations and their capacity to engage with a wide range of political opinions and audience participation.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Marjory Goodall and recently Harriet Myles and Natasha Georgiou without whose help this venture would not have been possible. I'm grateful to Roger Holden whose technological expertise and demeanour make things run so smoothly.

I would particularly like to thank Ruth, Freya, William, Alex, and Leo; without them, the world would be a much less interesting and more difficult place to be.

My thanks to the late John Berger; an inspiration in politics, art, and how to live.

I would also like to thank Luisa Alexa Passalacqua Carenati who has guided me with her editorial skills and intellect through this process.

## About the editor and contributors

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He has been in clinical practice for fifty years and received his clinical trainings in both the United States and Great Britain. He was a graduate of the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Training Program at the University of Buffalo (1972), and received an MSW from Smith College in 1973. He trained as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist at the Tavistock Clinic in London and qualified in 1978. He also trained as a psychoanalyst at the Institute of Psychoanalysis in London and qualified in 1977.

He was the first non-medical psychoanalyst to serve on the London Clinic of Psychoanalysis (1979–1983); visiting professor of psychoanalysis at the Institute for Child Neuropsychiatry, University of Rome (1978–1998); director of education at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (1985–1987); professor of English literature at the University of Massachusetts (1983–1987); and Vorhees Professor at the Menninger Clinic.

He has lectured widely in Europe, the USA, South America, Australia, Japan, Israel, and Singapore and gave a keynote speech to the International Psychoanalytical Association in Boston in 2015. He has published numerous books, from *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known* (1987) to *When the Sun Burst: The Enigma of Schizophrenia* (2016). His books have been translated into more than ten languages. He is a citizen of both the USA and the UK. He lives in Santa Barbara, California where he maintains his private practice.

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**Dr Roger Kennedy** worked as a consultant family psychiatrist in the National Health Service at the Cassel Hospital, Richmond for nearly thirty years and

was an honorary senior lecturer in psychiatry at Imperial College, London. Since January 2011 he has held an appointment as consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist to a multidisciplinary private clinic—The Child and Family Practice, now at 60 Bloomsbury Street, London, as well as maintaining his long-standing private psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic practice in Twickenham.

He has extensive experience of providing courts and social services with expert opinion on multi-problem families as well as in private law cases. He is acknowledged as a leading expert in the field, and has published many papers and several books, including *Child Abuse, Psychotherapy and the Law* (1997), *The Elusive Human Subject* (1998), *Psychotherapists as Expert Witnesses: Families at Breaking Point* (2005), *The Many Voices of Consciousness* (2007), *Couch Tales* (2009), *Psychic Home* (2014), and *Tolerating Strangers in Intolerant Times* (2019). He sees adolescents, couples, and families for therapeutic work, and offers assessments for children and parents. Dr Kennedy can offer consultations to local authority workers dealing with complex families, and their departments.

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Dr Kennedy is president of the charity Community Housing and Therapy, a unique organisation that offers residential treatment for the mentally ill and help towards independent living. He is also a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a charity which encourages the development of a principled, prosperous society and the release of human potential.

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**David Morgan** is a consultant psychotherapist and psychoanalyst fellow of the British Psychoanalytical Society. He is also a training analyst supervisor

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He has a long-standing interest in psychoanalysis and its relation to politics. His books include *Researching the Unconscious: Principles of Psychoanalytic Method* (2019); *Reading Klein* (with Margaret Rustin (2016)); *The Kilburn Manifesto* (edited with Stuart Hall and Doreen Massey (2015)); *Social Defences against Anxiety* (edited with David Armstrong (2015)); *Reason and Unreason* (2001); and *The Good Society and the Inner World* (1991).

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in mental health for three years at City University, where he is helping to set up a radically new way to train mental health nurses based on psychoanalytic principles. He worked as a consultant social worker in the Adult Department of the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust between 1994 and 2012 where he was the clinical director of the Adult Department from 2007 to 2011. He has developed a reputation as a successful teacher and has taught and written about the application of psychoanalysis in a wide range of settings: supervision, leadership, groups, organisations, ethics, borderline disorder, adolescence, residential work, working with victims of sexual abuse, psychological services in the National Health Service, couple relationships, and politics. He has a particular interest in human creativity as it relates to the development of the mind and the central role of curiosity and interest. His early experience as an actor has left him with an abiding interest in theatre, art, and cinema.

