

the speakers



andrew samuels

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I don't have a settled position so I am going to ask three questions addressed to myself and everyone here.

- (a) Is there a crisis in the West that needs a kind of therapy?
- (b) Can cultural monoliths, such as Judaism for example, evolve so as to become more differentiated and open to dialogue?
- (c) Can psychotherapy ever really make a difference at the level of geopolitics?

A. IS THERE A CRISIS IN THE WEST THAT NEEDS A KIND OF THERAPY?

The short answer is yes, and I want to suggest that in Islam, whether it likes it or not, the West has found its therapist.

There are many signs of crisis in the West: materialism, global greed and massive social and economic inequality, crime and violence in society, addictions and consumerism, sexual excess (pornography, lap-dancing, prostitution, trafficking) and decline in the seriousness of long-term relationships and marriage, spirit-free politics, citizen apathy and the hibernation of idealism.

Many of these problems have been pointed out to us by Islamic critics, whether so-called moderates or so-called extremists. Of course, it is hard to listen, but, hey, whoever said being in therapy is easy?! I want to hit home the necessity to listen and to hear.

So I would like to position Islam, not only as the enemy of the West, not only as the critic of the West, but also as its therapist. Of course, these terms 'Islam' or 'the West' are themselves deeply problematic. I'll return to this issue later.

This is not to idealise Islam, which breeds its own injustices and cruel fundamentalisms – dependence on a Book, (Bible, Koran, Freud or Jung) is not always a good thing. And dependence on a book, coupled

with possession of power in general and military technology in particular, is a disaster, no matter whether this is America or Al-Quaida. But you don't have to be fault-free or possessed of 100% insight to be an effective therapist.

Let's take this idea of the West needing therapy a bit further – what are the cultural habits of mind that contribute to our problems? Can we doubt our one-sidedness, lacking balance, wholeness, integration? But therapists know that crisis is potentially the catalyst for healing.

There's a *crisis in thinking* - thinking in opposites, our binary way of thinking in pairs of complementary opposites (dualism). If we are rational, they are irrational, if we are compassionate, they are cruel. It is binary thinking that stops us spreading a general critique over all the warring players, so that one could condemn Saddam and Bush, Israel and the Palestinians, Jungians and Freudians. And, more important than criticise or condemn the players, develop an across-the-board compassion and love for them – for the Israelis as the suicide bombers hit, for the Palestinians as their children and communities are annihilated.

There's a *crisis in moral process*. Linked to thinking in opposites, there is the problem of what I call original morality, meaning the primitive, innate, archetypal moral sensibility with which we are born. This is an inborn but clumsy and rigid form of moral process in which horizontal conflict is flipped over into

a self-stabilising vertical evaluation. A moral hierarchy comes into being in which the opponent, initially located horizontally across from ourselves, becomes re-located vertically, below ourselves. One psychological follow-on from this is that there is no gain in peace or alliance or communication taking place because there's so much pleasure in the moral beat-up of the other. So the aggression displayed by our enemies is morally outrageous while our own is morally justified. Much of the pro-war propaganda can therefore be reframed as an abuse of morality.

You see original morality on the part of the West in relation to terrorism which receives blanket moral condemnation, forgetting that there are different kinds: what about the ANC, or Israel in 1947-8, or Hizbollah (a genuine liberation struggle against an occupier), or the IRA? Why is it so difficult to understand that, even it feels foreign, and requires moral imagination (the necessary counterpart to original morality) the terrorists are convinced they are engaged in a form of social spirituality (Samuels, 2001), whether we accept it or not? Original morality rules out empathy and hence forgiveness on the collective level. On the personal level, it rules out repentance and atonement. It is only a small part of the potential in human morality – but it is a lethal one.

What about aggression then? Fighting, bleeding, dying, suffering, destroying - and aspiring, asserting,

creating, liberating? I sometimes think many psychotherapists are too squeamish when it comes to the aggression represented by terrorism.

When you factor the immense political power and military might of the West in general and the US in particular into this, you see that a flowering of moral imagination (all about an improvised, flexible response to the other and to conflict in general) isn't going to happen. There is no incentive for it. The whole thing resembles depression, and the West is stuck in a profound cultural depression caused in part by its own strength, just as depressive anxiety in an individual is fuelled by destructive fantasies of destroying someone or something.

(I first began to write about the linkages between morality and geopolitics at the height of the Cold War – see Samuels, 1989, Chapter 11.)

