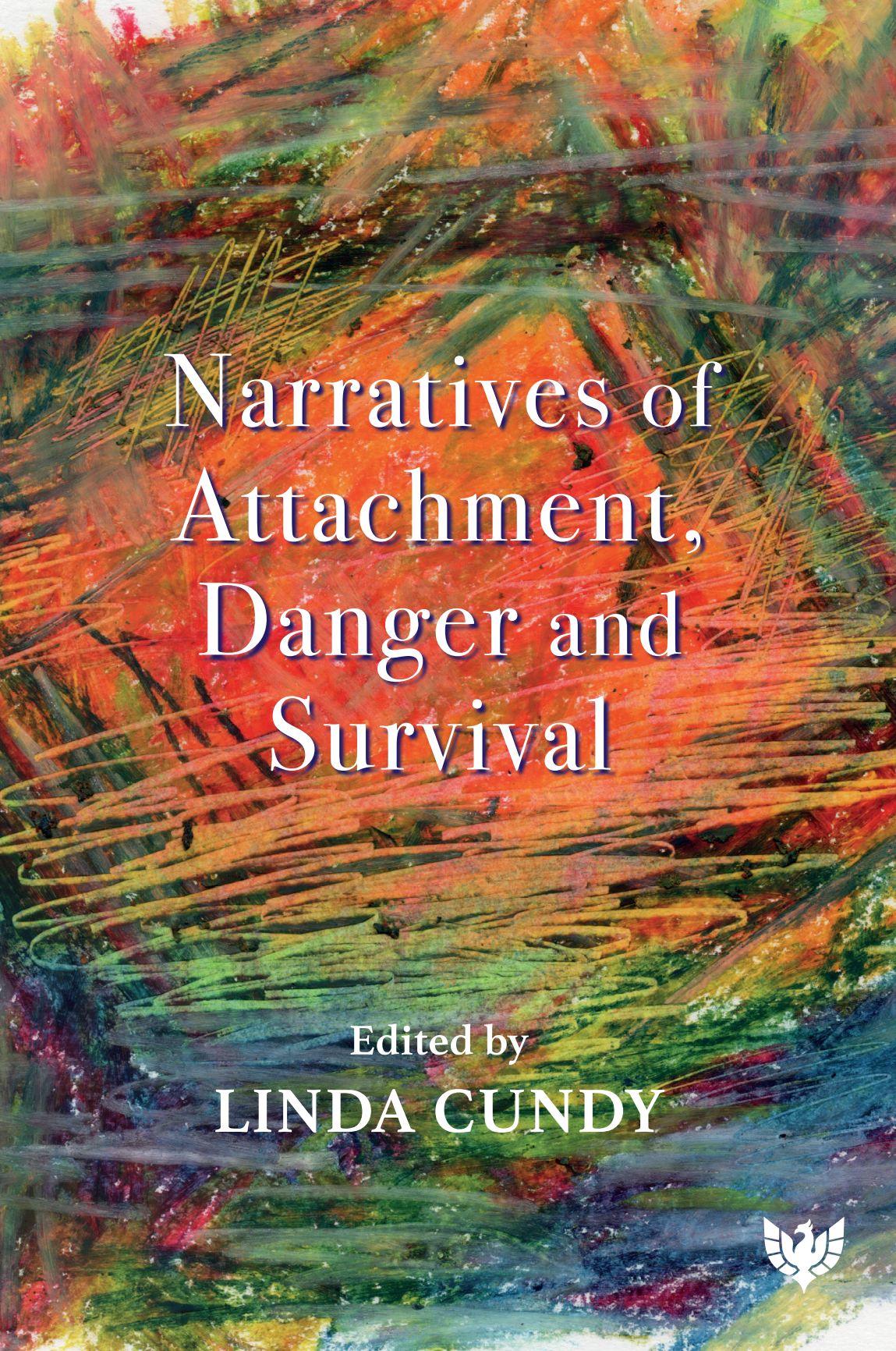
Narratives of Attachment, Danger and Survival
Edited by
LINDA CUNDY

# NARRATIVES OF ATTACHMENT, DANGER AND SURVIVAL

*Edited by*

***Linda Cundy***

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# Contents

# Acknowledgements

Following the initial enthusiasm shown by many colleagues keen to contribute to *Narratives of Attachment, Danger and Survival*, this project has had a challenging journey that in some respects mirrors the experiences of those who struggle to start a new life. Sadly, some authors needed to withdraw for various reasons and there have been numerous delays. However, this has created opportunities to bring in new material that was not originally planned but that has added further depth to the content. Even so, it has also delayed completion. I would like to thank my author colleagues for their contributions, their support, and their patience.