**Sally Weintrobe** is a psychoanalyst who writes and talks on how to understand what underlies our widespread disavowal of climate change. She edited and contributed to *Engaging with Climate Change: Psychoanalytic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (2012). Her current work is on the culture of “Uncare”, a culture that—she argues—works to sever our felt caring links with the environment and with each other. She is a fellow of the British Psychoanalytical Society (BPAS), a chartered clinical psychologist (BPS), and a founding member of the Climate Psychology Alliance (CPA).

## Foreword

This excellent book is a must for analysts and for readers interested in understanding our troubled world in a contemporary frame. David Morgan, its editor, tells us that the book is an outcome of the successful series of Political Mind Seminars given at the British Psychoanalytical Society since 2015. This initiative is really auspicious. The success in managing to bring together a group of psychoanalysts for a prolonged period of time, who were able to sustain the enthusiasm to discuss the effects that very painful situations of the contemporary world have on our subjectivities, is highly remarkable.

The whole world, in its different cultures and diverse geographies, is suffering the impact of unequal opportunities, intolerance of differences, violence, fanaticism, and vulnerability in childhood.

The book studies in a broad arc subjects that include the democratic state of mind, fanaticism, right-wing populism, neoliberalism, and terrorism, amongst others. It also includes the feminist perspective and the moral dimension of climate change.

The core of this publication is, as the title indicates, the attempt to find the unconscious axis of these problems. The book achieves this and in doing so, challenges a pervasive sense that not only exists in the psychoanalytic realm but has also extended to the whole of society: that those who are interested in politics deserve, at the very least, mistrust.



As every end is a new beginning, let us go to the moving quote at the beginning of the book about “the spare, unsteady splashes of beauty” even when we face death. This is the point in which aesthetics and ethics could meet. Starting from Freud’s “The Uncanny” we could quote Rainer Maria Rilke, who in the “Duino Elegies” says “For Beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror which we are barely able to endure ...”. He seems to allude to how the poet, the artist, and even the analyst with his gaze approach chaos or look at themselves in chaos.

From these perspectives, we can say that the contact with beauty is always essentially conflictive, because it is a mask that suggests and reveals at the same time as it conceals. Beauty is always a veil through which one can sense chaos. The aesthetic experience implies brushing against the veil itself, a semblance of the essential mystery.

Going back to the issue of the close relationship between ethics and aesthetics, this book shows that psychoanalysis has to take an ethical stance when confronted with the dehumanisation tendency in our contemporary world.

*Virginia Ungar, MD*  
*President of the International Psychoanalytical Association*

# Introduction

*David Morgan*

Political and ideological turmoil in the current and the last century has been certainly influenced by the effects of economics, revolution, and endless battles for power and supremacy. These events are also experienced by each human being in the most personal way, leaving deep emotional scars and trauma. Each individual's experience is multifaceted and reflects a transgenerational history that has profound influence on future generations that underpins themselves and their families, involving both the individual and the social unconscious.

If we think of poverty and how its after-effects are felt by future generations, distant memories of loss, trauma, and anxiety over survival continue to reside in the unconscious. This early shadow falls on future generations. So political turmoil is also a crisis of human relationships as well as economic and social convulsion.

The greatest dreads that can impact upon the individual such as anxiety, fear of persecution, and fragmentation of the self, occur in every era, but it is only in the last century with the work of Sigmund Freud that these psychological states of mind became a systematic field of study. Why this occurred is of great interest, but to my mind it meant that mankind had evolved (at least in Western Europe) to the point where survival and anxieties around it became subjugated for the first time to thought that was

not “pie in the sky” religious, but a deep understanding of human intrapsychic experience.

This does not in any way suggest that religion and philosophy do not have their own profound wisdom, but to my mind, psychoanalysis does contribute something unique and that is the role of the understanding of the unconscious and how actions are often impelled by this unknown influence.

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921c) Freud states,

It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instincts; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent, and so from the very first individual psychology is at the same time social psychology as well—in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the word.

If we are to learn from history rather than as it seems driven to eternally repeat it, we must understand what impels us to continue to repeat destructive actions that could lead to our demise.

