

## **Does the World Need Psychotherapy? – Political and Personal Perspectives**

**Andrew Samuels (Professor of Analytical Psychology, University of Essex)**

Tuesday 19th May, 5.30-6.30 Studio Theatre (FREE)

Summary: Could psychotherapy be more than a means of easing personal distress or increasing insight? For many years, Andrew Samuels has been working with politicians, political parties and activist groups as a political consultant. This work, conducted internationally, gives Samuels unique experiences and insights. Themes he has addressed in this work include leadership, economic inequality, and aggression and violence.

The project of bringing 'therapy thinking' to engage with social and political issues has a long history going back to Freud and Jung and the humanistic psychotherapy pioneers like Carl Rogers. But the question remains: Does the public world 'out there' need psychotherapy and its ideas and approaches? Isn't it just psychobabble? In well-received books such as *The Political Psyche* (1993), *Politics on the Couch* (2001) and *A New Therapy for Politics?* (forthcoming, 2015), Samuels has worked out a disciplined and focused approach, careful not to over claim on behalf of psychotherapy. He argues that other areas of professional and academic expertise – such a sociology and cultural studies - have travelled the same journey. So it is not unreasonable to set out to see how this works for psychotherapy with its emphasis on emotion, imagination, and reflection on bodily processes – all of which can be spun in a political direction.

Whatever the answer, we can't simply forget the role of psychotherapy in relation to people's emotional issues 'inside' themselves, including their relationship difficulties and, crucially, their emotional responses to what is going on around them in society and the wider world. So there is a second question to be considered: Who these days needs psychotherapy in this more traditional sense? And what kind of therapy should be available? What is the role of the state in this regard?

Bio: Andrew Samuels is well known internationally as a commentator on social and political issues from the standpoint of 'therapy thinking'. His work on the father, sexuality, spirituality and the therapy relationship has also been widely appreciated. He has evolved a clinical blend of Jungian, humanistic and relational psychoanalytic approaches. He was Chair of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy and a founder of Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility. He is a Patron of the Association for Dance Movement Psychotherapy-UK. His many books have been translated into 19 languages including *The Father* (1986), *Psychopathology* (1989), *The Political Psyche* (1993), *Politics on the Couch* (2001), and *Persons, Passions, Psychotherapy, Politics* (2014). *A New Therapy for Politics?* will be published in 2015. [www.andrewsamuels.com](http://www.andrewsamuels.com)