There's a *crisis of sincerity*. Aren't we Westerners supposed to love our neighbours, or even our enemies, it's supposed to be the heart of Judaism and Christianity? Yet we have created one of the most unfair and unjust social and economic systems the world has ever seen. We then close our eyes to the links between poverty and disempowerment and terrorism. We ignore what I call democratic spirituality, the fundamental, ineluctable equal-in-the-eyes-of-the-Lord kind of equality, similar to what Jocelyn Chaplin calls 'deep equality'.

B. CAN CULTURAL MONOLITHS, SUCH AS JUDAISM FOR EXAMPLE, EVOLVE SO AS TO BECOME MORE DIFFERENTIATED AND OPEN TO DIALOGUE?

I feel I must use Judaism as an example because this is my cultural location, and the invitation to the speakers was to be mindful of their cultural location.

There is world-wide debate within Jewry about the relationship between Jewish identity and Jewish nationalism. This is not totally new, there have always been anti-Zionist Jews, but the intensity might be new.

Some illustrations of these developments with which I have been personally involved:

- The formation in 2002 of Jews for Justice for Palestinians – there is an immense political impact in the mere title of this group.
- The renunciation by a number of Jews of the right of return – the Israeli law that guarantees that any Jew (according to rabbinical definition) has a right to live in Israel as an Israeli citizen. Palestinians have no right of return, so the argument goes, so why should Jews, many of whom never sought this right, have it?
- The role of Jews internationally in calling attention to serious inequalities in the Middle East – e.g. by participating in the *Guardian*

letter in April 2002 pointing out the anomaly that Israel is regarded as part of the EU for academic research funding purposes. And whatever one thinks about that call for a moratorium which many claimed was terribly unfair and against academic freedom, it crystallised debate so that the inequalities in the academic area in that region could be engaged with in a much better-informed manner.

C. CAN PSYCHOTHERAPY EVER REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT THE LEVEL OF GEOPOLITICS?

Psychotherapists face an unusual problem when it comes to commenting on issues such as the geopolitical situation. If we are not careful, we just end up sounding like any old journalist, nothing in our discourse that speaks of our work and knowledge base as therapists. If we are too technical, there will be the immediate charge of 'psychobabble' And a good deal of psychotherapeutic comment on politics can seem very reductive.

There's also the question of whether or not therapists should be getting involved with the political at all. Questions of neutrality and abstinence arise. I have discussed these at length elsewhere (Samuels, 2003) and what I want to do in this context is to point out that much the same problems exists for artists and religious people. If the novel is too 'political', it may be castigated

as propaganda not art. If the sermon harps on about conditions in the inner city, it is 'political' not religious pronouncement.

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The strengths of psychotherapy when it comes to political critique are obvious: 'therapy thinking' is reflective, long-term, bringing together psyche, body and the social realm, devoted to deep understanding, compassionate. Some of the weaknesses of psychotherapy are also obvious: love of power and being wedded to conformity, ignoring of issues

affecting difference, whether sexual, ethnic or socio-economic.

However, there are some weaknesses of psychotherapy that are less obvious: use of triangulation to solve every problem – the therapist needing two warring parties so as to sit at the supposedly neutral tip of the triangle and sort the whole thing out, an excessive belief in dialogue that avoids the shadow of struggle which can mean avoiding struggle. As Hamlet puts it, when bemoaning his lack of resolution and the capacity to act: 'the readiness is all'. Therapists are mini-Hamlets, preternaturally suspicious of action.

I will end with two quotes. The first one is well known and from Margaret Mead:

'Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has.'

Finally, something from the Book of Proverbs:

'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat. And if he be thirsty give him water to drink. Say not, I will do to him as he hath done to me.'

Further Reading

Samuels, A. (1989) *The Plural Psyche: Personality, Morality and the Father*. London & New York: Routledge.

Samuels, A. (2001) *Politics on the Couch: Citizenship and the Internal Life*. London & New York: Karnac/Other Press.

Samuels, A. (2003) 'Working directly with political, social and cultural material in the therapy session'. In *Controversies in Analytical Psychology*, Robert Withers (ed.). London & New York: Brunner-Routledge.

talia levine bar-yosef

On Friday, I took off in an airplane from Israel. The airplane was flying low, on a very clear day above old Jaffa. It was easy to imagine the streams of blood flowing in the streets of Jaffa as well as in most of the European cities above which the airplane flew. I was thinking about conflict, about the unbelievable easiness in which people kill one another. I opened my notebook and looked at the heading for this lecture – conflict and terror- I wrote. As the word in Hebrew for terrorism is terror. The British man who sat next to me peeped into my book and asked 'are you talking about married life? There you would find conflict and terror'. I smiled and corrected 'conflict and terrorism'.