To my mind this is an evolutionary and revolutionary development that is the understanding of the unconscious, which could contain the potential to divert humankind from the inevitable self-destruction Freud so cogently describes, that we do seem intent on repeating and enacting. If we think of how we dispose of waste materials, using the earth as an endless container for all we cannot use ... The infantile mode of relating is so obviously paramount here: it is somebody else's responsibility or another generation's task to deal with our shit.

It was actually Freud not Marx who highlighted that the motive of human society is in the last resort economic: the need to work has meant we have to repress pleasure and gratification, in the interest of working, to survive, as opposed to doing nothing or pursuing our instinctual gratifications at the expense of all else. He described this as the repression of the pleasure principle in the face of reality, what he described as the reality principle, for example, I am writing this at the end of a long pleasurable holiday and the awareness of forgoing the gratifications of pursuing pleasure for the daily need to work is casting its shadow.

Repression, however, is an important achievement of humankind; we sublimate desires to achieve a more socially valued state of existence and it is civilisation that arises out of this.

However, too much repression and we become sick. Marx explored the impact of labour on social relationships, class, and politics. Freud looked at the impact labour had on the mind or psyche of the individual and through extension, the group and society.

The repression for Marx was political. For Freud, the unconscious was how we managed this repression and we were no more aware of it than we are aware of the social processes which determine our lives that Marx brought to our awareness. The main reason for this repression is that humankind is conscious and we are very vulnerable when we are born; unlike animals we take years to stand on our own two feet and are very dependent on our care-givers. Without this care we would die. We are also born with an inherent awareness of the reality of death.

It is getting the help we need to manage this reality of our vulnerability at different stages of development, oral, anal, genital, oedipal that we begin to accept the reality principle and give up our narcissism (fear of not surviving) and need for instant gratification. For example, oedipally we have to find our own relationships rather than incestuous ones. We must move from infantile auto-eroticism to adult relating. This is the first mental and emotional work that prepares us, or fails to prepare us, for the task of adult work and life. Many leaders like Donald Trump and others who behave like infantile children are clearly emotionally immature, but have been compelled to get into positions of power.

Freud's view of humanity was pessimistic; he saw us dominated by a desire for gratification and an aversion to frustration. The apotheosis of this is the death drive, a struggle to return to nothingness, a prelapsarian Eden before we had the frustration of knowledge and limitations.

This may sound conservative but he was also convinced that modern society had become tyrannical in its repressiveness. Freud's contribution to political thinking therefore cannot be underestimated. He questioned the origin and structure of society in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13), exposed illusions and dogmas in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927c) where he says if a society has not developed beyond a point at which satisfaction of one group is based on the suppression of another, it is understandable that those who are suppressed should develop an intense hostility towards a culture that does nothing to alleviate this inequality.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930a) he challenges “civilised sexual morality” as the origin of “the nervous and mental illness of modern times”. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921c) he analyses the concepts of leader, crowd, and power. He wrote about Bolshevism in the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1933a) and described the foundation of a people in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939a).

In his theory of the superego, Freud ascribed values, ideals, and imperatives associated with morality and society to the psyche. He suggests that sexual (life) drive and death drive, coupled with the instinct for mastery, is a determining factor of existence in society, politics, and the individual.

Political thought—as in Machiavelli, Hobbes, Marx, Weber, and others—intersects and illustrates many of Freud’s ideas. For example, the radical rejection of all forms of illusion, the will to lucidity based on a flexible rationality, the dismantling of connections within communities, and the emphasis on the autonomy and responsibility of the individual subject. This is not to say that psychoanalysis has not been criticised.

At times, psychoanalysis has been seen as a form of social control forcing individuals into arbitrary notions of normality. This has been particularly strong in the work of Thomas Szasz (1978) but has tended towards a critique of psychiatry and a medical model that rather dominated American psychoanalysis. In fact, Freud demonstrated how polymorphous and flexible the notion of norm is.

Freud was also accused of being concerned with the individual only, substituting psychological answers for social and historical influences, when it was, as I think he saw it, always a subtle interaction between the individual and social pressures.

However, Freud did not reduce his invention only to an important method of healing mental disorders. In his work, he has also focused on important works that addressed fields that were external to knowledge of the individual unconscious, and politics was included in his work when he addressed issues such as civilisation, law, or the libidinal foundations of leadership.