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# About the editor and contributors

**Nancy Borrett** is an experienced psychotherapist, music therapist, and supervisor who has worked at the Clinic for Dissociative Studies (CDS UK) in London since 2011. She had previous experience in a variety of NHS settings and has a small private practice. Nancy also develops and delivers training about understanding and working with dissociative disorders to therapists, NHS teams, and other professionals. Based on collaboration with people who have lived experience, she hopes to promote ethical therapeutic practice, accurate understanding, and compassion for people with dissociative disorders. Nancy had a first career as a violinist and continues to find inspiration in music.

**Charles Brown** is a UKCP fellow, a member of the College of Psychoanalysts and Jungian Analysts (CPJA), and a member of the Arbours Association and an associate member of the Association of Group and Individual Psychotherapists. He is a member of the International Network of Democratic Therapeutic Communities (INDTC). He is an honorary Fellow at the British Association for Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Supervisors (BAPPS). Charles is an addictions therapist, qualified psychoanalytic supervisor and group facilitator, and a training therapist, trainer, and training supervisor.

He also maintains a small private practice in South London. He has a long-standing interest in identity and meaning.

**Linda Cundy** (editor) is a UKCP-registered, attachment-based psychoanalytic psychotherapist and clinical supervisor with a private practice in North London. Trained as a counsellor in the 1980s, Linda worked for a number of years for mental health services until retraining at The Bowlby Centre in the 1990s. She is also an independent trainer and conference speaker, nationally and internationally, specialising in attachment, human development, and clinical practice. Linda has curated, edited, and contributed to six books to date and is series editor for the Psychotherapy Matters books published by Karnac in association with UKCP.

**Judy Davies** graduated in communication studies and then worked in a variety of media-related jobs before training as a psychotherapist. Alongside her private practice she worked for a number of organisations including the Tavistock Clinic, ChildLine, and SANEline, and also as a school counsellor. Following this she joined an NHS mental health service, where she specialised in EMDR treatment for post-traumatic stress.

**Cora Hart** is a survivor of extreme abuse from a multi-generational organised criminal network within which she was born and raised. She has dissociative identity disorder, also known as DID. Long-term psychotherapy enabled her to escape. No longer being abused and controlled, she is discovering the joys and challenges of life with freedom and choice. Despite experiencing extreme trauma until midlife, Cora and her alters have achieved academically to a high level. They are strong defenders of human rights and dream of an inclusive world without violence or injustice. They draw strength from newly found close friendships, music, nature, and art.

**Mary Kelly** is an expert by experience. She comes from an army family, born in Athlone and educated in Cork, Ireland. A former nurse, carer, mother and grandmother, and law graduate, she works in a criminal law firm in London, and volunteers in the London refugee community kitchen and as an end of life doula. Gardening, along with political

and social activism, saved her from total mental breakdown post cult. She worked as a nurse in occupied Palestine and helped set up a women's peace camp at Shannon airport prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. She is a member of the Family Survival Trust which supports people affected by cults, and campaigns for the law on coercive control to be amended so leaders of cults can be prosecuted for crimes against members.

**Hyun Suk Lee** (이현석) has worked as a psychotherapist and counsellor with a diverse range of people from primary school children to older people, in various organisational settings for the last fourteen years. He is also a specialist mental health mentor working with university students, and an integrative supervisor, facilitating a reflective space for the groups of trainee counsellors and student advisors. He holds an MA in analytical psychology, PgDip in psychodynamic therapy, and a diploma in integrative supervision. He is an accredited member of BACP, and a registered member of UKCP and FPC. Hyun is involved in organising and engaging with physical and creative therapeutic projects such as table tennis sessions and a singing group for the North Korean refugee community in London.