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Judy Ryde asked me to speak personally, to tell about life under an umbrella of conflict, terrorism and cultural difference. When describing the structure of this day and the people on the panel, she said something about inviting Andrew Samuels because they wanted a representative of a white western culture. I was surprised of my own emotional and physical reaction which was very strong. First physical – I felt my stomach contracting, and then a kind of anger, possibly rage, emerging from bottom to top. 'What do you mean,' I asked 'and what am I?' My very strong reaction which was bordering, or possibly could have developed to violence shocked me.

This was a primary look into an experience of the life of the humiliated. What actually happened? I was trying to understand and feel. I heard someone else defining me differently from the way I define myself. Moreover, defining me as someone who I perceive, and I guess imagine she perceives, as

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reality

belonging to a place which is below, which is less, than the place I perceive myself as belonging to. A feeling of cultural inequality. Was I hurt? Was I humiliated? No doubt I was taken aback. Then surprised by my own anger, shocked by it, and found myself empathising with all those who feel defined by the other differently than the way they define themselves. Also felt that my sense of belonging was taken as well as

inequality to the same Western world which is supposedly a better one. And have no doubt Judy didn't even hint that this is what she thought. My projection here is rather clear. Without my consent I was utterly surprised contrary to my perception of myself, found myself in a different place – uncomfortable, lower. In a moment my definition of myself disappeared. I can easily understand that Judy sees where I come from as part of the Middle East, which it is, hence, not a Western country. 'So what is so painful?' This experience could have been the beginning of a serious conflict. We will go back later to why most likely it won't be.

As I was getting ready for this talk I thought about what I want to say, which is not simply theory as the organizers requested.

- ♦ About the continuous life in conflict between us and the Arab Palestinians and the Arab countries in general.
- ♦ About continuous life in conflict between secular Jews and religious ones in Israel and outside it.
- ♦ Continuous life in conflict between Jews of Eastern and Western origin.
- ♦ Maybe about conflict in Ireland, South Africa, Iraq, Wales and Britain.
- ♦ Or possibly about my inner conflict between my liberal, leftist social values and the act of terrorism which is angering, frustrating, and unacceptable.

I thought about my philosophical trust in the power of dialogue and personal contact (which, in my mind, is what will prevent conflict with Judy) versus my helplessness to bring about dialogue when the conflict is deep, when the abyss between the cultures is vast. Especially when there isn't really a sense of a wish for dialogue in the macro. My deepest and fullest belief in the right of every human being to exist in dignity according to his, or her, perception; my utter belief in the right of every human to co-exist is being challenged again and again by its meeting with reality.

I fully understood the depth of this difficulty when on one Saturday night, after a long argument with my daughter about the danger of sitting in a coffee shop in Jerusalem, I drove her there against my better judgement. As educated as I am I heard myself telling her that each kilometer that I drive I feel that I bring her closer to her death. Felt devastated by this crazy statement to a degree that my daughter before leaving the car calmed me down and promised, as if she could, that everything will be okay and they will be careful. A couple of hours later she called me to pick her up. However waited down the block rather than in the 'safe' coffee shop. When I asked them about waiting in the dark rather than in the 'safety' they explained that the place was filling with people and they suddenly felt unsafe and decided to leave, with my words of caution ringing in their ears. Ten minutes later the

coffee shop exploded, about 20 youngsters died. By chance, my daughter wasn't one of them.

This is when I understood in the fullness of the physical and the emotional sense, later on the cognitive level that in situations when it is either me or someone else's existence 'possible', it will be me - especially my kids.

Which brings me to my next point: the fundamental cultural difference between the Muslims, the Christians and the Jews.

No doubt that what I say is not necessarily true about every person in each of these cultures, but I believe it is generally true about the culture as a whole. In the Muslim culture, definitely the Palestinian one, and it is also true about Kuwait across the gulf war, one is entitled and sometimes commanded, to kill a person for the mere reason that they belong to the opponent/enemy group. Jews are being killed for being Israelis. Palestinians were slaughtered by the Kuwaitis, at the moment that the Gulf War ended. 'We shall slaughter all the Palestinians and so it should be - for they supported the Iraqis when they invaded us' told me one of the most respectable women in Kuwait. The Jihad, even though many from within the Muslim world argue about its validity, is a basic point of view, inherent to the Muslim culture nowadays. On the whole, in Judaism there is a clear value commanding maximum care not to kill a person

based only on their cultural identity. No doubt mistakes occur, the intent however, is commanded to be clear and well explained. No doubt any culture contains hard liners. The fundamental approach the Jihad holds allows the liberty to enter any Israeli target with an explosive belt (dressed as a religious Jew into a bus, this very morning) and try and kill as many Israelis and hurt as many families as possible. A friend called me this morning after yet another bus exploded and said 'If somebody will explain to me why the seven people who were killed this morning had to be killed in order to solve this specific conflict I shall support the Palestinian struggle wholeheartedly'. As indeed I fail to see the justification behind a whole number of Israeli military operations in the Palestinian authority.

Returning to cultural inequality and the sense of being overlooked and invisible: the feeling one feels when erased by the other could lead to a strong wish to erase the eraser. The helplessness, the silence when being wiped out, lack of contact, the distance; all can create contraction and acceptance, on one polarity, as well as a wish to have substance and profile, on the other. The wish to prove that one exists could lead to the will to take over the other's place and erase them, rather than coexist. 'You (the other) brought me to a situation of total anonymity, I will bring you to exactly the same situation: either on the emotional level, or on the practical and physical one'. This the extreme that

I actually wipe you off the face of the earth. It is easy to accept and understand these feelings and the need to bounce back and be visible. To be placed in the same place where one wanted to be, and perceive himself as belonging to. However, there is no way to accept the choice of a terrorist action in order to solve this problem.

The basic need is to change the other's standpoint and attitude towards oneself, to begin with at least, to expect them to change their behavior. The way we want to present as useful, and suggest to explore in order to work out differences, is the Buberian dialogue. Buber developed his philosophical stance about dialogue in the late thirties. It is not well known that he began developing his thoughts about the dialogic relationship when he fled Nazi Germany to Israel and forsook the complexity that might arise in the relationship between the Jews and the Arabs living in Israel....

Buber stresses that in order to hold the dialogic relationship, both parties should have a mutual interest to meet, to be in contact, and to co-exist. Meaning, first of all, perceive the other as an existing entity with equal rights.

In different words, the bridging of difference, the containment and solution of conflict starts with the acknowledgement of the other as an equal partner to the relationship.

aida alayarian

Terrorism is not a new kind of war. It has always been an option when a body of people has faced overwhelming power against them. Of course, such a group could face the enemy as part of a set battle and would almost certainly lose in a devastating defeat. Why has the attack on the United States of America provoked such a response? Is this sense of dread occasioned by the reawakening of memories of previous catastrophic experiences?

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My generation has come to see the European Union primarily in terms of the Common Market. In this focus on economic cooperation it is often forgotten that for the original architects of 'closer union' the driving force was not primarily a commitment to economic liberalism but a reaction to their experience of the horrors of war. The Holocaust expressed how man could lose all vestiges of civilization, and Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Rwanda, and now the Balkans, Afghanistan, September 11th, Iraq, showed how we could with certainty destroy not only an enemy but also all life on the planet.

In response, world leaders moved beyond placing their hopes in the independence of nation states to interdependence through international cooperation. This was the basis for the United Nations and for the rapid development of international law and economic institutions. The adoption of the International declaration of Human Rights showed humanity's realization that if we did

not find a way of containing and transforming our aggressive urges there was a real danger that we would simply destroy our race and life on this earth. And now it is happening.

After the Second World War super-powers knew that a direct confrontation could bring a total war and complete nuclear catastrophe and so they diverted their aggression and market economy into sponsoring guerilla wars and terrorist campaigns in various parts of the world. While the collapse of the Soviet Union led to an end of such hostilities, most notably in South Africa and Northern Ireland, in other places especially in the Middle East there was a further deterioration. Terrorism was not merely a tool of the great powers, an expression of their open struggle. It was a phenomenon in its own right.

From a psychoanalytical point of view none of this is surprising. I think that Freud himself conveyed that human beings flourished better if they were free to conduct their lives as they chose and to take responsibility for themselves, within the boundaries of what was legal and acceptable in the society in which they found themselves. One of the distinctive contributions of psychoanalysis is the appreciation that congenial social and economic circumstances while helpful are not in themselves a sufficient protection against mental and emotional disturbance.

President Bush expresses the views of many people when he denounces

the actions of an 'Axis of Evil'. Terrorism is seen as the successor to communism – an evil belief system against which a war can be waged, and won.

