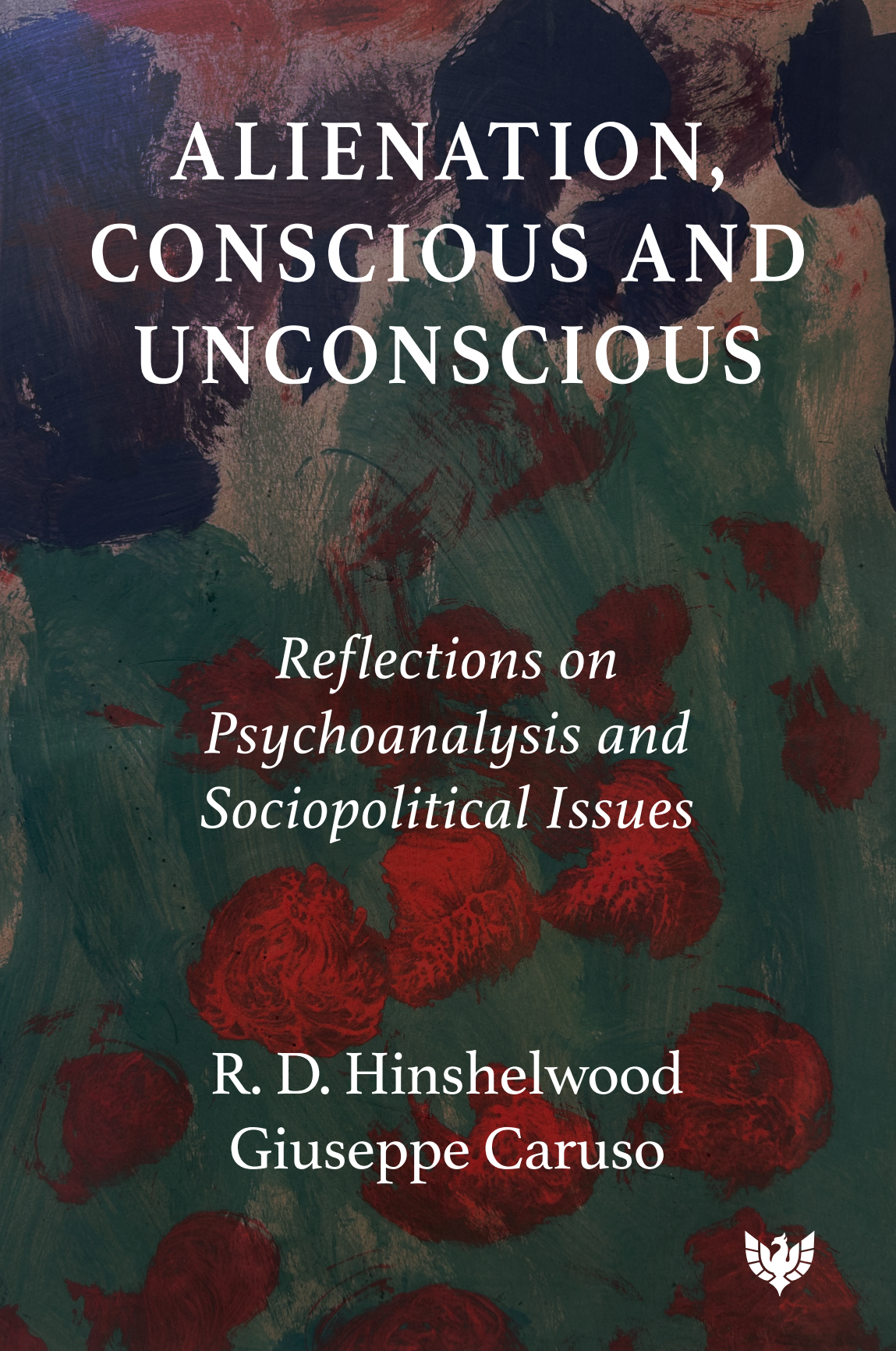
ALIENATION, CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS
Reflections on Psychoanalysis and Sociopolitical Issues
R. D. Hinshelwood
Giuseppe Caruso

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I (RDH) would like to dedicate the book to therapeutic communities, which have been an inspiration through all my career. They have taught me that there are two sides to every story, and dialogue has to be a respectful means of acknowledging that.

I (GC) dedicate this book to E.

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Acknowledgements

My (RDH) interest in the implications of psychoanalysis for political thought was greatly stimulated by learning from, and discussion with, Bob Young over a period of four decades or so, until, sadly, he died in July 2019.

Too many to mention are those who inspired my (GC's) commitments to politics (over the more recent decades friends and colleagues in the World Social Forum, Teivo Teivainen above all), and psychoanalysis (for discretion may they be acknowledged as TW, MLR, RR, and DBB). My deepest gratitude to Bob Hinshelwood, for much more than just this book.

