

Editorial

Happy New Year!

Last year, *Psychotherapy and Politics International* adopted a new style, and I took the opportunity to introduce some different sections, an initiative that has led to the submission and publication of more contributions than in previous years. Last year we published a total of 33 contributions in Volume 15 (11 in each of the three issues), compared with 26 in Volume 14 (2016) and 23 in Volume 13 (2015). Last year too, in addition to the usual editorials (3), and an increased number of peer-reviewed articles (17) and “Reviews” (6), *PPI* also published some “Notes from the Front Line” (1), “Controversial Discussions” (2), “Talks” (1), and various contributions to the “Arts & Poetry” section (3). I am most grateful to the Associate Editors in charge of these subsections, as well as to colleagues submitting manuscripts and other contributions, for this renewal, which continues into this particularly full issue.

Although this is a generic issue, there are a number of contributions that reflect a particular theme or area of interest; these, therefore, I have grouped together.

The first group—topically enough, as this editorial was written in the month in which Donald Trump announced his intention to move the United States’ Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem—comprises three contributions on Palestine and Israel. The first is an article by Paul Solomon in which he offers some reflections on conflict between large groups—specifically, the Israel/Palestine impasse—drawing on psychoanalytic and group analytic thinking. I particularly appreciate Paul’s willingness to share his analysis as, in the course of the production of this article, he has dealt with a strong reaction from one of the reviewers of his original submission, a process to which Paul refers and on which he reflects. This is followed by an article by Jonathan Chadwick in which he offers some thoughts on, as well as questions about, a workshop production of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* staged by Theatre for Everybody in Gaza. Besides his experience as a theatre director, Jonathan brings a detailed knowledge of Tolstoy’s novel to inform his discussion of the nature of war and peace and, indeed, different kinds of war and peace, and its relevance to the current situation in Gaza. The article is a revised version of a blog Jonathan wrote on Az Theatre’s website, and I am grateful to him for revising his blog for this journal. Over the years, *PPI* has published a number of articles about the conflict in Israel and Palestine, as well as inspiring accounts from practitioners who are in a very real sense on “the Front Line.” The third in this trio of contributions is an article by Ariel Katz who describes a Somatic Experiencing course that took place over two weeks at the Nur Center for the Treatment of Psychological Trauma in Ara, Hefa, Israel. The article is an account of how a mixed group of therapists from all over Israel, together with some international colleagues, came together to study this technique for dealing with trauma, and includes several poignant examples of how the outside (the environment, politics) impacts on the inside (the inter- and intrapersonal). I am aware that these three contributions come from colleagues outside Israel and Palestine—Paul from Aotearoa New Zealand, and Jonathan and Ariel from the United Kingdom—and I would welcome both responses and more contributions from colleagues living and working in Israel and Palestine.

Among other things, war often causes refugees, who are the subject of the next two articles. The first reports on a piece of research conducted by the author, Zoe Apostolidou, into therapeutic work with asylum seekers which found that the dominant political discourses about asylum (a) have a detrimental effect on asylum seekers’ mental health and (b) have a negative impact on the therapeutic relationship between client and practitioner. Regular readers of *PPI* will be aware that the last issue of the journal was a special themed issue on the politics of psychotherapy research (Rodgers & Tudor, 2017) and so, following this, I am particularly delighted to welcome and publish Zoe’s article on research into an area of psychotherapy that is profoundly political. Originating in social constructionist epistemology (the methodology), Zoe’s research is based on a thematic analysis (the method) of interviews with nine practitioners

specialising in therapeutic work with asylum seekers in Australia. Historically, *PPI* has not tended to attract this kind of research submission, and I hope that both this article and the previous special issue (Rodgers & Tudor, 2017) will generate more submissions on research into psychotherapy and politics. The second article on refugees focuses on a neglected area within this literature, that of refugee fathers. Written by Renos Papadopolous and Nikos Gionakis, this is a revised and edited version of an article that originally appeared in a book published in Italian, *Alla Ricerca del Padre in Famiglia e in Terapia* [In Search of the Father in the Family and in Therapy], edited by M. Andolfi and A. D'Elia and published by Franco Angeli Editore in 2017. I am grateful to the editors and publishers for their permission to reproduce this chapter, and to the authors, Renos and Nikos, for their work on this article, which is a substantially different version of the original. Drawing on their respective therapeutic practices with refugees, and challenging what they refer to as “the feminisation of refugees,” the authors focus on the predicament of refugee fathers, identifying not only their particular difficulties but also their retained strengths and the positive experiences gained in adversity.

