Editorial

Keith Tudor and Alayne Hall (Ngati Whatua, Te Rarawa, Tainui)

E ngā waka, e ngā mana, e ngā hau e wha, ngā mihi nui ki a koutou arā me to whānau hoki. Tenā koutou, tenā koutou, tenā koutou, katoa. He tino hari maua, i te tari putanga tuatoru na *Ata: Journal of Psychotherapy Aotearoa New Zealand*. To the many talented and esteemed who are propelled together by the four winds, spread throughout the islands, we greet you and your families.

This special issue of the journal reflects the main theme of the NZAP's 2014 Conference, "The Essence of Psychotherapy", in six articles based on papers presented at the Conference on a range of subjects that encompass the body (Cockburn), groups (von Sommaruga-Howard), mother-infant attachment and the environment (Thorpe), dreams (Bowater), recovery (Holdem), and ethics and morality (Coates), and a seventh article based on some research into the theme of the issue by Keith Tudor.

In the first article, Garry Cockburn discusses the complex history of the perception of the body in psychodynamic psychotherapy; a history which has seen the body's role being understood as integral to the therapeutic process rather than just the location for negative enactments. The title of his article, "Embodying the mind and reminding the body" is a delightful play on the relationship between mind and body and reminds us to include the body in our thinking about psychotherapy. Of course, using the word "thinking" in this way still privileges the cognitive over the somatic, and, amongst many other things, Garry's article invites us to consider language; the dialectical *and* unitary relationship between mind and body being perhaps best represented by the term "MindBody" — and/or "BodyMind". This article is an example of a contemporary interest in integrating psychoanalysis in(to) body psychotherapy, and Garry does this through the work of Wilfred Bion (1977, 1991, 2005) and Thomas Odgen (2001, 2004). Whilst Wilhelm Reich was the first psychoanalyst to consider the body in psychotherapy, Garry also refers to the work of Sandor Ferenczi who has received more attention in recent years as evidenced by explorations of his work in four special editions of the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* in the last eight years. Although Garry acknowledges that his article considers the psychological and the physical more than social and spiritual dimensions, we nevertheless appreciate his sociological reference to the pervasiveness of traumatic images. As an illustration of Garry's point, a brief online search of *The New Zealand Herald* as we were writing this editorial found that four out of the top six stories were concerned with some form of trauma, i.e., upsetting racist and sexist comments, serious injury, a physical attack and further threat, and a homicide

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inquiry, mediated by a sports item, and a good news story. In the face of such social and psychological trauma, we support Garry's call: "What is needed is a strongly 'relational' and gentle 'sensori-motor' therapy so that our psyches do not fragment" (p. 108).

In different ways the next two articles represent a social dimension and a social concern with the former also taking up the theme of trauma introduced by Garry.

Teresa von Sommaruga-Howard describes her dawning understanding that intergenerational trauma was having a perplexing and pervasive impact on every aspect of her work with groups in Finland. Working with individuals from a country and culture other than one's own one is inevitably going to pose challenges, many of them unanticipated at the outset. A different first language will compound those challenges, particularly if they relate to language and prohibitions against speaking. As one of Teresa's group members said: "Speaking here is very painful and full of things I want to say but I'm unable to say." Additionally, as one of the peer reviewers of Teresa's article pointed out, "A paper that attempts to understand the behaviour of an ethnic group in terms of their history, written by someone who is not a member of that group is always going to be an uncertain project." Thus, in the very act of writing of her article, Teresa faced some of the same challenges that she and the Finnish large groups faced: how to articulate with any confidence that which is barely known and, further, about which communication has always been prohibited. Indeed, this is what Teresa has endeavoured to do, describing how her exploration of the bloody history of Finland helped her begin to understand why her attempts to facilitate communication and find meaning were rebuffed: "I began to understand that when meaning has never been found for devastating pain that can only be avoided, a situation arises … of encountering the 'denial of denial'." (p. 115). Teresa brings her personal history to the article, writing how her own family's denial of denial made her sensitive to its presence but also enabled her to stay with the process. She acknowledges that it is "the next generation [that] is left to manage painful feelings with unclear origins" (p. 124) — with potential massive socio-political consequences.