About the authors

Giuseppe Caruso is a psychoanalyst of the British Psychoanalytical Society. He works in private practice in London. As a social theorist he has published widely on global justice movements and cosmopolitanism and, more recently, integrating psychoanalytic insights to explore emotional cycles and leadership in groups. His earlier research involved ethnographic fieldwork with the Shipibo-Konibo people in Peru, leading to a monograph about their traditional medical practices.

R. D. Hinshelwood is a Fellow of the British Psychoanalytical Society and a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. He had a long interest in alternative psychiatry and worked as a part-time Consultant Psychotherapist in the National Health Service whilst also running a private practice as a psychoanalyst for more than forty years. Subsequently he became professor in the Centre For Psychoanalytic Studies at Essex University (now the Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies), and is now Professor Emeritus. He has written widely on psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts, as well as comparative psychoanalytic research, the psychodynamics of institutions, and a number of political topics (that make up the contents of this current volume).

Abstracts of the papers

The eleven papers published in this book focus on the relevance of psychoanalysis to political issues, debate, and action. Abstracts of each of the papers are below.

Part I

Paper 1
Projective identification and Marx's concept of Man (1983)

At the level of observation, the social science phenomenon of alienation as described in Marx's early writings corresponds surprisingly with the psychoanalytic occurrence of projective identification. There are various headings of the similarities: Weakening and depletion, Imprisonment, Unconscious phantasy, Sensuous activity, Reciprocity, Control and possession.

Paper 2
Convergences with psycho-analysis (1996)

The powerful influences of the communism of the Russian revolution and the medical development of psychoanalysis have pervaded so

much of the history and culture of the West in the twentieth century, but they point to radically different deterministic causes. The many attempts to join up a Freudo-Marxism have been dubious. The failure of the Bolshevik Revolution to spread to the more advanced capitalist countries, such as Germany, led to the recognition that more causes were operative than economic ones. Critical theory originating with the Frankfurt School demanded that cultural causes arising from unconscious sources must be in play as factors modifying the classical communist determinism. Here Raymond Williams' formulation of the conceptual superstructure is noted as a model of convergence.

Part II

Paper 3
The individual and the influence of social settings: A psychoanalytic perspective on the interaction of the individual and society (2005)

This paper describes the internal world as if it were a real place with space and time like the external world. That internal reality gives a special colouring to the external world for all individuals in their own differing internal worlds. Insofar as this internal composite is in fact the identity of the person, it become a template that interprets the external world uniquely for each individual. However, it is an unstable world inside us, which is constantly changed by contact with other minds that can evoke new experiences, and especially ones that originate in that "other" mind via an interpersonal "flow" of emotions.

Paper 4
Social Possession of identity (1988)

Projective identification is discussed as an interpersonal phenomena forming a potential bridging concept between the internal defences and the external relationships. There is a flow of personal experiences between people, sometimes shared and sometimes distorted, even denied. The experience may therefore evolve and evoke as it passes through different persons, and ultimately it contributes to group decisions and actions. Interruption of the flow of communication results in flatness and inauthenticity.

Paper 5
Psychological defences and nuclear war (2002)

War arouses powerful reactions in people, including fear, rage, righteousness, and grief, as well as the defences against these basic emotions that numb the impact of death and fear. There is a common element for everyone involved, and so these internal dynamics tend to be shared across a whole society or nation. This paper focuses on these internal states and how they collect together. It also considers a qualitative difference between conventional war and nuclear war. The fear of loss in ordinary warfare is exaggerated when nuclear weapons threaten a total annihilating destructiveness of everything.

Part III

Paper 6
Ideology and identity: A psychoanalytic investigation of a social phenomenon (2009)

An individual's ideal is formed from the group she is in at the moment. There are two forms of allegiance to a group ideal. One is to aspire to it so far as one is capable, and the other is to adopt it so completely that one becomes identified with it to the exclusion of mistakes, aberrations, and inconsistencies; one has *become* the group ideal. This identification is strongly enhanced in a group situation. It is similar to Freud's diminished ego in the face of a loved object. The process involves narcissistic identification of others as bad, and oneself as good; consequently it involves a false consciousness. These two forms of the ideal are parallel with the distinction between the overvalued idea (defensive) and the selected fact (creativity).

Paper 7
Intolerance and the intolerable: The case of racism (2007)

There are two aspects to racism: first, the social intolerance that sweeps through a society; the second is the internal state that the social attitudes seem to recruit. In general, identity is very fluid, and deeply connected with roles in a social context. Pathological personality structures based

on the narcissistic split between positive and negative part-egos can then be externalised by being hooked into social relations based on cultural prejudices. The narcissistically intolerable, internal "badness" meets the external intolerance of a difference.