**Zibiah Alfred Loakthar** is a senior lecturer at the University of Essex where she co-directs the Centre for Trauma, Asylum and Refugees (CTAR). Zibiah is a course director for MA Refugee Care and supervises doctoral students in this field. She is Director of Equality Diversity and Inclusivity and Co-Director of graduate studies for the Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies, and sits on the University of Sanctuary committee and the Eastern Arc of Sanctuary Steering Group. Zibiah enjoys interdisciplinary research and fostering cross-sectoral and cross-cultural collaboration. As an oral historian, Zibiah has edited the journal *Oral History* and worked on life story projects in partnership with museums, libraries, charities, and community organisations. Her interviews with talking therapists are archived within the British Library's National Life Story Collection. Zibiah has many years of practical experience working within social justice and equality sectors with mainstream charities and with diverse minoritised communities, leading advocacy, arts, community development, disability, education, health, heritage, human rights, memory, oral history, and

volunteering projects in London and in Ghana. She chairs front line charity Community Language Support Services, and also volunteers as a trustee for North London Deaf Children's Society and for the British Schools Museum.

**Jacqueline Samuel** is a therapist with nearly thirty years of experience, specialising in helping individuals navigate the complex impacts of leaving religions or faith groups. Based in Hertfordshire, she also supports clients dealing with addictions, depression, and anxiety. Her work is informed by her international experience, including time spent abroad and working with clients who have relocated to new countries. Jacqueline's deep understanding of attachment and trauma enriches her practice and her contributions to this compilation, including a chapter that explores the challenges and healing processes involved in leaving communities of faith.

**Joe Secrett** is a freelance youth worker with more than twenty-two years' experience supporting young people from inner city environments. For the past ten years, his focus has turned to serious youth violence and child criminal exploitation and he delivers specialist mentoring, group workshops, and professional training in this area, among others. He has seen, first hand, the impact of serious youth violence in his community and is passionate about making a positive impact on this in any way he can.

**Ruthie Smith** is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist (The Bowlby Centre), energy psychotherapist, and teacher, who is keen to integrate a spiritual perspective into her work. She has taught on psychotherapy training and supervision programmes and lectures at events and conferences in the UK and abroad. After ten years as a principal individual psychotherapist in the NHS supervising work with complex trauma, she established The Flame Centre in London specialising in trauma, and devised a post-qualification clinical training in energy psychotherapy, which she currently co-directs under the auspices of Energy Psychotherapy Training Ltd. Her book, *Energy, Soul Connecting and Awakening Consciousness: Psychotherapy in a New Paradigm* (2024) is published by Karnac.

**Maggie Turp** is a psychotherapist whose work draws on psychodynamic, attachment, and narrative perspectives. Her publications include *Psychosomatic Health: The Body and the Word* (2002), *Hidden Self-Harm: Narratives from Psychotherapy* (2004), and a number of journal papers. She is an active member of the Climate Psychology Alliance and contributes to the CPA therapeutic support service. She co-edits the climate psychology journal *Explorations*, and is sole editor of the "Cli-Fi Corner" section, which reflects her special interest in the ways in which fiction and autobiographical narratives help us to imagine and think through both current threats and losses and possible future scenarios.

# Foreword

*Maggie Turp*

The first time I met Linda Cundy, we were speaking at the same conference—from an attachment-informed and object relations point of view respectively. Linda's warmth and enthusiasm for her subject shone through. Her firm grounding in attachment theory was evident and at the same time lightly worn: there was nothing doctrinaire about her presentation. On the contrary, her patients and their dilemmas came to life in the room as she spoke about them. I felt immediately that this was someone with whom I could have any number of conversations and come away each time feeling both that I had been heard and that my own understanding had been enriched. Over the fifteen or so intervening years, this has indeed turned out to be the case.

Linda's publications have the same qualities of liveliness, warmth, and quietly held erudition as were apparent to me when I first heard her speak. We read them for enjoyment and enlightenment rather than simply as essential items on a reading list—although they are that too. Linda and I share an understanding that it is primarily through the telling and retelling of self-narratives that new meanings and new possibilities come into view. Our training and experience as psychotherapists have acquainted us with the general shape of the terrain to be traversed, but the emphasis remains on the individual nature of each life trajectory.

In making sense of their experience and negotiating change, each patient must find their own way, negotiating dense thickets and steep upland paths, retracing their steps when resources are exhausted or obstacles become overwhelming, tracking back and starting over, often only to find themselves in an old familiar impasse, and nevertheless—with the therapist as support and guide—finding the courage to try again.