In the next article Miranda Thorpe describes how her travels through South East Asia and India awakened her curiosity about how caregivers can manage babies' ablutions without recourse to nappies of any sort. Her research into a traditional indigenous technique of potty training, which in the West is called "Elimination Communication", found that it relies on the caregiver becoming attuned to a newborn baby's innate rhythms, its body language and habits. One of the mothers Miranda interviewed described the evolving nature of the technique: "You have to pay great attention at the start, but then it is easy" (p. 134). Miranda compares this level of attunement to a therapist's detailed and careful observation of a client's "output", alongside holding the client in mind. Additionally, in exploring the sociopolitical and environmental impacts of our reliance on disposable nappies, Miranda poses questions about what is at stake as we relentlessly emphasise and unwittingly honour Western models of "efficiency", "cleanliness", and "self-sufficiency". Elimination Communication relies on deeply connected families in which caregivers have the time and motivation to pay close attention to babies, matching their rhythms to their babies' rhythms. The result is grown-up children who "can describe their body sensations linked to their emotions in minute detail" (p. 135) and who stay closely connected with their extended families. Citing

Winnicott (1974) and Bowlby (1988), Miranda argues that healthy independence can only arise from a capacity for dependence, a capacity that can be undermined by Western addiction to "freedom" and "choice" fuelled by the pervasive propaganda of consumerism.

While Miranda touches on the spiritual aspects of indigenous culture, Margaret Bowater's description of her personal and professional dreamwork reminds us that we all have access to our own personal/transpersonal mythical realm. From the beginning of psychotherapy, dreamwork in one form or another has been of its essence and Margaret has tapped into this tradition for some 20 years, collecting her own and others' dreams, leading courses on working with dreams, and participating in dream-sharing groups. She tracks her interest in dreams from her fascination with poetry in her childhood to the realisation of the significance of dreams when she trained as a counsellor many years later. From that time, her own and others' dreams have been a source of information and inspiration. Margaret describes some of the different ways in which our dreams can inform our waking life; as reflections of conscious or unconscious dilemmas, offering hope or encouragement, as communications across the barrier of death, and highlighting unresolved issues, particularly those arising from past trauma. Decades of being nourished and enriched by dreams gives Margaret the credentials to advise us to listen to our dreams and "find therapy for our own souls" (p. 145).

Personal experience is also the starting point for Lynne Holdem's article which, in tribute to Eigen (1985), is entitled "Running between catastrophe and faith" and is an exploration of the effects, both devastating and liberating, of a traumatic experience on her life and on her clinical work. For Lynne, surviving a tsunami while on holiday in Samoa with her family resulted in the dissolution of defensive barriers and a subsequent "liberation and expansion of the self" (Ghent, 1990, p. 1). Drawing on Winnicott (as cited in Ghent, 1990), Eigen (1981, 1985, 2009), Ghent, and Ogden (1999), as well as local reference points (Colin McCahon's work and the haka "Ka mate! Ka mate!"), Lynne explores how catastrophe can heighten sensitivity and aliveness by allowing an oscillation between paranoid schizoid and depressive states. She finds that this falling apart and coming together enables us "to receive the impact of emotional reality and to evolve with it, gathering in and reuniting elements that have been fragmented, enabling us to affirm love while knowing hate" (p. 153). Through two clinical vignettes Lynne explores the transformation of catastrophe into healing. In the first, she wonders whether her inadvertent admission of helplessness showed her client that she could acknowledge and contain catastrophic feelings, thus giving her client access to a position of surrender rather than submission (Ghent, 1990). In the second, Lynne hypothesises that her own experience of trauma gave her the emotional freedom, agency, and confidence to be active enough to penetrate her client's dissociative defences, helping her find, as Ghent (1999) put it, her own "will and power" (p. 7).