This scope of the unconscious theory on political matters has not been overlooked by the following generations. In fact, some schools of thought have been impacted directly by Freud’s work, or even by its consequences and reinterpretations. The explicit approach between contemporary political theory and psychoanalysis got its first inspiration from the Frankfurt School: Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Jürgen Habermas,

Theodor Adorno, and Walter Benjamin. Hannah Arendt was not an aficionado of psychoanalysis but her political philosophy certainly resonated with psychoanalytic thinkers of today.

One of the richest traditions that has arisen from Freud's writings is a form of political psychoanalytic work engaged with the question of happiness and how it affects whole societies, for example Reich and the Frankfurt School of Adorno, Horkheimer, Habermas, and Marcuse. These theorists attempted to explain some of the perceived omissions of classical political theory such as Marxism by drawing answers from other schools of thought such as psychoanalysis and sociology. A synthesis of the work of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Freud, Weber, and Lukács, they were concerned with the conditions that allow for social change and the establishment of rational institutions.

Walter Benjamin, who is associated with the Frankfurt School, also wrote about themes of culture, destruction, Jewish heritage, and the fight between humanity and nihilism, making significant contact with post-Freudian psychoanalytic thinking.

Hannah Arendt, although opposed in some ways to psychoanalysis, through her writing on the Holocaust, Eichmann, and totalitarianism explored intellectual history as a philosopher, using events and actions to develop insights into contemporary totalitarian movements and the threat to human freedom presented by scientific abstraction and bourgeois morality.

In what is arguably her most influential work, *The Human Condition* (1958), Arendt differentiates political and social concepts, labour and work, and various forms of actions. She then explores the implications of those distinctions. Her theory of political action, corresponding to the existence of a public realm, is extensively developed in this work. Arendt argues that, while human life always evolves within societies, the social part of human nature and political life has been intentionally realised in only a few societies as a space for individuals to achieve freedom. Conceptual categories which attempt to bridge the gap between ontological and sociological structures are sharply delineated. While Arendt relegates labour and work to the realm of the social, she favours the human condition of action as that which is both existential and aesthetic.

In the *Origin of Totalitarianism* (1951), she examines the roots of communist and Nazi dictatorships, demonstrating that totalitarianism was a "novel form of government", different from other forms of tyranny in that it applied terror to subjugate mass populations rather than just political

adversaries. She conceived of a trilogy based on the mental activities of thinking, willing, and judging. In *Life of the Mind* (1977–1978) which concerned the discussion of thinking, she focuses on the notion of thinking as a solitary dialogue between oneself. This leads her to introduce concepts of conscience—an enterprise that gives no positive prescriptions, but instead, tells one what I cannot do if I would remain friends with myself. Arendt is widely considered one of the most important political philosophers of the twentieth century and now she has influenced many of the parts in this volume.

Frantz Fanon was an enormously important psychiatrist, philosopher, revolutionary, and writer from the French colony of Martinique whose works are influential in the fields of post-colonial studies, critical theory, and Marxism. As an intellectual, Fanon was a pan-Africanist concerned with the psychopathology of colonisation and the human, social, and cultural consequences of decolonisation. In his important book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and other seminal works, he applies historical interpretation and the concomitant underlying social indictment to understand the complex ways in which identity, particularly blackness, is constructed and produced. In the book, he applies psychoanalytic theory to explain the feelings of dependency and inadequacy that black people might experience. This for me has been a profound use of psychoanalytic theory to understand racism and colonial fascism that continues in the work of Fakhry Davids in this book and Frank Lowe (2014) at the Tavistock Clinic with his important *Thinking Space* on race and racism.

Franco Fornari, in his great work *The Psychoanalysis of War* (1974), shows us that war and violence develop out of a “love need”: our wish to preserve and defend the sacred object to which we are attached. “Nations”, of course, are the sacred objects that most often generate warfare. Fornari focuses upon sacrifice as the essence of war; this astonishing willingness of human beings to give over their bodies to the nation state.

Herbert Marcuse is probably the parent of modern psychoanalytic and political thinking. He particularly develops the idea of alienation in which capitalism exploits humanity, turning people into commodities. In *One Dimensional Man* (1964), Marcuse writes, “People recognise themselves in their commodities finding their souls in their cars and hi-fi, the market creates false needs and false consciousness, geared to consumption integrating the working man entirely into the capitalist system.” His thinking is particularly apposite when we see the current effects of neoliberalism on

society making welfare, education, and health secondary to profit. In *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955), he proposes a non-repressive society, attempting a synthesis of the theories of Marx and Freud exploring the potential of collective memory to be a source of disobedience and revolt and point the way to an alternative future.