Paper 8
The function of symbol-formation: Pinning down the ego function (2020)

This paper follows a previous one in the *British Journal of Psychotherapy* in 2018, which examined Hanna Segal's theory of symbol-formation and the various modifications she made to it. In this paper, I argue that we need to examine the specific functions involved in symbol-formation to spot which of them fails. To use one thing (a symbol) to represent another requires a kind of suspension of reality; the capacity to represent means taking one thing *as if* it were really another. There is a double relation to the symbol—which is a mark on a piece of paper and is *also* the thing it represents. I have termed this the "as-if" function that is needed in order to use symbols and representations. It indicates the precise location of the psychotic failure to recognise reality. The as-if quality breaks down and the symbol is mistaken as identical (equated) with the thing symbolised. This addition to Freud's list of ego-functions involved in the reality principle is crucial to the development of representation, and ultimately to the capacity for civilisation.

Part IV

Paper 9
Reflection or action: And never the twain shall meet (2017)

We return to the problem of the convergence between psychoanalysis and politics. They each have their own forms of action. Labour process is cited as an example of social processes in action with a damaging impact on the minds of industrial workers. Primitive mechanisms are discussed as processes that interrupt the clear awareness of those involved in industrial relations. Psychoanalytic "action" is different: it is the thoughtful understanding of the defences that distort reality, validity, or authenticity. The gift that psychoanalysis makes is the knowledge of

the unconscious. But one cannot simply apply the psychoanalytic action of interpreting an individual unconscious by applying such interpretations to a social group.

Paper 10
The disappointment of democracy (2021)

This paper is a reflection on the discontents of civilisation and the possibility that democracy itself is disappointing at times. I attempt to pinpoint various features that disappoint with our current notion of democracy, and imply that a vigilance for failures is a necessary antidote to idealisation. I discuss a selection of the disappointments with the plea that modern democracy certainly needs systems of accountability much more than empty promises of freedom.

Paper 11
Political action, psychoanalytic action (2023)

The forms of action in the two domains, politics and psychoanalysis, appear quite different. However, political debate is the first step in politics and depends on the individual's mind to manage representations that discussions are based on. We need undistorted representations for creating potential plans and policies and to exchange them with other minds. This first step, debating, corresponds entirely with the psychoanalytic process. Whereas this first step corresponds to the whole process of psychoanalysis, it is only the first step in politics, which proceeds to a further step of putting into effect the experimental policies conceived in thought.

Introduction: A preliminary discussion

GC: To begin with, Bob, let me start by saying how delighted I am to be having this conversation with you on this important part of your work. Thank you for having accepted to do this with me. I will say only a few words to get us started. This book is not only the celebration of one important aspect of the work of a very inspiring analyst, one whose work—as a clinician, academic, and supervisor—spans five decades (and counting); it is also an opportunity to push your thinking further along paths you have travelled and along some you have only indicated you might have travelled had you had the opportunity. The opportunity has come, therefore, now to review, update, and explore further at least some of your reflections on the relationships between psychoanalysis and politics, between what in psychoanalysis is indicated as internal and external reality (the environment, symbolic and material), between what in the social sciences are indicated as the micro and macro dimensions of human activity and being, the fine grain and the fabric of the human cloth.

Your extensive production of clinical papers, the theoretical studies of the work of Melanie Klein (the canonical dictionary), Wilfred Bion, and, more recently, Herbert Rosenfeld, and your works with and on organisations and therapeutic communities, have attracted wide interest in the psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic field, in academia, and beyond. Your work is imbued with an acute sensibility to social and political matters even when these are not specifically the direct subject of the paper or book in question. Consider,

for instance, how genuinely political is the treatment of the subject matter of one of your most psychoanalytic books, *Therapy or Coercion* (1997), on whether psychoanalysis is transformative or a form of brainwashing. While the volume treats matters of concern for the therapeutic community (and its patients), it says a great deal about mechanisms of propaganda and truthfulness, the application of which is society-wide and the experience and awareness of which is common and diffused (or it would be important that it was as a key political skill). You have produced a series of important papers on political subjects over the past four decades. We collect here eleven of your most inspiring papers, the first published in 1983, the latest in 2023.

In the spirit of psychoanalysis and of your engaged and generous nature, we explore your work further in a series of conversations following each group of papers (we discuss the rationale of the grouping below). The conversation starts indeed now, in this introduction, so that we can observe the mind of the psychoanalyst at work as you, Bob, think with me through some of the key aspects and implications of your work. Let me start by asking you something of your personal trajectory, to help us situate your perspective. How did you become interested in a dialogue between political studies and psychoanalysis? What brought you to consider the need for that dialogue and its use?

