

## Editorial

By happenstance or synchronicity, the current issue has a strong theme: almost all the papers discuss particular emotional states – forgiveness; hope; envy; arousal and disgust; and the more complex combinations of states that constellate around trauma and brutality. This theme was quite unplanned, but it is a very interesting one; psychotherapy has given complex emotions (beyond the fundamental set of grief, fear, anger and joy) insufficient examination in general, and virtually no attention in a political context.

Despite important work by Tomkins (Demos, 1995), Nathanson (1994) and a few others, the topic of emotion is still a confused and undeveloped one. There is even a lack of general agreement on terminology: what is the relationship between ‘emotion’, ‘feeling’ and ‘affect’? Are the specific emotions which we recognise innate to human beings, or culturally determined – as their valuations certainly are? Despite a good deal of work on cross-cultural recognition of emotions, where Ekman (1973) is the leading figure, the picture is still unclear. Nor is it wholly clear whether emotions can be differentiated physiologically, or only psychologically (although it does seem that at least the ‘negative’ emotions are psychologically distinct: Berkowitz, 1999). Affective neuroscience (Panksepp, 1998) is making new contributions to these questions.

What makes emotions particularly relevant for this journal is their relational quality. Many of our feelings are primarily or even wholly *about others*. This operates on a group level as well as on an individual one; groups, institutions and nations can be thought of as constituted and bound together by the emotional relationships between their members, and between each group and other groups. This is the territory which the papers in the current issue explore.

PPI has already published two papers by Augustine Nwoye, who teaches in Tanzania. The first two have addressed specifically African themes; this paper, although it has some African resonances, looks at the universal human question of hope. Again synchronistically, a recent article in *Therapy Today* is entitled ‘Hope: the neglected common factor’ (O’Hara, 2010), and this is Professor Nwoye’s theme: as he says, ‘the mainstream psychology literature has largely been silent on the proper meaning of therapeutic hope and hoping, and how hope can be resuscitated in people demoralized by extreme hardships or unpredictable life events’. Nwoye offers both a thorough critical survey of the existing literature and his own analysis of ‘the ontological complexity of hope’.

If we look at the other papers through the lens of hope, they could be thought of as offering a variety of reasons why we might be cautiously hopeful about political possibilities. Uri Hadar addresses one of the most apparently stuck and knotted contemporary issues – the Israeli–Palestinian conflict – and looks head-on at the question of Israeli brutality: how has it come into being? What holds it in place? And how might we conceive of it softening? As others have done, Hadar relates the current actions of the Israeli state to the legacy of the Holocaust; but unlike some others, he identifies a specific mechanism that links the two: the theme of ‘sacrifice conversion’. He argues that, as the lamb was substituted for Isaac, so Israel is unconsciously substituting the Palestinians for the Jews.

Gottfried Heuer's paper examines the complex emotion state of 'burn-out', which he summarizes as 'self-neglect that can be understood as ultimately suicidal'. He provides an enormous backdrop for his theme, from ancient and early modern alchemy to the work of Wilhelm Reich, and treats burn-out as the template for the current environmental crisis. Linking with Nwoye's paper, Heuer concludes by suggesting that our current state of 'individual, collective and global burn-out' requires a response of 'radical hope'.

One emotion which has received a good deal of attention from psychotherapists is envy (Klein, 1975). Sue Cowan-Jenssen shifts the emphasis from envy as a psychological state to envy as 'a culturally generated phenomenon'. She points out the factors in our culture which amplify and encourage envious feelings, and explores their economic and social function – and also, our own envious feelings as practitioners in relation to colleagues and clients. Birgit Heuer's paper functions almost as a rebalancing to Cowan-Jenssen's, countering envy with forgiveness, and pointing out that forgiveness exists not only as a supreme moral achievement, but also (like envy) as an integral part of everyday experience. She moves on to the clinical context, describing forgiveness as 'an imaginal creative act that unfolds over time'.

It is a pleasure to publish articles from time to time which come from rather different worlds; and Catherine Butler's article, from the world of psychosexual medicine, brings us both a refreshing difference of perspective and a reinforcement of familiar themes. Dr Butler discusses two very difficult emotional states which can arise in therapeutic encounters: arousal and disgust. As she points out, there are particular features of her own working environment which tend to call out these reactions; however, the same is true, though not for exactly the same reasons, in ordinary psychotherapy, and we don't find it much easier to discuss these feelings than sexual health practitioners do. Butler's paper starts off a discussion that needs to be had at some length.

Finally, Part 2 of Sandra Bloom's splendid paper on trauma and art, first published in the mid 1990s, completes this issue. Strikingly in this context, Bloom quotes Herbert Marcuse as saying that 'the artist has a responsibility to help society deal with its hidden conflicts and contradictions and *must embody hope in any way possible* [my italics]. To do this we must be able to share in a vision of what does not, but still could, exist. He said that "if art cannot change the world, it can help to change the consciousness and drives of the men and women who would change the world". Can we usefully substitute 'therapy' and 'therapist' for 'art' and 'artist' in this statement?

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