There was also the generation of French intellectuals of the sixties and seventies, among them Félix Guattari, Georges Bataille, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, Louis Althusser, and Michel Foucault, all of whom take up their essays and criticism in the possibilities of thinking with and against psychoanalysis. Political thinkers like Cornelius Castoriadis, Ernesto Laclau, Norbert Elias, Slavoj Žižek, and Zygmunt Bauman—all these writers put the psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan in the centre of their works. Many of these writings would be impossible to be properly understood without psychoanalytic knowledge.

Alain Badiou (2018), another important French political philosopher influenced by psychoanalysis, says that it has recently become common today to announce, for various reasons, the end of the human species as we know it, threatening categories, such as trans-humanism and the post-human rise to the surface or, symmetrically, a return to animalism, but they obscure the real danger to which humanity is exposed today, namely, the impasse into which globalised capitalism is leading us.

It is in reality this social form, and it alone, which authorises the destructive exploitation of natural resources, linking it to the pure notion of private profit.

That so many species are threatened, that the climate is out of control, that water is becoming a rare treasure—all of this is a by-product of ruthless competition between billionaire predators and that scientific progress is anarchically subservient to marketable technologies. Badiou (2018) states that for four or five millennia, humanity has been organised by the triad of: private property, which concentrates enormous wealth in the hands of very slender oligarchies; the family, through which fortunes pass through inheritance; and the state, which protects both property and family through armed force. It is this triad that defines the Neolithic age of our species, and we are still there—indeed now more than ever. Capitalism is the contemporary form of the Neolithic and its enslavement of technologies by competition, profit, and the concentration of capital only brings to their apex the monstrous inequalities, social absurdities, warlike massacres, and deleterious ideologies which have always accompanied the deployment of new technologies under



the historical reign of class hierarchy. The real question in our time, Badiou states, is the possibility of a methodical and urgent exit from the Neolithic. The Neolithic being a thousand-year-old order, only valorising competition and hierarchies, and tolerating the misery of billions of human beings, must be overcome at all costs, he says, lest those wars are unleashed of which the Neolithic has since its appearance fought like those of 1914–1918 or 1939–1945, with their tens of millions of victims, only this time with many more. For Badiou, it is a question of proposing that a non-Neolithic social organisation is possible, which is to say: no privatisation of property which must be common, namely the production of all that is necessary for human life; no family of heirs, no concentrated inheritances; no separate state protecting the oligarchies; and no hierarchy of work. Capitalism he says is only the last phase of the restrictions that the Neolithic form of societies imposes on human life. It is the last stage of the Neolithic. Slavoj Žižek has probably been one of the most prolific if idiosyncratic writers in recent years. His ideas would need a separate book to do them justice. However, I feel he argues that the state is a system of regulatory institutions that shape our behaviour; its power is purely symbolic and has no normative force outside of collective behaviour. In this way, the term *the law* signifies society's basic principles, which enable interaction by prohibiting certain acts. Political decisions have become depoliticised and accepted as natural conclusions. For example, controversial policy decisions (such as austerity and reductions in social welfare spending) are presented as apparently “objective” necessities.

Although governments make claims about increased citizen participation and democracy, the important decisions are still made in the interests of capital. The two-party system dominant in the United States and UK produces a similar illusion.

The real political conflict is between an ordered structure of society and those without a place in it. The postmodern subject is cynical towards official institutions, yet at the same time believes in conspiracies. When we lost our shared belief in a single power, we constructed another of the other in order to escape the unbearable freedom that we faced. It is not enough to merely know that you are being lied to, particularly when continuing to live a normal life under capitalism. For example, despite people being aware of ideology, they may continue to act as automata, mistakenly believing that they are thereby expressing their radical freedom. As Žižek states, although one may possess a self-awareness, just because one understands what one is doing does not mean that one is doing the right thing or anything.

His books: *Living in the End of Times* (2010), *Violence* (2008), *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?* (2001), *The Parallax View* (2006), and many others contribute enormously to politics and psychoanalysis.