RDH: Let me say first that, of course, it is flattering, and inflaming of a personal narcissism, to be asked by you (an academic, but also currently a trainee psychoanalyst), to consider, and reconsider, this selection of papers (chapters) on wider social issues.[1] Unlike many of my colleagues, my path to psychoanalysis was not via psychology or child psychotherapy. My path started originally with my shock at first encountering, as a medical student, the conditions in which suffering human beings were housed in mental institutions. Although I had been acquainted with Freud and Jung from my last year or two at school, my first encounter with a Kleinian psychoanalyst was when advised as a young psychiatrist to read Bion's book on groups (1961). Bion, too, had followed a path to psychoanalysis somewhat similarly via a concern with the inappropriateness of the social institutions for mental health.

[1] What we refer to as chapters, here, are the chapters in this book, but they were, of course, previously published elsewhere mostly as papers in journals. The original references are available in footnotes to each chapter heading.

I was young and idealistic (and now old and unrealistic, I suppose) when I started in psychiatry in 1966. Then there were the old mental hospitals, one of which, Shenley, I worked in for a couple of years. It was the hospital where David Cooper had worked and where he developed Villa 21, a legend then, although I have not heard it mentioned for a long time. I never met Cooper—he had left Shenley by the time I arrived—but his spirit remained. At the time, Ronnie Laing was at his height, and being young and hesitant then, I never met him personally, though I went to some of his talks. This movement in psychiatry took me away from the traditional approach and towards, literally, a communal form of thinking, the therapeutic community movement. I am still in support of The Consortium of Therapeutic Communities (TCTC). It took me into my training in psychoanalysis, in the 1960s. There were very few trainings in psychotherapy, and I came to the view that the Institute of Psychoanalysis was the best at the time. Twenty years later, there were too many psychotherapy trainings, and one of the reasons I started the *British Journal of Psychotherapy* was to help some of them to collaborate together.

In fact, the schismatic fervour of analysts and therapists in general is an instance of the problems of collaboration—a genuinely, I think, political matter. It is more than disagreement. In so many ranges of political activity at a group level, there is intransigence rather than mutual enquiry of each other. And in the world of therapy and professional understanding, that is shame indeed. Nevertheless, whatever the mental belligerence amongst psychotherapists, and the physical belligerence of warfare in politics, there has been over history and from civilisation to civilisation, a persistent, slow progress towards verbal engagement. Whatever happens to our present civilisation, it is likely that the next will progress a trifle further than us. So, my sense is that one important foundation stone of the success of humanity is that we have developed the ability to collaborate more than any of nature's species. I nearly said "perfected a collaboration", but human collaboration is far from perfect, which is why we are looking at these issues and problems. Collaboration unfortunately has the purpose of bringing individuals together in some unifying way—unfortunately, in that the generative move towards collaboration also moves us towards a threat to individuality and personal creativity, and thus a rival destructiveness.

GC: I tend to think of war as one expression of anti-politics … I wonder whether here there might be a way to push you a bit to define politics and the political?

RDH: That's a good starting point. I tend to think of politics in rather broad terms—ever since those slogans from my youth, such as "anatomy is destiny", and "the personal is political" emerged. So anything that we are and do is within a context of others. Anything that we do *together* is political. That might include even being a part of a football team. Some would say that what we do in a social setting is group dynamics, but I think I'd try to restrict that to unconscious processes based on the anxiety–defence structure of the unconscious. Politics is significantly conscious though interfered with by unconscious dynamics.

GC: Recounting your experience at Shenley hospital and your involvement with the therapeutic community movement, you mentioned that it was this engagement that brought you into the psychoanalytic training. How did your engagement with therapeutic communities lead you to want to commit to individual clinical work as well? How did the two strands of your work—therapeutic communities and individual clinical work—coexist in your professional career? I am asking this because there is a way in which I understand what you write as though your engagement with groups required of you, elicited in you, the wish to deepen both your political commitments and to train in psychoanalysis—as if these two things were somehow connected in your experience and in your thinking about it.