In the final article from presentations at the Conference, Tony Coates discusses science and structure determinism and, in doing so, challenges the notion that psychiatry and psychological medicine are "science" rather than based on ethics and morality. In this closely referenced and argued article, Tony draws on autopoiesis theory and the biology of cognition to show that psychological medicine is fundamentally mistaken in endeavouring to base its diagnoses on the same principles as other schools of medicine

as no structural cause for psychological distress has been shown to exist. He suggests that understanding that this endeavour is mistaken may enable those working in psychological medicine to stop trying to treat illnesses and instead attend to alleviating suffering. This requires us to see people as human beings like us, rather than as a conglomeration of symptoms which can be collected on a questionnaire and fitted into a diagnostic category. Rather than seeing them as disordered, ill, or diseased, Tony suggests that we consider the context of their lives and see their behaviour from multiple perspectives; as a new way of conducting and expressing oneself or an expression of cultural diversity which may be associated with suffering. In this way, suffering becomes the problem not the suffering person. Tony's article is challenging in many respects: it draws on little-known theories; it compares psychiatric diagnosis with the European Catholic Inquisition of the 15th century (CE); it describes psychological theories as reified abstractions; and, finally, it challenges us to consider deeply how we think about and work with other human beings who are suffering.

This issue of *Ata* concludes with an article by Keith responding to the title of the Conference and exploring what we might understand by the term "the essence of psychotherapy". Described by one reviewer as "structured, coherent and erudite, moving smoothly and engagingly from enquiry to conclusion", Keith's article includes a review of the psychotherapeutic literature which refers to the "essence of psychotherapy". While only 18 references were found, seven of which were excluded, Keith found that the remainder described four specific areas of psychotherapy; its starting point, its outcome and process, and therapist attributes or qualities. Keith's article also offers a critique of essentialism: the reassuring but misplaced belief that there can and must be an essential element or nature to any object or endeavour. He concludes by suggesting that energy invested in attempting to determine the essence of psychotherapy may be better used in dealing with our own anxiety about the undeniable complexity and pluralism of our clinical work and of our lives.

We are pleased that the journal is generating interest, submissions, and debate. In previous issues of *Ata*, we have had reflective contributions on articles in other journals, a feature that we hope to continue in future issues; in Ata 17(2), a lively debate about culture between Drs Jonathan Fay and Farhad Dalal; in the previous issue, in response to a case study by Susan Hawthorne, an article on the ethics of seeking consent from clients for publication; and, in this issue, Keith's reflections on a literature review of the theme of the issue. We very much welcome further reflections from colleagues on previously published articles, whether they take the form of a letter, an article, or a review.

In the last issue, in the acknowledgements in Bron Deed's article, we wrongly attributed her thanks to Ingrid-Rose Nagl, a local therapist, when they should have been to Ingrid Rose, a process-oriented psychologist from the USA. We apologise to Bron and to Ingrid Rose for this mistake and for any embarrassment caused, and have corrected this in the online version of the article.

As ever, we acknowedge and thank Hineira Woodard for her translations/interpretations of the abstracts — tēna koe, Hineira; we also thank Jyoti Smith for her continued editorial assistance, and the School of Public Health and Psychosocial Studies at the Auckland University of Technology for funding Jyoti's role this year.

In the editorial of the previous issue, we acknowledged the proximity of the two issues of this Volume of the journal. With this issue we have almost caught up with our schedule and look forward to delivering two issues in specified months in 2015: the first, the generic issue of the year, in July, and the second, on the theme of the 2015 NZAP Conference, "Shifting Ground", in December. The submission deadlines for the next three issues are:

Volume 19(1) — 30th April 2015
Volume 19(2) "Shifting Ground" — 9th September 2015
Volume 20(1) — 7th April 2016.

The other news is that, for economic reasons, from the next issue, Volume 19(1), the journal will move to an online-only format. Members and subscribers will receive notice of publication and be able to access the issue online. We also plan to put all volumes of *Forum*, *Ata*'s predecessor online so that members and subscribers will have access to the complete archives of the two journals, comprising over 200 contributions (articles, reviews, obituaries, editorials) in a format that will allow for searching articles, subjects, authors, and keywords. Whilst we appreciate that some readers — including ourselves — will miss having a hard (paper) copy of the journal we hope that this will be compensated by the more flexibity search facility that the online format offers, as well as the benefit in the reduction of costs — and, of course, our carbon footprint.

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