As we can see Freud's estate was particularly vast and rich for political thought and influenced many clinicians, but also important revolutionary figures. Currently, one can say that Freud and psychoanalysis define ways of thinking politics within the political theory.

Joel Kovel, an American psychoanalyst and academic, has probably through his writings been one of the most radical psychoanalytic thinkers there has ever been. His works have included: *Against the State of Nuclear Terror* (1982), *History and Spirit* (1991), *In Nicaragua* (1986), *Overcoming Zionism* (2007), *Red Hunting in the Promised Land: Anticommunism and the Making of America* (1994), *The Age of Desire* (1981), *The Enemy of Nature* (2002), *The Radical Spirit* (1988), and *White Racism* (1970). I think I speak for many when I say he was a shining light in this area. His conversion in later life to Christianity was a surprise to us all. In a personal communication, he stated that he "found it compelling to invoke Christ as an inspiration to humanity in a form that he felt theory could not achieve".

Also, from the American psychoanalytic tradition there has been the important work of Dr Vamik Volkan such as *Blind Trust* (2004) and *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relationships* (1988) among many other works. Volkan's research focuses on the application of psychoanalytic thinking between countries and cultures, individual and societal mourning, transgenerational transmissions of trauma, and the therapeutic approach to primitive mental states. He developed unofficial diplomacy's "tree model", described "linking objects" and "linking phenomena" of perennial mourners, and observed "chosen traumas" and "chosen glories" of societies. He has used his ideas in work with the United Nations, particularly in Cyprus and Turkey. Similar interventionist work has been undertaken in the UK by Lord John Alderdice who has used his training in psychiatry and psychoanalysis in his work with the Northern Ireland peace process and other frontiers of political conflict. His groundbreaking work is represented by many papers including a chapter in the next volume of *The Political Mind, A Deeper Cut: Further Explorations of the Unconscious in Social and Political Life*.

In the UK there has been a major contribution to the field from a Jungian perspective from Andrew Samuels who was the prime leader in this psychopolitical area a long time before anyone else. In his seminal work

*The Political Psyche* (1993), he showed how the inner journey of analysis and psychotherapy and the political convictions of the outer world such as market economy, environmentalism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism influence the individual and added an international survey into what analysts and psychotherapists do when their patients/clients bring overtly political material into the clinical setting. As a pioneer of psychopolitical, gender, and sexuality issues, he has made a contribution that has been a remarkable one, particularly in the early years when his was a lone voice in a rather resistant psychoanalytic environment. I do think we owe a lot to his initiatives in this field.

Another Jungian analyst, Coline Covington in her book *Everyday Evils* (2016), provides an important contribution when she looks at the evils committed by “ordinary” people in different contexts—from the Nazi concentration camps to Stockholm Syndrome to the atrocities publicised by Islamic State—and presents new perspectives on how such evil deeds come about as well as the extreme ways in which we deny the existence of evil.

Other important contemporary authors have been Jessica Benjamin, who has written widely on feminism and gender and who more recently contributed articles and thought to the Israel/Palestine conflict, as has Professor Jaqueline Rose—again from Birkbeck University—in *The Question of Zion* (2005) and who has also contributed very importantly to feminist and gender studies. Susie Orbach in the UK has been at the forefront of psychoanalysis and feminist thinking.

Also from the UK, there has been Juliet Mitchell’s seminal work on psychoanalysis and feminism (1974) and David Bell’s look at culture through the work of Hanna Segal (1999) establishing how Hanna Segal’s approach provides a clear focus to psychoanalysis and culture. David Bell has also contributed a great deal to the political debate through his own talks and papers such as “Primitive Mind of State” (1996), and on the subjects of the National Health Service, neoliberalism, and Hannah Arendt.

Hanna Segal herself contributed a great deal to thinking about the dangers of nuclear power. She explored the relationship of war to the contrast between the paranoid and depressive positions in Kleinian thought, highlighting the usefulness of the role of an identified enemy in warding off the subjective pain of depression in *Psychoanalysis, Literature and War* (1997). Segal continued her lengthy examination of the relationship between psychological factors and war in this work on the symbolic significance of the events of 9/11.

