

EDITORIAL

Kate Thompson, James Poulton, and Lorna Robinson

It has been two years since the three of us took on the editorship of *Couple and Family Psychoanalysis*, a privilege and a pleasure, and it has been a time of endings and beginnings. We have said farewell to our founding editors, Molly Ludlam, Christopher Clulow, and Christopher Vincent, who have stepped back from active membership of the board, but who we are delighted to be able to rely on for support. And we have welcomed new members from around the world, a reflection of our international base and mission—Gael Beckett (South Africa), Ortal Kirson-Trilling (US), Lea Setton (Panama), and Anastasia Tsamparli (Greece). This brings us up to a healthy twenty members of the board, and thirty-two of the advisory board.

We are lucky in that we have been able to rely on each other as we have found our feet, and this collegiate approach has been reflected elsewhere too. We have settled into the rhythm of one general issue in the autumn and a special issue on an area of particular interest in the spring, overseen by various guest editors, and this has felt like a dynamic collaborative enterprise. We are keen to encourage articles from around the world to facilitate new developments in thinking about psychoanalytic work with couples and families, and dialogue between different theoretical traditions—and we have various plans in the pipeline, including collaborations with colleagues in Latin America and Italy. Our New Writer's Prize encourages new voices in the field, and we are looking at creative ways of supporting first-time authors in to print. Please do get in touch if you have ideas for special issues, or might be able to contribute to our forthcoming issues on parents as couples and, further afield, sibling relationships.

We are delighted to introduce you to this second issue of the year, which contains a set of articles on a range of themes from colleagues around the world. James Poulton (US) opens the issue with an evocative and rich article on the interactive dynamics of what he names the “healing couple”, an extension of the conceptual thinking on the “creative couple”, now a cornerstone of couples work for so many of us. His thinking is in dialogue with theorists such as Fairbairn and Henry Dicks and, more recently, Judith Pickering and Mary Morgan. He identifies an important development in psychoanalytic thinking linked to Winnicott's description of creativity within individuals. The couple-based version of creativity focuses on the shared aspect—a new dimension that can be found in personal and interpersonal experience—and Poulton offers clinical observations to illustrate this transformative couple process.

Sabina Grzymowicz (Poland) has produced a lyrical article that draws parallels between Poland protecting its borders and the boundaries between self and other within an intimate couple relationship. Grzymowicz describes

recent history in which there has been a large influx of Ukrainian nationals, fleeing from conflict across one of Poland's borders, while refugees from Africa, the Middle and Far East entered illegally across the Belarusian border, seeking a better life in the West. Grzymowicz interweaves her reflections on Poland's relationship with refugees with the internal scaffolding of an intimate couple. Linking to the work of Ronald Britton, her article explores themes of recognition, merger, and fear of "the other". Does too much difference pose a threat; and how could embracing difference foster development within a couple relationship and a country?

Shelley Nathans (US) presents a far-reaching examination of the common view that the biology of sex and attachment are incompatible since attachment requires security while good sex requires novelty. She proposes that attachment and sexuality are not easily separated into distinct systems, and that sustained sexual connection is best conceptualised as the integration—not opposition—of attachment needs, sexuality, and emotional experience. Through a review of the kinds of unconscious difficulties that create problematic sexual relationships, as well as a compelling vignette, Nathans demonstrates the validity of viewing sexual problems not merely as evidence of an artefactual opposition between sexual and attachment needs but as indicative of the couple's complex interactive dynamics that are rooted in both sensual and relational experiences stemming from each partner's infancy.

From Israel comes a welcome article from Shmuel Gerzi who thinks his way through the deceptively simple concept of understanding the true meaning of intimacy within couple relationships. Gerzi painstakingly identifies the distinctions between emotions, needs, and feelings. Citing theory to develop his thoughts, he goes on to map the intricacies of the therapeutic process in understanding defensive blocking within couple communication. Gerzi uses clinical material to show how he supports his patients as they give voice to their emotions and navigate the shared couple space between them. He describes how, with active engagement, the therapist attempts to share in emotional currents as they pass between a couple and authentically validates each partner's expression, thus touching on fundamental needs for both.

In an evocative article about the roles money can play in both couple relationships and the treatment of couples, Amita Sehgal (UK) offers an overview of the interface between money and patients' unconscious emotional states. After reviewing the evolving relationships between money, couples, and gender roles over the past two centuries, she offers a panoramic review of psychoanalytic approaches—from Freud's suggestion that a neurotic's interest in money is rooted in the infant's interest in defecation, to Carrington's view that discussing money in couple relationships entails encountering "something akin to a deep, inaccessible, raw force" that must not be unveiled. Sehgal then suggests that Glasser's "core complex" is well-suited to explain the multiple ways meaning is attributed to money by the intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics in couples. Through a series of case vignettes, she vividly illustrates her core conclusion—that "money functions as a powerful

emotional conduit to convey feelings of vulnerability, longing, hopes, fears, and aggression”.

From Canada, Leslie Malchy brings self-psychological and relational analytic lenses to explore the issue of consensual non-monogamy in couple relationships—a growing cultural and social trend that has to date been underexplored in the psychoanalytic literature. She traces the features of defensive as opposed to developmental uses of non-monogamy, especially as she argues that these are the kinds of relationship that show up more commonly in our consulting rooms. Through the use of an extended case study, she considers how non-monogamy can be used as a strategy for the avoidance of intimacy, as a vehicle for narcissistic rage, as malignant triangulation, and as a deflection from marital disillusionment.

Kathy Sinsheimer (US) looks at the dynamics at play in estranged families, a phenomenon that she argues is on the rise, fuelled by technological advances, which mean many of us live predominantly online and are less dependent on each other for companionship, and that has fuelled a rise in loneliness and estrangement. Through vivid clinical vignettes, Sinsheimer outlines strategies for working with estrangement in family work, and outlines her use of the “family state of mind”, a riff on the “couple state of mind”, to describe a unit with active, functioning attachments, and generative relationships.

In the book reviews section, we have an extended review of the French visual artist Sophie Calle’s unsettling photographic record of what was formerly East Berlin, in which the empty spaces of the city where national monuments of the German Democratic Republic once stood speak of a terrified expulsion of memory. There is a review of a collection of articles on psychoanalytic couple psychotherapy edited by Shelley Nathans, which presents a range of overlapping and divergent theoretical perspectives, including Winnicottian theory, link theory, attachment theory, relational theory, and self-psychology. And we have a review of Molly Ludlam’s thoughtful primer on couples therapy, an invaluable resource for both trainees and couples alike.

Finally, to our arts coverage, which presents two reviews of different productions of *Oedipus*—one at Wyndham’s Theatre, London, from autumn 2024, and one at the Old Vic, London, from spring 2025. If *Oedipus* has been experiencing a moment in the past couple of years, this may be because it can ask profound questions that might be more difficult to address in a contemporary piece of writing. Our reviews show how these productions offer views variously on the value of truth in political discourse and the way in which online settings are used to play out internal dramas.