The next two articles discuss aspects of psychiatry and psychotherapy. In the first, Daniel Burston who, over the past few years, has become something of a regular contributor to *PPI*, clarifies the rhetoric and reality of anti-psychiatry and anti-anti-psychiatry. The article is based on a talk Daniel gave to a group of psychiatric residents at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—appropriately enough, it appears in one of the journal's new sections, “Talks.” Daniel's argument is coherent and challenging and, perhaps not surprisingly, evoked some strong reactions from the residents present at the original talk. I am interested to see if the article provokes any such reactions or responses from readers of the journal (or any different ones). The second article on this theme—which also appears in one of the journal's new sections, “Controversial Discussions”—is the result of a conversation between Chris Wise and Steffi Bednarek on the uses and potential dangers of using diagnostic language in psychotherapy and counselling. This article began as a result of a posting on the discussion board of the organisation Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility (PCSR) (members of which are closely associated with *PPI* as they receive a copy of the journal as part of their membership). The posting led to some e-mail correspondence between Chris and Steffi, which was published in *Transformations*, the PCSR magazine. Subsequently, via the good offices of Deborah Lee, our Reviews Editor, Chris and Steffi agreed to edit and expand their original discussion. While not particularly controversial (at least between these two authors), their discussion covers some important topics such as the power of words and terms, especially “diagnosis,” and the nature of language and of experience. It also, importantly, has a good conversational style, which is one of aspects of this section I want to encourage. Again, I am grateful to Chris and Steffi for their willingness to bring their discussion to a wider audience—and to Deborah for facilitating this.

Following these three grouped contributions, the remainder of this issue comprises an article, some more “Notes from the Front Line,” and three book reviews.

The article, by Osana Yakusho, challenges the individualism of positive psychology that, in its pursuit of positivity and its aim to provide “new” information to “normal” people, ignores institutional forms of oppression and thereby individualises societal problems and their effects on individuals. In the article, Osana deals with an important (and rather large) subject in a concise, stimulating, and accessible way.

In the second collection of such “Notes” in this issue, the “Front Line” shifts to the setting of an interview for a clinical placement in psychotherapy. In this contribution, Deborah Lee takes as her starting point the question asked (by the interviewer) of the psychotherapy student seeking a placement: “How would you answer if a client asked you if you'd been raped?” As with her previous contributions to *PPI*, Deborah raises some important questions about situations that are informed by often unexamined assumptions.

Deborah has also been busy in her role as Reviews Editor (which she holds with Gottfried Heuer) and, as a result, we have reviews of three books: the second edition of *The Dynamics of Power in Counselling and Psychotherapy* by Gillian Proctor, reviewed by Emma Palmer (recently known as Kamalamani); *Zen and Therapy* by Manu Bazzano, reviewed by Deborah Lee; and *Out of the Woods* by Brent Williams, reviewed by Elizabeth Smith. I had the good fortune to meet Brent Williams at the launch of his book in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, a meeting and contact

that led to this review. His is an astonishing book in a number of ways, being written from the point of view of a client's experience of depression and therapy as graphic nonfiction novel, beautifully illustrated by Korkut Öztekin.

The next two volumes of *PPI* this year are special, themed issues: the first, Volume 16(2), on various significant anniversaries; and the second, Volume 16(3), on the politics of ageing. The submission deadline for the latter is 31 May. This is a growing area of interest and concern for psychotherapists and I very much welcome contributions on this subject.

I hope you continue to enjoy *PPI* and, of course, continue to support it by submitting articles as well as other forms of contribution.

Keith Tudor

Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand

Correspondence

Keith Tudor, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Email: keith.tudor@aut.ac.nz

REFERENCE

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