Michael Rustin has been very active in the fields of psychoanalysis, mental health, and welfare, developing research methods to explore the study of unconscious mental life. In his important book *The Good Society and the Inner World* (1991), and in *Reason and Unreason* (2001), he addresses his concern with the social and political relevance of psychoanalytic ideas, and with their use in the understanding of cultural phenomena.

Fakhry Davids's *Internal Racism: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Race and Difference* (2011) is a seminal work on racism from a psychoanalyst.

Jonathan Sklar has also contributed recently to the understanding of the profound effects of trauma in the socio-political realm in two seminal works, *Landscapes of the Dark: History, Trauma, Psychoanalysis* (2011) and *Dark Times: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Politics, History and Mourning* (2019). These are important contributions to the understanding of how trauma if not symbolised and mourned is repeated in future generations.

Other contributions to the field have been from academia, in particular Stephen Frosh and his colleagues at the department of socio-political studies at Birkbeck University, as also Professor Robert Hinshelwood and colleagues at Essex University in the department of psychoanalytic studies.

Psychoanalyst Daniel Pick at University College London in his *Psychoanalysis and the Age of Totalitarianism* (2014) (written with Matt Ffytche) provides a cogent exploration of this important area that is once again re-emerging as a dangerous tendency in right-wing populism as an antidote to the complexities of immigration and economic uncertainty.

Robert Young was one of the first thinkers through his radical "Free Associations Press and Human Nature" series and their related conferences, to begin to explore these areas. The unifying thread of Robert Young's research, political activities, writing, and clinical practice has been the understanding of human nature and the alleviation of suffering and inequality. His work has largely been interdisciplinary, seeking to promote unity in how we think about nature, human nature, and culture. He has made a huge and relatively unsung contribution to this area.

Psychoanalyst Sally Weintrobe's tour de force on climate change, *Engaging with Climate Change: Psychoanalytic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (2012), has been a hugely valuable contribution to this neglected area of political and social thinking, addressing what is the most pressing concern of our day.

Joanna Ryan (2017) in *Class and Psychoanalysis: Landscapes of Inequality* explores the hugely important question of class. Joanna Ryan provides an

overview in which she looks at the radical potential of psychoanalysis, with its deep understandings of the unconscious, while simultaneously maintaining its status as a mainly exclusive profession which can only be afforded by the few.

She shows how class was clearly excluded from the founding theories of psychoanalysis despite the pioneering work of Reich and others working with the underprivileged and this has left a problematic legacy. This has been compounded by the reduction of psychotherapy providers in the National Health Service, with only a few institutions managing to continue providing psychotherapy, such as the Tavistock and Portman Clinic, Camden Psychotherapy Unit, Maudsley Hospital Psychotherapy Department, and the Cassel Hospital, all in London. Outside of London, a similar picture occurs.

She explores the injuries of class, the complexities of social mobility, and the defences of privilege and illustrates the anxieties, ambivalences and inhibitions surrounding class, and the unconscious way that they may be enacted (Ryan, 2017). I find her work compelling and inspirational, addressing an area that has been neglected, probably due to its uncomfortable truths.

Elizabeth Cotton who writes a blog called “Surviving Work” explores similar issues in her article, “Do you have to be married to a banker to train as a psychoanalyst?” (2017).

As you can see, many psychoanalysts and academics have been inspired to step out of the consulting room to address the wider issues that affect the setting that the people we see and ourselves inhabit. I am aware many analysts do not consider the political world a suitable place for psychoanalysis to venture. I think this underestimates the profundity of our thinking which people are hungry for. The Political Mind Seminars and Frontier Psychoanalyst broadcasts (<https://www.epf-fep.eu/fre/news/frontier-psychoanalyst-radio-politics-society-and-the-individual>) have demonstrated there is a need for psychoanalytic thinking in these areas. I believe the chapters in this book demonstrate that psychoanalysts can contribute a great deal of valuable understanding to these issues and I hope they will be read by people in the socio-political world as well as interested colleagues.

At the moment, our institutions in the UK that underpin a caring society, such as the National Health Service and welfare system, are currently facing an uncertain future. The same is happening elsewhere. As people become increasingly measured by their economic production and life is based on commodification rather than other values, there is a need to redevelop a

culture that preserves the importance of humanity. We should all be working hard to reverse what has become known as neoliberalism with its emphasis on market forces over human love and joy. Psychoanalysis, as you can see in the chapters of this book, makes a valuable contribution to this important endeavour.

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