Nowhere are the vicissitudes of this journey clearer than in the carefully gathered and curated set of individual self-narratives that make up *Narratives of Attachment, Danger and Survival*. Many of the authors writing here are recounting their experience publicly for the first time. We are alongside them in the horrendous, sometimes life-threatening, situations in which they find themselves. We share with them the pain of their disillusion. We follow them in their efforts to extract themselves and embark on a journey of recovery. We celebrate their hard-won gains. We mourn with them that which is irretrievably lost—a familiar and loved environment, a close community, the never-to-be-recovered years without the children who had to be left behind.

Among the myriad examples of contested leave-taking that make up the book are some that will be relatively familiar—such as the difficulty of leaving a violent relationship, or the losses and gains associated with seeking refuge from one's country of birth—and others that we are less likely to have encountered—for instance, one woman's internal struggle with the dilemma of whether or not to leave a religious community, not because the good object has turned bad but because her sexuality would have to be suppressed in order to continue to belong. A common theme running through the diverse individual accounts is the speed and ease with which one can fall into a situation that subsequently reveals itself as restrictive and in some cases toxic and, by contrast, the painful and exhausting struggle involved in extracting oneself, the setbacks along the way, and the losses that are the price of regaining a measure of control over one's life.

The range of situations and the diversity of cultural backgrounds and ethnicities represented by the writers add further value to this highly readable book. In a world of psychotherapy still dominated by white, middle class European or US therapists, Linda has done us a great service in bringing a rich diversity of voices—Black British, Korean, Jewish, Irish—to the table. The chapters that make up the volume vary

widely in both content and emphasis and yet perfectly complement one another. Where one includes a checklist of resources for those seeking to leave a toxic situation, another lists danger signals that might alert a potential victim in time for the situation to be avoided. Where one is focused on the ongoing process of recovery in the present and future, another looks back to early experiences and attachment patterns as the author searches for the roots of his or her vulnerability. Where one reflects on naivety and youthful idealism, another underlines the reality of the genuinely good things initially on offer, with the shadow side only becoming apparent, the trap only closing, when the individual has been drawn in.

The individual authors and the ways in which the narratives are presented are likewise varied and break new ground. (There are parallels here with Linda's previous edited book *Attachment, Relationships and Food: From Cradle to Kitchen*.) Some chapters take the form of an individual telling his or her own story. Others take an alternative form—a chapter co-written by psychotherapist and patient; a chapter on gangs presented as a dialogue between a psychotherapist and a youth worker; an account by a South Korean psychotherapist of his work with a North Korean person whose journey to seek refuge brought her to Britain, involving a thoughtful consideration of how social mores and politics find their way into the quasi-sacred space of the consulting room. Having to leave one's homeland—whether on account of persecution, war, climate heating, or environmental degredation—is a topic of ever-increasing relevance. "Large populations will need to migrate, and not simply to the nearest city, but also across continents" (Vince, 2022, p. 11). A moving and poetic chapter highlights the "philosophical existential discomfort about where 'there' and 'here' may be", adding further to our understanding of the challenge faced by persons seeking refuge far from home.

The myriad voices and ways of approaching the topic of contested leavings add up to a book that is—to borrow a phrase from Gestalt—much more than the sum of its parts. After the variety, the drawing together of the themes is deftly achieved by Linda in the final chapter, "Dangerous liaisons: Picking up the pieces". Here again, Linda's deep grounding in attachment theory shines through, yet her analysis is never doctrinaire. She invites the reader to explore with her, to think together

with her, and always to hear the unique voice and experience of every individual.

This excellent and groundbreaking book—I can think of nothing quite like it in the library of either attachment theory or psychoanalysis—is erudite and moving. It is highly accessible, both to those of us working in the field of psychotherapy and to lay readers. I myself have learned a great deal from it and am delighted to have been invited to contribute a personal appreciation of its many merits.

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Vince, G. (2022). *Nomad Century: How to Survive the Climate Upheaval*. London: Allen Lane.

