

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of *Psychotherapy and Politics International* in 2020—and of the 2020s! As I acknowledged in my brief editorial introduction to the last issue, a special one on Body Psychotherapy edited by Nick Totton, that issue was the 50th issue of *PPI*. So we could also say that, in terms of issues, we are entering our next half century!

In editing the journal since 2012, I have had the support not only of my family and particular close colleagues, but also of the institution for which I work, Auckland University of Technology. For the past five years, it has supported the part-time employment of an editorial assistant, who for the majority of that time has been Karen Begg (Ngāti Raukawa, Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi). Sadly (for me), Karen has resigned from this position as she has relocated and is working overseas, but I do want to take this opportunity to thank her not only for her skills but also her interest in the subject and dedication to the journal. She has worked with contributors, reviewers and the production team efficiently, and with courtesy and patience—*tēnā koe* | thank you, Karen. I am fortunate to have found a colleague, Leah Royden, who is both a psychotherapist and an experienced editor, to replace Karen, and I welcome her to this role and to the journal—*tēnā koe*, Leah.

As ever, with regard to the generic issues of the journal, I am delighted that we have an interesting range of articles about psychotherapy and politics in their international context—from authors in Aotearoa New Zealand, France, Mexico, South Africa, the (far from) United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The first article in this issue is on The Psychopolitics of (and Psychotherapy Required by) Neoliberalism. Its author, Bert Olivier, is a now regular contributor to the journal. As we have come to expect of Bert's contributions, this article is well argued and well referenced, persuasive and provocative. As someone who identifies with the tradition of radical psychiatry and radical therapy and its focus on alienation and oppression, I particularly appreciate the argument that neoliberalism is a form of distortion and alienation—from our minds, bodies and relationships.

One form of resistance to neoliberalism is engagement with different forms of knowledge or epistemology, and the second article in this issue provides an example of this. In it, Susan Crozier and Nigel Pizzini provide an account of the rationale behind their efforts to develop a counselling programme (also an academic Master's), centred on a poststructuralist approach (narrative therapy) that also takes account of, and is informed by, an indigenous wisdom tradition, in this case that of *te Ao Māori* (the Māori world), which is embodied by *tangata whenua* or the first people of the land of Aotearoa. This is a stimulating, thoughtful and detailed article which, I hope, will influence thinking about the education of counsellors, and especially about culture and the acculturation of counsellors and psychotherapists well beyond the Land of the Long White Cloud (Aotearoa).

The third article, on Rethinking Intimacy in Psychosocial Sciences by Florentina Andreescu, is another example of the necessity of rethinking concepts in Western psychology and psychotherapy. In this contribution, the author critically engages with the concept of intimacy as outlined by Anthony Giddens and Lynn Jamieson. Drawing on literature from psychoanalysis, philosophy and neuroscience, Florentina explores the difference between lived intimacy and symbolic intimacy and, in doing so, argues for the importance of openness, vulnerability and boundaries.

The fourth article, on Therapeutic Activism, by Gillian Hughes, Charlotte Burck and Laureline Roncin, describes the development of an approach to psychotherapy informed by social justice and, specifically, their work with refugees. Given the propensity for the secondary traumatisation and burnout of volunteers working with refugees, the authors, who are members of the Refugee Resilience Collective, focus on supporting the emotional resilience and self-care of these volunteers. The authors are explicitly political and the article reflects this: it is honest, clear, reflective and inspiring.

All four articles, albeit in different ways, argue for the dialectic between theory and practice, and a practice that is reflective of critical theory—and unpinning this is the importance of the freedom to practice. I have therefore

chosen to follow these articles with a contribution to the journal's "Notes from the Front Line" Section which reports on another threat to such freedom, in this case, the proposed exclusion of psychoanalysis—and psychoanalytic thinking—from French courts.

The sixth contribution to this issue is another article that takes the form of a "Controversial Discussion". In this one, The Politics of Realism and Social Constructionism in Psychology are discussed by David Pavón-Cuéllar and Carl Ratner, who focus on the contradiction between these two perspectives and traditions and, in doing so, address subjective freedom, idealism and positivism, scientific objectivity, the truth claims and practical outcomes of psychological theories, the connection between science and politics, Kenneth Gergen's attitudes toward other theories, the social fragmentation that is a consequence of social constructionism, technocracy, cultism, solipsism, the neutrality of science and its role in the German Nazi regime, religion, and indigenous psychologies! This is an intellectual tour de force. In the last section of the article, David is joined by a colleague, Montserrat Ríos-Martínez, in a final reflection on this Discussion.

It is followed by the latest in our series of contributions by colleagues discussing books that have influenced them. In this issue Maxine Sheets-Johnstone discusses Darwin's *The Descent of Man* and Jung's *Civilisation in Transition*. This, in turn, is followed by two book reviews: of *Psychotherapy, Anthropology and the Work of Culture*, edited by Keir Martin and reviewed by Andrew Hodges; and of *The Handbook of Brief Therapies* edited by Sarah Parry and reviewed by Katherine Thomas.

The next two issues of the journal are special issues—on Lived Experiences (Volume 18, Number 2), and on Transactional Analysis and Politics (Volume 18, Number 3). Submissions to these as well as future generic issues are welcome. As ever, I hope you enjoy this issue of *PPI* and are inspired not only to think about and develop your psychopolitical practice but also to consider writing and contributing to the journal.

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