

# Editorial: Developments in the *International Journal of Psychotherapy*

HEWARD WILKINSON

*Minster Centre, London/Scarborough Psychotherapy Training Institute, UK*

---

**Abstract** *The Editorial reflects the new developments in the Journal, which will have a more varied and multi-length mix of contents, with a larger clinical component, whilst retaining its character.*

## **Developments in the *International Journal of Psychotherapy***

The papers in this issue, the new design, and the developments in the aims and scope of the Journal and requirements for contributors, all aim to achieve both continuity and change. We wish simultaneously to develop the role of the Journal as the organ of the European Association for Psychotherapy, making it more accessible to Continental European readers, and to develop the characteristics which are making it truly an international Journal, having a steadily growing readership in all parts of the globe, with a strong American presence.

The mix of papers will be more varied therefore both in length and content. Whilst we are not moving to become a 'standard' clinical journal, and clinical contributions need to have something which gives them affinity with the aims and scope of the Journal, there will be a stronger clinical component, and papers are welcome of different types, some of them shorter, as per the notes for contributors. There will still, however, be a major component of fundamental evaluative thinking about the nature and basis of the Psychotherapies which has given the Journal much of its character hitherto!

We have a new Book Reviews Editor, Pamela Atkinson, whose contribution will make itself felt in the next issue, and are hoping to have additional members of the book review team in both Continental Europe and in the USA in due course. Welcome Pamela!

The Editorial Board is developing in a new direction, and is at present in a state of transition. We shall be communicating with members old and new shortly.

These Editorials have many times themselves raised fundamental issues in the field, being a frequently downloaded type of item as reflected in the data on net downloads of contributions to the Journal, and they will often continue to do so, but on this occasion these themes are addressed in my own medium length paper.

The new character, I think, is reflected in the current group of papers.

## **Wilkinson**

My own paper is designed as a marker to re-emphasise the character of the field of Psychotherapy as understood by the European Association of Psychotherapy, both with respect to the autonomy of the field of Psychotherapy, especially in its non-subordinate

relation to Psychology and Psychiatry, its pluralism, and its scientific character. The paper is organized around a discussion of the latter, and it is argued that Psychotherapy is scientific in a broad but not a narrow ('hard', scientific) sense of science, in terms of a model of 'science' which includes its wisdom component, its pluralism, and multiplicity, and its inherent relations to values. The question is raised, in terms of a discussion of Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapy, a form of Cognitive-Behavioural Psychotherapy, whether even this most 'scientific' of branches of therapy does not share the universal characteristic of Psychotherapy as an emotional-evaluative activity and method, which, in the plurality of its methods, embraces all aspects of human life and will do so more and more.

### **Clarkson**

Professor Clarkson's paper—which ends with some poignantly personal poetry—is addressed, from a very different starting point, to related themes, being a radically foundational paper. Her paper sets out to answer some questions about the knowledge foundations, the epistemology, of Psychotherapy which were raised in a radical way by Alvin Mahrer. In a comprehensive and lucid survey she supports a moderate constructivism in response to Mahrer's challenges about Psychotherapists' assumptions, validating a modest but genuine predictive element in Psychotherapy, the valid but metaphoric character of its constructs, the irreducible element of reinforcement (learning theory again!), the priority of relationship, and varied forms of relationship, over theory and interpretation in the work, and the crucial presence of the practitioner's own normative beliefs. She ends with a poignant poetic statement in relation to her own. From a very different angle the irreducible character of Psychotherapy as an inherently evaluative activity, organised around emotion, is emphasized and the compatibility of this with a broad sense of science explored.

### **Apter**

Norbert Apter's paper describes and explores the fundamental work of one of the great early *non-psychoanalytic* pioneers of Psychotherapy, Moreno the founder of Psychodrama, in its availability for integration. He emphasises the fundamentally relational and actualizing character of Moreno's vision and assumptions, which have lain at the heart of humanistic developments in Psychotherapy ever since, and have been absorbed into the mainstream of many psychotherapies. It is not a criticism of his position, but an endorsement of it, if we note that relational psychoanalysis, as in object relations approaches, too has developed in a way which gives it affinity with the relational-social aspects of Psychodrama, as pioneered by Moreno, as has often been pointed out, and these convergences are part of the development of Psychotherapy.

### **Sella**

Yorai Sella's paper is a clinical paper which draws on psychodynamic theory, body-oriented psychotherapy, neuro-biology and clinical practice to propose new etiological paradigms and guidelines for psychotherapy with patients suffering from anorexic symptoms. In suggesting that anorexic symptoms represent part of a preverbal aspect of the self the paper evokes how, particularly through countertransference process, certain rigid assumptions were overcome in the work, leading to greater humanity and helpfulness through relationship. The formation of the difficulties are embedded in sub-cortical 'emotional memory', equating eating behaviours with stress; it is suggested that these patients face a punishing choice between self-agency and nourishment. The inadequate nature of environmental regulation does not allow adequate

assessment of their own bodily states and they create muscular tension and spatial distance, to maintain a schizoid type self-cohesion and sense of autonomous-authentic self. It is discovered through experience that therapy with these patients must therefore include empathic attention to the salient features of this 'self-structure'—distance, rhythmicity, muscular and vocal tone—as perceived by the therapist and as assessed through a very personal relational process of countertransference experience of projective identifications, thus bearing out in practice the theoretical stances of the previous papers.

### **Lundblad**

Finally we have a research paper which emphasises the pluralistic aspect of Psychotherapy in that it suggests that, whilst Cognitive-Behavioural treatment for depression may be well-established as a better and more effective treatment for depression in the main ranges of depression, psychoanalytic method used longer term may be better for very severe depression. It is easy to imagine how this might be so, on the basis of these findings. As we say in England, 'horses for courses'! This study focuses on the nature and persistence of change in eight severely depressed women following long-term psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Three different types of instrument were used in a quasi-experimental design to measure the change in a pre-test, post-test and follow-up test. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2), the Karolinska Psychodynamic Profile (KAPP) and the Meta-Contrast Technique (MCT) were used. The patient group as a whole showed substantial improvements in areas such as degree of depression, work capacity, interpersonal and emotional functioning. The change remained at least one year after psychotherapeutic treatment. Once more we have a paper which corroborates the theoretical positions taken in the earlier papers.

Welcome to our new look Journal!

**Resumé** *L'Éditorial reflète les nouvelles orientations du Journal, dont les articles seront plus variés en contenu et en longueur, avec un composé clinique plus large, tout en préservant l'image du Journal.*

**Zusammenfassung** *Das Editorial beleuchtet neue Entwicklungen des Journals. Während der Grundcharakter erhalten bleibt, wird es eine grössere Variation der Beitragslängen und Inhalte, sowie einem höheren klinischen Anteil geben.*