RDH: Yes, I suppose that the therapeutic community movement has always been an inspiration that has helped me to look ahead to where I might go. And I am still involved and have given presentations recently at the annual conference of the movement. The presentation, in 2022, was called "Psychiatry upside down", which more or less says everything that was in the presentation. I learned psychiatry in the early 1960s at University College Hospital medical school where it was rather inspiringly taught by a number of people, including Roger Tredgold and Heinz Wolff. And by the time I got my first job in psychiatry, the anti-psychiatry movement of Ronnie Laing and David Cooper was getting into full stride and marching with the swinging London of the 1960s. It was a time of sparkling hope after the post-war austerity (that had

lasted until the mid-fifties) and now a new phase in human civilisation was opening up. We thought! The problem with psychiatry then was the psychiatric institutions; they were deeply impersonal, or, as I would later realise, deeply depersonalising. Something personal, and personalising, like therapy or psychoanalysis, seemed essential. Actually, at that time, towards the end of the sixties, there were very few formal trainings in therapeutic work, and most of them emerged in the 1970s. The Institute of Psychoanalysis, however, had been training since the 1920s and was obviously one to consider. The only other one was the Jungian Society which I certainly romanced with, and I had read a book about Jung (by Freda Fordham) in my last year at school. Perhaps what decided me was that I knew that some psychoanalysts had recently been working with these difficult "psychotics"—depersonalised as this diagnostic label implies. That was a factor in deciding for the London Institute, and for choosing a Kleinian analyst—and I started my analysis on Guy Fawkes Day in 1969, when I was thirty.

I had already been aware of Elliott Jaques' work on social defence systems, and I suppose that is still central to my thinking. He was at that time part of the core Klein group. And also, Isabel Menzies Lyth's work which showed the relation of institutional depersonalisation to the anxiety-defence structure in hospitals. I was fortunate to have Isabel as my first training supervisor, and people often think I became interested in institutions because of her influence; but in fact, it was the other way around. I remember one occasion, probably in 1975, sitting in her consulting room for supervision on her not very comfortable furniture. She sat on a rather upright settee with her arm along the back and was twiddling a ring on her left-hand ring finger. I was not at all confident enough to comment on the significance of her ring—I was in my mid-thirties, and she was a rather formidable Scottish woman in her mid-to-late fifties. But she did shortly move to Oxford and married Oliver Lyth, who within a year or two promptly, and very sadly, died.

Eventually, influenced by Bob Young, I began to read Marx and some of the Western Marxists. I had been in a small reading group which included Alicia Etchegoyen and Arturo Varchevker. Arturo had organised it in the eighties, and indeed I went to Nicaragua with Arturo around then, and I had met Marie Langer of the Plataforma group, then in Mexico City. The reading group sought to read around psychoanalysis

in philosophy and politics. Bob Young was just starting his career as a psychoanalytic publisher, and he was enlisted to be mentor of the group. He did not count himself a communist/Stalinist but did convince us of the social penetration of values, attitudes, and ideas (including false consciousness) behind everything including science itself. I don't think any of us in that reading group regarded themselves as Stalinist. But my brother did join the Communist Party and was a member until 1990. My family was always loyally Labour, and my grandfather was branch secretary of his union. It was the printers' union and I believe my grandfather worked on the *Daily Herald* before the First World War when it was a campaign newspaper for the Labour Party. So, I have a left-leaning inheritance, which I have not forsaken. I have never really been an activist, however, although I was interested in the civil disobedience campaigns against nuclear weapons around 1960. Indeed, I found some newsreel footage, in the film archives of the University of East Anglia, taken of a protest in Norfolk; there is a moment of some ten seconds or so where I am part of the crowd of protesters. That was the one time when we were taken off by the police in buses to Winson Green prison in Birmingham, where we were on remand for three days and then saw a magistrate who sentenced us to "keep the peace for twelve months". Of course, as we said, what else were we trying to do!

GC: This is a fascinating story, and one with deep roots stretching across decades and, indeed, continents. What you say about the cooperation with Bob Young across disciplines but also across domains of living, so to say, is important as we observe the entrenchment of ideologies of radical individualism and competition (not too distant from versions of the belief in the survival of the fittest) governed by transcendental invisible hands. On the perversion of ideas, you write convincingly in your paper on ideology and identity (see Chapter 6 in Part III).

RDH: You are right, the aim is to create a structure of ideas that could contribute to wider debate, and personal history is only a peripheral interest. Nevertheless, the personal is inevitably the context for giving a pattern to one's understanding of a more general history of cultures and of bodies of knowledge. And vice versa, too; each is a reverberating context for the other—the personal history and the social.

GC: Reading Marx's earlier work, you developed very personal and deeply psychoanalytical takes on some age-old philosophical issues. Incidentally, Bion, whose work you discuss at length, including in a recent book (Hinshelwood, 2023), in *Learning from Experience* (1962) and in other places, wrote about the relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy. For instance, in *Learning from Experience*, he writes that "psychoanalysis … may be regarded as having a relationship to philosophy analogous to the relationship of mathematics to applied mathematics" (1962 [2014, p. 331]). He writes in very similar terms in "A theory of thinking", and in other places as well. This links, somewhat, to a foundational debate in the history of anthropology between armchair anthropologists such as Tyler and Fraser and a new generation of field anthropologists who claimed the primacy of experience of the other over theorising it by reading secondary sources. What is your take on this relationship and how, if at all, the two disciplines, psychoanalysis and philosophy, can complement each other's perspective on human behaviour and life?

