

# Editorial

Welcome to the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition. The Chinese phrase on the cover says: 百花齊放– bǎihuā qífàng – let the hundred schools contend. It refers to a golden age of thought during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods of ancient China. An artist in Taiwan did a calligraphy of these four characters especially for the journal. The contributions in this edition demonstrate a richness of thought, a daring to put these ideas into practice and to describe the results. There are differences in style, tone, authority and understandings of theory. The multiple sets of ripples in a pond are an image of the hundred ways we connect. Interpenetration can be perceived; each set of ripples taking the other into itself. Notice multiple occurrences of the AANZPA symbol.



A submission for the journal is assessed by the ambition that the writer has for it. When an important addition or refinement is offered to psychodramatic theory and the writer wishes that to be applied in practice, then that is a serious ambition. More work may be required than what the writer initially envisages: perhaps not enough work has been done on finding language that will reach and impact on the readership; perhaps the readership is not known enough; perhaps there has not been enough done in testing out the proposed approach. A submission with a different motivation does not need to be judged by such criteria. For example, a paper inviting readers to become part of a new and innovative inquiry may be quite short and speculative in nature.

The practice of previous editorial teams has been to develop a collegial approach by assigning an editorial guide to accompany the writer. Typically, the editorial guide becomes very familiar with the writing making it difficult for them to assess how the written work will impact on a new reader. It is then necessary to seek wider feedback.

Many have considered over the years whether the journal can be peer reviewed and if so, what that would mean. There is no one global definition of peer review except that the field itself defines what it means

by that. In this edition, submissions have been reviewed by at least two peers. Not all submissions have been accepted. Some contributors been advised to do further work. Careful consideration is made to link the writer up with useful guides, advisors or supervisors. From this perspective, we go beyond what is considered sufficient for peer review in other journals and fields. I would like to think that, as a result, we are collegially informed and community developed. I seek to have our processes in the journal in alignment with our ethos to build reciprocity in our relationships, for us to be robust, sensitive and creative in our expressions with each other. I expect people interested in how that works for the journal will seek conversations with me and others involved. I will report back to the Association on how we are going in this.

Members of AANZPA have been building up their collective practice wisdom in many different ways: in training, in writing together, in work, at workshops, in various meetings, and at the annual conferences. I consider the whole of AANZPA membership as the editor's advisory board. I will endeavour to match people best able to do the work. When you are considering writing something for the journal, it may be useful to consult with myself or others at an early stage, to be thoughtful on who might effectively accompany you as you warm up. We may assemble a team, different people brought in to assist with specific things at different times.

As most of us are aware, there is no short route in writing. We work on a new piece of writing and find out all over again – it is not straightforward. There is the gestation period and the production period. More often than not it takes multiple passes. Much loved passages must be thrown out. Sometimes something is not right but no matter how much one attends to it it is not fixed. The writing must be put aside and perhaps months later, when it is cold, the deficiency is apparent. As in all things, years of experiential learning are required to develop the various competencies involved in producing effective and satisfying writing.

Sometimes more work is required to connect our writing with what has already been written on the topic. In AANZPA, we have 23 years of journal and a large library of theses which are available online to all members. Work needs to be done by writers to see what has already been written about in their topic area. There can be good profit in seeing how psychodrama theories and approaches connect in with and share common ancestry with others. The three publications on J.L. Moreno that are reviewed in this edition make it very clear that a visionary and a genius do not make a saint. Let's be alert to reifying J.L. Moreno and willy-nilly claiming things as unique to him or psychodrama when they are not.

In the journal, as in any writing, there are words on a page crafted in anticipation of a relationship with readers. To be successful, a shared language is required. When we have our reader in mind, then our organs of perception get going, our language wakes up. In psychodrama we have words – spontaneity, tele and role for example – that have special relevance and meaning to us. If we want to reach people outside of psychodrama, then we might need other words. For instance, we might find words such as light, spirit or resurrection work more effectively than the word spontaneity.

Vivienne Thomson has been working for precision in thought and language in role theory for many years. In this edition, she describes her collected experience in the important area of conceptualising, describing and naming a role. There are some clear guidelines and illustrations that will be of practical assistance to trainers, trainees and practitioners. Again, the psychodramatist is urged to dwell in the unknown space of the emerging relationship and have it impact on them.

Kate Cooke is also doing innovative work with role theory. She takes us on an intimate journey with a client diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder, revealing how an intrinsic badness developed. Kate integrates concepts from psychiatric perspectives with psychodrama.



Hamish Brown presents a fascinating illustration of working with a very large group working out a decision making process for governance of a large geographical region. Hamish integrates the experience he has had in organisations with psychodramatic theory and practice. His premise is that relationship building and

reciprocity can occur in any political organisation, independent of political structure whether it be hierarchical, consensual or democratic. This is very good news to me. I find I am calmer. I need not be so worried about trying to fix the political structure before I can find ways to engage in relational work and be involved in effective decision making.