# Preface

*Linda Cundy*

> *Stories of defiance against oppressive regimes create a community of opponents who share the same abhorrence of stifling authoritarianism. In this sense, one may speak of a "storied community" which is the group of people who are joined together by certain shared narratives. A storied community provides the coherent narratives which are essential ingredients of resilience and offers a transitional space which can act as a secure base.*
> —Renos Papadopoulos, 1999, p. 332

It is around 10.30 p.m. one winter evening in 1992 and I've been working a late shift as a counselling supervisor at ChildLine, back then a twenty-four-hour telephone counselling service for young people in crisis or distress. I'm heading to the bus stop to go home, my ID lanyard still around my neck. There is a woman waiting for the bus with several young children; the eldest is a boy of maybe seven or eight. They are not adequately dressed for the time of year and look dishevelled. The mother seems intoxicated, or perhaps suffering from a mental health condition. She is shouting, swearing at her children, and threatening to hit them. As a ChildLine employee, whose job is to provide support to young people experiencing abuse, I cannot stand by and see

her lash out at these youngsters. I speak up, expecting to elicit her rage. As tactfully as I can, I suggest that maybe the children are tired and becoming a handful, but that hitting them is not the best way to manage their behaviour.

As anticipated, the woman starts to scream at me, telling me to mind my own f***ing business, that she's well known to social services and the police—"They all know me!" But what takes me by surprise is the reaction of the eldest boy who steps in between his mother and me. "DON'T YOU SPEAK TO MY MUM LIKE THAT! IT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU, YOU INTERFERING ****!"

This was the moment I fully understood the strong bond between a child and his or her parent, even an abusive one—or, perhaps, *especially* an abusive one—the complex cocktail of feelings aroused that might include fear of being hurt, fear of being abandoned and left alone in the world, but also love, protectiveness—and shame; Fairbairn's (1952) notion of the moral defence: "They would love me and care for me if I was not such a demanding, unlovable monster." This is "attachment to bad objects". With decades of clinical experience since that encounter, I now recognise that feeling ashamed of the caregiver is also often thrown in for good measure,

Attachment is a fundamental survival strategy. Most people survive infancy but many do not thrive; insecure attachment is adaptive but sets limits on flourishing. However, this is a book about attachment to bad, or suffocating, or dangerous "objects" in various guises that threaten thriving and even survival.

So how was it conceived? In the intervening years since those ChildLine days, following my training in attachment-based psychoanalytic psychotherapy, I have published several books, all multi-authored but curated and edited by me. I enjoy working with others on writing projects and have also supported authors as they prepared their own publications. So, when I was asked to meet with a woman who wanted advice about writing a piece for a psychotherapy readership, I agreed. That is how I came to meet Mary Kelly, expert by experience of being drawn into, living in, and eventually escaping, a cult. As I listened to her story and registered her desire to make her experience meaningful through educating others, I could sense my own engagement stirring and a conversation start up in my head: "This is so interesting.

What if I were to offer this …?" "Don't be crazy! You have so many other commitments! Don't you dare!" I remember the fateful moment that I explained to Mary which journals she might approach, and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Then, ignoring my own warning, I suggested another option; "Or you could write a chapter for a book." Mary's immediate response; "I'll write something for a book."

I have no personal or professional experience of cults but I was deeply impressed by Mary and an idea had been taking shape during that conversation: a collection of chapters about different kinds of danger and the challenges of leaving them behind. I immediately knew of several colleagues who might be interested in contributing and it seemed that each time I mentioned this project it enthused people and they then offered to write something too. The book began to take shape and themes to emerge. I could then identify gaps and seek out people with expertise in these areas. Along the way, we have lost some valuable chapters for various reasons, but gained other important contributions, often through chance conversations. We have become a "storied community".

Each chapter focuses on a particular kind of belonging—with an individual, to a family, group, or community. While some are born into these environments and their identities are entirely shaped within that context, others have made a choice to follow a specific path. Others still have had an identity, and thus a route through life, imposed upon them from outside; poverty, lack of opportunities, overstretched family resources, and racism condemn many to lives on the edge. Each of these scenarios raises different challenges when the attachment turns bad.

The paths we choose may alienate us from family and friends, who don't understand or approve. If things go wrong we may assume that we will not be welcomed back, and we may be right. There may also be a great sense of shame for making choices that turned out to be unwise—and about which we may have been warned.

How to tear away from the old perilous life, redefine oneself and grow into a new life, become one's own person, when society pigeonholes you and you face constant, continuing prejudice? Perhaps the status quo would be tolerable were it not for the toxicity.

How to walk away from, or escape from the only life that is familiar? Maybe severing links with family, friends, partners, children? And

possibly with no connection to others outside who may understand and help? The attachment instinct has ensured our survival, as individuals and as a species. But ultimately, survival trumps attachment; in many of the situations described in this collection, survival—and any possibility of thriving—demands *detachment*. The unfamiliar, especially if faced alone, can hold further jeopardy.

Authors here describe different kinds of danger. For Jacqueline Samuel, it is not a risk to life, limb, or sanity, but the damage done to the self by hiding or denying a vital part of oneself, the risk of losing a loving relationship, and, ultimately, the danger of living in bad faith. She acknowledges what she had to give up, a meaningful way of life that provided security, structure, and purpose. Jacqueline's chapter beautifully examines the inner conflicts and external challenges, the gains and painful losses for her. There is no inference that the path she chose, Orthodox Judaism, is in itself a danger, but we do hear stories of people leaving various faith groups, especially in small communities, where this can lead to dire consequences: individuals expelled from their families, parents who "abscond" denied access to their children, shame tainting the whole family, younger family members' marriage opportunities impacted, and so on.

For Ruthie Smith, discovering that a spiritual group she had chosen and been fully committed to, which had given her so much of meaning, had been corrupted was profoundly distressing, but the real spiritual trauma was the violation of her trust. When deeply held values are contaminated in this way, how much of oneself feels tainted, and what can survive the sense of defilement?

Others experienced actual mortal danger through persecution, violence, perverse sexual slavery, and addictions. For addicts, the drug of choice, whether that is a substance or the cocktail of chemicals produced in the body by compulsive behaviours, becomes the tantalising but potentially lethal "attachment object". Initially, as with secure attachment, this provides pleasurable feelings but over time its effectiveness wanes—it becomes unreliable. All attention then becomes focused on regaining the craved experience to the exclusion of all other connections, the same pattern we see operating in coercive relationships.

Leaving, whether a partner, faith group, cult, addiction, gang, or homeland, entails a myriad of losses. This book contains two chapters, by Hyun Suk Lee, and Zibiah Loakthar, about the challenges faced by people who were ultimately able to make that decision to escape their homeland and have often survived perilous journeys to seek asylum elsewhere. The "bad object" they have fled may be oppression by a brutal regime, poverty, religious or cultural practices that victimise. In some cases, not only is the journey fraught with dangers but the reception on arrival is regrettably hostile and dehumanising.

Each of us is shaped by our relational ecosystem. We learn how to behave in culturally accepted ways, how to communicate our needs, which aspects of our personalities can be expressed and which repressed. This process, though most influential in the first years of identity formation, continues throughout life as we adapt to new relationships and situations—humans are, after all, the most adaptable of all Earth's creatures. I believe, too, that the very landscape of our early years—the colours, seasons, sights, smells and tastes, flora and fauna of our environment—exerts an influence on who we become. Some people choose to leave, for education, employment, adventure, or love, knowing they can return. Some are displaced or forced to evacuate due to wars, natural disasters and, increasingly, climate crises.

Generally, families and neighbours who escape en masse are housed, at least temporarily, together. Others, however, who find themselves the target of persecution or poverty in their homelands face many of the same dilemmas as those escaping other dangerous situations and ask themselves the same questions, and more. Is it *really* necessary to leave behind one's home, family, possessions? Maybe culture and language? Where to go, and what risks will have to be faced? And what kind of reception might be waiting? Will it be possible to make a new life elsewhere, and what might that look like? These situations are fraught with ambivalence and, as with other escapees, decisions are made or postponed while in a highly stressed state when clarity of thought may be impaired, or when lulled into passivity by denial. How immediate is the danger? Is this *really* a life-or-death situation? Does escape leave loved ones in danger? It may be easier to make that leap into the unknown if it is undertaken with others, or to protect one's children, or if there are family members elsewhere to meet them.

From those early days working for ChildLine, I remember hearing stories of the "lovely, good, kind daddy" who sometimes disappeared to be replaced by a "horrible monster". This technique for preserving in the mind a wholesome object of love by splitting into good and bad is equally evident in those who have experienced a "good, loving partner/leader/guru" who unpredictably transmogrifies into an unrecognisable, terrifying presence. Thus, leaving entails walking away from the idealised attachment figure as well as the manipulative, cruel one, giving up hope of recovering or repairing that relationship. As Judy Davies describes in her chapter, it is the promise of change, the reminders of loving times, the pleas of vulnerability, and the sense of one's own importance to the abusive partner that evoke hope. Giving up all hope is a big, painful ask; sometimes it has claimed decades of one's life.