RDH: I am not sure that the philosophical approach is easy for me to grasp. It seems … well, a little alienating! (Is it unfair to say that?) But I love the idea that psychoanalysis is a kind of fieldwork philosophy, and philosophy is an armchair version of psychoanalysis. I think Freud might well have agreed that psychoanalysis had put philosophers out of business. And of course, one respects the fact that the Frankfurt School and their critical theory descendants did attempt to turn to Freud, and especially his structural model. But as Freud always said, that model is a metaphor for the hidden experiences of the unconscious. I hesitate to critique such philosophical use of psychoanalysis. But I will say just a few words about what I got from my reading of some critical theorists. It seems quite difficult for the writers to capture experiences that are *not* alienating/reifying. They use terms like "recognition", "appropriation", etc., and try to capture the abstract meanings of the terms they have chosen. Although the variety of arguments that justify these various terms, and problematise them, suggests that none of them really does the trick. So, there may be significant value in capturing and trying to construct a dimension from alienation to authenticity.

And, of course, above all, it is important to relate the impact of the cultural context to people's experience of themselves and each other. I quite accept that the emphasis on private property, ownership,

wealth-possession does create a pressure to see persons as commodities, as Marx observed in such detail. That is, the culture that inevitably derives from capitalist forms of ownership, and the self-seeking and exploitative relations that come out of this, is an important pressure on people's relating to each other in conventionally predictable ways (and as we prepare this book, I am finishing a long and involved text on these pressures, which is due to be published now as *Unconscious Politics* (2024)). I am interested that the industrial "social relations of production" came historically after the period of slavery (I mean, after that period in European history)—instead of buying and selling persons as if trading commodities, industrial relations mean buying a person's time as a quantity of a commodity. There seems to be some historical continuity between slavery and industrial relations, and thus a qualitative continuity.

I think it would be interesting at this point to hear a little about your own journey from your initial interest in psychology through your long diversion into anthropology at university. With your eventual return to psychoanalysis, including how it is that you, like me, need to understand the contribution psychoanalysis can make to politics.

GC: Yes, it is true, my journey to clinical psychoanalysis has been long and it involved a number of detours. My interest in psychoanalysis and in political action, though, was born at the very same time around my mid-teens, when I was a high school student. I became very interested in matters of social justice and some of the people I met then and worked with were involved in the anti-psychiatry movement, were feminists influenced by French feminism, were pedagogues committed to educate for freedom and all, in one way or another, directly or indirectly, were inspired by psychoanalysis. So I think I met Freud and Marx in the short span of a few weeks. One of the things that struck me soon enough, as my interest in political action developed, was the reproduction among social justice activists of disruptive group dynamics that enormously weakened their influence and the spread of their, indeed our, ideas and practices. Often, we felt that these dynamics reproduced the very social malaise we criticised. This also caused personal crises and often depression and hopelessness. In a way, my enthusiastic idealisation of activist groups had met inevitable disappointment. However, I turned (or so I like to think) that disappointment to some use. I began thinking that group dynamics and individual psychologies lead to

difficulties and failures of collective action, not only the other way around. I also thought that, surely, living in certain social conditions must have an impact on the psyche and on the structures of thinking of those subjected to appalling living conditions, exploitation, abuse, and domination. I thought that keeping the psychological effects of these experiences separated, split, from the organisation of political action meant a great disservice to both activists and their groups, and their ability to act politically. When it came to choosing a course of study at the end of high school, however, I chose to study anthropology rather than psychology as I had originally thought. Among those with whom I spoke then about the things I was interested the most in, many referred often to other societies around the world that were organised in very different ways to our "Western" ones, and were sometimes more egalitarian and democratic. Many, especially the older activists had travelled to South America, Cuba, Africa, the Subcontinent, and in the Middle East. They described not only different organisations and different ways of doing politics, but also entirely different conceptions of what it means to be humans together. Coming from a rather small provincial Sicilian city, I became interested in gaining a broader perspective on the world and, as anthropologists sometimes say, I set off on the longest road home. I returned to academic work several years after graduating, having worked on traditional healing practices in Peru and on international development projects. When I returned to it, it was to study political activism in an interdisciplinary way or, like I preferred to say, in a transdisciplinary way. It was about a decade ago, while I was delving into the debates in political theory on political representation and (indeed, vs!) prefiguration as the privileged forms of political action, that I returned to my early wish to pursue a clinical training. As we will discuss later, I had begun to conceive of psychoanalytic action and political action as closely resonant. When I met you for the first time at the end of 2015 I thought now this is what psychoanalysis, and your work in particular, can offer to political theory! I also thought, that the political theory I was interested in could use the psychoanalysis of the kind you offered. I also did think then, and do too now, that political theory and practice have much to offer to psychoanalysis. In fact, Freud himself often used political imagery to describe the dynamics in the mind between its different agencies. It seems to me that psychoanalysis and politics the way I understand them are best integrated than separated. Their split is, I think, often a symptom of a divided group dynamic that can indeed be illuminated by that very split and worked through in the process. What I found in your work and in your attitude towards different disciplines, was that, without pretending to put political theorists and philosophers

