

Editorial

KEITH TUDOR, Auckland University of Technology, Aotearoa New Zealand

This journal has always represented the interplay between psychotherapy and politics, and especially the body politic (that is, a psychotherapy *of* politics), and the politics of the body (a particular form of politics *in* psychotherapy) (Totton, 2000). This is no less true of this issue and, following two special, themed issues, this generic issue of the journal is a particularly full and rich one, including two articles that specifically focus on the body.

In the first of three articles in this issue written by contributors from Israel, Shinar Pinkas-Samet explores the body in context and introduces the concept of “uber-bodyness”, that is, a culturally internalised ideal of a body. The article, set against the background of the “sleepy” city of Beer Sheeva in southern Israel, written from the perspective of a neo-Reichian relational body psychotherapy, and incorporating a case study, explores the impact of metaphor, movement, the collective unconscious, body shape, and shame.

The second article, by Yeal Shahar, also discusses an aspect of the body, this time an impingement of and on the body, namely, circumcision. From a perspective also informed by body psychotherapy, Yeal explores the emotional and psychological significance of male circumcision, and raises a number of issues that therapists might consider in their work with adults who have been circumcised. In the article Yeal makes a particularly pertinent and, I think, poignant point that an act that claims to be one of devotion and surrender to faith implants a mistrust in the newborn baby.

In the third in the trio of articles from Israeli contributors to this issue, Nissim Avissar discusses how to work sensitively with political material in psychotherapy, thus representing an aspect of politics *in* psychotherapy. Acknowledging the work of both Samuels (2006) and Totton (2006), Nissim examines conventional one-to-one therapeutic praxis from the point of view of the political contents that arise in the course of a therapy session, and, in doing so, draws out the distinction between “inside” and “outside” and specifically that of the internal and external investment of energy.

The next article completes another trilogy, this time, of the work of one author, Steve Gunther. The journal has previously published two articles by Steve, based on his doctoral study in social ecology on the interpersonal psychology of power, on the ethics of regulation (Gunther, 2014) and alternatives to adversarial processes in the regulation of professional ethics (Gunther, 2015). His current article, on the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of harm questions notions of the

*Correspondence to: Keith Tudor, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, Aotearoa New Zealand.
E-mail: keith.tudor@aut.ac.nz

complainant as victim, and explores alternative epistemological views regarding the power that clients have and hold. He also questions linear views of causality and, therefore, responsibility, and suggests that a more complex understanding of such positions and power would help investigative processes and procedures. I appreciate Steve's work, which is well-researched, thoughtful, stimulating and useful, and I am grateful to him for having submitting all three articles to this journal.

When doing politics or being political, one is often dealing with or, at least, mindful of history. Some years ago, the journal devoted most of an issue to reflecting on the events of May '68 (see Blackwell, 2009), and this year I was mindful of the 100th anniversary of the Irish Easter Uprising of 1916, and of a number of associated commemorative events. I thought it would be good to mark it and asked my friend and colleague, Helena Hargarden, to engage with me in a correspondence about our associations with that event and reflections on its impact. The result is an article which represents a psychotherapy *of* politics and which takes the form of a psychopolitical dialogue which encompasses a number of aspects of the Uprising and its implications, including the role of rebel songs. As it is somewhat invidious for me as the Editor of the journal to introduce an article to which I have contributed, I'll leave it to one of the peer reviewers of the article who commented that: "I felt I was seeing history, people and places, times and cultural/political forces through a lens which was both distant (as the voice of history) and near in the intimate stories of the conversationalists". The reviewer (who is neither Irish or English) went on to say that, as he read it, he was "finding connections with the subtle nuances of relationships and histories which inform our contemporary experience particular to political and social psycho analysis" – and, of course, this is part of the project that this journal represents and re-presents, and one to which I encourage other authors to contribute in various, creative forms.

The next three contributions deal, variously, with the implications of the referendum held in the United Kingdom (UK) on 23rd June this year, which resulted in favour of the "Brexit", that is, for the UK to leave the European Union (EU) in 2018.

In the first of these contributions, Ian Parker, one of the Associate Editors of the journal, asks what psychology might tell us about Europe and, specifically the way in which Britain voted in the referendum. He offers a critical review of five articles, each of which posed various psychological perspectives about the referendum, though, interestingly, none of them was written by a psychologist. Ian makes some important points about psychological discourse, psychologising (specifically of politics), and the role of psychoanalysis in reframing psychology – and concludes, of course, that the question (whether the UK should stay or leave the EU) should not have been posed or taken as a psychological one.

Over the years, the journal has had a section entitled "Notes from the Front Line", which has included different kinds of contribution, in the form of notes, reports, manifestos, etc., which are not subject to peer review. We have not had material for this in a few years, but, in this issue, we have an abundance. In the first of these I reproduce a blog, by Will Fish on "post truth" politics which, reflecting on the "Brexit" vote and the rise of the US Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, offers a commentary on people's changing attitudes towards expert opinion, evidence, and truth. In the second, Bob Hinshelwood offers his reflections on the meaning of the Brexit, and especially on demographics concerning age. Following this Anton Ashcroft, a psychologist with a lot of experience in the forensic field, offers an assessment of Donald Trump which not only considers his personality but also raises the wider implications of his behaviour and that of others in power or in powerful positions, and the extreme politics this represents.

Earlier this year, the Society for Psychotherapy Research (<http://www.psychotherapyresearch.org/>) held its 47th international meeting (conference) in Jerusalem, Israel. In March this year, the London newspaper *The Independent*, published a letter from over 300 signatories, criticising this decision. I knew of some colleagues who had attended the conference and asked them what they thought of the letter and the result is a fourth note from the Front Line which comprises: a background summary by Andrew Samuels, one of the signatories of the original letter requesting signatures; a response by Mark Widdowson, who attended the conference; and a response to his comments from the original group. I am grateful to both parties for their willingness to engage in what is an important debate about the nature of organisation, objection and activism, and the value and implications of a boycott. If readers have further responses, I would be interested in publishing them.

Editing and producing a journal takes a lot of work and, for the past two years, I have been helped in this by Jyoti Smith, a psychotherapist and, in a former life, an editor. Although she has eschewed a formal role and recognition, such as that of an editorial assistant, on the eve of her departure from *PPI*, I do want to recognise and publicly thank her for her invaluable contribution to the journal, especially in dealing with submissions and correspondence, in helping contributors with their submissions, and in supporting me to make the house style of the journal and, therefore, its overall look, more consistent. Tēna koe, thank you, Jyoti. I also want to acknowledge the support of Auckland University of Technology in providing the financial support to employ Jyoti for the past two years, support that has certainly enabled me to be more productive.

The next issue, the first of 2017, is also a generic issue for which we already have some interesting articles and, of course, welcome more. Following that, I am planning two further special issues for 2017: the first on “The Politics of Psychotherapy Research” (May 2017), the deadline for the submission to which is 31st January 2017; and on “The Politics of Psychotherapy Training and Supervision” (October 2017), the deadline for which is 31st May. As ever, I hope that you not only are stimulated and challenged by the issue, but also enjoy it!

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