

Editorial

In the last issue of *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, my colleague, Associate Editor, and friend, Gottfried Heuer and I had a robust dialogue “on style” (Heuer & Tudor, 2017). This issue of *PPI* represents one of our points of agreement: that the politics of this journal represents – and should represent – a range of style and forms. In this issue we have that range: from what could be described as a “heavyweight” theoretical paper (Olivier’s), through articles that describe a particular aspect of the interplay between psychotherapy and politics (Andreescu’s, Bloom’s, and Lee’s), and a reflective piece about a psycho-political movement (Skleding’s), to creative contributions to the journal’s new Arts and Poetry sections (Heuer’s, and Lee’s). Curiously, as with other generic issues of the journal, some common themes or connective threads appear: in this issue, Lacan, trauma, post-trauma, and Trump. We also continue to have a range of contributors, both geographically (South Africa, the US, the UK, and Aotearoa New Zealand) and in terms of their association with the journal: that is, contributors who have had articles previously published in the journal some time ago (Bloom in 2004, 2005, 2006, as well as in 2010 and 2011), more recently (Olivier in 2012 and 2013, and Andreescu in 2013), very recently (Lee, this year), and one (Skleding) whose article is his first in the journal – though, I hope, not his last!

In the first article, drawing on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s work, Bert Olivier discusses the ethical and political status of theorizing the subject and offers connections and challenges to psychotherapeutic practice. He also, drawing on Lacan’s ideas about subjectivity and desire, challenges the implicit – and, sometimes, explicit – conformity of psychotherapy and of psychotherapists in their work and attitudes towards, and assumptions about, their clients. In addition, he develops the concept of deterritorialization, which, I think, is a particularly pertinent one when we think about the importance of ground, land, and territory in a colonial and, arguably, postcolonial context. The other connection I made was between Lacan’s ideas about subjectivity and becoming and those of Carl Rogers. Not many would see these two as likely bedfellows but Olivier’s paper got me thinking about an article along the lines of “If Carl and Jacques had ever met . . . ?” Perhaps someone might write and submit it! Olivier’s article is not an easy read – at one point he himself acknowledges the abstract nature of its argument – it is, nevertheless, rewarding and deserves its position and status as the lead article in this issue.

The second article also draws on the ideas of Jacques Lacan – specifically his concept of different faces (the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real) to discuss facial disfigurements. Andreescu explores this through three layers of analysis: a personal account of a specific encounter she had; an analysis of what Andreescu refers to as “the structural underlay” of one’s experience of an embodied face; and various accounts of the trauma of disfigurement, including trauma sustained through war. This is a fascinating, layered, and well-structured article, which is brought to life by means of the specific accounts and illustrations.

The theme of trauma continues in the next article. The new American president, Donald Trump, is clearly making an impact, including on readers of and contributors to *PPI*. This is the third consecutive issue which has had some discussion of him and the political and psychological implications of his election, presidency, and personality. In this issue, Sandra Bloom uses a post-traumatic lens to understand the antidemocratic forces that led to Trump’s election (interestingly, by a minority vote). Drawing on social psychology research on authoritarianism, terror management theory, and obedience studies, Bloom offers some guidelines for, as she puts it, “Surfing the edge of chaos . . .”, guidelines that, I think, the reader will find helpful in both protesting and surviving. As we will not have heard the last of or on Trump, I encourage others to reflect on the international political zeitgeist that includes antipolitics politics, and post-truth politics. This article is followed, appropriately enough, by a cartoon created by Gottfried Heuer.

In the last issue – and the first to show the “new look” of the journal – I introduced a new section of “Controversial Discussions”, edited by David Pavón-Cuellar. In this issue David himself has engaged in such a discussion with his colleague Mario Orozco Guzmán on the theme of the politics of psychoanalysis in liberal and neoliberal capitalism. This

article is a good example of how two colleagues, with both similar and different analyses and perspectives, can engage in a robust debate – in this case about the similar and respective scope(s) and purpose(s) of psychoanalysis and socialism. I am grateful to David for commissioning and engaging in this particular discussion (which was peer-reviewed), and look forward to other such discussions, some of which will be linked to the themes of the special issues and which may or may not be peer-reviewed.

The theme or common thread of trauma continues into the next article, about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In the article, Deborah Lee offers a critique of current discourses about PTSD as well as post-traumatic growth from a person-centred political perspective. Lee takes issue with the pathologizing nature of some of these discourses, offers a critical analysis of PTSD and state-recommended treatments, which, amongst other things, marginalize person-centred and other humanistic therapies. Following her introductory article in the last issue of the journal, I am pleased to welcome Deborah's first major article in *PPI* – which, I am sure, will be the first of many.

The final article in this section of peer-reviewed articles is a reflective piece by Mark Skelding on the gathering and movement of Heart Politics. I first met Mark a few years ago in the context of discussions about the state registration of psychotherapists in Aotearoa New Zealand (see Tudor, 2011), about which we were both sceptical. Then he began to tell me about a gathering with which he had been involved for some years and which had been going for some 25 years. I (of course!) encouraged him to write about it, and the result is his contribution to this issue, which is a fascinating account of the philosophy, processes, and structures of Heart Politics, a psycho-political gathering that has impacted on many people's lives and informed psycho-therapeutic practice and thinking among certain professionals and lay healers and helpers in this country. I am grateful to Mark for writing this and especially for the way in which he has included the voices of a number of people involved in this gathering and movement.

Also in the last issue, I announced that I wanted to revitalize the Reviews section of the journal under the editorship of Deborah Lee, supported by Gottfried Heuer. I am delighted to say that Deborah has hit the ground running, as a result of which we have two book reviews, of *The Political Self: Understanding the Social Context for Mental Illness*, edited by Rod Tweedy, reviewed by Els van Ooijen; and of *Against Empathy: the Case for Rational Compassion* by Paul Bloom, reviewed by Philemon Eva.

In the Arts and Poetry section, there is a poem by Deborah Lee.

I hope that readers will support the new, expanded look and vision for *PPI*, specifically and practically by submitting contributions for consideration as controversial discussions, talks, pieces for "Notes from the Front Line", reviews, and images and poems.

Looking ahead, we have a number of special themed issues for which we are inviting papers:

- Volume 15(3) October 2017, The Politics of Psychotherapy Research, edited by Brian Rodgers and myself. Submission deadline: 16th June 2017.
- Volume 16(2) May 2018, May '68: 50 Years On. Submission deadline: 31st January 2018.
- Volume 16(3) October 2018, The Politics of Ageing. Submission deadline 31st May 2018.

I am also planning special issues in 2019 on body psychotherapy, with guest editors Maxine Sheets-Johnston and Nick Totton; in 2020 on gender, and on the politics of psychotherapy supervision and training; and in 2021 on indigenous therapy, the submission deadlines for which will be published in the journal and online. Please feel to submit articles or contributions for these and the other, generic issues of the journal.

As ever, I hope you enjoy this issue.

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