out of business but in a spirit of close collaboration, your kind of psychoanalytic thinking can contribute an experience and therefore a language to speak about what is not alienating, what is (the) political, and, by doing that (this providing a language), you offer both tools to think about but, in the process of collective thinking, to work through pathological social organisations. Not only, and here I'm using Klein's formulations, a theory of paranoid–schizoid thinking and behaving but also of what depressive thinking and acting look like. When we initially spoke about my interest in your work and we started imagining this collection, I mentioned that it lay in the ability to bring to life and to political debate aspects of experience that could not be accessed through political philosophy alone. I also mentioned that, perhaps, psychoanalysis could be seen as a vertex—a perspective, a point of view, in a way similar to Bion's conception of vertices as different vantage points to apprehend human experience. You seemed to me unconvinced that that indication could already be seen in Bion. I now agree that there is also an important limitation in this view as it assumes a firmer position than I wish to hold here in the constructivism–objectivism debate. Here instead, I think it would be interesting to hear your thoughts on Klein's thinking in developing your psychoanalytical and political thinking.

RDH: Thanks for letting us in on a glimpse of your own trajectory and that interesting convergence of psychoanalysis and politics which you make. You are right, that I do think Klein's approach was one of the most focused on the patient's experience. Of course, not only her—Kohut coined the term "experience-near", for instance. But I was struck by Klein's recently published lecture notes:

> If we are not bent on labelling our patients as such and such a type, or wondering prematurely about the structure of the case … then are we ready to learn step by step everything about the patient from himself. (Klein, 1936)

So much of the psychoanalytic literature is about patients who fit our metapsychology. But listening in to our *patient's* "metapsychology" ought really to be our starting point. They come in order that we listen to them, their experiences of pain, conflict, anxiety. There has been a constant debate about whether Klein was an instinct-focused drive theorist. In fact, Klein never used the term "drive" in that technical way. She does use the term "instinct", although exceptionally in the

term "Death Instinct"; but she really only means aggression. Klein never talks, anywhere, of "psychic energy", nor does she refer directly to Freud's "economic model". She is one of the earliest who focused on relationships, and who was influenced by the very humanistic Ferenczi, her first analyst, and by Karl Abraham, her second analyst, whom she revered. It also came from her work with children, whose play invariably concerned playing with the relationships between toys.

I may have given a wrong impression about Bion. He certainly took as his perspective to see what he could of the patient's experience. He claims he learned from a teacher at medical school, Wilfred Trotter: "Trotter … listened with unassumed interest as if the patient's contributions flowed from the fount of knowledge itself" (Bion, 1985 [2014, p. 38]). However, Bion deviated into an abstruse metapsychology in the early 1960s, trying to create for psychoanalysis the equivalent kind of schema (using a grid) to the physicists' use of mathematics, as you have just indicated. However, he pulled himself back severely from that and became extremely preoccupied with the way an analyst and an analysand can relate from their separate points of view. So, I do agree that Bion did focus as a matter of principle on experience as much as abstraction, though he veered between the two.

And perhaps you are right, though I had not seen it, that what psychoanalysis may offer politics is to realise that so much comes from experience, as much as from logical debate. Populism seems to imply quite desperate experiences, for instance. But the experiences can be at an unconscious level and thus beyond verbalisation unless we employ psychoanalytic insights.

GC: I agree that the use of psychoanalysis for the purpose of social analysis needs to be cautious and this use needs to be spelled out as far as both intentions and method are concerned. This is so for many reasons, including to resist the colonising temptation that often drives some interdisciplinary enterprises. Psychoanalysis, the social sciences, history, philosophy do not form a single unified and stable pattern. These perspectives, these disciplines, form multiple conceptual patterns and, consequently, multiple objects. I would like to ask you to spell out the conditions of convergence and disjunctions between psychoanalysis and social analysis. You suggest we might think in terms of psychosocial analysis. Can you say more about how you think of the relationship (synthesis perhaps?) of these two approaches?

