

Editorial

Paul Solomon

I am very happy to introduce the 2010 issue of 'Forum: The Journal of the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists'. We open with Paraire Huata's keynote address from the 2009 conference, which was hosted in partnership between NZAP and Te Puna Wānaka, Christchurch. Paraire invited us to enter Te Ao Māori; and that was the conference that saw us vote members of Waka Oranga onto Council. I hope that Māori psychotherapists will feel encouraged to contribute to future issues of the Forum.

Paraire spoke of the challenge of encountering borders, places where we experience different customs, language, smells and tastes that are strange to us, where we touch beyond the physical realm. In editing the articles for this issue of the journal, I was struck by similarities between the challenges of crossing borders that separate Pakeha and Māori cultures, and the challenge, when reading each article, of entering the worldview, way of thinking and feeling, and ways of working, of each contributor. They are diverse in their theoretical affinities, yet all share a passionate commitment to the possibility of healing through dialogue, through *kōrero*. All the writers, in one way or another, address what it is to cross the borders that divide each therapist from his or her clients; and Keith Tudor's article "Bridges across troubled water" discusses the wisdom of humanistic and psychodynamic psychotherapies seeking common ground.

Some of Keith's recommendations about conditions needed to build a solid bridge between psychotherapy modalities are, it seems to me, applicable to how Pakeha might approach learning about Māori: for example, acceptance, curiosity, empathy, and lack of defensiveness. But, as Vamik Volkan (2002) observes, dialogues between 'opposing' groups (Serbs and Croats, Arabs and Israelis, Germans and Jews, etcetera) are initially limited by the defensive relegation to unconsciousness of all awareness of a need for dialogue, and any sense that issues remain unresolved for present generations. In the New Zealand context, some Pakeha dismiss or do not feel any need to think about Te Tiriti o Waitangi or Māori grievances and experiences: no bridge, then.

Ashleigh Phoenix's paper, which she presented at our conference in Nelson in 2010, is entitled "The hijacked mind: An examination of the trauma of sexual abuse, using the events of September 11, 2001 as a metaphor". Ashleigh, too, refers to gulfs and attempts to bridge them: as she so poignantly observes, there is a gulf between the state of mind of the person who has experienced catastrophic trauma, and the listener; and she links this to one of the consequences of 9/11, that we in the West have lost our previous sense of safety, of going-on-being, and are left confused.

Other contributors have also written accounts of clinical work with their patients: Itay Lahav has contributed a paper, "The adolescent", in which he outlines ideas about assessment of adolescents for suitability for therapy; and shares a case history from his practice. Papers on child and adolescent therapy have appeared all too rarely in the Journal, and this one is very welcome (as is Sandra Winton's paper, mentioned later). Carol Worthington's paper, "Fragment of a therapy: Experiences with psychosis", describes in some detail ten sessions of psychoanalytic psychotherapy with a patient who struggled with psychotic processes, and I feel privileged to have read this intimate account. It is perhaps redundant to say so, but again, the metaphors of 'gulf' and 'bridge' seem relevant: Carol describes how in their work together this patient was able, to some extent, to melt the harsh grip of her paranoid-schizoid defences, and eventually find a bridge to a more functional 'reality'. Margaret Bowater's paper, "Dreams at the edge of death", is based on her conference presentation and workshop in Nelson (2010). Margaret offers a distillation of many years experiences of hearing workshop participants and psychotherapy clients' accounts of dreams and near-death experiences; and she contextualises these by quoting dream accounts from antiquity, and from other cultures.

We are fortunate to have Nancy McWilliams' commentary, "Individuality: A threatened concern in the era of evidence-based practice?" Many of us know Professor McWilliams as the author of books on which we found our practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and as an editor of the Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual; we know her work so well that when she came to address us in Auckland last year it was hard not to think of her as 'Nancy'. Professor McWilliams addresses the gulf between current conceptualisations of psychotherapy as a collection of techniques, targeting discrete disorders; and the ways in which many practitioners attend to individual differences in their patients, and indeed in their own personalities. Sean Manning's contribution "Is psychotherapy any good?" addresses similar themes. It is what Sean calls a "summary of summaries", reviewing some of the research around evidence-based practice, and inviting readers to take up the conversation regarding the validity and effectiveness of psychodynamic therapy.

Chris Milton offers an invitation into the territory of a Jungian analyst with his paper, "Towards individuation: A Jungian view of being a body and being together." He begins with a discussion, which he calls a 'thumbnail sketch', of the theory of analytical psychology; and he offers his reflections on how Jung's thinking anticipated that of later psychoanalytic theoreticians. Chris includes a case vignette from his own practice, followed by a "constructed, fictionalised case" that embodies elements of his clinical experiences with several patients. He invites us to enter a world that may be unfamiliar to the majority of NZAP members, and he uses some of the language of phenomenology, that has not (as far as I recall)

hitherto found a place in the Forum. Sandra Winton's article, "Paul Russell and repetition" introduces Russell's reworking of Freud's thought about the repetition compulsion, and Russell's very vivid 'theory of the crunch'; and Sandra uses these ideas to elucidate her work with two patients, an adult and a child.

Finally, Victoria Grace's review of Ian Parker's book "Lacanian psychoanalysis: Revolutions in subjectivity", introduces yet another territory: one that is unfamiliar to me and, I imagine, some other readers of the Journal. Parker, in her view, delineates the socio-political and historical dimensions that are implicit in Lacan's thought. I identified with Victoria's suggestion that the book would be interesting to those psychotherapists who have Lacanian psychoanalysis 'in the periphery of their vision, and would like to learn more'.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Journal, and will be inspired to contribute to a future issue. I acknowledge all the contributors to this issue, and thank them for their generosity and hard work in sharing their experiences in written form.

Reference

Volkan, V., Ast, G., Greer, W.F. (2002). *The Third Reich in the unconscious: Transgenerational transmission and its consequences*. New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge.