

## Editorial

The newly – appointed editorial group members are Philip Culbertson, Angela Stupples, Margot Solomon and me, Paul Solomon. Readers of the Forum will have noticed an increasingly scholarly tone in the journal over time; this issue marks another step in that direction. The Forum is now a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. The editorial group is currently working, in the words of the editorial of issue 5 in 1999, to ‘enable the Journal to take its place in the international literature of psychotherapy,’ alongside other psychotherapy journals in Australia, Britain, America, and other countries. Whether the transition requires a change of name, from Forum to Journal, is a topic for discussion in the newsletter, by our Council, and by all members.

For me, the move to ‘scholarly journal’ status and a peer – review process, resonates with the registration issue. The Psychologists’ Board’s somewhat hostile opposition to the proposal that psychotherapy be registered under the HPCA, has been cogently critiqued by Seán Manning, Marianne Quinn and others in the Newsletter. Our NZAP Council responded suitably assertively. The smell of turf wars is in the air, but I take comfort in knowing some psychologists who hold in high esteem their psychodynamic and psychoanalytic supervisors and trainers, in New Zealand and in other countries. The opposing group is not homogeneously hostile; it contains friends as well as foes. War and rivalry are not inevitable.

It is different overseas: an email came from a student who, having completed a BA in psychology and the AUT Graduate Diploma year, is taking a gap year working in a psychiatric hospital in Cusco. Here he is regarded as a colleague, and reports that in Peru, European-trained psychologists later train in psychotherapy, which is valued as an advanced skill.

Some NZAP members have trained in psychology as well as psychotherapy, and seem to demonstrate how the disciplines can complement one another: Mark Thorpe’s article in this issue has more on the theme. While writing my MHS thesis, I interviewed psychologists in the USA who practice psychotherapy and meditation. One of them said he practiced psychodynamically and relationally, but personally found the language of psychology more incisive when he came to describe his work. Taking a leaf from his book, in my MHS thesis I drew on the work of psychologists (as well as psychoanalysts, neuroscientists and philosophers) to address questions around whether experience can be rendered into words, and the clear thinking of psychologists was very helpful to me. The psychotherapists whom I interviewed seemed to be more at ease with opening themselves to powerful counter-transference feelings, and reflecting on them. Perhaps psychotherapists and psychologists might benefit more from co-operation than from rivalry?

In the context of this debate around registration, Jonathan Fay reminds us ('Last Word,' Newsletter August 2006) that as a professional association we need to look to our qualifications process, and to including in it 'accurate assessment of the personal qualities required to practice effectively as a psychotherapist.' One such quality is a grounded awareness of one's own conscious and unconscious emotional processes, and the ability to reflect on them in order to develop sensitivity to transference and counter-transference. Psychotherapy trainings differ from psychology trainings in encouraging students to engage in personal psychotherapy, in addition to supervised practice, to assist in developing this core skill of psychotherapy.

We train ourselves to work with unconscious process – many psychologists and some psychotherapists do not acknowledge its existence. Recent research in neuroscience elucidates the role of implicit memory (which by definition is out of conscious awareness) in brain development and in the growth of human attachment. Thomas Lewis spoke of this at the NZAP conference in Queenstown, and his article was in the September 2005 Forum. Alan Schore (2003) outlines the implications of recent research for the practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis – what he calls a developmental neuropsychanalysis – and Fonagy et al. (2002) synthesize developmental research from a number of disciplines as it affects psychotherapeutic treatment of psychological disturbances. As well, research is uncovering the neurobiological basis of human empathy (Google 'mirror neurons' for an overview). Because I have often felt the effects of unconscious process both in my personal therapy and as a therapist with my patients, I have no need of reassurance on that score. It is heartening to feel my subjective experiences validated by research, and empowering to be able to stand strong in the face of attacks on psychotherapy, whether from psychologists or in the popular media.

We psychotherapists willingly immerse ourselves in the uncomfortable underside of life, the disowned shadow, the negative projection, the paradoxical, conflicted and mysterious aspect of experience: the unconscious, that which many prefer not to know. Bion (1970) quoted from Coleridge's 'Rime of the ancient mariner' to describe the challenges on the path towards opening our psyche to what is new or unfamiliar:

The analyst has to become infinite by the suspension of memory, desire, and understanding. He will inevitably feel dread, like

One that on a lonesome road doth walk in fear and dread,  
And having once turned round walks on  
And turns no more his head,  
Because he knows a frightful fiend doth close behind him tread.  
The frightful fiend represents indifferently the quest for truth and the active defences against it (p. 46).

However comforting it might be to imagine that chaos resides only in others, in the patient, or in an “other” professional group, Bion exhorts us to meet the patient’s fear and defensiveness in the humbling awareness that we too are sometimes fearful and defensive; randomized controlled trials cannot help us on that journey.

The articles in this issue reflect a feast of clinical concerns and therapeutic modalities. John Bryant outlines the role of neurobiology and attachment theory in understanding violence, while Mark Thorpe (a psychologist who practices psychotherapy) links Object-relations, Self-Psychology, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, and Mentalisation. Mihiteria Wharetohunga King describes a meeting with whakamā in psychotherapy, and Leon Tan offers an analysis of virtual life in mixed realities. From Mary Farrell we have an illustrated journey through Samuel Beckett’s analysis with Bion in the 1930’s, and from Margot Solomon a discussion of the forces that control us in large groups. Anne McDermott takes up the training theme in her discussion of the relevance of play to the teaching and learning of psychotherapy.

Paul Solomon

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## References.

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