I wonder whether psychoanalysis can offer unique tools for social analysis regardless of the society one is discussing, whether it can access "universal" underlying patterns (and emotional dynamics) of individual and collective human behaviour. In other words, can psychoanalysis provide a theory of political action (as opposed to reaction, acting out, and enactment)? Let me add that this matter is currently the main focus of my own curiosity and research, and I think that you offer a genuinely psychoanalytic approach to groups, institutions, and societal phenomena including populism, nationalism, racism, paternalism, and democracy.

RDH: I think you put your finger on a really important, and tempting, slippage that psychoanalysts are guilty of. We sometimes (even often) "analyse" society as if it were an individual mind on the couch. And, for instance, there is a tradition from Carl Jung to Earl Hopper to talk of the "collective" unconscious or the "social" unconscious. Incidentally, I think that your original training as an anthropologist would be a great asset in our conversations. I might add that many years ago, I was an impressed reader of Lévi-Strauss and structuralist anthropology, now swamped I understand, by the tide of post-structuralism and postmodernism.

With regard to your question about how our understanding of the unconscious can contribute to the social sciences, I think there are several ways, and they will emerge in the course of reading the papers and discussing them. But fundamentally the unconscious is structured in terms of anxiety and defence. There are indeed basic common anxieties—persecutory and depressive, in technical terms. And there are also, of course, characteristic defences that we all share the use of. What is interesting is when similar anxieties in similar situations erupt amongst the group all together so that we form a collectively anxious culture. Then the anxiety can become so intense it is rendered unconscious for everyone through the assistance of "social defences", as Jaques (1955) and Menzies Lyth (Menzies, 1960) called them. Then the collective anxiety–defence system can interfere extensively in political discussion at the conscious level. Then clear political thinking is inevitably disrupted; it fails and degenerates into the potential for rigid oppositions. This powerful obstacle is the existence of the human unconscious, which by its nature resists becoming available for conscious discussion. This is the major gift that psychoanalysts can offer.

GC: This is very interesting, Lévi-Strauss' extraordinary account of his fieldwork in Brazil has greatly contributed to my choice to study anthropology. It has also, however, taken me from my original plan to study psychology. As it is often said among anthropologists, our discipline is the longest way to go back home. And it has taken me three decades to return to my initial clinical interests. But I digress. Let's pause then here and let's turn to reading your papers in turn. Before doing that, let me briefly describe the structure of the book. The papers in Part I, with their focus on social analysis and Marx set the tone for what follows. Key concepts, such as alienation, reification, symbols, representations, politics, political, projective identification, are introduced in these first two papers. The papers in Part II explore the widened scope of Kleinian psychoanalysis in organisational contexts, both in social movements and in psychiatric institutions. The aim is to show the deeper, even deepest levels of the unconscious with their anxiety–defence structure in organisational and political modes. This work is grounded not only in Klein but also in two of her closest colleagues—Elliot Jaques and Isabel Menzies Lyth. In Part III, the scope of your work extends to even wider contexts as you explore the pernicious effects of ideology in general and racism in particular. Key to understanding how you link the deepest workings of the mind with the widest social phenomena is your paper on symbolism and symbol-formation. In Part IV, three papers on political action and democracy conclude this excursus with matters bridging psychoanalytic action and political action. The reader will find some repetitions in the papers, as they were originally set as separate and standalone works. However, as the core concepts recur, one has the opportunity to see them at work in different contexts. These iterations also show small variations that indicate both their internal complexity and adaptability but also their vitality and proneness to transformations. On infrequent occasions there have been small edits to the papers for the purposes of clarity without any change to the meaningful content. Finally, there is one more note I wish to add in this introduction. While avoiding belabouring here a point that will become apparent to the reader as we read through this collection, I will just mention that there is a striking emerging property to these papers taken together. Something that could be expressed by saying, in a Hegelian way perhaps, that an accumulation of quantity brings about a change in the overall quality of the experience. What emerges from this work, I think, are both a number of positions taken vis-à-vis some of the crucial debates on kinds of human activity, and also an integrated way to frame them. Uncovering, that is, describing in convincing terms, what this emergent position may be,

is part of what each conversation aims to do. In a preliminary way, and to ease ourselves into the themes of the first part of this collection, it does not seem to me that your work limits itself to adding together Klein and Marx, but aims at their integration, and at opening up new creative ways to look at the relationship between micro and macro dimensions of the human escaping what, to some, is their incommensurability. From a split position to an integrated one, I would like to say. This could be put differently, if not very elegantly. The parts of this work can be thought of as parts of a complex thought digestive system. Paraphrasing Bion, it is possible to think of the combined works here presented (a body of work) as providing a novel containing thinking structure on social and political matters. The way in which this is done is just as interesting, if not even more interesting, than the outcome of each individual containment moment. And now, on to the first set of papers.

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