Perhaps the most dangerous response is the tendency to think and speak of the situation in moralizing terms from either side. Terror is not a new weapon. Throughout history it has been used by those who could not prevail. How do we distinguish between a terrorist, a freedom fighter, a revolutionary and a brave army officer? How do we distinguish between the Nelson Mandela of forty years ago and the Nelson Mandela of now, between the terrorist and the global hero? Is it a change in the man or a change in our perception?

The start of such a road to reflection is the existential commitment to understanding what is going on in the mind of the terrorist. This stance is relatively easy to describe in a psychoanalytical text. It is quite another matter to promulgate it in the raging heat of a community torn apart by violence and death, but it is at precisely this level that I believe the creation of psychoanalytical space is most needed. I have come to the view that the psychoanalytic approach which can create a space for reflection, is too valuable to be restricted only to work with individuals and small groups. This is particularly important when political discourse in a community is overtaken by powerful emotions, as is the case during times of crisis, like now. The violence of domestic

and international terrorism provokes particularly strong feelings. The purpose of this dialogue in my view, is to create the space to think psychoanalytically about a tactic of war whose very purpose is to provoke powerful feelings and reactions, and to destroy the capacity to reflect.

The mechanism of triangulation and the use of symbolism are very familiar to psychoanalytically informed thinkers, the Oedipal Complex being one of the most important contexts. We are also familiar in working with individuals and families, and from our experience as therapists, we know how those who are 'weak' can provoke the 'strong' into counter-productive and pathological reactions. Similarly the organizationally weak terrorist group aims to provoke organizationally strong authorities into a substantial over-reaction that will damage their standing and moral authority both domestically and internationally. To this end the violence is not only intentionally criminal in terms of the domestic law but also of any human code such that by violating all social norms which it provokes outrage and cannot be ignored.

It is my experience that people from a stable law-abiding background find it almost impossible to comprehend that those who engage in terrorism believe themselves to be entirely justified. Terrorists and their supporters see themselves as righting some terrible wrong, some humiliation, and some deep

disrespect that has been done to them, to their community or to their nation, to their class. They in their weakness are, with great courage and risk to themselves and others, embarked on the heroic task of righting that wrong. This is one thing held in common by both the terrorists and those who are combating them. Both believe that to kill off the 'evil' is good, and should one die in the attempt, it is not only a moral and courageous act but also one which confirms the wickedness of the enemy. In this regard I do not make a difference between those who adopt terrorism to achieve a manifest political end, and those whose terrorism is more theological or transcendent. In both cases they are motivated by beliefs rather than by more obvious personal betterment. I do however take the view that there is often a fundamentalism about the way in which the beliefs are held which demonstrates a more primitive mode of thinking and one which is difficult to engage. Those colleagues who refused to work with psychotic patients as 'mad' are failing to even embark on the road to understanding. And the question of whose madness is it will remain unknown.

A psychoanalytical approach can bring substantial light to bear on the thinking of even the most disturbed patients so long as one appreciates that their thinking is not secondary process in form. I do however make some differentiation between terrorism, whose purpose is to bring about radical change, and the tactics

of terror used by dictatorial states to hold on to power and maintain the status quo. I am not making any judgments about moral equivalence, but I am differentiating between the two because the mechanisms are different and without some clarity of definition it is hard to come to an understanding of the different mechanisms by which violence is used in the political field.

While all of this may tell us something about the characteristics of terrorism as a tactic, and may even hint at some of the ways in which we may more appropriately address it, the question remains, 'What is the terrorist trying to achieve?'

I have already mentioned how in my experience there is always in those who embark on a campaign of terrorism a sense that they are righting some terrible wrong. What is the nature of this injustice? Of course social and economic disadvantage may play a role but it seems to me that this in itself is rarely a sufficient explanation. I have been struck in my dealings with people in all such communities how much they want to be treated with respect. My experience of politicians also is that disrespect and humiliation is rarely either forgotten or forgiven. One of the reasons why conflicts in countries such as where I was brought up run so deep and create such violence is because each side treats the most essential features of the other with disrespect. The same is true of religion. Religious beliefs fulfill a fundamental need to create order

out of the uncertain experiences of life. When belief structure, religious or otherwise, is attacked it is perceived as a threat to that which protects people from chaos. They defend against the attack for fear of a breakdown of the way of making sense of life, and dealing with the disappointments of the past, the present and fears for the future.

