



## Editorial



**Gillian:** Well I am the new co-editor of *Self & Society* which is very exciting! In saying hello, I wanted to muse a little on receiving an invitation to apply for this post from David and Richard last year. Richard contacted me to say: 'As part of my withdrawal from the therapy world, I'm giving up the co-editorship of *Self & Society* journal this summer/autumn, and we're currently looking for a female replacement for me. Both David and I think that you'd be an excellent choice!' My first response was to feel flattered that I had been sought out and deemed an 'excellent

choice'. This was followed by bemusement on why that would be, and thinking there must surely be many people more qualified, experienced and more suitable for the job than me. Was I more flattered to have been chosen by two men? Sadly, possibly. I then noticed the 'female replacement' part of the invitation. My initial response to this was to be impressed that they had thought that gender representation was important, which was swiftly followed by a realization of, 'Ah, they want me fundamentally because I'm a woman and if they didn't have that political agenda, lots of men would be more appropriate than me'. I subsequently felt rather undermined and patronised. This was followed by a defensive, 'Well if they think that men could have done it better, I'll show them'. I was intrigued by my emotional response, having not knowingly been in this position before (although who knows how many times previously my gender has been a factor in asking me to contribute without this being explicitly acknowledged?). I wondered about the impact of this response on my behaviour, particularly the final defensive having to prove myself.

Politically, I really appreciate the acknowledgement of and thinking around gender dynamics and power and am glad this was discussed explicitly. But it has made me experience directly how fraught dynamics of power are with regard to structural inequalities. It made me realize yet again how much of my behaviour is evaluated by me and others in the light of my gender, how much more assertive I feel I need to be to prove myself and how much that provokes defence in others due to its unexpected nature in a woman. The dynamics of power, gender and politics and their relevance to therapy have long been a keen interest of mine (Proctor, 2002, 2004, 2006) and I heartily welcome the opportunity to be involved in a journal where these themes are acknowledged, discussed in their complexity and welcomed. I look forward to working with you all.



**David:** I'm very happy to be working with you, Gillian, and I already sense the potential for new ideas and fresh thinking in our co-working, always so vital to keeping a journal lively and relevant. Richard is of course still very much involved as an Associate Editor and indeed very much in evidence in this current issue by virtue of the magnificent theme symposium on Rudolf Steiner and the Psychological Therapies that John Lees and he have co-edited. Both Gillian and I had to confess our huge ignorance of the significance and scope of Steiner's contribution to psychology: a shameful omission which this symposium does so much to address. If you're wanting a crash course on the continuing relevance of Steiner's thinking to our movement, look no further. John and

Richard will be presenting a Part II later in the year, and I'm sure we won't be alone in looking forward to it. Robert Sardello's column also addresses Steinerian themes, as does the poem that ends this section, from Paul Matthews.


Additionally, we have three very varied and equally interesting free-standing articles: one hot off the press from Robin Shohet on the theme of complaints – a topic and set of practices clearly calling out for critique and deconstruction, and there is no one better equipped to start such a task than Robin, who will be co-hosting a CSTD conference on this theme later this summer in London (<http://www.cstdlondon.co.uk/annual-supervision-conference>).


Secondly, and quite coincidentally, we have a paper from the Critical Supervision Collective critiquing and challenging a whole set of norms and assumptions about supervision. And finally, in an articles section unusually focused on practice themes, we have another breath of fresh air and clarity from US-based Hayward Fox (see Vol. 42, Nos. 1–2 for his previous article), informed by his deep engagement with Buddhist practice and thinking.

In our 'Regulars' section, we have highly pertinent politically informed pieces from both Stuart and Sissy, together with politically inspired poems from Brian Thorne; Manu's ever interesting reviews section and a terrific Retro Review, again by Robin, of Keith Johnstone's classic, *Impro*.

We hope you enjoy this varied and nourishing fare, as *S&S* enters its 45th year, and we also hope you like the new layout.

As we were going to press we received the sad news that Manu Bazzano will be leaving his role, a role that we are certain you will agree he has performed marvellously. This will be leaving an interesting and rewarding vacancy, from the Winter issue 2017 onwards, for a new Book Reviews Editor. Do contact Gillian and me, if you are interested, for more information.

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