Fear, of course, pervades all these narratives; fear of humiliation, condemnation, litigation. Fear of loss. Fear of death and eternal damnation. Measures taken to manage fear include denial, numbing oneself with substances, dissociation. Splitting the other into good and bad is an effective defence. Another is radically splitting the self into fragments, each holding only some memories. Dissociation is an extreme, and extremely primitive defence against overwhelm: "Dissociation is learned early. Later abuse or other traumas did not account for dissociative symptoms in young adults" (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 121).

In Chapter 5, psychotherapist Nancy Borrett and client "Cora Hart" discuss together, with interjections by some of Cora's alters, how the therapeutic frame needed to be adapted to take into consideration their dissociative identity disorder. As van der Kolk reminds us, radical dissociation is perhaps the earliest physiological protection, before the psychological defences of denial and repression become available. In Cora's dreadful experience, dissociation spared her from full awareness of the brutality of her existence. Skilful but perverse and sadistic "attachment figures" manufactured massive splits in her psyche to protect themselves; the child who went to school had no access to memories of what she endured at home. In such thankfully rare situations, psychotherapists need to go beyond the traditional therapeutic frame to prove themselves reliable, secure allies in order for the client to risk seeking freedom from their family and abuse group, whose tentacles appear to be everywhere. Nancy's work with Cora has challenged her

on many occasions to extend the therapeutic boundaries in order to provide the secure base her client has so desperately needed.

One theme that emerges in these diverse chapters is that it can take numerous attempts to finally break free from a hostile environment; there is frequently more than one "last straw". Due to the addictive quality of toxic relationships, when "addicts" walk away, committed to getting "clean", they are vulnerable to being drawn back in.

Another thread running through these chapters is that leaving is not The End. Relationships are carried inside us as threatening voices, watching eyes, injunctions, temptations. It takes many years to "relocate the abandoned object", to adapt Bowlby's phrase about the outcome of mourning. During this time, if there is no strong bond to provide an anchor and give some shape to identity: "We do not know where we are going, just that where we have come from is disappearing. Our bodies are burning with the shame of not belonging, and the feeling of longing …" (Jason, online newsletter of Refugee Action, 2 March 2023). It does not help that society frequently views refugees and asylum seekers, ex-gang members, ex-cult members, and those with a history of addiction as pariahs. Necessary resources to help with integration and becoming useful members of the community are scarce. No one can do it alone—we all need someone to attach to, and something meaningful to live for.

My own chapter concludes the book, gathering themes that have emerged and proposing a therapeutic model for those who, like me, work with a diverse client group.

What I had not anticipated at the inception of this book was that many of my colleagues would choose to write autobiographical, rather than clinical, accounts. It has been harrowing to read their stories detailing painful experiences, sometimes of mental cruelty, racism and assault, violation of beliefs and values that caused deep psychic wounds, or simply feeling that a fundamental part of oneself is perceived as unacceptable by those we respect and identify with. It is also unusual for psychotherapists to openly share their own narratives, coming out from the shadows of professional anonymity to tell their personal histories. For each of the authors in this collection who made

that choice, psychotherapists or not, sharing such personal information has been courageous. It has also proved to be significant in the long, ongoing process of recovery. Difficult memories have been revisited, old ghosts roused. Traces of unresolved trauma and loss have been reactivated. As painful as it has been to read their experiences, it was far more challenging for these authors to reconnect with past events and process them by putting them into words, weaving them into a coherent narrative. I am touched that they have been prepared to do so, and that they now feel safe enough to share them in this book. This is triumph over trauma, the "adversity activated development" (Papadopoulos, 2021) that Zibiah Loakthar references in her chapter. This is also what I noticed that first meeting with Mary Kelly.

Despite the very different form of oppression each describes, and the unique voice of each author, those who have contributed their narratives of attachment, danger, and ultimate survival have become a "storied community". I thank each of them for their courage—we can learn so much about attachment and its central role in human nature by exploring their stories of walking away from their previous lives, their people, everything that is familiar, and making a new beginning. And, following Mary Kelly, I hope these stories help each of us recognise that a helping hand and warm welcome can be all it takes to make a difference to those driven to escape persecution, oppression, and danger in all its forms.

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