Such an attack may be overt as in the Crusades and all their more recent counterparts, or it may be the less obviously brutal but nonetheless threatening march of modernity and humanity. No surprise then that with a combination of fear and envy almost all the religious families are now seeing fundamentalist wings develop which in their different ways, and sometimes with violence, fight against the very culture that the West sees as offering the best hope for the future. Of course there are issues about world development, inequality, ignorance, disease and poverty, but these are not the only threats to world order.

Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East, Blacks and Whites, rich and poor – all of us on this single planet hurtling through space. Knowing is not always a comforting reassurance, but it does imply that understanding is possible if we can find the time, the space and the language to look for it. I hope that this dialogue helps me a little further on the journey, of being a political animal that wants peace, for everybody.

lennox thomas

Working as a therapist with children and families who are seeking asylum, I too often see the result of religious, civil and ethnic war and the effects of terrorism.

Whilst as a discipline many psychotherapists are involved in the care and treatment of those traumatised in this way, we have made little progress in the way we think about our theoretical approach.

Lennox Thomas first trained in child care and clinical social work before moving to the probation service, and work in psychiatric hospitals.

He is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice, and is also trained in couples and family therapy. He is a consultant and supervisor to two refugee counselling organisations, and was a founder member of NAFSIYAT.

Our clinical objectivity often gets in the way of meeting the client or patient and we protect ourselves by not wholly believing the stories that we hear of killing, mutilation and rape.

I first heard Dr Alehandeo Reyas, psychoanalytic psychotherapist, talk movingly about his long term work with a young woman from South America who had experienced persecution in her country and what she needed from him was to be listened to, and to begin her recovery by confirming how wrong what had happened to her was and thereby giving up neutrality, establishing a line between good and bad.

It could very well be that modes of psychotherapy different to how I was trained might not have angst about privileging the real empathic relationship above the transference in such cases. Like Dr Marie Langer, psychoanalyst, who worked with the poor in South America, I think that therapy can have a liberating function.

I imagined that we would spend much of our time today talking about the gulf wars and the enormity of it all both scared and bored me. I am not a pacifist, how could I be as a black boy always having had to fight my own corner, but there are some wars that should and should not be fought.

If indeed this war was about fighting for the liberty and justice of the people of Iraq, it was indeed several years too late. The Kurds were already bombed, the Marsh Arabs were already gassed, Saddam's Baath party was terrorising religious groups, Muslims, Christians and Jews. Democracy was dead and previous American administrations had signed the death certificate by their support of the regime. Anyway how could a man barely a product of the democratic system in the US talk about regime change, far less talk about democracy.

Weapons of mass destruction supplied by the west and meant to crush the religious right in Iran became a threat turned on the west itself. Much of what that dreadful man has done to worry the west was in fact done before and just after the first gulf war.

It has been said that this war is an empire war or a paternalistic war. It seemed that the US needed to show its displeasure and George Jnr blustered that he was losing his patience with Saddam during the crucial days before we slid into war with Saddam (not the good people of Iraq of course.)

In psychodynamic terms, if you think this way, could probably be seen as a means to restore the honour of the father George Snr. who did not quite sort out and deal with Saddam in 1990. Here the restoration of patriarchy like the mythic wars of Jason and the Argonauts is to confer honour or to serve as an act of atonement or reparation for previous errant behaviour of the son.

If we use such a lens to see possible motivation for this war then the associated behaviours have to be taken

into account: the continued exclusion of world government in the form of the United Nations and the dismissal of many members of the European Union as old Europe and therefore irrelevant.

We do not know what the future holds, many fear for their safety and like the early 1970s I am careful about the places that I go to in the centre of London with my family for fear of terrorist bombs. Like many people in this room I have discussed the issues with friends and had falling outs with people. My barber, an ex soldier, thinks less of me for my anti-war sympathies. He thought that I would have cared about the poor people in Iraq, he could not quite understand my view that bombing them and ushering chaos into their lives was not going to be of help to them.

I also have great concern for the servicemen and women out in the gulf. I have the memory of the previous gulf war which effectively took the life of one of my former child clients from the children's home where I worked with him as a very young child. Whilst the war did not kill him he was effectively dead emotionally when he came back. He disappeared living like a vagrant drinker and is probably dead now.

I don't know what therapists would go down in history for saying about this war because it is so very much outside the consulting room. It often takes a long time for atrocities to be understood and written about. The first time I read about the atrocities of the 1939 - 45 war and what it meant psychologically was from reading Eugene Heimler and Bruno Bettelheim in my mid twenties. Similarly our current episode might in time be understood and recorded.