Hamish has applied elements of sociometric theory to the field of facilitation. If facilitators take that up and incorporate it into their theory and practice, then that would be called psychodrama being a reference discipline. Another aspect of Hamish's writing that is very attractive, and what I want to encourage for other contributors, is the collegial tone.

Jerri Bassi also invites us into an ongoing inquiry and experimentation in innovative work. Jerri's work is with how small figures and video can be used to understand and illustrate our method. This may be to funders, prospective group members, interested people or the participants themselves. Jerri's ongoing work highlights certain principles of production that don't just apply to the psychodramatic stage, but operate in different media such as the written word and film.

I was particularly delighted to come across the poem *The Empty Page* by Elizabeth Nannestad. Elizabeth has been involved in psychodrama for several years. It is a brilliant illustration of the experience of a writer facing the empty page. *The Empty Page* portrays the visceral experience of trepidation and warm-up to the potential in the emerging production: horror, surprise, curiosity, love, tenderness, grief. I hope this poem may provoke psychodramatists to surrender to the empty page as they do to the stage. I hope this poem will incite the imagination of the psychodramatist. The psychodramatist will see how their production competencies and sensibilities can be transferred and applied to other media. This will be a very different warm-up to writing for some. If so, please be kind to yourself. It is the beginning.

The exegesis form is welcome in the journal. The exegesis is used by different academic disciplines where an expression in an artistic form is made and then there is some explanation involving theory. The reader can have such a full and satisfying experience when the writing invites them into experiencing the thing that is being discussed. This may be done as a poem or a drawing. Sometimes powerfully as a story. The psychodramatic method is visual and sensual. It involves all the critical senses of the human being in relationship with others. Nothing is left out. If we see value in this for our writing, if we are ambitious and imaginative enough, and determined enough, then let's see if we can produce that in our writing. We do not just explain and use case study illustrations. We dare to invite the reader into an experience. Perhaps the reader also works to form the clinical analyses and interventions. The reader also works at the theoretical implications. The reader, as engaged audience member, is but a step away from the stage.

There is an opportunity in the AANZPA Journal for psychodramatists who love story and drama and want the reader to get the experience as well as the explanation. This may be in a narrative approach. Or perhaps a critical hermeneutic approach where the researcher's experience is the research sensibility. There is an opportunity for psychodrama writers to offer leadership in terms of academia. It is not that we simply comply with existing norms. We may take initiative to challenge others with a fresh

standard, a new ambition; something unique to psychodrama, what distinguishes us from other modalities and approaches. A readiness for the valuing and practicing of relational living in the unknown emerging moment. Get the writing fit for that. The visuals, the story, the aesthetics. The attractive pull of beauty is a core mechanism in our method that is fully understood in its living. Let's see if we can enthuse and integrate our expressions of practice and theory with the aesthetic element.

Simon Guernsey describes his work on the use of story in working with organisations. He has offered the full version of the story, in this case a fairy tale, intending the reader to have a lived experience of the work he is describing. It is an experiment. I hope also that it will help restore dignity to the word 'story' that has had negative connotations stuck to it.

I hope the vision, daring and tenor of the contributions in this edition will stimulate the imagination on the different ways aesthetic elements can be integrated into the theory and practice of psychodrama, and particularly, in the writing of the work.

Science? Yes, we want it. I was curious to what had resulted from Charmaine McVea's work presented in the 2007 edition of the AANZPA journal. She invited people to get going with ways to evidence and understand their psychodramatic work. I had a conversation with her about her work and how science and rigour may be nurtured and progressed in AANZPA. This conversation is presented in this edition.

It should be clear by now that there are many types of articles that can be published in the journal. Perhaps, you wish to have a conversation with a group of people on a topic and have that published. You may wish to present the work of another person in our organisation (without waiting for it to be posthumous.) You may take an article written before and revisit it. You may write a letter to the editor on some aspect of our writing, journal or something published in it. Please take initiative and engage your imagination and craft the writing in a way that is congruent with you and the spirit of your relationship with AANZPA.

In this edition, we have a tribute to Joan Chappell compiled by John Faisandier and Vivienne Thomson. It is very moving to experience people's gratitude and love. This is the very life we are working with. It uplifts the spirit and gives our whole organisation dignity. I have enjoyed being the editor immensely. I love getting alongside people, to tune in with their work and passion and see how that may get expressed in the journal. I feel a great settling in me when I realise we are all in this together, it is not just up to me. There have been difficulties and differences in expectations and communication styles. I look forward to learning from you. I feel very

encouraged. I anticipate there will continue to be a flourishing of a hundred flowers.<sup>1</sup>

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Philip D. Carter  
Editor  
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<sup>1</sup> The hundred schools phrase was resurrected by Mao and made into a couplet 百花齊放，百家爭鳴; bǎihuā qífàng, bǎijiā zhēngmíng; Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend. It is interesting that the cultural revolution followed. Interesting that the original Spring and Autumn and Warring States period was followed by the imperial Qin Dynasty with its brutal enforcement of unification and standardisation. So the societal movements, like the lineages of families, and the expansion and contraction of individual hearts, the breath in and out, and the evolutionary intents of longer gestation that have wave lengths as broad as galaxies, so...